

Outline of the Book of I John

Introduction to I, II, and III John

Author:

The apostle **John** is clearly the author of the gospel of John, I, II, and III John and Revelation. “Dionysius noted that John did not name himself in his epistles, ‘not even in the Second and Third Epistles, although they are short Epistles, but simply calls himself a presbyter.’ (Eusebius, H.e. VII, xxv.)”¹ John was the brother of James (Acts 12:2), son of Zebedee (Mk. 1:20; Lk. 5:10) and Salome (Matt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40). John was called to be an apostle by Jesus (Matt. 4:21) and became known as the disciple whom the Lord loved (Jn. 13:23; 20:2; 21:20). John was one of three with Peter and James whom the Lord allowed to be on the mountain when He was transfigured (Matt. 17:1ff). The same three were allowed to go with Jesus into the house of Jairus to raise his daughter from the dead (Mk. 5:37ff). Again the same three were asked to pray with Jesus at Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37ff). John leaned on the Lord’s breast at the last supper (Jn. 13:23). Lastly, Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to John when hanging upon the cross (Jn. 19:26ff).

John exhibited great zeal for Jesus and His teachings. Jesus noted the zeal when calling John and his brother James the “*sons of thunder*” (Mk. 3:17). On one occasion, John “*forbade*” a man from performing an exorcism in the name of Jesus, possibly out of fear that Jesus had not permitted this (Lk. 9:49ff). On another occasion, John and James were ready to call down “*fire*” from heaven when a village of Samaritans refused to receive Jesus (Lk. 9:54). Those who exhibited a love for Jesus and His commands were equally loved by the apostle John (I Jn. 1:4; II Jn. 4; III Jn. 4). Interestingly, verse four of all three epistles deals with this joy.

Later in life, John was known as a “*pillar*” in the church (Gal. 2:9). He was eventually exiled to the island of Patmos “*for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus*” (Rev. 1:9). Tradition reveals that John lived to an old age and died in Ephesus.

Themes in John’s writing

The theme of I John is fellowship and was stated clearly in I John 3:10, “*In this the children God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*” The word righteousness is defined as the state of being ‘right, lawful, and just.’ One who follows the laws of truth, exposes error in the lives of other brethren through love, and cares for the physical well being of brethren through love is one who is truly in fellowship with Jehovah God.

The theme of II John is fellowship, too. II John 9 stated, “*whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.*”

The theme of III John is fellowship as well. III John 11 stated, “*Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*”

The Content of John’s writing

Eternal life

¹ Woods, Guy N. New Testament Commentaries Based on the American Standard Version; I and II Peter, I, II and III John, and Jude pg. 333.

The central thought of John's writings may be found in I Jn. 5:13, where he said, "*these things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.*" The assurance of eternal life is set forth in John's writings for the faithful. John said, "*And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal*" (I Jn. 2:25). Eternal life was within the grasp of all humanity; however, the condition set forth to be a recipient of that life was "*belief.*" Faith in Jesus was to be established in the minds of John's readers by the eyewitness account of the Lord's life. Thus John said, "*Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name*" (Jn. 20:30-31). John equated obtaining eternal life with faith as he equated faith with obedience. Again, John said, "*and hereby we 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*" (I Jn. 2:3-4).

Jesus

Eternal life is a central theme in John's writings; however, the means to achieving this life is Jesus. Jesus, therefore, occupies a crucial focal point of John's writings. John referred to Jesus as the "*Messiah*" when examining the longed-for savior of the world (Jn. 1:20; 3:28; 4:25; 7:27; 12:34 etc.). The Lord is referred to as the "*Holy One of God*" (Jn. 6:69), "*the Savior*" (Jn. 4:42, I Jn. 4:14), the "*Lamb of God*" (Jn. 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:6), the "*King of Israel*" (Jn. 1:49; 12:13; 18:33-38; 19:3, 14-22), the "*Son of Man*" (Jn. 3:13; 6:62; compared to Dan. 7), the "*Son of God*" (27 times in the book of John) and the "*word*" (*logos*) (Jn. 1:1-18; I Jn. 1:1-4).

John revealed the deity of Jesus in his writings. Jesus was depicted as the "*Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (Jn. 1:1). John recorded Jesus saying, "*which of you convicts me of sin*" (Jn. 8:46). As God, Jesus had no sin! Jesus was one with the Father as God (Jn. 10:30; 17:21-24). As God, Jesus proclaimed the end from the beginning (Compare Jn. 13:19 with Isa. 46:10). When Philip asked Jesus to "*show us the Father,*" Jesus responded, "*Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, show us the Father?*" (Jn. 14:9). When Jesus appeared to the disciples before ascending into the heavens, Thomas replied, "*My Lord and my God*" (Jn. 20:28). Jesus referred to Himself as "*I am*" and thus equal to God (Compare Exodus 3:14 with John 8:68). I John 1:1-2 referred to Jesus as the "*Word*" and "*the eternal life.*" Clearly the deity of Jesus is seen when John stated, "*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life*" (I Jn. 5:20). Those who denied and rejected the deity of Christ would die in their sins (I Jn. 2:22). John recorded Jesus saying, "*except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*" (Jn. 8:24).

Abiding in the word of God

A peculiar word found throughout the writings of John is the word "*abide.*" The abiding concept of John indicated man's responsibility to conduct himself as God commanded. John used the word "*abide*" twelve times in John 15 and eleven times in I John 2. John said, "*As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father*" (I Jn. 2:24). The word "*abide*" (*meno*) is defined as "to stay, stand fast, abide, in battle... to stay at home, stay where one is, not stir...to stay, tarry... to abide by an opinion, conviction, etc.," (LS 498). "Remain, stay – a person or thing remains where he or it is. Live, dwell, lodge" (AG 503). The apostle Paul had told the Corinthians "*that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written...*" (I Cor. 4:6). John meticulously wrote to Christians, encouraging them to keep at home in the gospel truths. II Jn. 9 states, "*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.*" The word abide is conjugated as a (Verb-Participle-Present-Active-Nominative-Masculine-Singular) (Friberb 732) which

indicates the ongoing action of the abiding. Such instructions were imperative in light of a variety of false teaching occurring at this time (cf. discussion below on false teachers).

