



# Introduction

- Written by the Apostle John
- One of the 'sons of thunder' – Mark 3:17
  - The son of Zebedee - Matt 20:20
  - Younger brother of James - Matt 10:2
- A fisherman by trade – Matt 4:21
- Peter, James & John become part of the group of 3 disciples Jesus sets apart
- John's mum has sown discord among the disciples! – Matt 20:20-24

# Introduction

- John was called at the start of Jesus' Galilean ministry – Mark 1:19-20
- Probably one of the youngest disciples
- His family were respected, had hired servants and were known by the High Priest - Mark 1:20 / John 18:15
- John was charged by Jesus at the Cross with looking after Mary – John 19:26-27

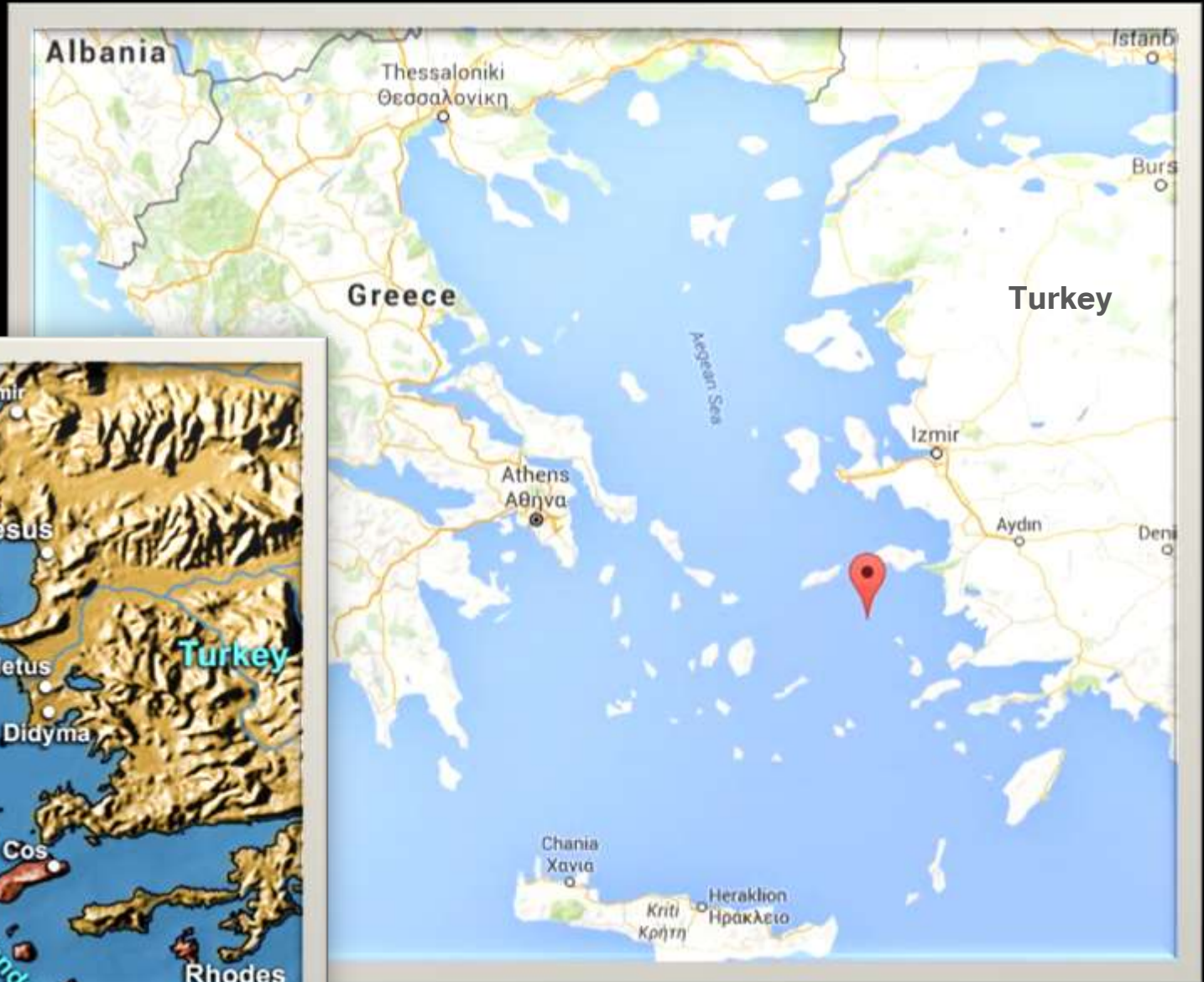
# Introduction

- John later became the pastor of the church at Ephesus
  - Mary also relocated to Ephesus

# Introduction

- A rumor spread that John would not die!
  - From Jesus words in John 21:22
- According to Tertullian (*in The Prescription of Heretics*) John was arrested plunged into boiling oil in Rome...
- But was not harmed by it!
- John was then banished to Patmos
  - Where he received the 'Revelation'
- He later returned to Ephesus
  - Polycarp became a disciple of John

# Patmos



# Patmos



# Introduction

- It is believed that John died and was buried in Ephesus
- In the 6<sup>th</sup> century the Basilica of St. John was built over the believed burial site







- Selçuk is the central town of Selçuk district, İzmir Province in Turkey, 2 kilometres (1 mile) northeast of the ancient city of Ephesus.

# Spiritual Background

- John writes against a background of rising Gnosticism.
  - Gnosis = 'Knowledge'
- Gnosticism became prevalent during the early years of the Church
- It is essentially a philosophy which centres on search for (and discovery of) supposed 'higher knowledge'
- Gnostics claimed that this knowledge was not intellectual, but spiritual.

# Spiritual Background

- Having this 'knowledge' was to be 'saved'
- The other major doctrine of Gnosticism was the separation of spirit and matter.
- All matter was considered to be evil and the source of evil
- The spirit was considered to be good and impervious to defilement by anything the body (matter) did.

# Spiritual Background

- Among their various heresies:
