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Open English Translation of the Bible

The first letter that we have, written by

Yohan

(John)

Introduction

This *First letter of Yohan (John)* had two purposes: 1. encouraging the readers about God and his son Yeshua (Jesus) the messiah, and 2. warning them that it's important to not follow false or incorrect teachings that can destroy their unity with the messiah. These false teachers stated that Yeshua didn't become a person like us. They also taught that salvation doesn't include godly living and the love of others.
So in refuting those false doctrines, Yohan carefully explained that Yeshua the messiah came to this world as a real person, and he also explained that all who believe in Yeshua and love God, must also demonstrate their love to each other.

Main components of Yohan's letter

Introduction *1:1-4*
The darkness and the light *1:5–2:29*
The children of God and the children of Satan *3:1-24*
The truth and the lies *4:1-6*
About love *4:7-21*
Faith in Yeshua the messiah *5:1-21*

Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Readers' Version

The message that is life

1:1–3 We are reporting to you and testifying about what existed from the beginning:[1] ***Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the messiah and son of God.*** We heard him, we saw him with our own eyes, and we touched him with our own hands. Concerning the message of life, we can also report and testify to you that that life was revealed[2]—he is the eternal life that was with the father and was revealed to us. We report what we've seen and what we've heard so that you all also can have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the father and with his son. **4** We're writing all this so that our joy may be extended to you also.

We're all sinners

5 This is the message that we heard from him and which we are declaring to you all: **God** is light and there is no darkness in him—none at all. **6** If we say that we and him are relating well together and yet we're walking in the darkness, then we're lying and not living the truth. **7** But if we're walking in the light, just like he walks in the light, then we'll get along well with each other, and his son **Yeshua's** (Jesus'; Grk. Yesus') blood is removing the consequences of all our sins.

8 If we say that we don't have any sin, then we're just fooling ourselves and haven't embraced the truth. **9** But if we admit our sins, Yeshua is trustworthy and totally sinless, and he will forgive us for our sins and remove all of our guilt and consequences. **10** If we say that we haven't sinned, then we're making a liar out of Yeshua and we haven't internalised his message.

The messiah is our advocate

2:1 I am writing to you all, my treasured new believers, so that you might avoid sinning. If anyone should sin, we have an advocate to help us relate to the father: **Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the sinless **messiah**, **2** and it's him who is the atonement for our sins—not just our sins, but also the sins of the entire world.

3 We will know if we really know Yeshua if we obey his teachings. **4** If someone says that they know Yeshua but don't do what he taught, that person is a liar and hasn't internalised the truth. **5** However the person who obeys Yeshua's teaching demonstrates that **God's** love has truly been planted in them. We know that we are alive in Yeshua if **6** we claim to live in him and then live our lives like he lived.

Love not hate to be in the light

7 Dear friends, I'm not writing a new rule for you all, but reminding you of an old rule that you had from the beginning. This old rule is the message that you all heard.[3] **8** Then again I *am* writing a new rule to you—a rule which is true in Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) and in you all, because the darkness is already disappearing and the true light is already shining.

9 Anyone who says they're in the light but hates a fellow believer,[4] is still in the darkness. **10** It's the person that loves their fellow believers who is living in the light and doesn't offend anyone. **11** But the person who hates a fellow believer is living and walking in the darkness and doesn't know where they're going because they're blinded.

Don't love the things of this world

12 I'm writing to you new believers because your sins have been forgiven because of Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) authority. **13** I'm writing to you fathers because you have known the messiah from the beginning.[5] **14** I wrote to you new believers because you have know the father. I wrote to you fathers because you have known the messiah from the beginning.[6] I wrote to you young men because you are strong and **God's** message lives in you and you have overcome the evil one.

15 Don't be loving the world nor the things in the world. The father's love does not live in anyone who loves the world **16** because everything that's in the world, bodily desires and lusts and arrogant living, is not from the father but from the world. **17** And the world will come to an end along with the desire for it, but the person obeying **God's** desires will continue to live.

Beware of 'new' teaching

18 New believers, it's now the last times and what you heard about the false messiah coming is now happening. Many false messiahs have already been around and that confirms that it's now the last times. **19** They came from our group, but they were never truly part of us because if they were, they would have stayed with us. But they left us so it would be revealed that they're not part of us.

20 But you all have received the spirit[7] from the chosen messiah[8] and you all know all about it.[9] **21** I didn't write to you all because you don't know the truth, but because you have known the truth and any falsehood is not part of it.

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1 **RV 1:1 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 1:1.

2 **RV 1:2 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 1:14.

3 **RV 2:7 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 13:34.

4 **RV 2:9 · Note** Literally 'our brothers'. In this letter that term could refer to 'siblings', 'fellow believers', or 'fellow citizens' (or Yohan could be alternating between two or three of them in his mind as he wrote). After considering all the uses of the term in chapters 2–5, we have taken 'fellow believers' as being more likely, i.e., the context would often seem to be focusing on believers (even though most of us would want to apply 3:16–17 to also include 'fellow citizens').

5 **RV 2:13 · Cross-ref.** Lk 2:25-35.

