



Beginnings

John's letters are unique because of the timing.
John has **outlived** all the apostles and most of
the first eyewitness of Jesus and His resurrection.

He is writing to a church that has **not
seen or experienced** the events of the
Gospels or the book of Acts (90AD)

The subject matter is simple and straightforward: **truth** (right doctrine), **obedience** (right living), and **love** (right relationships). The cyclical structure of the book invites deeper reflection on these themes.

In the Bible the apostle John is mentioned by name **30 times**—in Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts and Galatians.

Biography

Calling

A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and **John**, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind. [Matthew 4:21-22](#)

It should be noted that Jesus' **reputation** had spread across Israel

Biography

Affluence

When the brothers left their father to follow Jesus, hired hands remained to help him in his fishing business. The fact that the family had enough money to hire **servants** suggests that it was probably a reasonably successful business ([Mark 1:20](#)).

"...leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the **hired men**." [Vs 20](#)

Biography

Nickname

James and John (the sons of Zebedee, but Jesus nicknamed them "**Sons of Thunder**"), [Mark 3:17](#)

Son of thunder was more than a label of a hotheaded rich kid. It also denotes passion and speaking with the voice of God

Biography

Nickname

As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He sent messengers ahead to a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival. But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus, **"Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up?"** But Jesus turned and rebuked them. So they went on to another village. [Luke 9:51-56](#)

Biography

Nickname

Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favour. "What is your request?" he asked. She replied, "In your Kingdom, please **let my two sons sit in places of honour next to you**, one on your right and the other on your left." [Matthew 20:20-21](#)

Biography

Nickname

When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were **indignant**. *Vs 24*

Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your **servant**, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your **slave**. *Vs 26b-27*

Biography

Inner Circle

Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and **John** (the brother of James). [Mark 5:37](#)

Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and **John**, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. [Matthew 17:1](#)

He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and **John**, and he became anguished and distressed. [Matthew 26:37](#)

Biography

Inner Circle

It should be noted that all the inner circle were **renamed** (nicknamed) by Jesus

Sons of Thunder and the Rock



Biography

Most Trusted/Brave

When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside **the disciple he loved**, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home. [John 19:26-27](#)

According to the Gospel accounts, **only** John was witness to Jesus on the cross. This gives John a unique position in the early church

Biography

Recognized Leader

In fact, James, Peter, and **John**, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews. [Galatians 2:9](#)

Biography

Fate

I, John, am your brother and your partner in suffering and in God's Kingdom and in the patient endurance to which Jesus calls us. I was **exiled** to the island of Patmos for preaching the word of God and for my testimony about Jesus. [Revelation 1:9](#)

Biography

Fate

"The common tradition of the church affirmed that, after his leadership role in the church of Jerusalem, John moved to Ephesus, where he lived to an old age and died a natural death. The tradition is summarized by Eusebius." [Anchor-Yale Bible Dictionary](#)

Biography

Fate

After his release from being banished he finalized the arrangement of books and the canonization of the New Testament around 96 - 99 A.D. As the **last living person** who was directly instructed during Jesus' earthly ministry, John lived a long life and died close to 100 A.D. Evidence suggests the last apostle ended his days in the Asia Minor city of Ephesus.

Themes of 1st John

Jesus is **real** (2nd Generation)

Jesus is **true** (Gnosticism)

Gnosticism

The Gospel of John was written at a time when **Gnostic** challenges to belief in the coming of Jesus as the Son of God had surfaced.

Gnosticism: after *gnôsis*, the Greek word for "knowledge" or "insight", most often portrayed as "secret"

Gnosticism

"The apostle John was living at the close of the first century when he wrote the three letters by his name and then the book of Revelation. As we saw last time, the church that Jesus had founded was under attack from **Gnostic** teachers from without. John found it necessary to expose their error by explaining where truth, love and light really reside." **David Hulme**

Gnosticism

“Based on the internal evidence of 1 and 2 John, a problem had arisen within the church, possibly throughout Asia Minor. We know from church history that near the end of the first century, and in the early second century, proto-Gnosticism, specifically **Docetism**, arose within the church.”

“In later years this developed into a theological system known as Gnosticism. Its teachings blended Greek dualism with Eastern mysticism.”

Gary W. Derickson

Gnosticism

Docetism is an ancient heresy that says Jesus was **not fully human**. According to Docetism, he seemed to be human, but because Jesus was fully divine, he had no physical body. The form people saw was essentially a ghost.

The word "docetism" comes from the Greek word, *dokein*, which means "**to seem**." The earliest evidence of this heresy actually comes from 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John, where the Apostle John writes about a group who seemed to deny that Jesus came in the flesh

Docetists focused on Jesus' **divinity** rather than his humanity.