- They taught that Jesus was born as a normal man, and at his baptism the 'Christ Spirit' came upon Him.
- Others taught that Jesus didn't really have a physical body, he was a phantom & only seemed to have a physical body.

# Time/Order of Writing?

- 2 John – Letter to ‘The Elect Lady’
  - Contains a warning about coming apostates
- 1 John – General letter to the Church
  - Contains rebuke of present apostates
- 3 John – Letter to Gaius
  - References previous letter to the Church
- Revelation (Ch 2:1-7)
  - Commendation for rejecting apostates
- The Gospel of John

# Time/Order of Writing?

- Revelation must have been written before 70 A.D.!
  - The common view is that John was banished to Patmos by Emperor Domitian (AD81-96)
- But we have Papyrus 98
  - The earliest fragment of a copy of Revelation 1:13-2:1 – found in Egypt
    - It dates to the latter part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century
- Revelation contains no reference to the destruction of the Temple
  - Neither to any of John's writings!

# Time/Order of Writing?

- Revelation ch 2 references those who claimed to be Apostles – yet all the Apostles (except John) had died by A.D.70
- There is no record of Domitian persecuting Christians (or Jews)
- It is more likely that John was banished to Patmos by Nero – who did persecute Christians!
  - (full name *Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus* – although his birth name was *Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus*)

# Theme

- 1st John is written to the Church
  - so applicable to all Christians
- Not dealing with a specific problem or situation
- It is more of a sermon than an Epistle
- He addresses his hearers as ‘teknion’ – an affectionate term meaning ‘born ones’ (*my little children 2:1*)



# Theme

- John tells us his 5 reasons for writing:
  - That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us 1:3
  - And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. 1:4
  - these things write I unto you, that ye sin not 2:1
  - These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 2:26
  - 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. 5:13

# Theme

- In addition, John exalts God in his epistles:
  - God is Light - 1:5
  - God is Love - 4:8,16
  - God is Righteous - 2:29
  - God is Life - 5:11,12
  - God is Truth - 2 John
  - God is Good - 3 John