Fellowship

Eternal life was set forth as contingent upon faith and obedience in the writings of John. Jesus was depicted as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29, 36) and thereby provided a means for fellowship with Jehovah God. No man can have fellowship with God and walk in sin because “*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all*” (I Jn. 1:5). To violate the laws of God is to walk in sin (I Jn. 3:4). To violate God’s law is to display a lack of love for God (I Jn. 1:6, 2:3-4) and one’s fellow man (I Jn. 3:11-16). Without lawful living we separate ourselves from God and from those who are in fellowship with God (cf. I Jn. 1:7). The apostle Paul said, “*abhor that which is evil*” (Rom. 12:9).

John brought out the heinous consequences of sin in his writings; yet, he also boldly proclaimed God’s gracious offer for the forgiveness of sins that fellowship may be enjoyed. Jesus cleanses us from sin when “*we confess our sins*” (I Jn. 1:9) because He is the “*propitiation*” for our sins (I Jn. 2:2). Therefore, each Christian is to continuously “*purify himself*” (I Jn. 3:3).

Love

John is sometimes referred to as the ‘apostle of love.’ The love John speaks of in I John has specific meaning. The love John wrote of was *agape* love. This love takes into consideration first of all the spiritual well-being of men. John referred to God as “*love*” (I Jn. 4:8, 16) because He provided a way for men to be saved (Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:9). Those who love God are soul lovers; i.e., those who want to dwell in eternity with Jehovah God. One who does not obey God’s laws does not really love God, brethren, or his own soul (I Jn. 2:5). Having love for God, self, and others is characterized by lawful living. Lawful living provides fellowship with God and brethren (I Jn. 1:3-4). Secondly, love is depicted as a care for the physical well being of others as well (cf. Matt. 9:35-38; I Jn. 3:17).

The purpose of I, II, and III John:

John began the first epistle commending fellowship with God and brethren through the sacrificial offering of Jesus Christ (I Jn. 1:1-4). Sin, however, had separated many brethren from Christ. The source of the sin appears to be a multiplicity of false teachings. Inasmuch as fellowship had been breeched, John gave instructions to regain the fellowship lost through sin. Paul did the same thing with the Corinthian brethren by establishing what the Christian is (I Cor. 1:1-9) and then exposing the errors of brethren that they may repent in the remainder of the book.

II John continues the idea of Christian fellowship in light of what God demanded of his followers. John used the word truth (and its derivatives) ten times in the short 13 verse book. Clearly the focus of the book is remaining faithful (II Jn. 6), watching for error (II Jn. 7), and never fellowshiping error (II Jn. 9-11).

III John is a letter to one named Gaius from the apostle John. The short letter indicates the intra communication between churches in truth. Diotrephes, a factious man in the church where Gaius attended, reminds us of those who decry ‘autonomy, autonomy, autonomy’ that they might have their erroneous ways in the local church. Demetrius and John exposed the error of Diotrephes.

False teachers

John said, “*these things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray*” (I Jn. 2:26). Throughout I John there were apparent issues that the apostle dealt with. Brethren were being led astray by various doctrines. There were apparent divisions in the church (I Jn. 2:19); however, the faithful had remained. Though the faithful remained, the influence of the dissenters was still felt. Again, John said,

“My little children, let no man lead you astray:” (I Jn. 3:7). The apostle Peter told us that those who would lead astray with contrary doctrines are termed *“false teachers”* and are truly those who *“deny the Master that bought them”* (cf. II Pet. 2:1-3). The false teachings examined in I, II and III John resemble much of Gnostic philosophy.

The issues were:

1. Some believing that they alone had a deeper understanding (knowledge) of the truths of God (I Jn. 2:20-21, 27).
2. Some denied that Jesus was the Christ (I Jn. 2:22).
3. Some denied that Jesus came in the flesh (I Jn. 4:2; II Jn. 7).
4. Some false teachers apparently were claiming a separation from any sin (I Jn. 1:8, 10).
5. They were following the ways of the world (I Jn. 2:15-17).
6. They were teaching that the commandments of God were not binding (I Jn. 2:4).
7. Some believed that they could sin and remain in fellowship with God and brethren (I Jn. 1:5-7).
8. False teachers have no real love for God nor brethren (I Jn. 3:10).

Gnosticism

Gnosticism is thought to have reared its head even before the days of Jesus. It was a “heretical system of thought, at once subtle, speculative, and elaborate, it endeavored to introduce into Christianity a so-called higher knowledge, which was grounded partly on the philosophical creed in which Greeks and Romans had taken refuge consequent to the gradual decay and disintegration of their own religions, partly, as will be shown, on the philosophies of Plato and Philo, and still more on the philosophies, theosophies, and religions of the East, especially those of Persia and India.”² The basic thought of the Gnostics was as follows:

1. Cosmological dualism consisting of matter and spirit. Matter was considered evil and, therefore, not created by God as was the spirit. The earth and the physical body were therefore evil.
2. Great knowledge was bestowed upon only the intellectual elite.
3. The earth was created by a ‘demiurge’ that was distinctly different than Jehovah God.
4. If matter is evil, then Jesus Christ could not have been God in the flesh. Gnostics denied the humanity of Jesus.
5. Gnostics denied the capability of knowing God.
6. Gnostics believed in a progression of angels from lower to higher in holiness. The lower the angel, the closer to man. Man represented sinful flesh. The higher angels were to be worshipped.
7. Gnostics denied that man had a free will to choose between good and evil.
8. Gnostics practiced asceticism to obtain spiritual fellowship with Jehovah God. Since the body was sinful, it was to be punished by pain or hunger (cf. Col. 2:21-23). Other Gnostic Philosophers viewed the body as separate from the spirit and sinful; therefore, they treated the body to licentious practices and indulged their sensual appetites.
9. Gnostics practiced syncretistic theology (an attempt to reconcile or combine differing beliefs, as in philosophy or religion). The Gnostics treated Christianity as a philosophy, combining its truths with the religions of Jewish, Greek and oriental sects.

