

First John Outlined, Summarized, & Paraphrased

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Note the following about the King James Version (KJV) translation in column 2: (1) Brackets usually contain words added by KJV translators. (2) Words in smaller type (see 5:7-8a, 13b) lack textual support in Greek. (3) Bolded expressions are also found in John's Gospel.

SUMMARY	1 JOHN BY PARAGRAPHS (KJV)	PARAPHRASE
Prologue: Apostolic Witness & the Purpose of Writing, 1:1-4		
1:1-3 <i>Apostles witness about the Word of Life so that hearers can participate in that life.</i>	1 That which was from the beginning , which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life , which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.	Eternal life always existed with God the Father. It has been revealed as His message (word) in tangible form to the writer and other apostles, who now participate with the Father and His Son in that life. They tell their experience (give their witness) of that revelation so that those who hear can also participate in that life.
1:4 <i>John writes to bring joy.</i>	4 And these things write we unto you, that your [more likely, our] joy may be full.	This letter is designed to make the readers [or, the writer, or both] completely happy.
Part I Christian Life as Participation with the Father and the Son, 1:5 to 2:28		
A. Ethical Test, 1:5 to 2:11		
1:5-10 <i>Participants in God's life walk in His revelation and are being cleansed from sin.</i>	5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness , we lie, and do not the truth : 7 But if we walk in the light , as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin , we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us .	5 The message from God through apostles is that "God is perfect truth without untruth." This fact implies that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Those who claim to participate with God in His life yet do not live the way He says to, are lying and do not put the truth in practice; 7 but those who obey His revelation do participate and are being cleansed from sin through Jesus' sacrifice. • 8 Those who deny their sin have not opened their lives to God's truth; 9 but those who admit their sin can count on His forgiveness & cleansing. 10 In other words, anyone who refuses to recognize his sin rejects God's convicting message as though God were a liar.

SUMMARY	1 JOHN BY PARAGRAPHS (KJV)	PARAPHRASE
<p>2:1-6</p> <p><i>Jesus is our Advocate with God when we sin. Obeying Him proves we know Him.</i></p>	<p>1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world. 3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1:8). 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.</p>	<p>1 John writes partly to help get Christians cleansed from sin. When they do sin, however, they have a representative before God, Messiah Jesus, who perfectly fits God's standards. 2 He satisfies God for them—and potentially for everybody. 3 Those who obey Him can be sure He represents them. 4 Anyone who thinks Jesus represents him yet disobeys Jesus, neither speaks nor acts according to God's revelation. 5 In one who values and obeys God's message, God's love has reached its object—and he lives in God. 6 Anyone who remains in God will live the way Jesus did.</p>
<p>2:7-11</p> <p><i>Living in His revelation, we see His love & are enabled to love. Lack of love shows we are still in the dark.</i></p>	<p>7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning (1:1). The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning (1:1). 8 Again, a new commandment (2:7) I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. 9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness (1:6-7), and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.</p>	<p>7 John reminds those called brothers that they have a command God's people have always heard. 8 However, it is new in the sense that now it is lived out (a) by the Son—and through Him (b) by those who have left their ignorance to live in His full revelation. 9-10 The proof that one lives there is that he loves his brother—and does not make him fall. 11 Anyone who hates his brother has not responded to God's revelation and doesn't know how to live.</p>
<p>B. Parenthetical, 2:12-17</p>		
<p>2:12-14</p> <p><i>John assumes that the readers are at least forgiven and know God as Father.</i></p>	<p>12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him [that is] from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father (2:3). 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him [that is] from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.</p>	<p>12-14 John assumes that the readers are believers, forgiven through the Son and acquainted with the Father. The most mature among them have more knowledge of God; those not so mature are at least spiritually strong from letting God's word stay in them—and have won victories over Satan.</p>

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<p>2:15-17</p> <p><i>But they are in danger of loving the world system—and perishing with it—rather than loving God.</i></p>	<p>15 Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.</p>	<p>15 You can't yield allegiance both to the current system, and to God. 16 Strong desires to please our body and self-glory are tied to a system cut off from God 17 and doomed. Only doing what God wants will make us survive that doom.</p>
<p>C. Christological Test, 2:18-28</p>		
<p>2:18-19</p> <p><i>The existence of apostate "anti-christs" shows that the age is ending.</i></p>	<p>18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.</p>	<p>18 This evil age is nearly over. We know this because the final evil ruler already has many forerunners. 19 These evil teachers started out in the church but showed their true nature by leaving apostolic teaching.</p>
<p>2:20-23</p> <p><i>The Spirit given by Messiah teaches readers all they need; antichrists lie by denying Messiah.</i></p>	<p>20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also].</p>	<p>20-21 You do not need their teachings; the Holy Spirit from Jesus has given you God's whole revelation. 22-23 The false teachers' biggest lie is to deny that Jesus is the Messiah; denying Him rejects His Father as well.</p>
<p>2:24-25</p> <p><i>Stick with the apostolic message to be sure of eternal life.</i></p>	<p>24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, [even] eternal life.</p>	<p>24 Let God's revelation about the Son remain in you; then you will remain in the Son and the Father 25—and will receive eternal life.</p>

