

# Stirring Up to Righteousness

**Key Verses:** *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

*—I John 1:8,9*

**Selected Scriptures:**  
*I John 1:5-10; 2:1-8*

*6:20, Revised Version*

John’s epistle was written to fortify Christians against these subversive teachings of philosophers. He exhorted them to hold fast only to the doctrines of Jesus and the apostles, and to consider these philosophizing teachings as lies. All such false teachers were to be considered representatives of the “many antichrists,” or opponents of Christ, which the Apostle John warned were “even now” in the world.—I John 2:18

John’s object in writing this epistle was to stir them up to righteousness: “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.

**This epistle is supposed by**

scholars to have been written around the year A.D. 90. By then Christianity had attained considerable prominence, and believers were scattered throughout the Gentile world. Many things in Christianity commended it to the Greek philosophers of that time. However, they sought to combine with it their pagan philosophies, and many became so-called “Christian philosophers.” This, the Apostle Paul warned, was “knowledge which is falsely so called.”—I Tim.

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. 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.”  
—I John 2:12-14

At the time of this writing, the Apostle John was quite old. He had become very mellow in character because of his experiences and thus spoke very tenderly to those both mature and new in the faith. He desired that they might realize the important responsibility of abstaining from sin, continuing in God’s love, and thus maturing in Christ.

It is a noteworthy fact that the majority of Christians never experience the fullness of joy and peace and blessing that they might possess. Many are content with first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and as “babes,” do not go further to the full development of these principles in sacrifice and service. (I Cor. 3:1) John desired to stir up the minds and hearts of believers to an appreciation and use of their privileges in Christ, that thereby they might grow and develop in him.

“That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes,” from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, was John’s testimony. (I John 1:1) He, and the other apostles, had seen Christ in his life and in his death; they saw him after his resurrection; they knew these things were true. The apostles suffered the loss of all things in proclaiming the word of Truth.—Phil. 3:8

The testimony on which Christian faith rests is not man’s, but is God’s. Man had no testimony on this matter worth listening to until God spoke, first through Jesus, and afterward the apostles. Because they saw and knew Jesus, we have their sure testimony, and their “testimony is true.”—John 21:24 ■