Gnosticism was not unlike our modern humanism. Humanism is a philosophy that believes that man is the measure of all things. Truth is what you determine it to be. The Gnostics, like modern humanists, determined what truth was apart from the word of God. John combatted these errors in his day saying, *“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error”* (I Jn. 4:6). As Jesus would not allow the lines of true discipleship to

² Renwick, A. M. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; Vol. 2, pg. 484

be marred, neither would the apostle John! Though the Gnostics claimed a deep knowledge of truth, John exposed them saying that their knowledge was in “*the deep things of Satan*” (Rev. 2:20-24). Examine the chart below that exposes the Gnostic errors.

John Exposed Gnostic False Teaching (Any teaching contrary to Jesus was error; see I Jn. 4:6)	
Teaching of the Gnostics (False teachers)	John exposed the error
Cosmological dualism (matter is evil and spirit is good)	I Jn. 1:8, 10
Intellectual elitism	All may know truth (I Jn. 2:20, 21, 27; 3:2; 4:6)
Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh because matter is evil	I Jn. 1:1-3; 4:2; II Jn. 7
Denial in the ability to know God	John assured his readers of their ability to “know” God (I Jn. 2:3, 5; 4:2, 5:20).
Ascetic practices	Fellowship obtained by walking in truth (I Jn. 1:5-7)
Syncretistic theology (the commandments of God were not necessarily binding)	One theology (I Jn. 2:4; II Jn. 9).
Some taught that the body was naturally sinful and therefore one may sin and remain in fellowship with God and brethren	John sets the matter in clear language (I Jn. 1:3-7).

Date of I, II, and III John

Due to the dates of the Gnostic heresies and a lack of Roman persecution mentioned, it has been generally accepted that the date of these general epistles is approximately AD 90.

Outline and Exegesis of I John

Chapter 1

- I. Jesus, the Word of life, provides fellowship with God and brethren (I Jn. 1:1-4):**
- A.** *“That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life”* (I Jn. 1:1).
- “That which was from the beginning”*
 - The apostle John began his gospel account in the same manner (cf. John 1:1).
 - The *“beginning”* here represents the time before creation and may be summed up as eternal existence (Col. 1:17) as opposed to the beginnings of his addressees’ conversion (I Jn. 2:7) or the point at which Satan became evil (I Jn. 3:8).
 - The subject spoken of here is Jesus.
 - “That which we have heard, seen, beheld and handled”*
 - Having *“heard”* Jesus speak personally served as a witness to His reality.
 - Having *“seen”* Jesus with their eyes served as a witness to His reality.
 - Having *“beheld”* (*theaomai*) Jesus indicated that not only did they see for a brief moment as though He were a ghost, but they, “gaze at, view, behold” (LS 360). “Observe” (AG 353).
 - The Gnostic who would say that Jesus was a mere phantom or ghost due to the fact that all matter was evil is here refuted.
 - “Concerning the word of life”*
 - Jesus was recognized as the *“Word”* (Jn. 1:1), as deity in flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14) (cf. Appendix # 1; The Deity of Christ).
 - Jesus used the preposition *“of life”* to describe Himself (Jn. 11:25; 14:6). He is known as the *“bread of life”* (Jn. 6:35, 48). Lastly, He is known as the *“light of life”* (Jn. 8:12).
 - As the Word, Bread, and Light of life, He was not merely a set of laws (truth or gospel), but the very source of life. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (Jn. 14:6). Jesus provides eternal life for the soul that would seek Him.
- B.** *“(and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)”* (I Jn. 1:2).
- The *“life”* is Jesus (cf. verse 1).
 - Jesus was *“manifested”* (*phaneroo*) (“to make known” {LS (855)}). The pre-existence and deity of Jesus Christ is seen here. John spoke of Jesus being *“the eternal life, which was with the Father.”* John made the idea of Jesus’ deity and eternal existence concrete in John 1:1, 14, 15, 29-30, and Jesus said, *“except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”* (Jn. 8:24).
 - Because deity became flesh (God incarnate), John and the other apostles were qualified witnesses (having heard, seen, and handled) to *“declare”* unto the world Jesus. To *“declare”* (*apaggello*) = “of a messenger, to bring tidings, report, announce etc.; to carry a report... to bring back tidings, report in answer” (LS 86).
 - The apostles brought the report and tidings concerning Jesus (whom they heard, saw, handled, and beheld). This is the gospel message regarding *“the life”* (Jesus).
- C.** *“that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:”* (I Jn. 1:3).
- The purpose of the declaration of the gospel on the part of the apostles is now revealed; i.e., *“that ye also may have fellowship with us... the Father... and the Son (Jesus Christ).”*

2. The fellowship (*koinonia*) that John spoke of here could only occur through the “*Word of life*” (Jesus). Now we see John’s thesis: Jesus Christ provides fellowship with brethren and God. Secondly, it is God’s purpose that man achieves this fellowship.
 3. What is fellowship (*koinonia*)? “To have or do in common with, have a share of or take part in a thing with another” (LS 440) (Cf. Appendix # 2; Biblical Fellowship).
 4. At this point in the study, John only revealed a fact. Having fellowship with God is made possible through Jesus Christ. For this cause the apostles declared the gospel message.
- D. “*and these things we write, that our joy may be made full*” (I Jn. 1:4).
1. Not only the immediate context, but the whole epistle was included in the “*these things we write.*”
 2. True joy is found in one walking in the truths of “*the Word of life.*” John later said, “*I rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bare witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in the truth. Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth*” (III Jn. 3-4; cf. II Jn. 4).
 3. True joy is found in fellowship of brethren with God and brethren with brethren. Such fellowship leads to an eternal life with God. Such knowledge ought to make the saint very happy.