# Theme

- John gives us 7 tests for Christian behaviour
- 1) Do you walk in the Light ? 1:6
  - He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.
- 2) Do you admit you are a sinner? 1:8
  - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 3) Do you obey God's Commandment? 2:4
  - He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

# Theme

- John gives us 7 tests for Christian behaviour
- 4) Do you imitate Christ? 2:6
  - He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.
- 5) Do you love Others? 2:9
  - He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.
- 6) Do you still love the World? 2:15
  - If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

# Theme

- John gives us 7 tests for Christian behaviour
- 7) Does your life prove Christ is Righteous? 2:29
  - If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

# Combatting Gnosticism

- John assures us of 7 things we can know:
- 1) Knowing God 2:3
  - And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments
- 2) Knowing that we are secure in God 2:5
  - But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.
- 3) Knowing we are born into His family 3:14 / 5:2
  - We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren
  - By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

# Combatting Gnosticism

- John assures us of 7 things we can know:
- 4) Knowing we are of the truth 3:19
  - let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him
- 5) Knowing we God abides in us 3:24 / 4:13
  - And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us..
- 6) Knowing the Spirit of God 4:2
  - Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God

# Combating Gnosticism

- John assures us of 7 things we can know:
- 7) Knowing truth from error 4:6
  - 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.





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.

**1 John 1:1-3**

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;

1 John 1:1

- Jesus was there before the beginning began
- Jesus is the source, cause and sustainer of all things
  - See Col 1:16

2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

**John 1:1-3**

- Lit. *'When the beginning began'*
- 'Logos' –
  - 'reason' in terms of thought, and
  - 'word' in terms of the expression of that thought

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

**John 1:4-5**

- All life originates from God
- Adam was just a 'shell' until God breathed life into him and 'he became a living soul'
- Life itself is a great light      But...
- Man rejected the light
- That's why God had to be manifest in the flesh, to help us see & to lead us back 'from darkness to light'

# The Light of Life

- Life itself, the fact we are alive, the fact we live on a 'living planet' teeming with life, is the most undeniable proof (light) that man could need that there is a Creator.
- Life cannot arise from non-life.
- However, from an evolutionary perspective, there can be no such thing as 'life', as it is commonly understood, but just degrees of molecular complexity.

# The Light of Life

- A human being would therefore be just a more complex arrangement of chemicals than, for example, a spec of dust.
- This means there can be no such thing as morals, or right and wrong.
  - This foolish notion, propagated by the world's academia & education systems, is brutally assaulted by the facts.

# The Light of Life

- We all have a sense of justice, right and wrong, the capacity to love and hate etc.
- These things cannot be explained by, and have nothing to do with, the physical world.
- Life is not merely physical. It is spiritual.
- 'Life' is a bright light, illuminating the way for all who will open their eyes.



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;

**1 John 1:1**

- Hearing
- Sight
- Touch
- Empirical evidence!