6 **RV 2:14 · Cross-ref.** Lk 2:25-35.

7 **RV 2:20 · Note** anointing: It's not really clear here what Yohan is referring to that they have received: God's favour? a skill or ability? a blessing? the Holy Spirit? But v27 below seems to be talking about God's holy spirit.

8 **RV 2:20 · Note** holy (one): Yohan seems to be referring to Yeshua here.

9 **RV 2:20 · Note** You all know all: also unclear what Yohan means.

Readers' Version

22 **Anyone** who teaches that **Yeshua** (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) is
not the **messiah** is a liar. And **anyone** who disowns the fa-
ther and the son is a false messiah. 23 Anyone who disowns
the son, doesn't know the father either—only those who
confess the son know the father
24 What you all heard from the beginning, that's what
you should hold to. If the message that you heard from the
beginning remains in you, then you also will remain in the
son and in the father, 25 and in that case, what he
promised us is to live forever.
26 I wrote these things to you all concerning those who
would mislead you. 27 But for you, the spirit that you re-
ceived from Yeshua remains in you all and so you don't
need anyone else to teach you because his spirit teaches
you about everything. The spirit teaches truth and not lies,
and since you were taught by the spirit then you are re-
maining in Yeshua.
28 So now you new believers, remain in him so that when
he is revealed, we can have boldness and not be ashamed
of him when he comes back. 29 Because you know that he
is sinless, you also know that anyone faithfully obeying his
teaching has been reborn in him.

Living as God's children

3:1 Consider the amazing love that
the father has given to us in order
that we can be called **God's** children,[10] and indeed we
are.[11] 2 Dear friends we are **God's** children now, but it's not
yet revealed what we will become. We know that when
Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) is revealed, we will be similar to
him because then we'll be seeing him exactly as he is. 3 Ev-
eryone who trusts their future to him needs to purify
themself just like he is pure.
4 Everyone who regularly sins is demonstrating lawless-
ness, and sin is lawlessness. 5 You all know that Yeshua was
revealed in order to take away sins,[12] and there's no sin in
him. 6 Everyone who remains in him doesn't sin—everyone
who keeps sinning has neither really seen Yeshua nor
known him.
7 So new believers, don't let anyone deceive you: the per-
son faithfully obeying Yeshua's teaching will be declared
not guilty just as he is not guilty. 8 Anyone who regularly
sins belongs to the devil, because the devil has been sin-
ning from the beginning.
9 Everyone who's been reborn in **God**, doesn't regularly
sin because **God's** seed of life remains in them and that
person isn't able to sin because they have been reborn in
God. 10 You can distinguish **God's** children and the devil's
children like this: everyone who doesn't faithfully obey
Yeshua's teaching or doesn't love their fellow believers,
that person doesn't belong to **God**.

Demonstrate your love for each other

11 Yes, this is the message that you
all heard from the beginning: to be
loving each other[13]— 12 not living like Kayin (Cain) who
belonged to the evil one and went on to murder his
brother.[14] And why did he kill him? Because his own ac-
tions were evil, but his brother Hevel (Abel) followed God's
instructions.
13 And friends, don't be surprised if the world hates you.
14 We know that we have transferred from death to life be-
cause we are loving our fellow believers. Anyone who
doesn't love others is stuck in death.[15] 15 Everyone who
hates another person is a murderer, and you all know that
murderers don't have eternal life in them. 16 We know
about real love because we saw that Yeshua (Jesus; Grk.
Yesus) gave up his life for us, and we should give up our
lives for our fellow believers. 17 But anyone who's enjoying
being alive and notices that a fellow believer is in need yet
shuts that other believer's needs out of their conscience,
how can **God's** love be living in that person? 18 So you new
believers, don't just proclaim that you're loving people, but
actually demonstrate it in actions and in fact. 19 That's
how we'll know that the truth really is in us.
At the same time, we need to tell ourselves 20 that if we
are feeling condemned, **God** is greater than our feelings
and he knows everything. 21 Then dear friends, if we're not
feeling condemned, we have confidence in **God** 22 and con-
fidence that whatever we are requesting from him, we will
receive it because we are following his instructions and do-
ing the things that please him. 23 And this is his command:
We need to believe in the authority of his son, **Yeshua the
messiah**, and we should love each other as per the com-
mand that Yeshua gave to us.[16] 24 Anyone who follows his
commands is living in him, and he is living in them and we
have confirmation that he is living in us, because we have
the **spirit** that he gave to us.

True and false spirits

4:1 Dear friends, don't trust every
spirit, but test them to determine whether or not it's from
God, because many false prophets go around the world.
2 You all can find out whether or not a **spirit** is from God:
If the spirit confesses that **Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the
messiah** has come as a person, then it's from **God** 3 but if
the spirit won't confess **Yeshua**, then it's not from **God** but
rather it's the spirit of the false messiah, whom you've
heard is coming, and is now already in the world.
4 You new believers are in **God** and you have defeated the
false prophets, because the one in you is more powerful
than the one in the world. 5 They belong to the world

10 **RV 3:1 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 1:12.