II. Fellowship with God is based on one’s current condition (I Jn. 1:5-10):

- A. “*And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*” (I Jn. 1:5).
1. The primary declaration that was taught by Jesus and now delivered by the apostles to mankind was “*that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*”
 2. John made this proclamation regarding the nature of God in view of the very purpose of Jesus in this world (Matt. 1:21).
 3. “*God is light*” (*phos*):
 - a. “Pure radiance, perfect brightness” (Moulton 432).
 - b. “An appellation of God, i.e., spotless, holy” (Thayer 662).
 - c. “Light is the element and sphere of the divine” (AG 872).
 - d. “Light” (LS 878).
 - e. “Light is continually used as figurative of holiness and purity (Prov. 6:23; Isa. 5:20; Rom. 13:12)” (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary; pg. 777).
 - f. “Light is often used as a symbol of goodness, uprightness, or blessing” (ISBE; Vol. 3, pg. 135).
 - g. Clearly light represents holiness, righteousness, justice, a state of sinless perfection (cf. Eph. 5:8ff).
 4. “*in him is no darkness.*” Darkness (*skotia*):
 - a. “Moral darkness” (Moulton 370).
 - b. “Metaph. Used of ignorance of divine things, and its associated wickedness, and the resultant misery” (Thayer 580).
 - c. “Everything that is enmity with God” (AG 757).
 - d. “Of spiritual or moral darkness, emblematic of sin, as a condition of moral or spiritual depravity” (Vines 260).
 - e. Darkness represents the abode of the wicked (Isa. 13:9-11; Amos 5:18-20; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13) and the state of the un-repenting (cf. Matt. 6:22-24; Luke 11:34-36; Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:14). Light represents the state of God and His throne (I Jn. 1:5; I Tim. 6:16); God’s word (Jn. 12:36; II Cor. 4:3-6), God’s Son (Jn. 9:5); and God’s people (Col. 1:12; I Thess. 5:5).
 5. The last clause, “*at all*” indicates with forceful emphasis that there is no darkness of sin in God at all.
 - a. Clearly the nature of God is sinless perfection (light) and not the least particle of darkness is in Him.

- b. Light is said to dwell with God (Dan. 2:22).
 - c. The garments of God are light (Ps. 104:2).
 - d. God's brightness is light (Hab. 3:4).
 - e. God is the everlasting light to those who obey Him (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23).
 - f. It is the gospel message itself that calls one into this light (II Cor. 4:4; I Pet. 2:9).
 - g. The apostle Paul called upon the Romans (and everyone of all times) to "*cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light*" (Rom. 13:12).
 - h. Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life*" (Jn. 8:12).
- B.** "*If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*" (I Jn. 1:6).
- 1. To have fellowship (share) with the light of God we must walk in light (sinless perfection). Such a state can only be achieved through the blood of Jesus (cf. below).
 - 2. To walk in sin (darkness) is to be separated from God and to have no fellowship with Him or other brethren.
 - 3. There is no marring the lines of true discipleship with the Lord. One is either in the light or in darkness. A mixture of darkness and light does not exist. Paul said, "*what fellowship has light with darkness?*" (II Cor. 6:14). One who confuses darkness and light is one upon whom woe is pronounced. Isaiah said, "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*" (Isa. 5:20).
 - 4. God has ever demanded that His people "*walk in the light of Jehovah*" (Isa. 2:5).
 - 5. Walking in truth is walking in light (sinless perfection). To conduct oneself in light is to abide in the teachings of Jesus. When one "*walks*" outside the teachings of Jesus, it is called sin and there is a breach of fellowship (cf. I Jn. 3:4). That God demands our walking in truth implies our ability to understand truth (cf. Appendix # 3; Can we know truth?).
 - 6. The Christian is not to fellowship sin, but keep himself pure (Eph. 5:11; I Tim. 5:22; I Jn. 3:3).
- C.** "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (I Jn. 1:7).
- 1. One who walks in light is one who has been cleansed from all sin. This "*walking*" is a present tense verb indicating the ongoing action.
 - 2. Fellowship with brethren and God is dependant upon one's attitude toward sin.
 - 3. "*The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*"
 - a. The effect of the blood of Christ is the cleansing of sin (Acts 13:38; 20:28; I Cor. 5:7; Col. 1:14, 20; Heb. 10:1-14).
 - b. Cleansing of sin causes one to be without spot of darkness and thus in fellowship with God and others who are washed by the blood of Christ (Col. 1:22).
 - 4. To occupy sinless perfection (an ongoing process; i.e., cf. I Jn. 1:9; 3:3), we must be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). If sin occurs after baptism, we are to pray to God for the forgiveness of those sins for reconciliation (Acts 8:22).
 - 5. Clearly sin is the dividing wedge between man with God and man with man. If God is light and no darkness at all is in Him, then no darkness may be in the one who claims to be in the light. God gives us the remedy to sin, His Son Jesus.
- D.** "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (I Jn. 1:8).
- 1. John defined precisely what sin was in I Jn. 3:4, "*Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*"
 - 2. To sin is to violate one of God's precepts or commands. From time to time even the best individuals sin and need the blood of Christ for remittance and reconciliation.

3. The liar and self deluded say they have no sin.
 4. The Gnostics believed that they could sin and continue in fellowship with God and brethren; however, John said that this was not so.
- E. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I Jn. 1:9).
1. To *“confess”* (*homologeō*) sins is to “to agree to a thing, allow, admit, confess, concede, grant... to agree to the terms of peace... admit... make an agreement, come to terms with another” (LS 557).
 2. The present tense of *homologeō* suggests that one continues to admit and confess their sins as they occur (again, cf. I Jn. 3:3).
 3. One who has such contrition of heart (cf. Isa. 57:15) can expect God to faithfully forgive and cleanse the spot of sin off his soul. Sorrow of heart over a violation of God’s laws helps one to repent of said sin (cf. II Cor. 7:10) (cf. Appendix 4; Repentance and Godly Sorrow; A Proper Attitude toward Sin).
- F. *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”* (I Jn. 1:10).
1. One who claims no sin has obviously not asked God to forgive him of any sin, and thereby makes God a liar. This individual is in darkness.
 2. The apostle Paul gave a fact when he said that *“all sin and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23).
 3. We do sin and we do continually need the cleansing blood of Jesus to maintain our fellowship with God. Those who would advocate the impossibility of apostasy or the imputed blood of Christ theories (Jesus’ blood cleanses us past, present and future) have simply not read their Bibles.
 4. The child of God sins; to say otherwise is not to have the truth of God.

