

## **The Structure of 1 John**

“The peculiar style of John appears at its best in I John because the epistle is short enough to show clearly its type of structure. I John is symphonic rather than logical in its plan; it is constructed like a piece of music rather than like a brief for a debate. Instead of proceeding step by step in unfolding a subject, as Paul does in Romans, John selects a theme, maintains it throughout the book, and introduces a series of variations, any one of which may be a theme in itself.”

Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey, Revised*, rev. Walter M. Dunnitt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 377.

## **The Heresy Condemned in 1 John**

“On the one hand, the issue in view might be simply some false prophets (1 Jn 4:1-6) advocating compromises with the imperial cult to save one’s life. On the other hand, the issue might be one of the heresies that was developing toward full-blown Gnosticism. Docetists believed that Christ was divine but only seemed to become human (cf. 4:2); Cerinthians (followers of Cerinthus) believed that the Christ-Spirit merely came on Jesus, but denied that he was actually the one and only Christ (cf. 2:22).”

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 735-36.

## **The Themes of 1 John**

“John returns to two major subjects repeatedly as he writes: christology and ethical behavior. And it is likely that the two are intimately connected. The secessionists had embraced an aberrant form of christology that led them to make wrong judgments about Christian living.”

Gary M. Burge, “John, Letters of,” *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 590.