

# The Epistle of I John

## Text: I John 1: 1-4

“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; (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;) 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. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

## Introduction:

- A. There is no book of the Bible that is more profitable for Christians, particularly young Christians, to study than the First Epistle of John.
- B. The Epistle was written for a specific purpose. That purpose is found in I John 5: 13.

“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.”

- C. It is important that we have eternal life. Likewise, it is of the upmost importance that we **know** that we have eternal life.
- D. In this key verse John tells us that sure knowledge of that fact will come as we study the Epistle of First John.
- E. In addition there are several other subsidiary and important purposes or truths that are set forth in the Epistle.

## **I. Background Information:**

- A. Although not stated anywhere in the Epistle the author of the Epistle was the Apostle John.
  
- B. The Internal Evidences:
  - 1. He was the son of Zebedee.
  - 2. The disciple whom Jesus loved.
  - 3. He was the youngest of the apostles, and the only Apostle to die of natural causes at an old age.
  - 4. Even though John does not name himself as the author of this epistle, as the Apostles Paul, Peter, James, and Jude did.
  - 5. In fact when John had any occasion to speak of himself in his writings, it was usually in terms like: “the disciple whom Jesus loved”, or “the other disciple.”
  - 6. Even though John did not put his name in this epistle there is no doubt that he is the author.
  - 7. The Epistle breathes the temper and spirit of this great apostle.
  - 8. When one compares this epistle to the Gospel of John, which we know was written by John, his authorship is easily seen from the style and subject matter.
  
- C. The External Evidence of the authenticity of the Epistle.
  - 1. It is quoted or referred to by the early Christian writers as the undoubted production of the apostle John.

2. It is referred to by Polycarp in the beginning of the second century.
3. It is quoted by Papias, and Irenaeus.
4. Cyprian and Dionysius of Alexandria admitted the genuineness of John's first epistle
5. All the three epistles were received by Athanasius and Cyril of Jerusalem, and by Epiphanius.
6. I John is found in the old Syriac version of the first century.
7. It is also very important for us to know that the genuineness of the first epistle was never extensively called in question.
8. Nor was it ever listed as one of the doubtful or disputed epistles.

D. The Date and Place of the Epistle.

1. Some believe that it was written around 69 or 70 AD, just a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, which he calls the last time or hour.
2. Others believe the Epistle was written while John was banished to the isle of Patmos during the reign of Domitian.
3. Others believe that it was written by the aged Apostle John after his return from exile to Ephesus, where he lived during his life and where he died and was buried.

E. In the Book of I John there are 34 marks that identify a believer.

**Go through the marks highlighted in Bible.**

## **II. Introduction to 1 John Chapter 1**

- A. In this chapter the apostle gives a summary of the Gospel, and the evidence of it, and from thence presses to a holy life and conversation.
1. The sum of the Gospel is Jesus Christ, who is described both as God and man.
  2. His **deity** is expressed by being that which was from the beginning, the Word of life, life, and eternal life.
  3. He gives testimony of his **humanity** as being life manifested in the flesh, of which the apostles had full evidence of because of he saw, heard, and handled the Lord.
  4. Because he had done so he was capable of bearing witness to the truth stated in 1 John 1: 1, 2.
- B. An outline of the chapter:
1. Evidence of Christ's Person and Excellency – Verses 1-2.
  2. The knowledge of these things give us communion with God and Christ – Verse 3
  3. Joy – Verse 4.
  4. A description of God – Verse 5.
  5. How Believers are to walk – Verse 6.
  6. The benefit of walking in the Lord – Verse 7.
  7. The way to forgiveness – Verse 9.
  8. The evil of denying our sin – Verses 8-10.

## Chapter 1

### **I. Verses 1,2:**

These verses speak of the evidence of Christ's Person and Excellency.

“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; (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;).”

A. “That which was from the beginning.”

1. This verse speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

- “In the beginning” our Lord, in his divine nature, existed as a divine person.
- He is the everlasting Jehovah, the eternal I AM.
- He was before the Gospel was preached
- He was before John the Baptist; He was before the prophets, before Abraham, and before Adam.
- He was before the beginning of time, before the creation of the world.
- The Scripture tells us that He was the Author and Maker of all things from everlasting.
- This is also seen in God's elect being chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

- In Christ the elect were given grace and blessings in Christ, before the world began through the everlasting covenant.

B. "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 and the other apostle were with the Lord almost 24 hours a day during his 3 ½ year ministry here on the earth.

- This phrase is proof that the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men.
- The apostles heard, and saw, and handled the Lord.
- They heard a voice from heaven, declare him to be the Son of God
- They heard him preach, they were privy to hearing the interpretation of the parables.
- They heard him proclaim himself the Son of God.
- They walked with the Lord on his journeys and had many private conversations with him.
- They saw his many miracles:
- They saw him raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, restore sight to the blind, cause the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, and the deaf to hear
- John and two other apostles were present at his transfiguration and saw his glory.
- John saw him as He hung upon the cross.

- He saw him after his resurrection from the dead when He showed himself to them alive, and was seen of them forty days.
- John and the other apostles saw him go up to heaven, and a cloud receiving him out of their sight.

“And our hands have handled of the Word of life.”

- Peter did when he was sinking and Jesus caught him by the hand and they walked to the boat.
- John did, when he leaned on his bosom at the last supper.
- Thomas did, after his resurrection, when he thrust his hand into his side.
- Then all the apostles were told to handle him that they might know for themselves that it was the Lord himself and not a spirit.

2. “Of the Word of life.”

- Christ is the Word of life because he has life in himself, as God, as the Mediator, and as the man Christ Jesus.
- The Son of God is the source of all life in two ways:
  - First because is the source of all life. He has imparted life into all creatures.
  - Secondly because He now imparts spiritual life to the elect of God.

**II. Verse 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.”

A. “For the life was manifested.

1. Christ the living God and giver of life, who was invisible from all eternity, in the fullness of time was manifested in human nature.

John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

2. John reconfirms their creditable as witnesses.
3. They are qualified to bear witness, since they are both eye and ear witnesses of the Word, the truth of his incarnation, his deity, and humanity.

“And show unto you that eternal life.”

4. We declare unto you Jesus Christ, the true and eternal God, and giver of eternal life.

### III. Verse 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.”

A. Verse 3 gives us the purpose of their bearing witness. **That you may have fellowship:**

1. “That ye also may have fellowship with us.”



- The Greek word rendered fellowship, is often rendered communion.
  - It properly denotes having things in common, or participation, society, friendship.
  - It may apply to anything which may be possessed in common, or in which all may partake.
  - That you might hear, see, and handle Christ in a spiritual sense.
  - John wished that they might have the same belief, and the same hope of heaven, and the same joys, and the same hatred of sin, the same privileges in God's house and family that he had.
  - All this came from the fact that the Son of God had become incarnate, and had appeared among men.
  - Thus they were united to the apostles, and participated with them in whatever befell them.
  - The effect of a revival is to unite Christians more and more, and to bring those who were before separated to union and love.
2. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father."
- Through Christ believers may call him their Father.
  - They can draw nigh to him through Christ and discover the fullness of his love.
3. "And with his Son Jesus Christ."

- The new birth places the believer in union with Christ.
- They become partakers of Christ and his blessings.
- They are to grow into an intimate relationship with him.
- They are given access and fellowship by the grace of God.
- And lastly they also have fellowship with the blessed Holy Spirit as seen in II Corinthians 13:14.

#### **IV. Verse 4**

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

- “These things” refer to the thing concerning the Lord Jesus Christ who was manifested in the flesh. It also speaks of the results of his coming.
- “That your joy may be full.” expresses more clearly the complete and perfect happiness which Christians obtain through the Gospel.
- At the same time he reminds the faithful where they ought to fix all their affections.
- True is that saying,

"Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."

- Those who fully perceive what fellowship with God is, will be satisfied with it alone, and will no more desire other things.

#### **V. Verse 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.”

- A. In verses 1-4 John sets forth the reality of the incarnation.

The eternal Word has become flesh giving a concrete revelation of the Father and enabling man to enter into fellowship with the Godhead.

- B. Verse 5 is the message that John received and is announcing to believers.

- C. The message is:

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

- D. “God is light.”

- Light is expressive figure of holiness, truth, and love.

To say that God is light is to say that God is perfect holiness, perfect truth, and perfect love.

- E. “And in him is no darkness at all.”

- 1. Light and darkness are diametrically opposed.

Where light shines there is no darkness, and where darkness is there is no light.

The Tabernacle and Solomon’s temple are perfect examples of this.

- ❖ Moses built the tabernacle to God’s exact specifications. When it was completed the Holy of Holies was in complete darkness because God had given no instructions for illuminating it.
- ❖ When the tabernacle was completed a cloud overshadowed the tabernacle and God dispelled

the darkness when He illuminated or filled the Holy of Holies with his presence.

- ❖ Then God commanded that a veil be placed between the Holy of Holies and a guilty people lest they be consumed by the brightness of his glory.

2. In the beginning of John's Gospel the world is in darkness.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

3. Light reveals.

- If you lose something you use light to find it.
- After centuries man had lost the revelation of God because of the blindness of the natural mind.
- It was then that the Lord Jesus Christ came, as the light, revealing the person of the holy God.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18

4. The truth that “God is light” reveals that:

- There is not the smallest spot of moral or intellectual imperfection in God.
- There is not the slightest trace of falsehood in God.
- There is not one speck of error in God.

- There is no selfishness in God.
- But rather God is infinite wisdom, infinite holiness, and infinite love.

5. Light also purifies:

- I remember my grandparents and even my parents taking the mattresses, coverings, etc outside and placing them in the sunlight.
- When I asked why, they said that it cleansed and purified.
- Light not only purifies, light is pure. It cannot be contaminated!
- There is no such thing as dirty light.

Some of the light may not pass through a dirty window but the light itself is contaminated by the dirt. It remains pure.

God is light. He is perfect. He reveals and purifies the uncleanness in us and He cannot be defiled!

## VI. Verse 6-10:

**“If we say** that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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. **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. **If we say** that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

- A. Knowing that God is light what kind of life should a Christian live?

1. To fully comply with the life God would have us live encompasses all the teachings of John in this epistle.
  2. However, John makes it very clear that the character and life of the children of God are determined by the character of God and his fellowship with them rather than by the character of the Christians themselves.
  3. The fellowship that God's children have with him transforms them in heart and character that they walk in light and purity.
  4. Therefore, our walk with God must be real.
  5. John was acquainted with people professing to be Christians whose religion was a matter of words only.
- B. In verses 6 – 10 the Apostle John gives us three test that are stated in the form of a false claim introduced by the clause “if we say.”
- C. The first is found in verse 6.

“**If we say** that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”

1. This is the test: How does the person claiming to have fellowship with God live?
  - If a person professes to have been born again of the spirit, to have the divine nature, to be like God, and to have communion with him, **but walks** in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, **he is a liar**.

Ephesians 4:18, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

- This professor is un-regenerated, a stranger to the Spirit of God and the work of his grace.
- They do not know the truths of the Gospel, love darkness more than light, and enjoy the pleasures of sin, and continue to walk in them, pretending to have fellowship with God.
- John says that those who live in this manner are liars and walk in darkness not light.

## VII. Verse 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.”

- A. Those who truly have fellowship with God **“walk in the light.”**
1. Walk in the light is a beautiful and familiar figure in the Bible.
  2. Walking in the light denotes the course or character of one conduct.
  3. Those enlightened by the Spirit of God have a true understanding of sin.
  4. A child of light desires to increase in spiritual light and knowledge of Christ and his Word.
  5. This fellowship results in confession and cleansing of sin, which leads to a deeper progressive fellowship with God.

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” I Peter 1:15, 16

6. Our salvation does not depend on our godliness, but our fellowship with the Father does.
  7. God is holy and cannot tolerate sin. So in order to know the blessings of fellowship with the Lord we must seek after holiness.
  8. We will never achieve absolutely holy this side of heaven we are to seek holiness.
- B. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Question - How can a holy God fellowship with a redeemed child who sins?

John answers the question in this verse.

1. Fellowship with God is possible because of the lasting value of the blood of Jesus Christ.
2. The redemptive value of the blood is revealed throughout the Scripture.
3. Believers are saved and cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.
4. The eternal Son put on flesh and blood, and shed his blood for us to wash our sins away with his own blood.
5. But the purifying power of Christ blood is not exhausted in the initial cleansing of the soul.
6. Christ is not a partial Savior, He saves to the uttermost. He cleanses the elect of ALL sin.
7. In verse 7 John is speaking of daily sins. He is not speaking of justification but of sanctification.
8. "Cleanseth" is present tense which a believer who is walking in the light has the privilege of enjoying.



John 13:10, "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

9. The cleansing spoken of in this verse is the guilt of all sin, that God may see us as righteous in his sight and that we might have fellowship with him.

## **VIII. Verse 8:**

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

- A. The confession of sins is a necessary consequence of "walking in the light."
- B. Commenting on this verse Augustine said,

"If thou shalt confess thyself a sinner, the truth is in thee; for the truth is itself light. Not yet has thy life become perfectly light, as sins are still in thee, but yet thou hast already begun to be illuminated, because there is in thee confession of sins."

- C. "That we have no sin" is present tense.
  1. It refers to the present state where believers still sin.
  2. Sin refers to the corruption of the old man that is still present in us.
  3. Even though the believer hates, confesses, and longs to be delivered from all sin, which is darkness they must confess our need of cleansing from present sin that we might "walking in the light."
- D. John says if Christians dare say that they have no sin, "We deceive ourselves."
  1. We cannot deceive God

2. The only thing they do is make themselves err from the right path.

E. "And the truth is not in us"

1. The light reveals sin and iniquity. Therefore those who deny that they have sin, deny the truth of God's absolute holiness and our sinfulness.

## **IX. Verse 9:**

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

- A. Again we see the promise of that God will be propitious to his children, provided they acknowledge themselves to be sinners.
- B. It is wonderful to understand that when we sin there is a reconciliation with God readily available that was prepared for us.

## **X. Verse 10:**

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

- A. God Word declares that the wicked go astray at birth, that all have sinned and come short of his glory, and that there are none that do good.
- B. The Scripture clearly teaches that the whole race is guilty of sin.
- C. Thus John says that those who claim purity for themselves blaspheme God and are not children of God.

## **Chapter 2**

### **I. Verses 1, 2**

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

A. My little children

1. Why did John address these people in this manner?
  - The Apostle used this phrase in six verses of Scripture: 1 John 2:18, 28; 3: 7, 18; 4: 4; and 5: 21.
  - The apostle was of advanced age as well as their spiritual father.
  - Since he was used of God as the instrument of their conversion, he therefore calls them this showing his paternal affection for them.
  - He in no way meant any disrespect, but wrote to them with pure love.

B. “These things write I unto you, that ye sin not.”

1. In the apostle urges Christians to observe the commandments of God that they “sin not” or continually or habitually make a practice of sinning.
2. He did not think that they could live sin free. But rather that they might not live in sin or indulge themselves in worldly living.