Synopsis of I John 1

The apostles declared the gospel message that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (I Jn. 1:1-3). The purpose of said declaration was to provide fellowship between man and God and between man and man in the realm of salvation. John precisely identified the message declared saying, *“that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”* (I Jn. 1:5). Such a declaration demanded that its hearers take an honest look at their own soul’s condition. To be a sinner in darkness is to be eternally separated from Jehovah God (I Jn. 1:6). God provides the remedy for sin through the blood of His Son Jesus (I Jn. 1:7). That blood cleanses the one who would hear (Rom. 10:17), believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Acts 17:30), confess that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10), be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and live faithfully praying to God daily for the forgiveness of sins committed (I Jn. 1:9; Rev. 2:10). Since God is morally pure and holy, He demands that His followers would be the same (I Pet. 1:16). This first chapter sets forth the elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ. That elementary principle is that sin separates one from God and the blood of Jesus reconciles one to God (Col. 1:12-23). No unclean or defiled person will be in heaven because the nature of God is light and there can be no darkness in Him (Rev. 21:27).

John’s epistle immediately dealt with false teachings of his day. The Gnostic who would say that all matter is evil and therefore Jesus was not really God in the flesh is defeated. John said that not only did he and the other apostles hear and see Jesus, but they beheld and handled the Lord. These three facts expose the reality of God incarnate (I Jn. 1:1-3). Secondly, the Gnostics and many today believe that they can continue in sin and remain in fellowship with God. John exposed this false idea and proclaimed the method for reconciliation when a sin has occurred. John said, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I Jn. 1:9).

Chapter 2

- I. Those who keep clean by the blood of Christ and obey God's commands enjoy true fellowship with the godhead (2:1-6):**
- A.** *“My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:”* (2:1).
1. The apostle Paul referred to the Corinthian brethren as his *“children”* to illustrate his spiritual relationship (I Cor. 4:15). Paul had preached the gospel to the dwellers of Corinth; many had obeyed and, therefore, he viewed himself as their father in the faith. John used the term in the same manner (not as the Father, but a father who cares for the well being of his children whom he has nurtured and taught).
 2. The *“these things write I”* refers to what has been said in chapter one, i.e., Jesus is the Christ who came in the flesh and died on the cross that man may have the remission of sins and fellowship with God. Secondly, John clearly pointed out that no man may have fellowship with God while walking in sin.
 3. John's conclusion was that if sin separates us from God's fellowship, we ought not sin. Man, however, is a free moral agent and chooses sin even though he is a Christian (cf. Jn. 7:17; Rom. 3:23; I Jn. 1:8). This being so, John said, *“and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*
 - a. The word *sin* (*hamarte*) (VSAA - - ZS) (Verb, Subjunctive, Aorist, Active - - third person, Singular) (Friberg 721). The active voice of the verb indicates the sinner himself as the one in guilt (he is not sinned against; he is rather the one acting in sin). The aorist tense of the verb *“sin”* indicates a past action (aorist = “a verb tense originally used in classical Greek that usually denotes past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action” {AHD 117}). John stated that a man, who at some point in the past sinned, may receive the forgiveness of sins because Jesus Christ is an advocate with the Father. Here we see the difference between one who sins in the past and does something about it (repents) in the present that he may be forgiven versus the individual who goes on sinning without repentance. Such a one will not receive forgiveness of sins (cf. I Jn. 3:8; 5:18).
 - b. The word *“advocate”* (*parakletos*) = “called to one's aid as a legal assistant, advocate, the intercessor or the comforter” (LS 597). As a lawyer would plead a case before a judge regarding the guilt of a client, even so Jesus is called as a legal assistant to plead our case to the godhead with the Father at His side. John's use of the term *“paraklet”* indicates the deity of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) (See appendix # 5; The Godhead).
- B.** *“And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world”* (2:2).
1. The antecedent to *“he”* is Jesus of verse one. Jesus is the *“propitiation for our sins.”*
 - a. The word *“propitiation”* (*hilasmos*) is “gracious” (LS 379). “The means of appeasing, a propitiation (Ezek. 44:27; I Jn. 2:2; 4:10)” (Thayer 301). “Expiation” (AG 375). The word is translated “sin-offering” in Ezek. 44:27. “Propitiation, expiation; one who makes expiation” (Moulton 201).
 - b. The English word *“propitiate”* means “to conciliate (to regain friendship; reconcile) (an offended power); appease” (AHD 993). The English word *“expiate”* means “to make atonement (amends or reparation made for an injury or wrong) for” (AHD 477). Jesus gave Himself on the cross for reparations and amended the breach between sinful man and God. He paid the price for sin and reconciliation (cf. Isa. 53).
 2. Clearly the word *“propitiation”* teaches us much about the nature of God and sin. When one sins, he is due the wrath of God (Isa. 13:9, 13; Rev. 19:15). God is the enemy of all sinners. There is no friendship or fellowship with God and sin. To reconcile the two

(sinner and God), there must be conciliatory amends made to Jehovah God who is the offended power. Under the OT system of sacrificing, the priest offered the blood of bulls and goats to expiate (amend or cover) the sins of the people. This was never intended to be a permanent amendment or covering (cf. Heb. 10:1-4). God offered his Son Jesus as a once-for-all-time sacrifice for sins (Heb. 7:27, 9:26; 10:10; I Pet. 3:18). God is not prejudice in any way but provided all of mankind a way of escaping His wrath (*“for the whole world”*).

