

DISCIPLESHIP IN PLURALISTIC SOCIETY – I JOHN

Study Notes for I John 1

John is responsible for a significant part of the New Testament through his gospel, the book of the Revelation, and his epistles. His writings represented the latter part of the first century during a time where the religious context was pluralistic in the sense that in addition to the Jew and Gentile situation, there was some division between Jews and Christians by that time. The occasion of the letter like the gospel was the reality that some Jewish believers left the fellowship because of pressure and doubts about Jesus being the true Messiah. In some parts of Asia Minor for example, there were privileges in this move to be members of the synagogue rather than part of the church fellowship. This is part of what was behind his comments about the church at Smyrna in Rev. 2:8-11. According to Dr. Keener there was also the reality of the Greek worldviews that had ideas like Docetists “Christ was divine but only seemed to become human”, others that “the Christ-Spirit merely came on Jesus” others that it was fine to compromise with the Roman imperial cult, and finally some that believed that since the body does not matter some held that they were incapable of sinning no matter what they actually did. The book is an epistle though it is written more like a homily, and we need to assume the prologue to the gospel of John as a good introduction to this epistle.

1. Look for repetitions, similarities, contrasts, and causes and effects in this passage.
2. What are some of the questions you have about this passage?
3. What are the main ideas that stand out to you?
4. What are your main takeaways from this passage?