C. “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

1. Advocacy is God’s family blessing; other blessings He grants to good and bad alike, but justification, sanctification, continued

intercession, and peace, He grants only to His children.

2. As our "advocate," Christ is not a mere prayerful petitioner. He pleads for us on the ground of justice, or righteousness, as well as mercy.
  - Though He can say nothing good of us, He can say much for us.
  - It is His righteousness, or obedience to the law, His suffering sin's full penalty for us, on which He grounds His claim for our acquittal.

D. "He is the propitiation for our sins."

Verse 2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1. Propitiation - This means the turning away of wrath by an offering.
2. The Christian's propitiation was the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. It turned away the wrath of God so that He could pass "over the sins previously committed".

Romans 3:25, 26, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

E. "And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Did Christ die for the sins of the whole world? **No!**

The word "world" or "Kosmos" has at least seven clearly defined different meanings in the New Testament.

1. "Kosmos" is used of the Universe as a whole.
2. "Kosmos" is used of the earth.
3. "Kosmos" is used of the world-system.
4. "Kosmos" is used of the whole human race.
5. "Kosmos" is used of humanity minus believers:
6. "Kosmos" is used of Gentiles in contrast from Jews:
7. "Kosmos" is used of believers only.

In verse 2 it simply means, "Not for ours (or the Jews) only, but also for the sins of the gentiles (elect in all nations of the world).

## II. Verses 3-6

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

A. "And hereby we do know that we know him."

1. Hereby or "by this fact" we are assured that we know him as our Advocate and Intercessor.
  - "If we keep his commandments."
2. "Keep" Gk: Tereo (Tay-reh-0)
  - John uses "keep" instead of "do."
  - Literally it means to "watch," "guard," and "keep safe" as a precious thing.
  - John is speaking of cheerful acceptance of, and willing subjection to, God's whole revealed will.

B. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

1. This verse is almost a repetition of I John 1:8.
2. John says that if someone says, "I know him," or professes to be a Christian.
3. **But** "keepeth not his commandments," or does not strive to live according to the Word of God (does not walk in the light) (does not obey God's commands).
4. "Is a liar"
  - They are false professors
  - They profess to have that which they really do not have.
  - Such a profession is a falsehood, if one walks in darkness and does not keep God's commandments, they do not have true religion.

C. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

1. Obedience to God's Word (both written and that he has made known to us as his will in regard to our conduct) is the evidence that we Know God.
2. "In him verily is the love of God perfected."
  - We are chosen, to be holy and blameless before him in love; we are redeemed, to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
  - The "love of God" spoken of here is "our love for God."

- As our knowledge of God is to be tested by our obedience, so too is our love for Him.
- Obedience is the full flowering of our love for Him.

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.”

- I John 4: 12, 17 speak of this love in greater detail.
- Both here and there it is made plain that the believers love for God (and one another) is the response to His love for us.

D. “Hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”

1. As in verse 3 a new test is introduced by the word “hereby know we.” **This verse says:**

- That those who **character of God** will be demonstrated in those who know the Lord.
- The character of God is clearly illustrated in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ who was “full of grace and truth.”
- Some part of that character will be evidenced in the life of all those who claim to abide in Christ.
- Thus a life of obedience is the practical manifestation of the knowledge of Christ that comes forth from our spiritual union with him.
- The parable of the vine and the branches help us to understand the relationship God’s people are to have with him.

- The life drawn from the vine enables the branches to produce fruit; likewise the life drawn from our Lord will be manifested in the lives of his people.

I will follow Thee, my Savior,  
 Wheresoe'er my lot may be.  
 Where Thou goest I will follow;  
 Yes, my Lord, I'll follow Thee.  
*I will follow Thee, my Savior,  
 Thou didst shed Thy blood for me;  
 And though all men should forsake me,  
 By Thy grace I'll follow Thee.*

Though the road be rough and thorny,  
 Trackless as the foaming sea;  
 Thou hast trod this way before me,  
 And I'll gladly follow Thee.

Though I meet with tribulations,  
 Sorely tempted though I be;  
 I remember Thou wast tempted,  
 And rejoice to follow Thee.

Though Thou lead'st me through affliction,  
 Poor, forsaken though I be;  
 Thou wast destitute, afflicted,  
 And I only follow Thee.

Though to Jordan's rolling billows,  
 Cold and deep, Thou leadest me,  
 Thou hast crossed the waves before me,  
 And I still will follow Thee.

### **III. Verses 7- 11:**

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in



darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

#### A. “Brethren”

1. In the first verse of this chapter the Apostle spoke to those, to whom he is writing, as “little children” which is a term of endearment.
2. In verse 7 he calls them “Brethren.”
  - He uses this term, knowing that they would understand it as expressing his relationship with them.
  - The term “brethren” is used to speak of one’s family.

Matthew 13:55, “Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and **his brethren**, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

- It is also used for people who are associated together nationally like those who formed the Jewish nation.
- This is seen very clearly in Acts 13:26

“Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.”

- The Lord used the term “brethren” speaking of His disciples.

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but **go to my brethren**, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

- In Acts and the Epistles saints are constantly addressed as “brethren.”
- So, in effect, the aged Apostle is speaking to his family. His “brothers and sisters in Christ.”
- Christians are a part of the family of God.
- As a Nelson I have one living sister, and a sister and two brothers that were still born.
- Dad had two brothers, so I have seven first cousins on dad’s side of the family.
- I have some second and third, and maybe fourth cousins that I could meet on the street and never recognize them.
- But I have 55 brothers and sisters in this church and a host of others in churches across the United States.
- I am much closer to you, my church family, than I am to many of my “natural family.”

So the Apostle is speaking to family, those “beloved” in Christ, those he want God’s richest blessing for.

#### B. The Old Commandment (Verse 7):

“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.”

- John tells these believers that he is not giving them a new commandment but is reminding them of the command that they had from the beginning.

- From the beginning means from the time when the gospel was first preached to you.
- The apostle is referring to the commandment of love, which is "the fulfilling of the law."
- In verses 1-6 the apostle tells these believers that if they want to walk in fellowship with the "God of love" they must walk in love.
- Verses 7-11 reveal that the intimate relationship with God also is dependent on their loving ones brother.
- The eternal law of God taught the Old Testament saints that they were to love one another.
- Christ not only taught it more clearly, but perfectly exemplified it, and demanded that his followers habitually exercise love one to another.

1 John 3:11, "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

John 13:35, "By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 15:12, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

John 15:17, "These things I command you, that ye love one another."

What John means is the commandment of love is the same Gospel command that they have already received from the Lord.

### C. The New Commandment (Verse 8)

“Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.”

1. The new is the old considered in a different aspect.
2. The commandment is both old and new.
  - It is as old as the Gospel, but new to each person that is made new creature in Christ.

Bread is old but it brings new strength and satisfaction to hungry exhausted men each day.

The sun is old, but its warmth and light bring joy and gladness to the hearts of men each morning.

The atmosphere is old, yet we breathe it anew moment by moment.

Love is old, but to the heart that experiences its uplifting power it is the newest thing in the world.

- And so it is with the love of God. It is as old as the Gospel, as old as the command of God that man love God and his fellow man, as eternal as God himself.
  - But when it burst into a soul darkened by sin it is the newest most astonishing, most revolutionary thing in the world has ever known.
3. “Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you.”
    - Bengel said, "In Christ all things are always true, and were so from the beginning; but in Christ and in us conjointly the commandment [the love of brethren] is then true when we acknowledge the truth which

is in Him, and have the same flourishing in us."

- The new commandment finds its truth in its practical realization in the walk of Christians in union with Christ.
  - Notice that the love commandment finds its realization separately:
    - First, it was true "in Him" (Christ).
    - Then it comes true "in you."
    - After we begin to walk in the light, we "also walk even as He walked."
    - Thus it is first fulfilled in Him, and now it is fulfilled in us, through His Spirit in us.
4. "Because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."
- The darkness of paganism and Judaism are passing away; while the pure and superior light of Christianity is now shining forth its beams of truth everywhere.
  - Notice that John does not say that the darkness was completely gone, but it is passing away.
  - Nor does he say that the light has reached its fullness, but is now shining and will shine more and more.
  - Thus the darkness passes away proportionally to the lights increase.

D. Verses 9-11:

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother

abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

1. This is the Apostles third statement about the state of those “claiming” to be in the light that are not.

I John 1:6, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”

I John 2:4, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

I John 2:11, “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.”

2. To be in the light means that one has been saved and is in Christ and God.
  - They live in God’s will for their life and conduct themselves accordingly.
  - They are obedient to his commandments.
  - And they love the brethren.
3. In verse 11 the Apostle says that one claiming to be in fellowship with the light must manifest that fact by deeds of light.
  - Those who walk in the light do not do anything that is an occasion for someone to stumble.
4. However, if a person hates his brother they are in darkness, they walk in darkness, and don’t know where they are going because the darkness has blinded their eyes.
  - John says three things about this person.

- Those who are in darkness draw their moral inspiration from that darkness.
  - Because they walk in darkness, their character is black or evil and there is no light in them.
  - Because of his sinful nature, the forces of darkness have blinded them to their own spiritual condition and they plunge blindly into eternal darkness.
5. Those who walk in the light demonstrate their love for God by their love for the brethren.
- Those who love God, have fellowship in the light, keep his commandments, and love the brethren are destined for that city where there is no need of the sun or moon.
  - Why? Because Revelation 21:23 says:

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

And thus saith the page of Holy Writ  
 Of the land of song and love,  
 “The glory of God did lighten it,  
 And the Lamb is the light thereof.”

They shall walk in white,  
 There shall be no night  
 In the fadeless home above;  
 And the shout shall ring  
 As the ransomed sing,  
 Oh! “The Lamb is the light thereof.”

#### **IV. Verses 12-14:**

“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake. 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.”

A. There are four evidences of fellowship found in I John chapter 2.

1. Fellowship is evidenced by “Obedience” – verses 3-5.
2. Fellowship is evidenced by “Imitation” – verse 6.
3. Fellowship is evidenced by “Love” – 7-11.
4. Fellowship is evidenced by “Separation” – verses 12-17.

B. Verses 12-14 contain six statements that are arranged in two series of three each.

C. In each series the Apostle John addresses his readers as “little children” or “believers in general.” Then “believers in particular” - “Fathers,” and “young men.”

D. Verses 12-14 contain two series of three:

- 1<sup>st</sup> {
- Verse 12, “I **write** unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.
  - Verse 13a, “I **write** unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.”
  - Verse 13b, “I **write** unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.”



2<sup>nd</sup>

Verse 13c, “I **write** unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.”

Verse 14a, “I **have written** unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.”

Verse 14b, “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.”

E. Note the verb tense change in the last two statements.

1. Many have tried to explain the verb change. It may be that it changes because the Apostle is repeating what he said in the previous verse pertaining to this group.

F. The phrase “little children.”

1. The Greek word “teknion” is used for the phrase “little children” in verse 12.
2. “Teknion” is a term of endearment used to address those who are part of the family of God and a word that expresses their fellowship with the Father because of their being forgiven of their sins.
3. The Greek word “paidion” is used for the phrase “little children” in verse 13.
4. “Paidion” emphasizes the idea of subordination to someone above.

Thus in order to re-enforce his message to his “little children” he appeals to their spiritual kinship in the Lord, to his affection for them and theirs for him, and to the authority which their past relations in the gospel give him over them.

G. We also note that each of the six statements has a “because” in it.

- In each statement the Apostle tells them the reason he is writing them.

H. The experiences found in these verses correspond to the group to which they are written.

There are both general experiences (those which are common to all believers) and particular experiences (those relating to a particular group).

I. There are two general experiences in this passage.

1. The first is the experience of “forgiven sin.”

- The message of the Gospel is the proclamation of the forgiveness of sin through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- When the elect sinner hears the Gospel and believes, at that moment his sins are forgiven.
- From that moment forward the believer has the blessed experience of the freedom from the guilt of sin.
- Why? As the apostle stated earlier in the epistle, it was because of Calvary, where the Lord Jesus Christ “cleanseth us from all sin”.
- There is not other way that a guilty sinner’s sin can be blotted out.

“Sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.”

- Next note that our sins are forgiven “for his name sake.”

- Believers approach a Holy God dependent on Christ for their standing before God.
  - It is not our righteousness but his; we seek God in prayer, not in our name or standing, but in Christ name and for his name sake.
2. The second general experience is that of “knowing the Father.”
- Having experienced the forgiveness of sin, believers can now “know the Father.”
  - This does not mean that they know everything about God. It speaks of their having known in the fullest sense the experience of his forgiveness, his cleansing, and his love.
- J. The Apostle also spoke to two groups in particular:
1. First he speaks to “Fathers.”
- Just as there were special reasons for writing to believers as a whole, there were also reasons to write to those who were more mature in life.
  - The group addressed here would embrace all those who were beyond “young men”. It would include those who were the heads of families.
2. “Because ye have known him that is from the beginning” speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- These mature Christians were well acquainted with the principles, doctrine and duties of Christianity.
  - They were well acquainted with the doctrines concerning the Son of God.

- Thus the Apostle addressed them as aged and established Christians, and called on them to maintain the true doctrines of the gospel, against the dangerous errors that were prevalent at this time.
3. "I write unto you, young men."
- These are those who are zealous for God and his cause.
  - They labor tirelessly for the glory of a Redeemer, his truths and ordinances.
  - They are energetic in the exercise of grace, and fervent in duty.
  - These are those who are active, diligent, industrious, always abounding in the work of the Lord.
  - They are strong and robust, able to walk by faith and in the grace that is in Christ.
  - They do not need the staff that old age does, nor the hand to lead and teach as children do.
4. "Because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."
- They are soldiers of Christ.
  - Christians must understand that there is a wicked one continually warring against souls, and particularly against the Disciples of Christ.
  - But those that are well taught in Christ's school can handle their arms and vanquish the evil one.

- Likewise they can overcome the world.
- Why can they accomplish this? Because they are strong.
- Where does their strength come from?
- The same place ours does the Word of God!
- The Word of God is the weapon by which they overcome the wicked one.
- It is the sword of the Spirit, whereby they quench his fiery darts
- Those in whom the Word of God dwells are fully furnished for the battles with Satan and the world.

Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Ephesians 6: 11- 13, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armor on,  
 Strong in the strength which God supplies through His eternal Son.  
 Strong in the Lord of hosts, and in His mighty power,  
 Who in the strength of Jesus trusts is more than conqueror.

Stand then in His great might, with all His strength endued,  
 But take, to arm you for the fight, the panoply of God;  
 That, having all things done, and all your conflicts passed,  
 Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone and stand entire at last.