11 **RV 3:1 · Note** 'and indeed we are' is missing from later manuscripts (and hence is omitted in some translations—there are more later copies than early ones and some scholars give more importance to that fact).

12 **RV 3:5 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 1:29.

13 **RV 3:11 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 13:34.

14 **RV 3:12 · Cross-ref.** Gen 4:8.

15 **RV 3:14 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 5:24.

16 **RV 3:23 · Cross-ref.** Yhn 13:34; 15:12,17.

hence they are speaking from the world, and the world is
listening to them. 6 However we belong to **God**, and any-
one who knows **God** listens to us, but anyone who doesn't
belong to **God** can't accept what we're saying. That's how
we can distinguish the spirit of truth from deceptive spir-
its.

Loving God means loving others

7 Dear friends, we need to be loving
each other, because love is from **God**
and everyone who truly loves has been reborn into **God**
and knows **God**. 8 Those who don't love, don't love **God** be-
cause **God** is love. 9 **God's** love was revealed to us when he
sent his only son to be born into the world so that we can
live through him. 10 So this is real love, not us loving **God**,
but God loving us and sending his son to be the sacrifice to
clear us of the sentence from our sins.

11 Dear friends, if **God** loves us like that, we ought to be
loving each other. 12 No one has ever seen **God**,[17] but when
we are loving each other then **God** is living in us, and his
love is being perfected in us.

13 We can know that we are living in him and him in us
because he has given to us from his **spirit**. 14 And we have
seen and are testifying that the father sent the son—the
saviour of the world. 15 Anyone who confesses that **Yeshua**
(Jesus; Grk. Yesus) is **God's** son, **God** lives in that person
and they live in **God**. 16 We have known and experienced
the love that **God** has in us.

God is love, and anyone who lives in love, lives in **God**,
and **God** lives in them. 17 This is how love will be perfected
in us so that we can live with confidence about the coming
judgement day: we live like Yeshua in this world. 18 There's
no fear in love, but rather perfect love drives away fear, be-
cause our fear is that of being punished but the one fear-
ing has not been perfected in love.

19 We love others because he loved us first. 20 Anyone
who says that they are loving **God** but hates a fellow be-
liever, that person is liar because if someone can't love a
fellow believer that they've seen, they can't love **God** who
they've never seen. 21 So we have this command from
Yeshua that anyone who loves **God** must also love their fel-
low believers.

Faith and love overcome the world

5:1 Everyone who believes that
Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) is the
messiah has been reborn in **God**, and everyone who loves
the father who gave birth to us, also loves the son that he
gave birth to. 2 We can know when we love **God's** children:
whenever we love **God** and obey his commands, 3 because
the definition **of** loving **God** is obeying his commands[18]
and his commands are not a big strain on us 4 because ev-
eryone who's been reborn in **God** is overcoming the world.
5 So who can overcome the world? Only the person who
believes that **Yeshua** is **God's** son.

God's testimony about Yeshua

6 **Yeshua (Jesus; Grk. Yesus) the**
messiah is the **one** who was born by
water and blood and spirit—not by water only, but by wa-
ter and by blood[19] 7 because there are three that testify:
8 the **spirit**, the water, and the blood, and these three
come together into one. 9 If we accept testimonies from
people, then God's testimony is better, because **God's** testi-
mony is about his son. 10 Any person that believes that
Yeshua is God's son has internalised **God's** testimony, but
anyone who doesn't believe **in God** calls him a liar because
they have not believed the testimony of **God** himself about
his son. 11 And this is the testimony: that **God** gave eternal
life to us and this life is in his son.[20] 12 Anyone who has the
son has life, but anyone who doesn't have the **god's** son,
doesn't have eternal life.

Living without ending

13 I wrote these things to you so
that you all could know that you
have eternal life, that is the ones believed in the name and
authority of **God's** son. 14 And so we have confidence in
God that if we request anything according to his will, he
hears us 15 whatever we're requesting, and we know that
we'll receive what we requested.

16 If anyone sees a fellow believer committing a forgiv-
able sin, then that person should ask God on their behalf
and God will give life to that fellow believer. (But there is a
sin that always results in death and I'm not suggesting that
we should ask in that case.) 17 All disobedience is sin, but
there are sins that don't necessarily lead to death.

18 We know that everyone who's been reborn into **God**
doesn't keep sinning, but the messiah who was born from
God watches over them and so the evil one can't touch
them.

19 We know that we belong to **God** and that the whole
word is under the control of the evil one.

20 We know that **God's** son has come and helped our
minds so that we could know the true one, and we are in
the true one and also in his son, **Yeshua (Jesus; Grk.**
Yesus) the messiah—the true **God** and eternal life itself.

17 RV 4:12 · Cross-ref. Yhn 1:18.

18 RV 5:3 · Cross-ref. Yhn 14:15.

19 RV 5:6 · Cross-ref. Yhn 3:5-8.

20 RV 5:11 · Cross-ref. Yhn 3:36.

Readers' Version

21 You new believers, don't honour idols.

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