- C. *“And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments”* (2:3).
1. To know God is to know His truth (Paul preached the gospel and called it truth Eph. 1:13 and the commandments of God {word of God} I Cor. 14:36-37). Truth is revealed as the commandment of God in the next verse (2:4).
 2. Modern day Gnostics who tell us that we cannot understand all truth are saying that we cannot know God. Jesus said, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (Jn. 14:6) (See Appendix # 3; Can We Know Truth?).
 3. Clearly the one who does not keep God’s commandments is a sinner and *“hath not God”* (II Jn. 9).
- D. *“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;”* (2:4).
1. The verbs *“know”* and *“keepeth”* are present tense and indicate that the individual keeps on saying I know him; however, he also continues to walk in rebellion to God’s commands.
 2. A glaring reality is that such a one is truly a liar and of their father the liar from the beginning (Jn. 8:44). Here we see the idea of a sincere false teacher obliterated (cf. Appendix # 6; Who is a False Teacher).
 3. Apparently one individual says, ‘all cannot know God’s truths’ and another says, ‘we know God’s truths but do not have to keep them.’
 4. John clearly painted the picture of two classes of individuals. First those who are in fellowship with God. Said individuals walk in the light obeying God’s commands and asking God to forgive them when sin occurs. Secondly, those out of fellowship with God. Said individuals may claim to know God; however, when they walk in darkness, they reveal that they have no true fellowship with God no matter what smooth and fair speech and argument they may give.
- E. *“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him:”* (2:5).
1. Here the association between God’s commandments, truth and His word is complete (they are all the same).
 2. The individual who continues to keep God’s word illustrates in his daily life that the *“love of God”* (the gospel truth revealing salvation) is *“perfected.”*
 3. The word *“perfected”* (*teleioo*) = “to make perfect, complete: of things, to make it perfect, complete, accomplish... to be accomplished” (LS 797).
 - a. Perfected (perfect tense verb {Friberg 721) indicates the present state resultant upon a past action.
 - b. Clearly the function of truth is to reveal information or instructions whereby man may enjoy salvation and fellowship with God. The individual who adheres to these instructions has allowed the word of God to accomplish its work in his life and is thereby perfect in Christ (a forgiven sinner).
 - c. The love of God is saving sinners through His Son Jesus. The gospel reveals this fact. When I adhere to these facts, God’s love is perfected (accomplished) in me.
 4. Such conduct, on the part of the Christian, gives one confidence that he is known of God and abides in Him with sweet fellowship. The Christian is *“in”* God (cf. I Jn. 5:20). To be *“in”* God or Christ is to keep God’s word and to let His love be perfected in our lives.
- F. *“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked”* (2:6).

1. A verbal claim to be in Christ is not the same as “*abiding*” in Christ. The word “*abide*” (*meno*) is “to stay, stand fast, abide, in battle... to stay at home, stay where one is, not stir...to stay, tarry... to abide by an opinion, conviction, etc.,” (LS 498). “Remain, stay – a person or thing remains where he or it is. Live, dwell, lodge” (AG 503).
2. In keeping with the present tense instructions to continue in the commandments of God, John stated that this continuing in truth is to “*abide*.”
3. “*To walk even as he walked*” is to conduct ourselves as Christ conducted Himself (cf. I Pet. 2:21ff).

II. Loving brethren equals walking in the light (2:7-11):

- A. “*Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which you heard*” (2:7).
 1. Hearing (listening and understanding) is the beginning of one coming to truth (Jn. 6:44-45, Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6).
 2. We have already examined the association between the “*word*,” “*truth*,” and God’s “*commandments*.” John’s beloved and fellow saints had at one time in the past heard truth and obeyed it becoming a Christian in fellowship with God.
 3. That truth that they heard from the beginning of their fellowship with God had not changed. Truth demands obedience, and therefore John had not written any new truths that they did not already have.
- B. “*Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth*” (2:8).
 1. Jesus had somewhat to say about this “*new commandment*.” “*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even 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*” (Jn. 13:34-35).
 2. God has always required His people to be a caring people (Mic. 6:8) (cf. Appendix # 7; NT Bible Love).
 3. The darkness of error and ignorance continues today, yet it is dispelled by the light of the gospel in others (cf. Jn. 3:19-21; Jn. 8:12). When you and I preach the word of God, it is out of care and concern for humanity. Such work of enlightenment is love personified!
- C. “*He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now*” (2:9).
 1. Earlier John identified the one that would say that he is in fellowship with God yet walked in darkness as a liar. Here the one who says he is in fellowship with God by walking in the light yet “*hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now*.”
 2. To walk in light is to walk in truth. To walk in darkness is to conduct one’s self in sin. Therefore, to “*hateth*” your brother in Christ is to dwell in sin and out of fellowship with God and other brethren; i.e., darkness.
 3. The word “*hateth*” (*miseo*) “to hate (to detest or feel animosity toward) (LS 514).
- D. “*He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him*” (2:10).
 1. Here the new commandment is identified as that which Jesus pronounced in John 13.
 2. To love one’s brother is to abide in “*the light*.” The word “*light*” has been intensely studied at 1:5, and it means to be holy, pure and clean. To hate a brother would be a spot on my holy, clean and pure heart which would dispel me from the fellowship of the God of light.
 3. To walk in light, regarding love for my brother, is to have “*no occasion of stumbling*.”
 - a. The occasion of stumbling occurs within the one who hates his brother rather than one who causes another to stumble.
 - b. To stumble is to sin. When one hates his brother, he will not warn him of error (I Thess. 5:14) nor help him in his time of need (I Jn. 3:15-17) (Again, note the Appendix # 7 on NT Biblical Love).

E. “*But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes*” (2:11).

1. The word “*darkness*” was examined in 1:5 and represents a life marred with sin. John affirmed three conditions of the sinner who hates his brother:
 - a. He is in darkness of sin (no fellowship with God).
 - b. He is continuing in his sin and therefore continues to have no fellowship with God.
 - c. He has no direction in life because the darkness of sin has blinded his eyes.
2. As a blind man stumbles in unfamiliar rooms, so the sinner stumbles through life. The Psalmist said, “*They know not, neither do they understand; they walk to and fro in darkness*” (Ps. 82:5). Not so with the child of God. The Psalmist said “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (Ps. 119:105).
3. The error of darkness blinds the eyes, and the God of darkness has His hand in such activity (cf. II Cor. 4:4). Here is the problem with those who do not know truth. They are deficient in truth not because it is too hard to understand, but because their hearts have been blinded by darkness (cf. Appendix # 3; Can we know truth).