## **V. Verses 15 – 17:**

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is

not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

A. “Love not the world.”

1. The word “world” has seven different meanings in Scripture. Which meaning is John using here?

- This does not refer to the created earth, for God said that it was good.
- God reveals Himself in the beauties of nature as God the mighty creator, thus leaving man without excuse.
- Nor does it refer to mankind as sinful and in need of salvation. For we are commanded to go and preach the Gospel to them.
- In this instance “world” refers to mankind under the dominance of sin and Satan and opposed to God.
- One commentator described the “world” as the prevailing spiritual and moral order of human affairs and the system of things that is hostile to God and alien from His love, and therefore radically evil and doomed to perish.
- Therefore, Christians are not to love the world or the thing connected with the present life, apart from the kingdom of God and the hope of eternal life.

B. “Neither the things that are in the world.”

1. The world is made up of those things influences that come forth from man and the things around

us by which man is captivated, enticed, and drawn away from God.

2. Therefore, Christians are not to set their affections on the pleasures, delights, and allurements of the world.

Matthew 16:26, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

C. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

1. Love of the world reveals the presence of a “character” that opposes God.
2. John’s use of the term “Father” rather than God reminds us of the personal intimate relationship that God’s children have with him.
3. Thus, when the love of God is not the ruling principle of life, the truth is an absent quality, and darkness and enmity against God will prevail.
4. Scripture tells us that man cannot serve two masters.

Matthew 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

- A person cannot truly, faithfully, and affectionately serve God and man at the same time.
- Man cannot have both worlds.
- You cannot be a friend the world or things that are evil and, at the same time, have a relationship with God.

James 4:4, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

- Friendship with the world = enmity with God.
- “A friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

D. Verse 16:

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1. John also list three categories of evil that are found in the world.
  - “Lust of the flesh” refers to the evil inclinations of man’s carnal or sin nature.
  - “Lust of the eyes” refers to Satan tempting the natural man so that evil desires degenerate into lust or covetousness.
  - “The pride of life” is the desire for prominence and adulation.
2. Satan utilized these three channels in his temptation of Eve.
  - Lust of the flesh - Eve “saw that the tree was good for food.”
  - Lust of the eye - That is was “pleasant to the eye.” (A thing to be coveted or desired).
  - Pride of life – “a tree desired to make one wise.”



3. Satan also used these channels to tempt our Lord.
  - He challenged the Lord to turn stones into bread – Satisfaction of the flesh.
  - He showed Him the kingdoms of the world – Lust of the eye.
  - He challenged him to demonstrate his faith by jumping from the pinnacle of the Temple – an appeal to the pride of life.

James 1:14, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

E. Verse 17:

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

1. There is another reason – we are not to love the world - because it is transitory, temporary, it passeth away.
  - Men lust after thing. But things also pass away.
  - Beauty, riches, power, prestige are continually taking away from men
  - Or men are taken away from them.

“It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment.”

- Life is short, the pleasure of lust pass away just as quickly as they came.
- The pleasures of sin are but for a season, a very short one – then cometh the judgment.

- The story of the rich man proves that you can't take it with you. And the lust thereof leads to a path of destruction.
2. "But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
- The Lord taught his disciples not to worry about food, clothing, and the necessities of life, but to trust God for all those things.
  - Instead, they were to seek those things that are eternal.

Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

- They were to set their hearts totally on the kingdom of God and the righteousness that comes only from him.
- Faith in the Lord removes worry and worldly anxiety.
- Those who love the Lord will not love the world with its empty show and transient vanity, but rather seek to do the will of God.

I John 4:4, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

- When we love God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and fellow Christians it reveals that the Lord redeemed us, He brought us into a loving relationship with our Father and the Son.
- The results: we abide in the love of God and Christ forever!

- We will never be separated from the love of God or God himself, but will abide as sons and daughters in heaven with Christ for all eternity.

What is the world to me,  
 With all its vaunted pleasure  
 When Thou, and Thou alone,  
 Lord Jesus, art my Treasure!  
 Thou only, dearest Lord,  
 My soul's Delight shalt be;  
 Thou art my Peace, my Rest—  
 What is the world to me?

## **VI. Verses 18- 19**

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

A. “Little children, it is the last time.”

1. The aged Apostle speaks to those he loves as his own out of years of experience.
  - He has seen the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
  - He witnessed the dispersion of Israel among the nations of the world following it's tribulation during the siege of Jerusalem.
  - The Roman Empire was being shaken with rumors and fears of change.
  - He felt that the work of Revelation was all but complete.

- He was seeing opposers of the truth coming forth as His Lord had said they would.

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

2. He says that “it is the last time.”

- John is not saying that it is the last hour of the Gospel dispensation or the world.
- John was simply saying that this was the last hour of the apostolic age.
- John is the only Apostle left alive, all the apostles are dead.
- Perilous times were now coming on, impostors and heretics were rising apace, against which the apostle cautions his little children to beware of these imposters.

B. “And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come.”

1. Antichrist "is coming"; and is beginning to show himself through the false teachers and deceivers that we are seeing.
2. Our Lord, the Apostles, and now the Apostle John tell us that a great antichrist will someday come upon the scene.

II Thessalonians 2:8 -10, “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

C. “Even now are there many antichrists.”

1. These were the ones spoken of by our Lord in Matthew 24:24.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

2. The apostle saw many “antichrist” in his time:

- There were the followers Simon Magus, the Menandrians, the Ebonite’s, and the Gnostics only to name a few.
- Thus we learn that there will be many antichrists who are forerunners and pave the way for the “antichrist.”

I John 2:22, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”

I John 4:1, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

II John 7, “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

3. So John says that a great antichrist will come upon the scene someday as foretold in the book of Revelation. But before he does there will be many antichrist come forth and deceive many.

- The popes of the Roman are examples
- Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hind, Joel Osteen, and many others are the antichrist and deceivers of today.

D. “Whereby we know that it is the last time.”

1. The Apostles were told that this would be a sign of this last time.
2. This is the time our Lord predicted. The time of which he has warned us.
3. There are many seducers among us today, let us fortify ourselves against their seduction.

#### E. Verse 19

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

1. It seems that the Apostle is speaking about people of that he knew personally.
2. They had made a profession of religion, they were members of a church, and perhaps some were preachers.
3. Yet they departed from the faith (the doctrine and teaching of the Lord's church).
4. They withdrew themselves from the fellowship of the church to which they belonged, and set up separate assemblies of their own.
5. “But they were not of us.”
  - They were not truly regenerated by the grace of God
  - Even though they had professed religion and joined the church, they were not God's elect.
  - They were not of God, but of the world. Therefore they were not true believers.

6. "If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."
  - If they had been of us (true believers). If their hearts had been right with God, they would have remained steadfast to him, steadfast in doctrine, and steadfast to, and in fellowship with the church, as do.
  
7. "But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."
  - If they were of the elect, "they would have remained with us."
  - This affirms, with all certainty the preservation of true believers.
  
  - Christians will remain steadfast to Christ and his church, they will never fall away.
  
  - They will not apostatize, nor fall from grace.
  
  - John affirms that if they had been true Christians they would never have departed from the church.
  
  - Therefore, those who do fall away were apostates. They were goats and were never among the God's elect sheep.
  
  - In the providence of God this occurred that it might be manifested that they were not true Christians
  
  - The results:
    - Their true character was revealed.
    - The church was purified of their influence.

- The church could not be held responsible for their conduct, or reproached because of their actions.
- Being revealed as apostates, their opinions and conduct had less influence on others.
- The order of the Apostle John's words, "not a one of them" indicates that the Apostle is saying that not a single one of them belong to the Lord, they were all reprobates.

However, the redeemed sing:

"The gospel bears my spirit up:  
A faithful and unchanging God  
Lays the foundation for my hope,  
In oaths, and promises, and blood."

## **VII. Verses 20, 21:**

"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth."

A. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One."

- "Unction" means "anointing"
1. In the upper room Christ told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come.

John 14:16, 17, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."



2. The Lord had been their “comforter.” Now He is going away and promises to send another Person like himself.

- Another “Comforter” (parakletos) literally “One summoned to one’s side to give help.”

B. John puts his “little children” in an emphatic position.

1. He sets them against these antichrists.
2. He reminds them that they have the Holy Spirit.
3. Then he adds, “ye know all things.”

- All of you already know that you have Him.

C. The Apostle tells them that this “anointing” comes from the Holy One.

1. Both God the Father and our Lord are called the Holy One.
2. In fact, John so identifies Christ and the Father in this writing that a separation of the two is impossible.
3. The New Testament speaks of Jesus as the “Holy One.”

Mark as well as Luke 4:34, “Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.”

Acts 2:27, “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

4. The Lord Jesus Christ was anointed as his baptism by the Holy Spirit.

5. Then Christ, who was anointed by the Holy Spirit, sends Him forth upon His people after His ascension.
6. Each believer receives the Holy Spirit at the time of their salvation.
7. Only those that belong to Christ, those that are born of the Spirit, have the Holy Spirit.

The antichrists are unregenerate and therefore do not have him.

#### D. Verse 21

“I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.”

1. The Apostle did not write assuming that his readers did not know doctrinal truth.
2. Rather, their knowledge is the ground of his confidence as he writes to them.
3. He knows that the anointing from the Holy One gives them insight into the truth that will cause them to respond to his admonitions.
4. They understand that the antichrists lie that is being spread is not truth and is dangerous.
5. And because it is dangerous he is warning them against it.
6. However, he knows that they have the guiding of the Holy Spirit concerning the truths under attack and will not be deceived by them.
7. What was the lie that the antichrists were propagating?

- The Holy Spirit's principal work is to reveal the truth concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Therefore, the "acid test" if you will for any religion is, "Who is Jesus Christ?"
- Scripture makes it very clear that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son, of the eternal Father, who was born of a virgin (came in flesh) and died on the cross to save elect sinners, arose from the dead, on the third day, and ascended to the right hand of the Father as our Advocate with the Father.
- Every antichristian philosophy at work in the world today denies that the Lord Jesus Christ is the God the Son.
- John was confident that greater was He that was in his "little children" than he that is in the world.

E. The Apostle Paul also prayed this prayer for those in the church at Ephesus.

Ephesians 1: 17-23, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

1. The Apostles prayer was answered. This Spirit of wisdom and understanding never deserted the church.
  - Throughout the centuries, apostolic truth has prevailed against all sorts of ignorance and perversion unto this day.
2. In addition to this inward ministry the Holy Spirit also works outwardly through the Word of God.
  - The Apostle John was one of those “holy men of old” that wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit.
  - I believe that I hold in my hand the preserved Word of God.
  - Therefore, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit in the believer will always corresponded to the external witness (the Word of God).

## **VIII. Verses 22- 25**

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”

- A. In these verses the Apostle covers the same material while bringing out new truth.
- B. He brings out more clearly the nature and consequences of the error of the antichrist and sets it in contrast to the nature and consequences of the truth know to Christians.

- C. He had spoken of the lie, now he speaks of the liars.
1. “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?”
    - The one who makes this denial is the chief liar, the consummate liar, Paul’s man of sin.
- D. “He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”
1. John says to deny that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is to deny the fundamental fact of Christianity.
    - Denying that the Lord Jesus Christ is not the Son of God is to deny more than the fact that He was the Old Testament Messiah.
- E. Time after time John clearly states that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

- F. John believed and taught that the Eternal Word became flesh and tabernacle among us.

“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 20:31

- G. John says that the antichrists are those who deny the doctrine of the incarnation and subsequent work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.”

1. John says that everyone without exception that denies the Son is bared entrance to the Father, and even knowledge of Him.
- H. "(But) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."
1. Matthew 11:27 says that knowing the Son assures knowledge of the Father.
  2. While John 14:6 says that they will also have entrance to the Father.
- I. Verses 24 -25, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

Adhere steadfastly to the truth that you have heard from the beginning concerning the Son of God and the way of salvation. Realize its importance, and influence on your happiness, here and hereafter, and never let it depart from you that you might receive the promise, promised us "even eternal life."

## **IX. Verses 26 – 29**

"These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."

A. Verse 26:

“These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.”

1. The Apostle John has spoken of the antichrist as lying deniers of the Son and the Father.
2. Here he correctly labels them as “seducers”

Seduce means to tempt to wrongdoing.

- In this verse the word seduce means to lead astray.
  - It here refers to those who deceitfully handle the Word of God in an effort to seduce them away from the truth, or lead them into dangerous error.
3. Speaking of these seducers Calvin said, “We ought always to bear in mind, that it is the duty of a good and diligent pastor not only to gather a flock, but also to drive away wolves’ for what will it avail to proclaim the pure gospel, if we connive at the impostures of Satan? No one, then, can faithfully teach the Church, except he is diligent in banishing errors whenever he finds them spread by seducers.”

B. Verse 27:

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

1. The “anointing” spoken of in this verse refers back to verse 20 and the filling and ministry of the Holy Spirit that begins at the moment a person truly believes.

- John reminds the believer that the Holy Spirit was sent to teach the believer the things of Christ.
  - Since the Holy Spirit is in His nature the Truth, He teaches and testifies only of those things that are true.
2. John says, “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.” And “the same anointing teacheth you of all things.”

John 16:14, 15, “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

Thus it is the Holy Spirit that teaches and reveals “all things” pertaining to Christ to the believer.

3. Because believers have the Holy Spirit, there is a change that took place in them.
- He abides in the believer thus empowering them they that they may hold to Christ.

John 14:17, “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

4. Because He dwelleth in you, “Ye need not that any man teach you.”
- The Apostle John is **not** saying that all teaching from human instrumentality is useless for Christians.
  - If he was saying that why would he be writing to them?
  - There are many passages of Scripture that support the need of human teachers.



Ephesians 4: 11, 12, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

- What the Apostle is saying is that the Holy Spirit gives a believer insight into truth that teaching cannot give.
- So, without the anointing (the Holy Spirit) man cannot see that truth.
- Truth may be put within a man’s grasp, but he must see it for himself.
- He cannot do that without the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

John 16: 13, 14, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

Today, we have the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit has given us, and the presence of the Spirit with us to fit us for understanding. The word and the unction still “teach us all things.”

C. Verse 28:

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

1. The phrase “little children” alerts us that the Apostle is again speaking to the whole body of the saints.
2. He exhorts all the saints to abide in Christ:

- Abiding in Christ means to continually love and exercise faith in Him.
  - To cleave to him with full purpose of heart that all life, grace, strength, and nourishment is derived from him.
  - Believers are to stand steadfast to His Word, and hold fast to his cause.
  - For He is our hope.
3. Our hope is seen in the following phrase, “When he shall appear.”
- Christ, our hope is now hidden. He is out of the sight of our bodily eyes in heaven, seated at the right hand of God.
  - But soon He will come again, “

1 Thessalonians 4:16, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

4. “And not be ashamed before him at his coming.”
1. The saints will not be ashamed, for they will have on the wedding garment, the righteousness of Christ, and will stand before the throne without fault, spot, or blemish.
  2. Then at the revelation He will come to the earth a second time, only this time He appearing will be a glorious one.
    - At this time every knee shall bow and every mouth confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

#### D. Verse 29:

“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

1. This is a supposition. The Apostle takes it for granted that they know that Christ is righteous.
  - He is simply calling their attention to a well known fact.
  - The Apostle John stated that Christ was righteous in the first verse of this chapter.