Gnosticism

"A more subtle distortion of the gospel comes with the **overplaying of the role of the Spirit** in Christian living. When the Spirit is divorced from the Word and from the gospel event of Jesus, we can end up with a docetic Jesus." **Graeme Goldsworthy**

"The docetic Christian is one who has lost sight of the role of our human **responsibility** to think through issues and to make godly decisions"

Second Generation

"By 90 A.D., enough time had elapsed for many of the things Paul spoke to have begun to occur. Apostasy was underway. There were many who were **untaught** and they provided fruitful ground for **false teachers** who had already departed from the faith. William Barclay, describing this' condition, states that "certain things had almost inevitably happened within the church." **Ray Stedman**

Biblical and theological **ignorance** always brings conflict and drift within the church

Second Generation

"...Many were now **second or even third generation** Christians. The thrill of the first days had, to some extent at least, passed away. In the first days of Christianity there was a glory and a splendour, but now Christianity had become **a thing of habit, `traditional, half-hearted, nominal.'** Men had grown used to it and something of the wonder was lost. John was, writing at a time when, for some at least, the first thrill was gone and the flame of devotion had died to a flicker" **RS**

Second Generation

Between **80 to 101** generations have passed since Jesus (depending on how you define a generation)

Grandparents (boomers) were passionate for the Lord, **parents** (X'ers) were observers of the rules of Christianity and the **children** (millennial and Z) were disinterested with faith altogether

Second Generation

After that generation died, **another generation** grew up who did not **acknowledge** the Lord or **remember** the mighty things he had done for Israel. The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight and served the images of Baal. [Judges 2:10-11](#)

Second Generation

First generation of Christian's **believed** the gospel and held as well that there were certain social, economic, and political entailments (behaviour).

The next generation **assumed** the gospel, but identified with the entailments.

The following generation **denied** the gospel: the "entailments" became everything.

The first generation is **holy**; the second generation is **religious**; and the third generation is **godless**.

John's letter is as important today as it was two thousand years ago. We are wrestling with much the **same** issues today.

We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life [1 John 1:1](#)

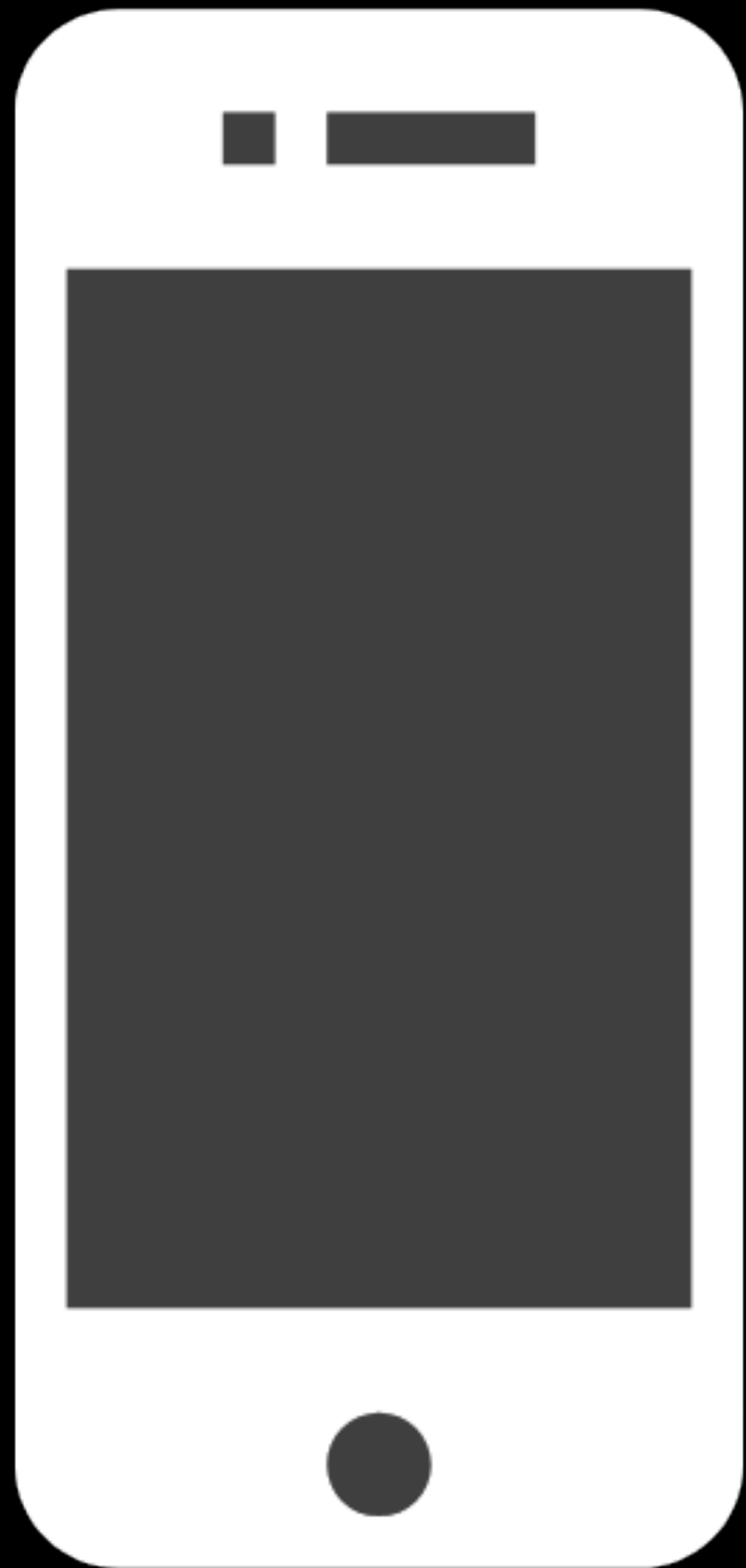
**Starts
January
12th
and
14th**



**The
Screwtape
Letters**

text2give

226-909-0014



eTransfer

info@uccwaterloo.ca

(auto deposit)