III. John’s purpose for writing the epistle (2:12-17):

A. “*I write unto you, my little children, because yours sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake*” (2:12).

1. John addressed his audience as “*my little children,*” referring to those whom he has taught and was responsible for their conversion in 2:1. Now, in verses 12-14, he addressed not only children but young men and fathers. Apparently the reference is a figurative one which represents three levels of spiritual growth.
2. Interestingly, John used the Greek word *teknion* in verse 12 and then *paidion* in verse 13. The subject remains the same; however, a different word is used. A *teknion* is “a little child” (Moulton 404). Jesus used this term figuratively to refer to those disciples whom he loved (Jn. 13:33). The term is used figuratively in many other passages to represent a tender and loving relationship between two classes of people (Jn. 13:33; I Jn. 2:1, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; Gal. 4:19).
3. The Greek word *paidion* is a “very young child, infant, used of boys and girls. Of a newborn child” (AG 604). The word *paidion* is used figuratively to refer to infants in faith (Matt. 2:8-13; Lk. 1:59, 66, 76, 80; 2:17, 27, 40). It seems apparent that the word “*children*” (*teknion*) is used as an affectionate address and “*children*” (*paidion*) represents the fact that they are infants in faith (new converts).
4. Secondly, notice the present tense of the Greek *grapho* (write) in verse 12 verses the aorist tense *egrapsa* (I have written) in verse 13-14.
 - a. The present tense of *grapho* represents John’s ongoing writing based on the current condition of the disciples addressed.
 - b. John continued to write “*because your sins are forgiven*” (2:12). This phrase is in the perfect tense (Friberg 722) and represents a present state based on past action (“pertaining to, or constituting a verb form expressing action completed prior to a fixed point of reference in time” {AHD 921}). The children John addressed had had their sins forgiven and had been cleansed from all unrighteousness (1:8-9). They had received the benefits offered in Jesus who is the Advocate and propitiation for our sins (2:1-2).
 - c. John had “*written*” (aorist tense) “*because ye know the Father*” (2:13). The aorist (“a verb tense originally used in classical Greek that usually denotes past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action” {AHD 117}).
 - d. Much has been written about the various tenses used in this text. It seems to me that the tenses only indicate that what John has done in the past he will continue to do in the future. Jesus offers the forgiveness of sins and so John has written and will continue to write.

5. *“For his (Jesus) name’s sake”* reminds us of Peter’s statement in Acts 4:12, *“And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.”*
- B.** *“I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father”* (2:13).
1. The second category of John’s addressee’s is here given (the fathers). The fathers would be those mature in the faith. The verb *“know”* is perfect tense (Friberg 722). This tense represents that these mature Christians had known the One through whom sins were forgiven and presently know Him (Jesus). He was from the beginning (cf. Jn. 1:1).
 2. The third category of Christians addressed is the *“young men.”* Those Christians are not new in faith; neither are they older and mature in faith as the fathers. This class of Christians is commended because they have *“overcome the evil one.”*
 - a. To *“overcome”* (*nikao*) is to have “victory, conquer, overcome, vanquish, subdue” (Moulton 277).
 - b. That which these young men in faith had conquered was the *“evil one.”* This phrase is an adjective that describes the devil (cf. Matt. 13:19, 38-39). The phrase means “wicked or malignant” (Moulton 336). “Diseased and degenerate” (Strong’s # 4190).
 3. The first category (children or new converts) are said to *“know the Father.”* Those who have had their sins forgiven are known of the Father and know the Father (cf. I Jn. 3:6).
- C.** *“I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him who 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 evil one”* (2:14).
1. The same basic thing is said here with exception to the tenses of the words *“write and written.”*
 2. Again, I believe this places emphasis on the fact that Christians of all levels had their sins forgiven, had overcome the devil and continued in faith. John has written and continues to write to encourage them to keep that state of mind lest they fall to the devil. Their strength was to continue and not falter.
- D.** *“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”* (2:15).
1. The context to this point is a motivational speech for the Christian at all levels to continue in faith. Though each of these levels of Christians had to live in the world, the admonition is that they are not to become a part of the world (cf. Appendix # 8; Worldliness).
 2. Interestingly Jesus said, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life”* (Jn. 3:16). Why would John tell all Christians to love not the world when Jesus said that God loved the world?
 - a. The word *“world”* (*kosmos*) is used in a variety of forms in the NT.
 - 1a. The physical universe (Jn. 17:5), “the habitation of mankind” (AG 446).
 - 2a. The world of humans “above the animals” (AG 446).
 - 3a. The world in relation to the state of spiritual condition. Figuratively, *kosmos* is used as the realm of the spiritually dead. “everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e., lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, ruined and depraved (I Jn. 5:19)” (AG 446).
 - 4a. This realm (world) of the spiritually dead is ruled by the devil (the prince of the world) (Jn. 12:31; 16:11) and is under his power I Jn. 5:19. Clearly, Jesus spoke of the mass of humanity in John 3:16 and John spoke of the realm of the devil and his power in I John 2:15.
 - b. One who would claim to love God who dwells in light and in Him is no darkness (I Tim. 6:16; I Jn. 1:5) can in no way say that they love the world of the evil one. The

two, God and the devil, are on opposite sides (dark and light). We cannot serve both (Matt. 6:24; James 4:4; I Jn. 1:5). The Christian cannot have fellowship (share) in the world of sin and with God and salvation at the same time (cf. II Cor. 6:17-18).

E. *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”* (2:16).

1. The reason all three classes of Christians mentioned in verses 12-14 do not have cares for the world is because it represents the opposite of what God represents.