1 John 2:1, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

2. “If ye know” could be said, “seeing ye know,” or “since ye know.”
3. Since the spiritual nature is derived from the Lord Jesus Christ, those that constantly give evidences of a righteous walk with the Lord know that they are born from above.

John 1:12, “To as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”

“See what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!”

## Chapter 3

### I. Verses 1:

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”

- A. The theme of chapters 2 & 3 is the absolute holiness of God.
- B. Now in verse 1 the Apostle transitions to a new subject: the present standing of the child of God.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”

- C. “Behold,” See, take notice, consider, look by faith, with wonder and astonishment, and observe.

“What manner of love.”

- 1. The believer really cannot fathom or comprehend the extent of the love that God has bestowed or given them.
- 2. God’s love is matchless, it is a great and wonderful blessing of grace and great favor.

D. “The Father hath bestowed upon us.”

- 1. “Bestowed” – “A gift given without outward cause or merit.
- 2. “Bestowed” amplifies the favor of God; because the love that has been bestowed, is because of the unmerited favor and grace of God.
- 3. The Father has adopted us into his family, and regenerated us by his grace “that we should be called the sons of God.”

E. “That we should be called the sons of God.”

- 1. In Hebrew, "to be called," and "to be," are synonymous.
- 2. Therefore, in what sense the saints are the sons of God?

3. This blessing does not come because of family heritage, nor by merit, but by the grace of adoption.

Ephesians 1:5, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

4. Because of God unchangeable love, He bestows upon those who have no legal right, the full privileges of adoption.
5. The solid rock of our assurance is the manifested unchangeable love of God.

F. The love bestowed upon us is also a separating love.

"Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

1. The world continues in wickedness. And those blinded by the god of this world go forth with their daily activity caring only for the things of the world.
2. They do not know the Father or the Son and therefore do not understand our principles or the reasons of our conduct. Nor do they know the source of our comforts and joys.
3. The people of the world believe us to be foolish for abandoning the worldly goods and pleasures they seek.
4. The world does not understand why Christians behave as they do, nor do they comprehend the nature and source of the Christian's joy.
5. Our Lord told his disciples:

Luke 8:10, "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in

parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.”

6. The world has no understanding of the real character of the Lord Jesus.

- Because of his character they hated him.

John 15: 18-20, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

## **II. Verse 2-3:**

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

A. Verses 2 & 3 reveal God’s conforming love to us.

The comparison of “Now” and “Not yet.”

1. “Now we are the sons of God.”
  - We are “now” already sons.
  - And because we are “sons” we presently enjoy many of the privileges of sonship.
2. But “it doth not yet appear what we shall be.”

I Corinthians 2:9, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

- Doth not yet appear – or it hath not yet at any time, been visibly manifested what we shall be.
  - The "what" suggests something inconceivably glorious that shall be our by virtue of this our sonship.
3. The Transformation of each believer into the Image of our glorified Saviour.
- In the beginning, man was made in the image and likeness of God, but sin came in and as the consequence that image has been defaced and that likeness marred.

Romans 8:29, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son"

- The time when this purpose and promise of God will be realized is at the Return of His Son.
- For it is then that God's elect will be completely "conformed to the image of His Son."
- They shall "be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."
- Then at that time "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality."
- Romans 7:24 ask the question, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
- Romans 8:11 answers this question.

" But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead

shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

- The "quickenning of our mortal bodies" refers the change that will take place in the mortal bodies of believers here on the earth at the Lord's coming.

Philippians 3:20, 21, " For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

- When the Lord comes in the clouds, our present corruptible bodies shall be transformed into bodies like the glorified of our Lord.
- Physical transformation is not the only transformation that awaits the believer.
- At our Lord's return there will be a mental, moral and spiritual transformation.
- When Christ appears that which is "perfect" shall come
- At that time we shall be "like Him" in every way.
- Sin will be removed and every trace and effect of the fall will be eradicated.
- Then will God's predestinated purpose be fully realized.
- Then shall we be completely "conformed to the image of His Son."

High in the Father's house above  
My mansion is prepared,



There is the home, the rest I love,  
And there my bright reward.  
With Him I love, in spotless white,  
In glory I shall shine;  
His blissful presence my delight,  
His love and glory mine.  
All taint of sin shall be removed,  
All evil done away;  
And I shall dwell with God's Beloved  
Through God's eternal day.

B. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

1. Our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ and is based on his person, his blood, his righteousness, and his sacrifice.
2. Only those that are born again have this hope.
3. The point being made in this verse is that the hope of being like Christ, and of being permitted to dwell with him, will lead a man to earnest efforts to become holy, and will be actually followed by such a result.
4. The logical conclusion is that the Christians blessed hope and assurance is our being transformed into the likeness of Christ when we enter into His blessed presence.
5. Though Christ is not physically present now, our hope is in him and his coming. This hope should motivate us to follow purity, for it leads us to Christ, the perfect pattern of purity.

### **III. Verse 4:**

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

- A. God gave the Mosaic Law after delivering his people out of Egypt.

1. The law was given to reveal the holy character of God and the demands that holy God required of those who would walk in fellowship with him.
  2. The Apostle John recognizes that any failure to obey is sin.
  3. Therefore verse 4 and the things that follow are true of any sin, great or small.
  4. However, here the Apostle is speaking of a course of sinning, or a willful, obstinate, persistence to sin.
- B. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.
1. The law of God given to man as a rule of life.
  2. The object of the apostle here is to excite them to holiness, and to deter them from committing sin as seen in verse 3.

1 John 3:3, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3. Everyone that has the hope of heaven will endeavor to be holy like the Saviour.
4. To confirm this, the Apostle John states the fact that those who are born of God do lead lives of obedience in verses 5-10.
5. He introduces the true nature of sin and gives the facts that he would use in order to deter them from indulging in sin:
  - All sin is a violation of the law of God – Verse 4.
  - The very reason for the Lord Jesus Christ coming was to deliver the elect from sin – Verse 5.

- Those who are true Christians do not habitually sin – Verse 6.
- Those who habitually sin cannot be true Christians, but are of the devil – Verse 8.
- And lastly those who are born of God have a germ of true godliness in them, and cannot habitually sin – Verse 9.

#### **IV. Verse 5:**

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

- A. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, He who was with the Father from all eternity, became incarnate, or appeared among men, for the very purpose of putting an end to sin.

Matthew 1:21, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

- B. “To take away our sins.”

1. Christ was the antitype of the scape goat, making reconciliation and satisfaction for the sins of the elect, through the sacrifice of himself.
2. He did what the blood of bulls and goats, or any legal sacrifice could never do.
  - Our Lord took the sins of his people upon himself, by bearing them on the cross with all the punishment that was due them.

- C. “And in him is no sin.”

1. This is an additional consideration to show that we should be holy.

- Because He was perfectly pure and spotless, believers should also endeavor to be pure and righteous.
- And as the Apostle has stated several times, those who are his desire and strive to become like him.

## **V. Verse 6:**

“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

- A. To sin means to practice sin, to make a habit of sin.
- B. But he that abideth in Christ does not continue to practice sin.
  1. The believers union with the Lord Jesus Christ broke the power of sin in the heart and nature, prevents sin from prevailing in the life and conduct of the believer.
  2. Instead, those who abide in Christ as the branch to the vine:
    - Deriving life, grace, holiness, wisdom, strength, joy, peace, and comfort from Christ.
    - They dwell in him by faith, enjoys fellowship with him.
    - They stand fast in him because they are rooted and grounded in him.
  3. Instead “He sinneth not.”
    - This does not mean that the believer has no sin, or that he lives without sin.

- It means that he does not practice sin, or habitually live a sinful life.
- Because to do so would be inconsistent with the believer abiding and dwelling in Christ.

An illustration:

Dr. Harry Ironside gives an interesting illustration from his early years in the California orange groves.

He said, for years only seedling oranges grew in California. However two Washington Naval orange trees were brought to Riverside California from Brazil. The trees were planted and cultivated. Later cutting were then taken from these two parent trees and regular orange trees were budded with the shoots from the Washington Navel trees. The characteristics of the trees were completely changed.

If a person had 40 acres of trees and did not want to be completely without fruit he would cut off the tops of 20 acres of the trees and leave the other half to continue bearing seeded oranges. Then he would cut under the bark of the lopped trees and graft in the navel orange cuttings or shoots.

In a couple of years the trees would have new branches loaded with oranges. If you asked the owner what kind of oranges they were he would proudly say "Navel oranges." If you asked him "is that the only kind of oranges they bear, don't they sometimes bear seedlings? He would reply, "oh no, budded trees do not bear seeded oranges.

He continued, sometimes I would stoop down and see a little shoot under the branches coming out of the tree, and say, "Look what is that shoot?" The owner would nip it off or take out his pocket knife and cut it away, and say, "That's from below the graft. It must be pruned off."

The characteristic of the budded tree is that it bears the Navel oranges, but if one does not watch closely, below the grafting there will be a shoot of the old nature.

So it is with the child of God, once saved we cannot go on living or practicing sin. If you find a Christian slipping into anything unclean or unholy, you may know that it comes from below the graft. It is the old nature manifesting itself and must be quickly nipped off.

## VI. Verse 7:

“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.”

- A. The Apostle is talking about the false teachers and antichrists.
  - 1. They had invented the awful theory that the great blessing of Christ had swept away all need of self judgment or striving for holiness.
  - 2. They taught that sin was gone in every sense; therefore, a believer could be at ease in the world.
  - 3. Since Christ had taken away all sin, why talk more about it? Why worry about it? What need was there of repentance?

The Apostle says “Little children” don’t let them fool you into not abiding in Christ and seeking after holiness.

- B. “He that doeth righteousness is righteous.”
  - 1. No one is made righteous by the works of the law, or by works, for this is contrary to the express word of God.
  - 2. Believers, not having been glorified, are still imperfect and are made righteous **only by** the imputed righteousness of Christ.
  - 3. As a result of the believers new nature they try to live holy and righteous lives rather than practicing sin.

4. It behooves us to be conformed to the image of Christ. When we are it will be evidenced in our life.
5. The exhortation is the same with that of Paul in Galatians:

Galatians 5:25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Galatians 5:16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

C. "Even as he is righteous."

1. Christ is righteous! He is righteous God.
2. Every believer is clothed with the same robe of righteousness that Christ is, and is justified by the same righteousness that He as Mediator was, when he rose from the dead, as the representative of his people.
3. Presently believers do not possess the righteousness of Christ to the same degree as He.
4. But there is coming a day when we will become wholly free from all sin, like our God and Saviour!

## **VII. Verse 8:**

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

A. "He that committeth sin is of the devil.

1. This verse does not mean that everyone that commits an act of sin is of the devil.

2. Because all men have a carnal nature, no one lives without committing sin.
3. The Apostle is talking about those who sin continually.
  - This person who's continually practices sin is of the devil.
  - Because they are like their father the devil they live in continually sin, as he does.
  - Because their nature is like his they resemble him, as children do their parents.
  - Because they belong to him, they are under his influence and are led captive by him at his will, and will have their part with him in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

B. "For the devil sinneth from the beginning."

1. The devil was made by God a pure and holy creature.
2. But he sinned from the beginning of the world, at least from the beginning of man's creation.
  - He not only sinned himself, by rebelling against God, but he also sinned by drawing and leading the rest of the apostate angels into the rebellion with him.
  - Not only did he rebel but tempted man, as soon as he was created, to sin against God.
3. Exactly what his first and particular sin was is not certain.
  - It could have been pride or envy, but John 8:4 seems to indicate that it was his not abiding in the truth, or being an opposition to



the truth of the Gospel, respecting the incarnation of the Son of God.

- Regardless of what his first sin was, he has been continually sinning ever since.
- John says he “sinneth”; he is always sinning, he does nothing else but sin
- Therefore those that live a vicious course of life are manifested to be of him and like him.

C. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

1. Christ was the Son of God before his incarnation.
2. John refers back to verse 5 where Christ is manifest in human form “for this end.”
  - The Apostle John repeats in other words what he had before said, that Christ came to take away sins.
  - Hence two conclusions are to be drawn:
  - Those in whom sin reigns do not belong to Christ.
  - Wherever Christ puts forth his power, the devil’s power and dominion is destroyed.

### **VIII. Verse 9:**

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

- A. Those who are regenerated, born from above, those quickened by the grace of God, those who have been made partakers of the divine nature, are

new creatures in Christ. They are begotten to a lively hope, by the washing of regeneration.

1. Those who are born of the Spirit live to please God and seek after divine and spiritual things.
2. They desire to be nourished by the sincere milk of the Word that they might have the grace and knowledge of God implanted in them.

B. These believers do not commit sin.

1. This means that because of the new nature the believer does not live and walk in sin.
  - They do not continually or habitually sin in the same area over and over.
  - But rather seek to be free from acts of sin in their life.

So for that reason:

2. "His seed remaineth in him."
  - God uses His Word to bring regenerate his people.

For God's Word says, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

- Likewise when the Word of God abides in the believers heart it teaches us to abstain from sin.
- But the "seed" being spoken of is not the Word of God.
- The seed being spoken of is the grace of the Spirit that is formed in the soul at regeneration.

- And like a seed, this new nature springs up in the believer that becomes a permanent restraining power that keeps him from a life of sin.
  - This seed is pure and incorruptible. It does not come from within man, but from God.
3. “And he cannot sin.”
- No man is impeccable!
  - This is not talking about sinless perfection!
  - What this means is, that which is born of God in the believer, the new man, or new creature, cannot sin.
  - The new nature is pure and holy. There is no sin in it, nor can anything sinful come out of it.
4. Because that which is born of God in the believer, preserves him from the temptations of Satan, the pollutions of the world, and the corruptions of his own heart.

I John 5:18, “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

- 5. The Apostle John makes it very clear that the design of regeneration is to destroy sin.
- 6. Secondly, those that are born of God lead a righteous and a holy life, because the sovereign work of the Spirit of God in the elect is to restrain the lusting of sin, and not allow it to reign.

This is a significant argument for the perseverance of the saints.

## IX. Verse 10:

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

- A. This verse again contrasts the standing of the children of God to the children of the devil.

In this contrast the conflict between these two divisions of humanity is emphasized.

1. The state of the children of the devil is prescribes the practice of sin.
  - The practice of sin denies the knowledge of Christ, or their ever being his, while their fruit is a manifestation of their true nature.
  - Those who practice sin as a habit of life are of the devil.
    - Sin is the ruling principle of their life.
    - And like their father the devil they sin constantly.
2. On the other hand, the children of God as seen as those that:
  - Those who are born again, seek after righteousness.
  - The children of God seek to do all that God's will and law require of them.
  - This righteousness is the outflow of the divine nature that was created in the child of God.
    - There is a light in his mind which shows him the evil and malignity of sin.