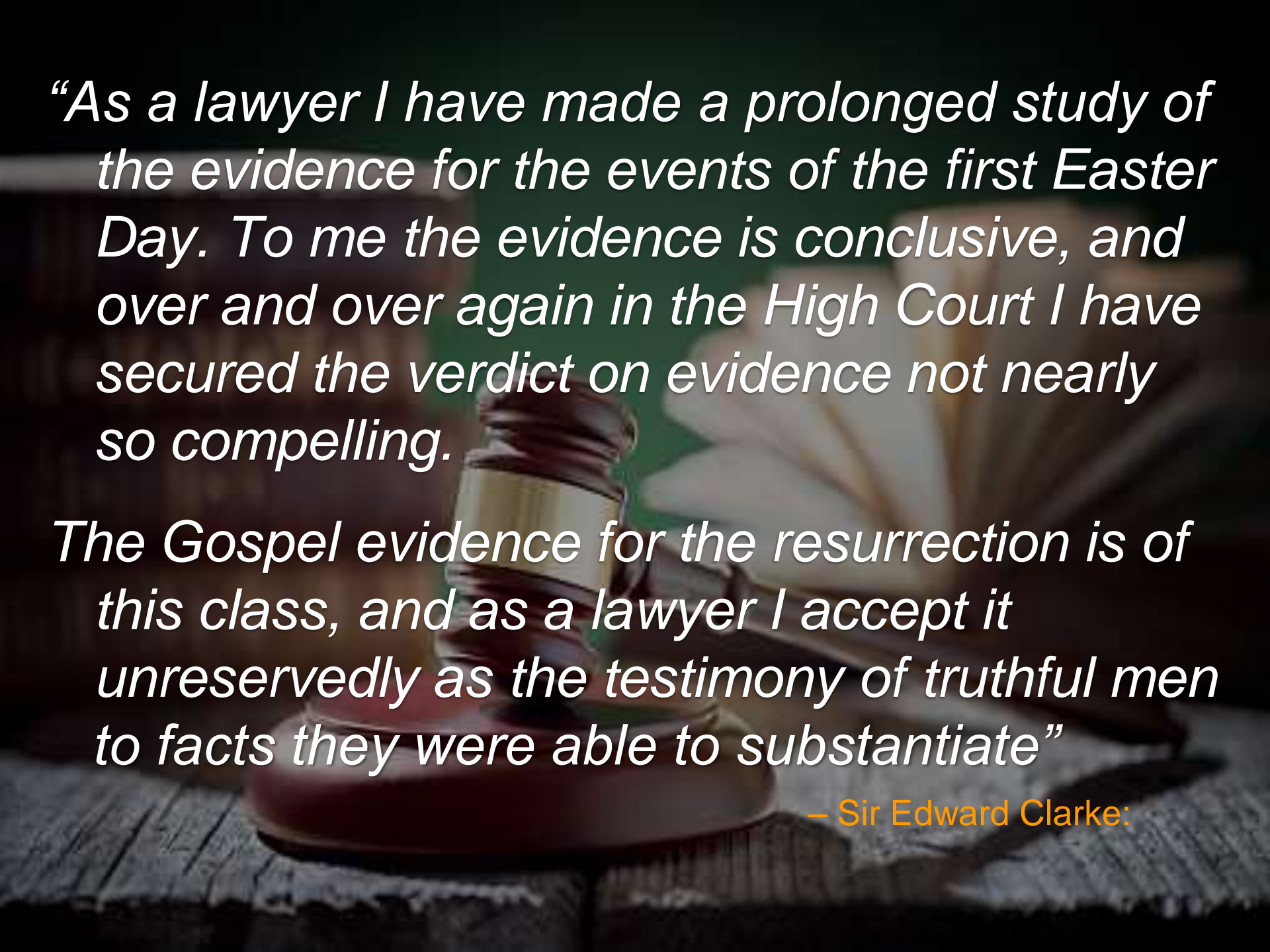
# The Gospel of John

## John's reason for writing:

<sup>30</sup> And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

<sup>31</sup> But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

**John 20:30-31**



*“As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidence for the events of the first Easter Day. To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling.*

*The Gospel evidence for the resurrection is of this class, and as a lawyer I accept it unreservedly as the testimony of truthful men to facts they were able to substantiate”*

– Sir Edward Clarke:

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.

**1 John 1:1-3**

# Our Walk With God

- John tells us that we can once again have fellowship with God!
- What was started in Eden...
- ...then subsequently lost due to the fall
- ...can be regained through Christ!
- This is the goal, the endgame!

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

**Revelation 21:3**

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

**1 John 1:4**

- True joy cannot be found outside of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ
- The World, the Flesh & Devil all promise joy
- They cannot deliver!

- 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.

**1 John 1:5-7**



- 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.

**1 John 1:8-10**

- v8. Saying 'we have no sin nature'
- Gr. *Katharizō* – Catheterise
  - To draw out / purge a poison from a system



# Next Session:

# 1st John CHAPTER 2

...a verse by verse study



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