

# **The Epistle of Certainties: I John**

## **I. The Background**

**A. Authorship** – very probable that the Apostle John is author of both Gospel of John and I John. (the same dualistic language)

- author is possible eye-witness to the Christ-event (see 1:1-3)

## **B. Genre**

**General Epistle vs. Personal Epistle:**

- is this letter written for a particular body or for the church in general?
- Compare this letter with I Corinthians

## **C. Audience:**

- Somewhere in the province of Asia
- A congregation struggling with its beliefs.
- A “new” kind of teaching arises amongst the fellowship (probably some form of Docetism).
- Adherents leave the fellowship.
- Those left behind are in need of assurance. Hence the concept of “know” is crucial.

## **II. Structure and theme:**

**A. Theme: God is light  
love  
life**

**God's character – should result in a particular way of living for believers.**

### **B. Structure**

**1. Living in God's Light (1:1-2:29)**

**2. Living by God's Love (3:1-4:21)**

**3. Living with God's Life (5:1-21)**

### **C. The Purpose of the Book**

- to add to their joy (1:4)**
- to guard against sin (2:1)**
- to warn them against false teachers (2:26)**
- to assure them of eternal life (5:13)**