- The desire of the believer's heart to please God likewise causes him to loathe and hate sin.
- Thus this nature proves their son ship to God.

B. The Sign of Love:

“Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

1. “Neither he that loveth not his brother” is another identifying mark of the unregenerate children of the devil.
2. The absence of love toward the brethren is another sign that that person is not a child of God.

**X. Verse 11:**

“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

A. The message means:

- ❖ An announcement of something good.
- ❖ “A thing announced or a precept declared.

1. This phrase is used two times in I John:

1 John 1:5, “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.”

1 John 3:11, “For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

2. The Gospel message of Him who loved us is that we love the brethren.

- Note that it does not say all mankind, but those who are our brethren in Christ.
- I often hear people say, “well God said to love the sinner, but hate their sin.”
  - I would like for them to show me that verse.
  - What the Scripture does say is found in Psalm 5:5 and 11:5.

“The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.”

“The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.”

- We are not to treat the unsaved with contempt.
- Rather we are to be concerned that they have opportunity to hear the Gospel, that by the foolishness of preaching they might be saved.
- We are commanded to “preach the Gospel to them trusting God to save his elect.

B. This is not a new commandment, we have heard the command at least four times before from the Apostle John:

John 13:34, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

John 15:12, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

John 15:17, “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

1 John 2:7, “Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.”

## **XI. Verse 12:**

“Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”

A. Again the Apostle John illustrates the point by using the opposite.

1. The Apostle says that we are not to be like Cain, or do as he did, hate the brethren.

Cain is the first mention or instance of hatred of a brother.

2. “Who was of that wicked one,”

- He was a child of Satan, and being under his influence Cain imitated him and slew his brother.

3. So we see the manifestation of the evil nature and character that come from his father the devil.

## **XII. Verse 13:**

“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

A. Cain hated his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”

1. The emphasis is on the word “you.”
2. The apostle John has just said that Cain hated Abel, his brother, without cause, therefore, we are not to think it strange if the world us likewise.

3. Our Lord told us in John 15:18:

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”

John 15:19, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

4. The Lord reminds us that the world hated him before it hated them.
5. The object of this verse is to show us more clearly the necessity of strong and tender mutual affection among Christians, since they can expect none from the world.

### **XIII. Verse 14:**

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

- A. The Apostle John explains in verses 13-15 that the love he is speaking of will not be manifested in the world.
  1. The world is characterized by hatred. Therefore, believers cannot pattern their life or conduct after the world.
    - Just as hatred is an indication that a person does not belong to the family of God.
    - The presence of brotherly love is a sure sign that one does belong to the brotherhood.
    - The Apostle says that it is an indication that they have “passed out of death into life” through the new birth.



- B. Immediately after Judas departed the upper room our Lord told his disciples the words of John 13: 34, 35.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Therefore we see that love for the brethren is the supreme manifestation of the new birth. Failure to manifest it shows the one has never passed from death into a new life in Christ.

#### **XIV. Verse 15:**

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

- A. There is no middle ground between "love and hatred, just as there is no medium between light and darkness, life and death. One excludes the other.
- B. According to the Scripture, a man that lusts after a woman has committed adultery with her in his heart. John says that a person who hates someone likewise murders them in his heart.
- C. Hate is a sure sign that a person is destitute of the Spirit of God; which all regenerate men have.

#### **XV. Verse 16:**

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

- A. Hereby or "by this we know Gods love for us."
- B. "Because he laid down his life for us."

John 15:13, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

1. Our Lord freely and voluntarily laid down his life for his people as a ransom for them.
  2. He is our substitute. He took our sins upon himself.
    - He bore the curse of the law and the Father's wrath.
    - He also took all the punishment due our sin.
    - He suffered death, the death of the cross; the just, in place of the unjust.
    - Note that the persons for whom he laid down his life, are described as "his friends."
    - Originally they were the enemies of God and at enmity with Him.
    - But when the Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, He reconciled us because God chose us to be his friends.
    - So by dying for us, He reconciled those who were enemies making us his friends.
    - Therefore, His love in dying for his people is greater instance of love that can be found.
- C. "And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
1. We cannot lay down our life in the same sense, or for the same purpose as Christ laid down his life for us.
    - The reason being that no man is sinless or perfect. Therefore he cannot ransom even himself.

- The saints ought to be willing to risk their lives, and expose themselves to dangers, for the sake of their brethren, when and if necessary.
- Priscilla and Aquila are examples.

In Romans 16: 3, 4, Paul said, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”

- We should be willing to freely lay down our lives in the cause of Christ as the apostles, and the martyrs of Jesus.
- The Lord Jesus Christ is our example of what brotherly love is.

### **XVI. Verse 17:**

But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

- A. In today’s world there are Christians who are called upon to suffer, or give their lives for our Lord.
- B. However, most Christians will not be called upon to give their life, but they may have frequent opportunity to show their love for the brethren in less exacting ways.
  1. A Christian that is blessed with material goods will instinctively show “the love of God” by sharing what he has with others that are less fortunate.
  2. An example of this love is seen in the church at Jerusalem.

Acts 4: 32 – 35, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

3. There came a time when the brethren that were in the church in Jerusalem were in need. God met those needs through the love of other brethren.

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem (Romans 15:26).

4. If a person hardens their heart and refuses to help in a practical way, what is the use of talking about brotherly love.
5. Therefore, it is love in deed and truth that is expected from a child of God.

Bruce said, that it is “not the kind of pious talk that devalues the currency of heavenly love because it is unmatched by corresponding action.”

## **XVII. Verse 18:**

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

A. The Apostle James said:

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

B. Instead we are to love “in deed and in truth.”

1. True love is a operative grace that is revealed as the saints serving one another by:
  - By bearing one another’s burdens.
  - Being forbearing and forgiving one another.
  - By praying for each other
  - By exhorting and building one another’s faith.
  - Admonish one another in love.
  - Forgiving that we might be forgiven
  - Helping those who truly need help.
  - These things are to be done whole heartily, with cheerfulness, and without grudging.

### **XVIII. Verses 19 - 22:**

“And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”

- A. Hereby, or “by the fact,” that we have true love for others, and that we evident it by being willing to make sacrifices that we might do them good.
- B. “And shall assure our hearts before him.”
  1. The Holy Spirit persuades our heart, or gives us full assurance that we are of the truth, and belong to God.

- Therefore, the believers' heart ceases to condemn him; thus satisfying the questionings and doubts of their consciences as to whether they are accepted before God or not.
  - 2. Thus we are assured that He loves us with an everlasting love, and we have passed from death to life.
  - 3. Why? Because brotherly love is a sure evidence of the saving work of God in the believers heart.
- C. Verse 20, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."
1. The object of this verse is to encourage Christians to live their life so that their heart does not condemn them for any secret sins.
  2. If the Christians heart condemns them, they will never have peace, for God (who knows more about us than our own heart) knows all that is in the heart.
- D. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.
1. If we live so that our conscience does not condemn us then we can have confidence that God.
  2. This confidence is not based on our merits, or what we do.
  3. The confidence or boldness which we have towards our Maker is founded solely on the evidence that he will graciously accept us as pardoned sinners; not in the belief that we deserve his favor.

E. “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”

1. We understand that there is a limitation:

- First, the request must be in accordance to the will of God.
- It must be requested in the proper manner.
- It is to be requested in the name of Christ, and for his sake.
- It is to be requested in faith, not wavering, but believing God and His promise.

2. “Because we keep his commandments.”

- This is not the meritorious grounds for the believer being heard.
- Rather, it furnishes evidence that we are his children, and He hears his children.

3. “And do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”

- Just as a parent is likely to bestow favor on obedient, affectionate, and dutiful children, so is God inclined to bestow His favor on those who please him by their obedience and submission to his will.

### **XIX. Verse 23:**

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”

- A. Having mentioned the keeping of the commandments of God, the apostle proceeds to show what they are:
  - 1. The first is faith in Christ, and the second to love to one another.
  - 2. The two are reduced to one, because they are inseparable.
- B. We are commanded to believe on Christ, that through his death we may be justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.
- C. Through him we are redeemed from the guilt of sin and restored to the Divine favor of God.
- D. Thus we are enabled to love one another as he commanded us.
- E. For without a renewal of the heart, love to God and man is impossible, and this renewal comes by Christ Jesus.

## **XX. Verse 24:**

“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.”

- A. Our Lord promised in John 14:23 that he would come and take abode in his people.
- B. The Apostle John says that we have proof that the Holy Spirit abiding in us is proof that He is abiding in us.
- C. The Holy Spirit is imparted to his people at the time of their salvation that He might:
  - 1. Enlighten their minds.



2. Elevate their affections.
3. Sustain them in times of trial.
4. Assist them in the performance of their Christian duties.
5. And to fill them with the spirit of the Lord Jesus.
6. When the fruits of the Spirit exist in a believer he can be certain that the Spirit of God is with him.
7. No one can be a true Christian in whom the Holy Spirit does not dwell.
8. Yet no one can determine that the Spirit dwells in a person, except by the effects produced in his heart and life.

## **Chapter 4**

### **I. Introduction:**

- A. In this chapter the apostle cautions against seducing spirits; advises to try them, and gives rules by which they may be known, and by which they are distinguished from others.
- B. Verses 1-6 give us the method by which we may determine that we have the Spirit of God.
  1. It was very likely that the teachers of error, the persons whom John regarded as "antichrist," would claim the same thing.
  2. Therefore, it was very important for believers to know how to determine whether it was the Spirit of God or the spirit of antichrist.
- C. In verse 1 The Apostle John tells them to test every spirit and gives them the things to use in determining if it was really the Spirit of God.

1. The evidence consisted of the following things:

- They had the Spirit of God who confessed that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh (verse 2).
- Verse 3, They who denied that Christ had come in the flesh did not have the Spirit of God, and the denial of this was the real spirit of antichrist.
- They who had the Spirit of God did not have the spirit of this world (verse 5).
- Those who had the Spirit of God would hear those who were his apostles and those who were sent by him (verse 6).

D. In verses 7-21, the Apostle speaks about the duty, power, and influence of love.

1. This is a favorite subject with John, and he here considers it at length, as a subject that was essential in determining the evidences of piety.

2. The duty and value of love are enforced by the following considerations:

- Verse 8 says that love has its origin in God, and everyone who has true love is born of God.
- Verses 9-11, God has shown his great love to us by having given his Son to die for us; and as He has so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
- If we love one another, it furnishes the best evidence that God dwells in us (verses 12-15).

- Verse 16 says that God is love, and if we have true love we dwell in him, and he dwells in us.
- Verse 17, Love will furnish us great advantage in the Day of Judgment, by giving us confidence when we come before him.
- Verse 18 tells us that love will cast out all fear, and will make our minds calm in view of the events which are to come.
- Verse 19 reminds us that the fact that He first manifested his love to us should lead us to the exercise of love.
- Verse 20 clearly states that a man cannot truly love God and yet hate his brother.

Therefore we see that it is the solemn command of God that he who loves God should love his brother also.

## **II. Verse 1:**

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

### A. “Beloved”

1. Again the Apostle John reminds these people of his great love for them and desire that they have God’s blessing and guidance.

B. The Apostle mentioned the word "spirit" in the previous chapter and now returns to his instructions concerning the antichrist spoken of in the second chapter.

C. "Every spirit" means, every teacher, who professes to be sent by God and to have his light, knowledge, and truth.

1. Every true minister of the Gospel has the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit that qualify him for his work.
2. The true minister of God is called and separated to the work of God by God.
3. Therefore true teachers teach the truths that are set forth in the Word of God.
4. But there are antichrist or false teaches that pretend to have the divine Spirit.
5. This warning contains a useful admonition for us today:

“Because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

- If Satan already had seduced many, and sent them forth in the name of Christ in the Apostle John’s time, think of the multitudes that exist today.
- This thought should terrify us and remind us that we likewise must “try the spirits.”

D. “But try the spirits whether they are of God.”

1. What is the standard that is to be used to try the spirits?
2. The standard is the Word of God, the standard of all doctrine.
  - If what is being said agrees with the Word of God it is to be received.
  - Therefore, that which does not agree should be rejected.
  - Revelation 2:2 says this of the church at Ephesus:

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

- Every believer should read and search the Scriptures that they might be capable judging whether the person or their doctrine is from the Spirit of God or not.
- The Spirit of God never speaks contrary to his Word.

### **III. Verse 2:**

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.”

- A. This is a rule by which believers may know whether a man professing to have the Spirit of God, is called and sent by him, and whether the doctrine he preaches, is of God or not.
- B. “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.”
  1. The servant of God will teach this doctrine concerning Christ.
    - They will teach the true person and office of Christ
    - That He existed before he came in the flesh as the Son of God, as a divine person.
    - They likewise profess that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Messiah
    - That he was the anointed prophet, priest, and King and acknowledge his teachings as truth.

- As well as his satisfaction, sacrifice, and intercession as our great high priest
  - Acknowledge all his ordinances and commands as King
  - And proclaim that he is the only Savior and Redeemer of men.
2. Those who teach these truths are on the Lord's side and can be regarded as true teachers of the Gospel.

#### **IV. Verse 3:**

“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

1. Cults different in beliefs but do have some similarities.
  - Many cults believe in the Trinity.
  - Cults do not believe in Jesus' virgin birth.
  - They do not believe in his incarnation as fully man and fully divine.
  - Nor do they believe in his death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice to cleanse his people from their sins.
  - Some do not believe in his bodily resurrection.
  - All of these are foundational Christian doctrines.
  - Any religion that denies the deity and work of Christ are a cult.

2. Today there are many religions, the television and radio is full of what the Apostle John called “antichrist.”

Today God’s people must be vigilant, heard the Apostle John’s warning as well as our Lord’s admonition in Matthew 24:11, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”

## **V. Verse 4:**

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

A. “Ye are of God, little children.”

1. John again uses his term of endearment “little children.”
2. What follows, “and have overcome them” he says to comfort the saints and to deliver them from the fears of being drawn aside by the delusions of the false prophets, and antichrists.
3. “Ye are of God,” you are his elect. Therefore you cannot be totally seduced
4. As the adopted children of God they are kept by the power of God unto salvation, as all that are begotten unto a lively hope are.

B. “And have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

1. The Apostle reminds them, and us as well, that we become strong, not by our own power, but by the power of God.
2. Hence the Apostle concludes, that we can no more be conquered than God himself, who has

armed us with his own power to the end of the world.

3. But in this whole spiritual warfare this thought ought to dwell in our hearts, that it would be all over with us immediately were we to fight in our own strength; but that as God repels our enemies while we are reposing, victory is certain.

## **VI. Verse 5:**

“They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.”