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<p>2:26-28</p> <p><i>Don't listen to false teachers but only to Jesus' Spirit, assuring final acceptance when He returns.</i></p>	<p>26 These [things] have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.</p>	<p>26 I write this warning because false teachers try to deceive you. 27 But the Holy Spirit given by Jesus is still in you. He is pure truth; let Him be your only source of truth. Then you will remain in the Lord Jesus. 28 Christians, remain in Him so that you will not be rejected when He comes again.</p>
<p>Part II Christian Life as Divine Sonship, 2:29 to 4:6</p> <p>A. Ethical Test, 2:29 to 3:24a</p>		
<p>2:29-3:3</p> <p><i>God's children do right like Him-and cleanse their lives in view of becoming perfect when He returns.</i></p>	<p>29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.</p>	<p>29 What is the evidence that you belong to His family? Doing what is right, as He does. 1 The Father in love has made us His children, which separates us from the rest of humanity. 2 Already being His children guarantees that at Jesus' coming we will be like Him. 3 Such confidence for the future based on Jesus makes one cleanse his life to become more like Jesus.</p>
<p>3:4-7</p> <p><i>Those who live in the sinless One do not sin because He cleanses from sin.</i></p>	<p>4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law [also practices lawlessness, NASB]: for sin is the transgression of the law [lawlessness, NASB]. 5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.</p>	<p>4 Whoever practices sin lives, by definition, without God's rules. 5 God's Son came to cleanse us from such attitudes, which He does not share. 6 Such cleansing marks a person who remains in the Son; the lack of such cleansing marks a non-believer. 7 In other words, being right is proved by doing right, like the Son.</p>
<p>3:8-10</p> <p><i>Like their fathers, the devil's children sin and God's children cannot sin.</i></p>	<p>8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.</p>	<p>8 Whoever practices sin belongs to the devil, the first one to sin, whose works God's Son came to abolish. 9 Anyone born into God's family now has God's life and thus cannot practice sin. 10 Therefore, one's practice—above all, his love—shows whether he belongs to God's family or the devil's.</p>

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<p>3:11-15</p> <p><i>In those who come into eternal life, God achieves His goal of producing love instead of hate.</i></p>	<p>11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 Not as Cain, [who] was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. 14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not [his] brother abideth in death. 15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.</p>	<p>11 All along, God's stated objective has been that we have such love. 12 By killing his own brother, Cain showed that he belonged to the devil. What made him do it? His brother's goodness showed up his own badness. 13 That's the reason the world hates believers. 14 Our love shows that we now participate in God's life. 15 Whoever wants his brother dead does not participate in that life.</p>
<p>3:16-18</p> <p><i>As in Jesus' case, God's love in us is seen in deeds that meet needs.</i></p>	<p>16 Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels [of compassion] from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.</p>	<p>16 The best example of love is that of Jesus' giving Himself for us, which is what we should do. 17 Refusing to share with a needy brother shows that we lack such love. 18 It is not enough to say kind things when action is needed.</p>
<p>3:19-24a</p> <p><i>Such obedient love gives us confidence that we belong to God and will get answers to prayer.</i></p>	<p>19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [then] have we confidence toward God. 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.</p>	<p>19 Active love marks us as belonging to the truth—and gives us confidence about the future. 20 Lack of confidence may not reflect our true status, which God knows. 21-22 When we have confidence, however, we get answers to prayer because God is pleased with us. 23 We keep His two-sided commandment to believe in His Son and love one another.</p>
<p>B. Christological Test, 3:24b to 4:6</p>		
<p>3:24-4:3</p> <p><i>We know that God is in us by His Spirit, who makes us testify that Jesus is Messiah, a testimony the coming evil world ruler does not affirm.</i></p>	<p>24b And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.</p>	<p>24 Obedience proves that we remain in Him and He in us. One evidence that He lives in us is the Spirit He gave us. 4:1 Not every spirit is to be trusted; many are deceivers. 2 A spirit from God must acknowledge that the man Jesus is Messiah. 3 A spirit that denies this already represents the coming evil world ruler.</p>