A. “They are of the world.”

Alford said, “They derive their spirit and teaching from the world, "unregenerate human nature, ruled over and possessed by Satan, the prince of this world." ”

B. “Therefore speak they of the world.”

1. They get the material for their teaching, their conversation, their life guidelines, opinions, and feelings of the world.
2. I am going to read to book titles and I want you to guess who wrote the books:
  - The first book is “Become a better you.”
  - The second book is “It’s your time.”
  - Who wrote these books? Yes, my favorite physiologist and babbler of secular humanism – and favorite example of what is not of God - Joel Osteen.
3. Therefore, “the world heareth them.”
  - The world loves its own.



- The world loves entertainment. But those of the world hate being told that they are not great, wonderful, and ok just like they are.
- And when you preach truth it convicts them of wrong in their life and they don't like it.
- That is why we have so many "feel good churches today."
- They compromise truth in order to get crowds. Therefore, the world feels right at home.
- That is why the world hates true Baptist.

John 15:18, 19, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

## **VII. Verse 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."

A. "We are of God."

1. Not only as the chosen of God, the children of God, the regenerated ones or believers.
2. But as ministers of the Gospel who are chosen, called, and sent of God to preach the Gospel.
3. Those who have been given the gifts necessary to do his calling. Those who are not of the world, nor speak worldly things, but being of God speak the words of God that they might magnify the grace of God in salvation.

B. "He that knoweth God" is those who know him in the free pardon of sin. Those who have tasted of his grace and goodness, and have put their trust in him.

C. "Heareth us"

1. This speaks of those who not only hear the Word externally, but internally as well.
2. This speaks of those that understand those things they hear and believe it, and reacting accordingly.

D. While "he that is not of God" is those who are not born of God, but of the world.

1. These people do not love righteousness, or truth, nor is the grace of God in them.

E. "Heareth not us" speaks of the natural man who is carnal and unregenerate.

1. This person cannot and does not want to receive Gospel doctrines.
  - For to them they are senseless, stupid, and foolish and they cannot understand them because they have no spiritual discernment.
  - To them they are "hard sayings" that they cannot bear, which is a sign that they are not of God.

F. "Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error"

1. The difference between truth and error is the distinguishing mark between those who are the true ministers of Christ, and who are the false teachers.
2. Their hearers also distinguish them.

- Men who have the spirit of error, are of the world, they are followed, and applauded men of the world.
- But those who are of God and have the spirit of truth, heard, approve of, and follow after spiritual men.

### **VIII. Verse 7:**

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”

- A. This is the second time the Apostle John has dealt with the place of love in the Christian’s relationships.
  - First, in chapter 2:7-11, and chapter 3:13-24 the Apostle presented love as the evidence that a believer has genuine life from above.
  - Now the Apostle sets forth love as the governing principle of the Christian life.
- B. “Beloved, let us love one another.”
  1. The Apostle John is the prominent New Testament illustration of the depth and tenderness of Christian love.
  2. In his epistles he addresses his disciples 12 times as "beloved."
  3. Since worldly men cleave to the false teachers; those that are of God, and on the side of truth, should love one another, and their faithful ministers, and stand fast in one spirit.
- C. “For love is of God.”
  1. Christians are commanded to love one another:

- First it is the command of God
  - Secondly it is his revealed will
  - And thirdly it is well pleasing in his sight.
2. Love comes from God. It is a gift of his grace, and a fruit of his Spirit.

D. "And every one that loveth is born of God."

1. Love to the brethren is an evidence of regeneration.
  - Love is not the cause of our passing from death to life, but the result and an evidence of it.
  - Love is a fruit of the Spirit of God, and shows itself quickly in a regenerate person.
  - A person may love a saint, as relative, or as a good neighbor.
  - But no man can love the saints as brethren in Christ, unless he is born again and has received the grace of God.
  - So loving the brethren is a certain evidence that a person "knoweth God."

E. "And knoweth God."

1. First, this person knows God in Christ
2. Secondly, they love those who have the grace of God in them, and the image of Christ upon them.
3. In knowing God this person knows the mind and will of God, and has experienced the grace of God, which causes him to love the saints.

## IX. Verse 8:

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

A. There are at least three great sayings about God in the Apostle John’s writings:

1. “God is Spirit,” “God is light,” and “God is love.”

God is pure “Spirit” in the highest sense.

2. “God is light,” which is the opposite of darkness, evil and sin, for light is holy and good.

3. “God is love:”

- God’s love is eternal.
- God himself is eternal and without beginning, his love is also eternal.

Jeremiah 31:3, “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

- God’s love is sovereign:

God is sovereign. Since God is sovereign, and since He is love, his love therefore is sovereign.

Therefore, God loves whom He pleases as seen in Romans 9:13.

- Since God’s love is sovereign, it is also uninfluenced.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (II Timothy 1:9).

- Therefore, we love him because He first loved us.

“What was there in me that could merit esteem,  
Or give the Creator delight?  
‘Twas even so, Father I ever must sing,  
Because it seemed good in Thy sight.”

4. Thus love is the evidence that we have been born of God and have a new nature that loves both God and the brethren.

## **X. Verse 9:**

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”

- A. This verse speaks of the special love of God for his elect:

1. This love was in his heart from everlasting, however, several acts preceded it's manifestation:

- First, God choose the elect in Christ.
- Secondly He appointment of him to be their Saviour.
- Then He made the covenant of grace with him on their account

2. These acts were secret and hidden; but now the love of God appeared is fully manifested or demonstrated to the elect in God sent his only begotten Son into the world to save them from their sin.

3. “That we might live through him.”

- All men died in Adam.

- All men are dead in sin and trespass
- No man can obtain eternal life for themselves, by their works.
- No man can quicken himself.
- Rather the Lord Jesus Christ came that they might have life.
- The elect are regenerated and made spiritually alive by the sacrifice of another, Jesus Christ.

## **XI. Verse 10:**

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

- A. First, we see that the love of God for his elect was the cause of him sending his “only begotten Son” as a propitiation for their sin.
- B. However, God is absolutely holy. But man sinned and God’s holiness required the wrath of God to fall upon us, unless propitiation was provided.
- C. Thus this verse shows us the value of the death of Christ and the great work He accomplished for sinners on the cross.
- D. Though man was unworthy, God “sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
  1. “Propitiation” means “a means of appeasing.”
  2. Christ propitiation was an appeasing of God’s wrath at sin.
  3. Sinful men may possess everlasting life only if their sins are expiated, or atonement is made for them.

- Christ became a propitiation for the elect that the justice of God should be satisfied.
- In Christ propitiation, God’s holiness, love and justice reconciled and the wrath of God, which sin deserved, was appeased.
- It is important for us to understand that the love of God for his people is from everlasting, and is unchangeable.
- The love of God never changes; it never varies from love to wrath, or from wrath to love.
- Nor is the love of God procured by the sacrifice of Christ. Rather, Christ propitiation is the result of God’s love for his elect.

## **XII. Verse 11:**

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

A. Beloved, if God so loved us.”

1. As to send his Son to be a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and to obtain eternal life for us through his sufferings and death.

B. “We ought also to love one another.”

1. God’s love to us is the grand motive for our love to one another.
2. “**If** God so loved us.”
  - We must all admit that this is an absolute fact.
3. Then we “also” being born of God, and therefore resembling our Father who is love.



- Therefore, because of God’s love to us, we love Him and also love the brethren, the children (by regeneration) of God, who are the representatives of the unseen God.

### **XIII. Verse 12:**

“No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

- A. The statement, “no man hath seen God at any time.” seems to be made to introduce the way that we may know that we have any true knowledge of God.
- B. The idea seems to be that God the Father has never been seen by mortal eyes. Therefore, we cannot expect to know Him in that way.
  1. However, there is a method by which we may be assured that we have a true knowledge of him.
  2. We cannot become acquainted with him by sight, but we may by love. So our loving one another and having the presence of his Spirit in our hearts is the evidence that we know him.
- C. “And his love is perfected in us.”
  1. As the indwelling Spirit of God dwells within the believer revealing and enabling the believer to drive out of their life all that displeases God.
  2. This love is an unfeigned love that is seen in deed and not in word only.
  3. This love is displayed by the love which is shown to the brethren.

- Thus our love for God is perfected by the love shown to the brethren in the same sense that faith is made perfect by works.
4. Therefore, the love of God grows, but will not reach perfection until the saints are in heaven.

#### **XIV. Verse 13:**

“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

##### A. “Hereby”

1. Even though we cannot see Him, the indicator of God’s dwelling (Greek, "abide") in us is that He hath given us "of His Spirit."
2. John 3:34 tells us that in the Lord Jesus Christ alone does the Spirit dwell without measure.
3. However, the Spirit of God imparts to each believer a measure "of" his Spirit proportionate to the will of God.
4. Love being His first-fruit according to Galatians 5:22.

#### **XV. Verse 14:**

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”

##### A. “We have seen, and do testify.”

1. “We” seems to mean the apostles, who were eye witnesses of those things concerning Christ.
2. Not only were they eye witnesses, they had a clear discerning of the love and grace of God, manifested in the mission of Christ.

- They had seen God manifest in the flesh; they had seen his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father.
- They had seen his works and miracles.
- Being eyewitnesses, they could give eyewitness faithful testimony that the Father had sent the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Saviour.
- They were also eyewitnesses of the truth of his death, burial, and resurrection since they had seen him dying and risen again from the dead, and go up to heaven.

B. Next we note the phrase, “Saviour of the world.”

1. This does not speak of every individual person in the world.
2. Why? The book of Revelation clearly states that there are some that will go into everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.
3. If then Christ is the Saviour of every individual of the human race He failed and his death was in vain.
4. Then what world was the Apostle speaking of?
  - He was speaking of all the elect of God, his sheep, his friends, his church, and the sons of God.
  - It may be said that he was speaking of all that believe in him throughout the whole world, without any distinction of nation, age, sex, or position in life.
  - To those who believe, Christ is the Saviour of both the soul and body.

- He saves them from all their sins, original and actual.
- He delivers them from the power of Satan, and the bondage and curse of the law.
- They are likewise set free from the wrath to come.

## **XVI. Verse 15:**

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

- A. Those who confess Christ, in the true sense, and from the heart are spoken of.
  1. The Scripture says that the devils believed and stated that Jesus was the Son of God; as did the unregenerate centurion at the cross of Christ, who had no true knowledge of God.
  2. The passage is not speaking of those who are insincere, or merely say the words without any proper sense of the truth.
  3. Rather it speaks of those whose confession is accompanied with a believing in Christ from the heart unto righteousness, life, and salvation.
- B. This confession results in a cheerful obedience to Christ because of a love for him, and faith in him.
  1. Because love and faith are fruits of the Spirit, they are evidences of God dwelling in a person and that person dwelling in God.

## **XVII. Verse 16:**

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

A. "And we have known and believed."

Or we could say that we have a full assurance and knowledge of, and faith in:

B. "The love that God hath to us."

God has shown his love for us in many instances, but especially in sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and to be our Saviour, that we might live through him.

C. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

1. In this phrase the Apostle John says that by faith God dwells in us, and God is love; then, wherever God abides, love ought to be there.
2. Hence it follows that love is necessarily connected with faith.

### **XVIII. Verse 17:**

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."

A. "Herein is our love made perfect" speaks of our love for God:

1. This phrase is best understood as the love of God that is in our hearts.
2. The expression is unusual; but the general idea is, that love is made complete or becomes what it should be, and will prepare us to appear with confidence before the judgment-seat of our Lord.

B. "That we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

1. This judgment is not the judgment of man.
  - Christians have been brought before judges, governors, and kings, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.
  - In these judgments those saints who truly love God, Christ, and the brethren, have stood with great courage, showed great boldness, and spoke freely of the things of God regardless of the consequences.
2. Rather this verse speaks of the future judgment:
  - Only believers are a part of this judgment.
  - Every believer will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, the just Judge, He who is great in majesty and glory.
  - Their sin is not an issue here, for it was judged at Calvary.
  - Therefore, those who are a part of this judgment know they are born again and have passed from death to life.
  - They know that they shall not enter into condemnation, but are the children of God and heirs of salvation and everlasting life.
3. "Because as he is, so are we in this world."
  - Because the saints are born again, as partakers of the divine nature, they bear a resemblance to God.
  - Even though the saints, in their present state, are not perfect they have holy in all manner of conversation, as he is holy.

- They are merciful, as He is merciful.
- Therefore, they try to love the saints as He does.
- They endeavor to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgive one another, as He for Christ's sake has forgiven them.
- Since God is love, they are loved by God with an everlasting and unchangeable love, even while they are in this world.
- What God then is in heaven, such we should be in this world, as a demonstration that we are his children.

### **XIX. Verse 18:**

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

A. “There is no fear in love.

1. The benefit of knowing God's love is a peaceful calmness that reaches beyond any fear.
2. Thus we see what a marvelous gift it is to be favored with God's love.
3. But before the Apostle exhorts us to duty, he commends to us this gift of God, which by faith removes our fear.

B. “But perfect love casteth out fear.

1. When a man knows that he genuinely and sincerely loves the saints, he concludes, as he may, that he has true faith.

2. This in turn frees him from the fears of men and of the future judgment and wrath to come.
- C. "Because fear hath torment."
1. Fear fills a person with anguish. It makes them restless and uneasy.
  2. A person who has fear will also have punishment.
- D. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
1. A person that has a fear of punishment is one who is not, by the love to the brethren, made to believe that he is a sincere lover of God, and true believer in Christ.
  2. True believers do not have a fear of destruction or death.
  3. Therefore, those who fear these things do not have the security that they are a true believer in Christ.

## **XX. Verse 19:**

"We love him, because he first loved us."

- A. The apostle correctly states that God loved us before we loved him.
1. God's love is from everlasting to everlasting.
  2. He loves his people as He does his Son, and He loved him before the foundation of the world.
  3. The Scripture says that He likewise chose the elect in Christ before the foundation of the world.
  4. Because of his love and grace He regenerates us and produces faith and love in our heart.



5. Thus we love him because He first loved us.

### **XXI. Verse 20:**

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

- A. A love of God cannot exist unless it generates brotherly love.
- B. Therefore, the Apostle says that those who say that they love God but hate their brethren are liars.
- C. It is said that "Nature is prior to grace; and we by nature love things seen, before we love things unseen."
- D. The eyes are our leaders in love. "Seeing is an incentive to love."
  - 1. Therefore, if we do not love the brethren, the visible representatives of God, how can we love God, the invisible One, whose children they are?
  - 2. The true ideal of man, lost in Adam, is realized in Christ, in whom God is revealed as He is, and man as he ought to be.
  - 3. Thus, by faith in Christ, we learn to love both the true God, and the true man, and so to love the brethren as bearing His image.

### **XXII. Verse 21:**

“And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

- A. The command to love a brother is as obligatory as the command to love God.

- B. One is as binding as the other. Both are to be obeyed.
- C. Those who are true Christian evidence love to his brethren as well as love to God.

## Chapter 5

### **Introduction:**

In chapter 5 the apostle treats of the nature of faith and love.

- A. Verses 1-3 reveal that Christ is the object of both faith and love.
  - 1. Faith in Christ is the evidence of regeneration, and where faith is, there will also be love for the author of regeneration, and to those who have been regenerated.
  - 2. Those who love God keep his commandments, and the keeping of God's commandments not being grievous, is a proof of love to God. 1Jo 5:1-3
  - 3. 1Jo 5:4,5, and whereas every regenerate man overcomes the world, it is by his faith, the evidence of his regeneration, that this victory is obtained; nor can any other man be pointed out that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God
- B. In verses 6-8, Christ, the Son of God, the object of this victorious faith.
  - 1. Christ is described by his coming by water and blood, of which the spirit is the true witness.
  - 2. There are six witnesses of the truth of his divine sonship:

- Three in heaven, the Father, Word, and Spirit, who are the one God.
  - And three on earth, the Spirit, water, and blood, who agree in their testimony.
- C. Verses 9-13 enforce that this testimony concerning the Son of God ought to be received:
1. This testimony should be believed since it is the testimony of God, whose testimony is greater than that of any man.
  2. Secondly because he that believes in Christ has a witness of this truth within himself which honors God.
  3. Where those who believe not say that God's record concerning his Son.
  4. A summary of that truth is that God has granted eternal life to those that believe in the Son of God, while those who do not believe in him have not eternal life.
  5. Thus we see the proposed ends of the Apostle writing these things and the necessity of receiving this testimony:
    - First that the elect might believe in Christ.
    - Secondly that they might know they had eternal life in him.
- D. In verses 14-15 the Apostle transitions from faith in Christ to confidence in prayer, as a particular fruit effect of faith.
1. He says that whatever is asked according to the will of God is heard; and those who believe this are heard and may be assured that their petitions will be answered.

E. Verses 16-17 tell us that we are to pray for others as well as for ourselves:

1. The apostle says that believers should pray for the brethren in general, and particularly for those brethren who have sinned, but not unto death.
2. The Apostle John says that even though all unrighteousness is sin, there is a particular sin which is unto death which should not be prayed for.
3. Verses 18-20 speak of the joy of those who are born of God, for they do not sin this sin; and through the use of the armor of God, and the power of divine grace, keep themselves from the evil one.
  - Since they do not have the sin of unbelief, they know that they are of God.
  - Being of God they are not of this wicked world because the Son of God came in the flesh, and hath given them an understanding of the true God.
  - Therefore, they know that they are in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the one true God, and the author and giver of eternal life.

F. Verse 21 concludes the chapter and the epistle with an exhortation to the regenerate ones to keep themselves from all sorts' idols as they had kept themselves from Satan.

### **I. Verse 1:**

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

- A. Pearson in his Exposition of the Creed said of this verse:

Whosoever - Greek, "Everyone that." He could not be our "Jesus" (God-Saviour) unless He were "the Christ"; for He could not reveal the way of salvation, except He were a prophet: He could not work out that salvation, except He were a priest: He could not confer that salvation upon us, except He were a king: He could not be prophet, priest, and king, except He were the Christ.

- B. "Whosoever believeth."

1. The Apostle gives another confirmation that one is a believer.
  - The reason being that faith and brotherly love are united.
  - Since God regenerates us by faith he must necessarily be loved by us as a Father; and this love embraces all his children.
  - Therefore, faith cannot be separated from love.
2. The first truth is, that all born of God, believe that Jesus is the Christ or the Messiah.
  - Here Christ, and Christ alone, is set forth as the object of faith.
  - Why? Because it is him that we find righteousness, life, and every blessing that can be desired.
  - Consequently the only way of believing is when we direct our minds to him.
  - In believing that He is the Christ, we believe that from him we will receive all those things

which have been promised to us through the Messiah.

3. The title “The Christ” is here for a reason:
  - It designates the office to which he was appointed by the Father.
  - Because under the Law, the full restoration of all things such as righteousness and happiness were promised through the Messiah.
  - Therefore, Jesus cannot be received as Christ, except one seeks salvation from him, since he was sent by the Father for this purpose.
4. Hence the Apostle declares that all they who really believe have been born of God
  - First, because faith is far above the reach of the human mind, so that we must be drawn to Christ by the Holy Spirit because none of us can or will come to him by his own strength.
  - This is what the Apostle also taught us in his Gospel, in John 1:13, when he says, that those who believe in the name of the only-begotten, were not born of blood or of the flesh.
  - The Gospel was written in order that its readers might:

“That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

- The Apostle Paul said

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12).

- 1 Corinthians 2:9 says:

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

- Only God knows the depth of this mystery.

C. The last part of this verse refers back to I John 4:21 and gives us the reason why we are to love our "brother" or those "begotten of him."

1. First, because they are "begotten of God."
2. Since regeneration does not come from the power or will of man but from his sovereign will, his rich mercy and great love; those who love their Father that has begotten them to a lively hope, cannot but love him, as well as those He has begotten.
3. Because, in order to show our love to God, we must show it to God's visible representative.

## **II. Verse 2:**

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.”

A. “By this”

1. Our love to the brethren is the sign and test of our love to God.
2. Thus John says here that our love to God is tested by our "keeping his commandments" is, conversely, the ground and only true basis of love to our brother.

3. Our love demonstrated to the children of God shows itself to be genuine when we do not love them not because they are rich, or kind to us, or they are of our denomination; but rather we love them because they are God's children and his regenerating grace is seen in them.
4. Thus we see what that love to the brethren is that is so pressed in this epistle: it is to love them as the children of God and the adopted brethren of the Lord Jesus.
5. Another sign of our true love of God is our obedience:
  - When we love God, and keep his commandments.
  - The keeping of his commandments requires a spirit that is inclined to and delights in keeping his commandments.

Psalm 119:32, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."

Verse 34-35, "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight."

### **III. Verse 3:**

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

- A. Keeping of the commandments of God is an evidence of our love for God.
  1. Keeping his commandments shows that our love is not in word, tongue, or in profession only, but in deed and in truth.



B. "And his commandments are not grievous."

1. Keeping God commands are not burdensome or disagreeable.
  - The law was a yoke so grievous that neither their fathers nor they were able to bear; but it is not so with the truth of God.
  - The law of God was for the punishing as well as testing of the old man; the word of God is the food and directory of the new man.
  - Instead the believer delights in doing the will of God because He never asks us to do anything that is not a delight to the inward man.

#### **IV. Verse 4:**

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

- A. The Apostle states that all who are born of God overcome the world.
  1. "Whatsoever" in the Greek is, "all that is begotten of God."
  2. He also states the way that the believer overcomes:
    - The victory over the world depends on faith.
  3. This passage is significant:
    - Even though Satan repeatedly comes against the believer, the Spirit of God, declaring that we are beyond the reach of

danger, removes the believers fear, and enables them to fight with courage.

- It is also noteworthy that the past is more emphasized than the present or the future.
- Why? The Apostle emphasizes the “has overcome” in order to make us as though the enemy had been already put to flight.
- Even though our warfare continues throughout our life, and our conflicts are come daily we must realize that God does not give us faith or arm us for only one day.
- It is through the perpetual work of the Holy Spirit that we are partakers of victory, just as if we had already conquered.
- Thus the believer can enter the battle with confidence because our Lord declares that they we have already overcome.

B. The term “world” has a wide meaning:

1. It includes everything that is adverse to the Spirit of God:
  - The corruption of our nature
  - All lusts, all the techniques of Satan
  - Anything that leads us away from God.
2. Having such a formable enemy we should be conquered a hundred times each day, **But God**, promised to us the victory.
  - We are encouraged to fight the good fight because God has promised us the victory through the invincible power of God.

- The Apostle does not teach us that man can win the victory in his own strength, or that God only gives us some help, so that being aided by him, we may be sufficiently able to resist.
- He makes it very clear that our victory depends on faith alone – the faith that the believer receives from another - by which we can overcome.

## **V. Verse 5:**

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

A. “Who is he that overcometh”

1. This has a very strong affirmation, that no other person is the conqueror of the world except "He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."

B. The victory which overcomes the world is faith.

1. Faith in the “Son of God.”
  - For it is by believing that we are made one with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, so that we partake of His victory over the world, because we have dwelling in us One greater than he who is in the world (1John 4:4).

## **VI. Verse 6:**

“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

A. “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ.”

1. "Water" does not mean the washings of the ceremonial law; because Christ did not come by these, but came to end them by his blood, which cleanses the believer of all sin.
2. Nor does the "water" speak of the purity of his nature, life, and conversation, even though he the holy Son of God.
  - He was holy in his nature, and qualified to be a sacrifice for the sins of others.
3. Nor does the "water" speak of the washing and cleansing of his people from their sins:
  - Why? Because the washing and cleansing of his people from their sins this is what He came to do and did, **not** what he came by.
4. The "water" speaks of the ordinance of water baptism by which our Lord was made manifest:
  - John identified Christ as the Son of God when Christ came to him at the waters of Jordan to be baptized of him.
  - At the time of his baptism He was declared to be the Son of God by his Father's voice from heaven.
  - Therefore, the expression "this is he that came" marks a definite historical coming of the Son of God.
5. Christ did not come by water only, but by water and blood:
  - The "blood" speaks of Christ own blood.
  - The "blood" refers to His atoning death upon the cross where the Lord made known His work as Redeemer.

- In his death He offered himself as the Substitute for the sins of the elect.
  - At Calvary He was declared to be the Son of God by the centurion and others that observed the earthquake, and the things that transpired at Calvary.
  - Again others declared him to be the Son of God with power at his resurrection from the dead.
  - There may be an allusion to the water and blood that came forth from his side when He was pierced while on the cross, of which the Apostle John was an eye witness of.
- B. “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”
1. The Holy Spirit, who bore testimony of Christ when He descended upon him at his baptism.
  2. He bore witness of him when He came upon his apostles and those gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost
  3. He bears witness of Christ as the Son of God continually.
    - The Holy Spirit’s witness is set forth by His using and confirming the Gospel, which is the testimony of Christ.
  4. Lastly, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a witness of Christ in the passage as well as other passages like Acts 5:32.

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”

5. Because the Spirit is truth; He is the Spirit of truth, and his witness or testimony is true.

## VII. Verse 7:

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

- A. Here we have the Trinity of heavenly witnesses who testified and assure the world of the veracity and authority of the Lord Jesus in his office and claims.

1. The first is the Father:

- He testified of the Lord Jesus Christ while He was here on the earth.
- First, in proclaiming him to be the Son of God at his baptism.
- Secondly, in confirming his character at the transfiguration.
- Thirdly, in raising him from the dead, and receiving him up to his glory.

He shall convince the world – “Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more.” (John 16:10).

Romans 1:4, “And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

2. The second witness in the Word:

- This is the name used in introduction the Lord Jesus Christ who existed before the world was, and the Name whereby he made

the world, and whereby he was truly God with the Father.

- The Word bears witness to the human nature, or to the man Christ Jesus, in and by whom we are redeemed.
3. The third witness is the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit sets his seal and solemn testimony on the Lord Jesus.
  - First, in his virgin birth.
  - Secondly, again we mention the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape upon the Lord at his baptism.
  - Thirdly, in an effectual conquest of the spirits of hell and darkness.
  - Fourthly, in his coming upon the apostles, to furnish them with gifts and powers to preach him and his gospel to the world after Christ had gone to heaven.
  - And lastly his work in calling, gifting, sanctifying and building the Lord's elect.
  - These witnesses are in heaven and bear record from heaven.
  - They are one, it should seem, not only in testimony (for that is implied in their being three witnesses to one and the same thing).

### **VIII. Verse 8:**

“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

- A. There are three witnesses in the earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood.
- B. These three remain and continue to witness today!
1. The witness of the Holy Spirit remains today and gives great witness to the truth of God's Word concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is preached.
    - He convicts sinners that they repent, believe, and obey the Savior.
    - The Holy Spirit also works through believers to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - The Holy Spirit is called the "Seven Spirits of God." Therefore his operations greatly vary.
    - But in each action He witnesses of Christ whether it be quickening, consoling, enlightening, refreshing, sanctifying, anointing, or setting the soul on fire, He always works by taking the things of Christ and revealing them to us.
  2. The witness of the "water" likewise remains today.
    - The water speaks of the new life implanted in Christians:
    - John's Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, said,  
"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."
      - The water given of the Holy Spirit creates within those quickened of the Spirit of God a new nature.



- The fact that this new nature exist in multitudes of people is evidence that the gospel is true.
- Why? Because no other religion even pretends to makes men new creatures. They may try to improve the old nature.
- But none of them can say,

"Behold, I make all things new."

For this is the exclusive prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The third witness that remains today is the "blood."
  - The blood of our Lord still operates among men today!
  - When the blood of the incarnate God, Jesus Christ is preached people who were afar from God come under conviction and yield to Christ and receive the gift of his salvation.

C. "These three agree in one," therefore every true believer should have the witness of each.

1. Does the Spirit lead you? Does the water bear witness that you are pardoned? Do you test in the blood of Jesus?
2. Practical evidence is good, but it must result from faith.
  - If you do not believe in Jesus you have not the essential witness.
  - If the Spirit of God has changed you, then you have the witness of the three

- For those who are truly saved are born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of the Spirit of God.

The three witnesses agree in one. Those who believe in pardon by the blood also believe in sanctification by the water. Those who rest in the blood of Christ honor the Spirit of God, and value both the inner life and the cleansing blood. God has fitly joined these three together as they should be.

## **IX. Verse 9:**

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.”

Here we have a proof by comparison:

- A. The creditability of human witnesses was set forth in the book of Deuteronomy.
  1. The witness or testimony of creditable men was accepted in all judicial trials. Every point was proven and established from the testimony given.
  2. From these human testimonies a person’s guilty or innocent, the severity of the punishment they received were decided.
  3. The Apostle states that the testimony of men is credited even in this case concerning the Son of God:
    - For example, the wise men spoke of his coming into the world, and the distinction concerning his person and lineage.
    - The testimony of the wise men concerning Christ coming into the world and He being the King of the Jews, and his star having

been seen in the east were all accepted by King Herod.

- Again we have the witness of the shepherds, who testified to the appearance of angels, who told them that the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, was born.
- They further testified that they saw the infant at Bethlehem.
- Again we have the witness of John the Baptist, who gave faithful witness that Jesus was the Son of God.

B. "The witness of God is greater."

1. John emphatically states that the testimony of God is greater and of much more value than the testimony of men, since His testimony is infallible.

C. "For this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son."

1. The witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, as well as the witness of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are the testimony of God and far greater than any human testimony.