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<p>4:4-6</p> <p><i>Believers defeat the false spirits of this world by not listening to them but to God's apostles.</i></p>	<p>4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.</p>	<p>4 Believers belong to God and have defeated such spirits because of the greater Spirit in believers. 5 Since the false spirits belong to the world, their message comes from the world and pleases it. 6 Apostles, on the other hand, belong to God; and their message pleases those who know God. Therefore, the apostolic message is the standard for testing spirits.</p>
<p>Part III Christian Life as Merging the Ethical and Christological, 4:7 to 5:12</p>		
<p>4:7-13</p> <p><i>Since God is the source of love and gave His Son before we had love, those He lives in will show His love.</i></p>	<p>7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.</p>	<p>7 Our obligation is to love one another. Such love proves that we are in the family of—and are acquainted with—the God love comes from. 8 If we don't love, we don't know Him. 9 God showed His love by sending His Son to give us life. 10 He loved us before we loved Him. 11 In view of His love, we should now love. 12 The proof that the invisible God, with all His love, lives in us, is that we love each other. 13 His Spirit of love in us proves that we live in Him and He in us.</p>
<p>4:14-16</p> <p><i>Those related to God recognize that Jesus is God's love gift—and live in love themselves.</i></p>	<p>14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son [to be] the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.</p>	<p>14 Apostles witness that God's love-gift for our salvation was His own Son. 15 Confession of His Son labels those in whom God lives and who live in God. 16 This confession also recognizes that God Himself is love. Remaining in love marks those who remain in God and He in them.</p>
<p>4:17-18</p> <p><i>Love makes us confident by making us like Messiah and displacing our fear of judgment.</i></p>	<p>17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.</p>	<p>17 Living in this love will give us perfect assurance as we become like Him. 18 As love grows, it displaces fear. If we still fear, that shows that we need to grow more in love.</p>

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<p>4:19-5:2</p> <p><i>God passes His love to us; loving our brothers proves we have it. Love for God guarantees we love His children.</i></p>	<p>19 We love [him], because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.</p>	<p>19 Our love resulted from God's love. 20 Since God is invisible, no one should claim to love Him if he hates his own brother. 21 No wonder [?]God commanded those who love Him to love their brothers! 5:1a Who are these brothers? Those born into God's family because they believe in Jesus as Messiah. 1b-2 If we love their Father and do what He says, we will love His children.</p>
<p>5:3-5</p> <p><i>Trusting Jesus as Messiah gives power to accomplish God's purposes and thus defeat the world system.</i></p>	<p>3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?</p>	<p>3 Loving God implies doing what He says, which is not hard 4 because our new birth brings us power. Through trusting God we defeat the whole evil system around us. 5 The victor is the one who believes that Jesus is Messiah.</p>
<p>5:6-9</p> <p><i>Three external witnesses that Jesus is Messiah are His baptism, His death, and God's Spirit.</i></p>	<p>6 This is he that came by water and blood, [even] Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth], the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.</p>	<p>6-8 Jesus was acclaimed as Messiah in both His baptism and His death. To these events God's Spirit added His own faithful witness. 9 It is more important to accept God's witness than man's—and God witnesses about His Son.</p>
<p>5:10-12</p> <p><i>Believers in Jesus get an internal witness: eternal life in Him.</i></p>	<p>10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.</p>	<p>10 God's Witness comes to live in us; rejecting that Witness rejects God. 11 What He witnesses is that His gift of eternal life is inseparable from His Son. 12 One must have the Son to have the life.</p>

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Epilogue: Five Great Certainties, 5:13-21		
<p>5:13-17</p> <p><i>This book is written to assure believers that</i></p> <p>a. we have eternal life</p> <p>b. God will answer our prayers, even for a sinning brother</p>	<p>13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. 16 If any man see his brother sin a sin [which is] not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.</p>	<p>13 This book is designed to assure those who believe on the Son that they have eternal life. 14-15 This assurance guarantees us answers to all prayers made in line with His character and plan. 16-17 For example, through prayer we can get a brother restored if his sin is not too grievous.</p>
<p>5:18-21</p> <p>c. Messiah will keep us safe from sin and the devil</p> <p>d. we now belong to the true God</p>	<p>18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth him[self], and that wicked one toucheth him not. 19 [And] we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, [even] in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.</p>	<p>18 One born into God's family does not practice sin, because Christ keeps him safe from the devil. 19 In contrast to the world controlled by wickedness, we belong to God. 20 His Son has come to lead us to know the real God. Living in God by living in Jesus gives us eternal life. 21 Do not go off after false gods.</p>