## **X. Verse 10:**

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

A. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

1. What happens when a person is saved?

- The Holy Spirit indwells that person to reside in them.
  - Thus they have the witness, the Holy Spirit, in them.
  - They have accepted the inward effectual testimony and call of the Holy Spirit and by faith, the gift of God, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."
1. "He that believeth not God:
 

"He speaks of a person that refuses to accept infallible testimony or witness of God concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.
  2. "Hath made him a liar."
    - It is to refuse to give credit to God's testimony, thus refusing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - Rejecting the testimony of God, the infallible Witness, is in effect to call God a liar.
    - This person is, in effect, saying that he does not believe that God sent his Son, or that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, regardless of the many evidences.
    - By doing so they in effect say that God the Father is the author and co-conspirator of the lie.
    - It is of a surety that such a person does not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

## **XI. Verse 11:**

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

A. “And this is the record.”

1. This is the witness, the sum, and substance in respect to the person of Christ, and the security of the believer’s salvation in Christ.

B. “That God hath given to us eternal life.”

1. This is our assurance that if the Lord comes, or we pass from this life into the presence of our Saviour through death, there awaits us a life of glory and happiness; where there is no sorrow, or pain.
2. This eternal life is the free gift of God the Father, and proceeds from his sovereigns good will and pleasure, and is given to all his chosen ones because they were ordained unto eternal life
3. All those He has given to his Son before the world began, are brought to believe in him.
4. Today we only hold the earnest of it; but there is coming a day when we will possess eternal life in its entirety and enjoy it for all eternity.

C. “And this life is in his Son.”

The Apostle John reminds us that the only way we can become partakers of this life is by believing in Christ as Saviour.

## **XII. Verse 12:**

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

A. This speaks of:

1. Those who have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Those who have true faith in him
3. Those people who have the Lord dwelling in their heart, and living and abiding in them.

B. "Hath life" again speaks of God's gift of spiritual life to those who quickened by the Spirit.

Again it speaks of eternal life which the believer looks forward to in faith and hope.

C. But "he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

1. This person is dead in trespass and sin.
2. They are alienated from God and therefore have no right to eternal life.
3. Instead they shall experience the second death, eternity in eternal torment.

### **XIII. Verse 13:**

"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."

This verse contains one of the four purposes of the Epistle, "that ye may know that ye have eternal life"

A. "These things have I written unto you."

"These things," are those that are spoken of in the epistle in general, but specifically those things found in the context concerning eternal life.

- B. “These things” are written only to those “that believe on the name of the Son of God.”

That we might have a present confidence in God and build upon the assurances that God has given us thus in His Word, and the presence of the Spirit of God in us.

- C. “And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Since the believer has already believed on the Son of God, the things spoken of above were written to encourage the believers to stand fast that their faith in him might be increased.

#### **XIV. Verse 14:**

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”

- A. “And this is the confidence that we have in him.”
1. The confidence spoken of here is the confidence relating to God answering prayer.
  2. The apostle does not say that this is the only thing in which we are to be confidence in him, but that it is one that is worthy of special consideration.
  3. The idea is that one of the effects of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is that we have the assurance that our prayers will be answered.
- B. “If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”
1. “If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”
    - This is the proper and the necessary limitation in all prayer.

- God has not promised to grant anything that shall be contrary to his will.
- First, it would not be right for him to do so.
- Secondly it is wrong for us to desire anything contrary to what he judges to be best for us.
- So it is very advantageous to us that all the blessing to be obtained by prayer be limited and bounded by the will of God.

C. The limitation here, "according to his will," probably implies the following things:

1. Those things that are in accordance with what he has declared that he is willing to grant:
  - There are many things which we know to be in accordance with his will, if they are sought in a proper manner:
    - The forgiveness of sin
    - The sanctification of the soul (1Thessalonians 4:3)
    - Comfort in trials
    - The supply of our needs
    - Grace that we may do our duty
    - The power of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us.
    - Wisdom to guide and direct us (James 1:5)
    - Deliverance from those evils that would beset us



2. The expression, "according to his will," must limit the answer to prayer to those things that He knows to be best for us.
  - There may be things that I think would be good for me.
  - However, there are times when we are mistaken.
  - It is important to remember that we cannot distinguish what is good for us as clearly as our Lord can.
  - There are times when we are completely mistaken.
3. "According to his will" likewise means that we cannot ask him to violation of any of the laws that He has ordained in order to answer our prayer.
4. The expression, "according to his will," must limit the promise to what will be for the good of the whole:
  - God presides over the universe, and as Sovereign He considers the needs and wants of every individual.
  - However, the interests of the whole, as well as of the individual, are considered in granting our petitions.

D. For example:

1. In a family, it is possible that one of the children might ask for something that would interfere with the rights of the other children.
2. Or the request could be inconsistent with what is best for the entire family.

3. In this instance a just father would deny the request.

Understanding these necessary limitations allow us to see that God truly does hear and answer prayer in a manner that always promotes our good.

## **XV. Verse 15:**

“And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

- A. As in verse 13 the Apostle uses the word “know.”
  1. In verse 13, “know” meant that the believer has unquestioning assurance that they have eternal life.
  2. The use of the same word here assures the believer that when their petitions are in the will of God the things asked of him will be granted.
    - Not one of our past prayers offered in faith, according to His will, is lost.
    - Believers have the confidence to believe that those particular things request in prayer and according to his will shall be given.
    - Like Hannah, we can rejoice over God granting them even before the event; and can recognize the event when it comes to pass, as not from chance, but obtained by our past prayers.
    - Jehoshaphat had such great believe and confidence in God answering his prayers that he appointed singers to praise the Lord beforehand.
  3. “We have the petitions that we desired of him.”

- Means that our prayers are accepted, and will be answered in that way and time which will be for the glory of God and our own highest good.

## **XVI. Verse 16:**

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.”

A. Gill said, “Those who have such an interest at the throne of grace, and such boldness and freedom there, should make use of it for others, as well as themselves, and particularly for fallen believers; for a "brother.”

B. James 5:16 says, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

1. This passage clearly teaches that we are to have an interest in the spiritual well being of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. “If any man see his brother.”

- “See” eliminates “he said, she said” hearsay.

- If a person personally sees his brother commit what is obviously a very serious sin he would first go to that brother and admonish him, then he is to pray for him.

- “He shall ask” indicates to me that the matter involving the sin is to stay private and between the two brothers. Unless the brother continues to commit the sin.

3. “A sin which is not unto death.”

- Every sin, even the least sin, is in its own nature mortal, or deserving of death.
  - "The wages of sin is death" yet none of the sins of God's elect are unto spiritual death.
  - By the grace of God and the blood and righteousness of Christ the sins of the elect are pardoned.
4. Then the question, how can one person know if another brother's sin is not unto death, when it is of the same nature and kind as another man's?
- The answer is "he repents, forsakes, and does not continue in that sin."
5. "And he shall give him life."
- In one sense God gives the sinning brother life through the admonition and comfort of his brother.
  - But it is God that gives him life through the pardoning of his sin.
- C. The last part of the verse says, "there is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."
- What is the "sin unto death?"
1. There is a definite meaning for the expression which will most likely be found in the context of the epistle itself rather than elsewhere.
  2. The meaning is one which the Apostles readers of the time were expected to recognize.
- The meaning of what this phrase means varies.

3. Some say that it involves wickedness of a gross and extreme nature such as blasphemy, murder, adultery.
4. Others identify it with hatred and bitter antipathy toward the church.
5. While others say it has to do with obstinate and impenitent sin that persist until death.
6. Still others see it as unbelief in its darkest form of willful, total rejection of Christ.
  - Which would be considered blasphemy of the Holy Ghost which is sin certainly worthy of death.
  - God gives those who commit this sin over to the depravity of their hearts and minds and they are beyond redemption.
7. Another suggestion lies in what the Apostle John declares so decidedly:
  - The man who is born of God does not sin (3:6-9).
  - On the other hand those that are the children of the devil live a life of sin; and sin is their natural element.
  - In this instance the Apostle John has in mind a class of professedly Christians who give themselves over to unrestrained sin.
  - Such people he says are not the children of God, but antichrist and the children of the devil.
  - Some of these people deny that Jesus is the Christ.

- They deny the thing John believed to be the foundation of Christianity - the incarnation of the Son of God.
  - While others he calls false prophets deny the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. All of these scholars believe that the “sin unto death” speaks of spiritual death.
  9. On the other hand there are others that contend that the death spoken of is a **physical** rather than **spiritual** death.
  10. The following are some of the reasons they believe it to speak of physical death:
    - The person to whom the statement refers is called “brother.”
    - In the Bible, “Brother” is never used to refer to an unsaved person.
    - Among the Bible writers none have more clearly or definitely presented the truth that once a man exercises faith in the Lord Jesus Christ he receives as a permanent possession the gift of eternal life that the Apostle John.
    - Therefore, having eternal life the believer can never sin unto spiritual death.
    - The sin unto death being a physical death is consistent with other passages of Scripture.
    - Scriptural examples of people that committed sin which God takes seriously enough, so as to end their lives.

- Acts 5:1-10 - Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit. God judged them for this and both were killed.
- I Corinthians 11:30 – the Corinthian Christians who are said to have “fallen asleep” because of their profanation of the Lord’s Supper.
- I Corinthians 5: 1-5 – the incestuous man at Corinth – He was having sexual relations with his father's wife. He suffered the destruction of the flesh or physical death.
- Sickness and physical death are sometimes the evidence of the chastening hand of God upon a sinning child.
- Though not always true, the sickness may, be the result of divine discipline to restore the offender to divine fellowship.

11. Thus the Apostle says that if the sin is not unto death the erring brother may be restored through the intercession of a praying brother.

12. But if the sin is unto death, the Christian is not forbidden to pray, but neither is he exhorted to pray for the erring brother.

## **XVII. Verse 17:**

“All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”

- A. All unrighteousness is sin against God or man is a sin against the law of God, and the wrath of God is revealed against it, and it is deserving of death.
- B. Yet all unrighteousness is not unto death. For example, the sins of David:

1. David's sin was against both God and man, yet they were put away, and he did not die.
- C. Peter sinned and did great injustice to his Lord. Yet his sin was not unto death; he had repentance unto life given him, and a fresh application of pardoning grace.
- D. "And there is a sin not unto death" is added to help weak believers:
1. Who hearing that there was "a sin unto death" that was not to be prayed for might fear that their sins were of that kind.
  2. But they are reminded that none of them are; for though they are guilty of many sins, God is merciful and forgives them so they are not unto death.

### **XVIII. Verse 18:**

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

- A. Those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and quickened by his power do not sin.
1. That is they do not continually live in sin.
  2. They sin, but they do not live under the power and dominion of sin.
- B. "But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself."
1. "He that is begotten" is in the perfect aorist tense which means that those begotten of God (once in a past time) continue in that state.
  2. "Keepeth himself"



- Literally, "He having been begotten of God (nominative pendent), it (the divine generation implied in the nominative) keepeth him."
  - No one can keep himself by his own power and strength.
  - God only keeps his people in safety.
  - It is by his power that they are kept.
  - However, the sense here is that a believer defends himself by taking to him the whole armor of God.
  - And especially the shield of faith, that he might stand against the corruption of his own heart, the snares of the world, and particularly the temptations of Satan.
3. "That wicked one toucheth him not."
- Satan cannot destroy the new life that is in him.
  - Because he is kept in the power of God, Satan cannot destroy him.
  - Satan may tempt him, he may be allowed to sift him, or buffet him.
  - He may be allowed to bring a great affliction upon the believer.
  - In all reality, as we see in the book of Job, Satan cannot do anything unless God allows him to do it.
  - The saints have the promises of God concerning their perseverance.

John 10:28, “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.”

Jeremiah 32:40, “And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”

### **XIX. Verse 19:**

“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

- A. Mankind is divided into two groups, those that belong to God and those that belong to wickedness or the wicked one.
  1. Those who are the sons of God know their state by the Spirit of God, which witnesses to the spirit of the saint that they are the children of God.
    - This is further evidenced in that they have the fruits and effects of regenerating grace.
    - The Lord’s people are his portion, his inheritance, chosen by his own determination according to Deuteronomy 32:9.
  2. While the whole world, the rest of humanity, remain in wickedness and follow the wicked one.

### **XX. Verse 20:**

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

A. "And we know that the Son of God is come."

1. This speaks of the second Person in the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. This speaks of Christ, God of very God that took on flesh, or became incarnate, that He might work out the salvation of his people.
3. John others had understanding and personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ because:
  - First, He dwelt among them, they saw him with their eyes, they talked with him, they heard him teach and preach, they saw the miracles he preformed, and lastly they handled him.
  - They saw those things that proved him to be what he was, the Messiah.

B. "And hath given us an understanding."

1. Where did this spiritual knowledge or understanding of spiritual things concerning Christ come from?

John 12:46, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

2. The Son of God, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ came as a light into the world, and gives spiritual light to men!
3. John clearly states this in the first chapter of this epistle:

1 John 1:1-4, "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; (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;) 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. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

C. “That we may know him that is true.”

1. Those that are given spiritual understanding receive that understanding that they may know "the true God."
2. The spiritual knowledge of the true God is only given to those whom receive eternal life.

D. “And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.”

1. The elect were secretly in him before the world was.
2. Because they were loved by him, chosen in him, and at the time of their conversion, the elect are brought to believe in him.
3. Thus they live in him while He lives in them.
4. Thus knowing Christ as the true God because they are in him as the branches are in the vine.

E. “This is the true God and eternal life.”

1. The Son of God, the fullness of the Godhead being in him bodily is called "eternal life."
2. He is “eternal life” because He is the source of it and the gives it to his people.

## **XXI. Verse 21:**

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”

- A. This the last verse of the chapter and the epistle is an affectionate, parting admonition.
- B. Then as today, Christians were surrounded by idolaters, with whom it was impossible to avoid association.
- C. The aged Apostle warns his “little children” whom he loves to be on guard against idolatry.
1. The Apostle admonishes them to abstain from Heathen idols and idolatry.
  2. At this time many of the Christians dwelling among Heathen idolaters.
    - Most likely, many of their families were idolaters.
    - Many were also accustomed to buying and eating things that had been offered to idols in the temples.
    - In addition there were some claimed to be Christians, like the Gnostics, who worshipped the images of Simon and Helena.
    - Regardless of what idolatry it was it was to be abstained from
- D. We know that some of those at Pergamos, in the region whence John wrote, fell into the snare of eating things sacrificed to idols.
- E. They, as we are not to love anything more than God or Christ: the one only living and true God, Father, Son, and Spirit, he is only to be worshipped, feared, and loved.

Ephesians 5:5, “For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

Colossians 3:5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

## **Conclusions:**

- A. The first epistle of John is easily divided up into three sections:
  1. God is light (1:1 - 2:27)
  2. God is love (2:28 - 4:21)
  3. God is life (5:1-21)
  
- B. John wrote about the most vital aspects of faith so that the readers would know Christian truth from error.
  1. He emphasizes the basics of faith so that we can be confident in our faith.
    - In our dark world, God is light.
    - In our cold world, God brings the warmth of love.
    - In our dying world, God brings life.
    - When we lack confidence, these truths bring us certainty.