2. The world ruled by the devil is represented by:

a. *“The lust of the flesh.”* The word *“lust”* (*epithumia*) is “to set one’s heart upon a thing, lust after, long for, covet, desire” (LS 292). That which one longs for or desires is things of the *“flesh.”* The word *“flesh”* (*sarx*) is “flesh as the seat of passion and frailty; Rom. 8:1-5” (Moulton 363). Paul spoke of sins of the flesh (the seat or source of man’s passion) in Galatians 5:16-21.

b. *“The lust of the eyes.”* What the eye sees the flesh often desires and longs for (cf. Matt. 5:27-28). The fleshly eye looks to sin, but the spiritual eye to study and observance of the beauty of creation.

c. *“The vainglory of life.”* The word *“vainglory”* (*alazoneia*) means “false pretension (a claim to something...making an extravagant outward show), imposture (the act or practice of deceiving by the assumption of a false identity), quackery (someone pretending to be something they are not)” (LS 32). Those associated with the realm of darkness seek aggrandizement and elevation in the eyes of their peers.

3. The world of Satan is governed by such conduct and is thereby *“not of the Father.”* The fruit of the spirit defines what is of the Father (cf. Gal. 5:22-25). The phrase *“of the Father”* or *“of God”* is an important aspect of John’s writings that will be followed closely throughout this study.

F. *“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (2:17).

1. The realm of the spiritually dead ruled and governed by Satan is in the process of *“passing away”* (*parago*) with all of its *“lust.”* To *“pass away”* means to go from one place to another (cf. LS pg. 595). *“To pass by, pass on one’s way”* (LS 595). The world and all of its lust has its day; however, it passes by the soul of eternity and fades while the soul of man goes on in eternity. The souls of the world pass by with lust and make their trek to hell for eternity (cf. Rev. 20:15). The Greek word *parago* makes it clear that the spiritually dead do not pass away into oblivion but to a final abode.

2. *“He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”* Again John used the word *“abide”* (to remain or take up residency). The saint shall have residency with the Father for eternity because the *“word of God abides”* within (2:14). The *parago* of the spiritually dead is a passing away forever from the presence of God whereas the saints shall *“abide”* with God *“for ever.”*

IV. A contrast between one who abides in the teachings of Christ and the spirit of antichrist (2:18-23):

A. *“Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour”* (2:18).

1. John returned to his affectionate address to all classes of Christians and referred to all as *“little children.”*

2. The *“last hour”* is the time of the Christian dispensation (cf. Isa. 2:2ff; Acts 2:17; 3:24; Heb. 1:2).

3. In times past the disciples had *“heard”* of the coming of *“antichrist.”* Even as John wrote, there were *“antichrist”* already working and thereby the disciples knew that they were living in the *“last hour.”* Clearly the point is made that since God’s people had heard that *“antichrist”* would be apparent in the *“last hour,”* and since *“antichrist”* is here, we know

that it is the “*last hour*.” Moses foretold of the coming of Christ in the last days and the consequence of rejecting his authority in Deuteronomy 18:15ff (cf. Acts 3:22ff).

4. Who then is antichrist? Antichrist is the spirit, disposition, character or state of mind of one who would reject the authority of Jesus Christ and His teachings (cf. I Jn. 4:3).
 - a. False teachers of John’s day were teaching that one could continue in sin and remain in fellowship with God and brethren (I Jn. 1:5-8) and that some cannot know all truth (I Jn. 2:3, 21); they denied that Jesus was the Christ (I Jn. 2:22) and were denying the deity of Jesus (I Jn. 2:22).
 - b. These false teachers laid claims to be Christians and even worshipped among faithful brethren (cf. 2:19), but they could not endure the sound doctrine (II Tim. 4:3) and left the faithful.
 - c. To deny the Son is to reject His authorized teachings. To illustrate this point clearly compare I Jn. 2:23-24 with II Jn. 9.
 - d. Those who reject the authority and teachings of Jesus are antichrist (against Jesus and His teachings) (cf. Appendix # 9; Who is Antichrist?).
- B. “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us*” (2:19).
 1. The antecedent of “*they*” is clearly the “*antichrist*” of verse 18.
 2. The antecedent of “*us*” is clearly those who abide in the teachings of Jesus (2:24; II Jn. 9).
 3. Notice that “*they*” (antichrist, the spirit of false teaching and rejecters of authority) were at one time a part of the “*us*.”
 4. Clearly that which distinguished the “*us*” from “*they*” was that the faithful “*continued*” in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the “*they*” did not. The faithful in Asia apparently took a stand against those who displayed the spirit of antichrist, and so they left (cf. I Cor. 16:13).
 5. They were not “*of God*” and therefore are not “*of us*” (cf. I Jn. 4:6).
 6. These antichrist went out from among the faithful brethren “*that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us*.” The doctrine of Christ would not allow a marring of discipleship (cf. Matt. 13 the parable of the sower). Those who opposed truth were not tolerated, and the pure gospel truth was defended to the point that the digressive brethren left and by their leaving they were exposed as those who are antichrist (opposed or against Christ’s teachings; cf. Matt. 7:22-23)! Paul said, “*For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you*” (I Cor. 11:19).
 7. Ron Halbrook quotes Foy E. Wallace, Jr. quoting on I Jn. 2:19, “If these appeasers among us who are trying to decide whom to fellowship and not fellowship, what to tolerate and not tolerate would stop compromising anything and start preaching the truth on everything, the fellowship question would take care of itself like it did in John’s day... the pressure of the preaching of the plain gospel, if it is constant, will drive heresy and heretics out- they will not stay long enough to be fellowshiped. And that is exactly what John and Paul meant by what they said” (The Doctrine of Christ and Unity of the Saints pg. 19).
 8. Again, compare II John 9 with this verse (I Jn. 2:19). The “*us*” are faithful saints who abide in the teachings of Christ and the “*they*” are the antichrists. Those who “*hath not God*” are not “*of God*” and they that “*hath God*” are the ones who “*abide in the teachings of Christ*” (II Jn. 9).
- C. “*And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things*” (2:20).
 1. The antecedent to the pronoun “*ye*” is the faithful Christians holding and abiding in the teachings of Jesus.
 2. The faithful have an “*anointing from the Holy One*.” The word “*anointing*” (*chrisma*) means “anything smeared on, esp. a scented unguent, thicker than *muron*... Whitewash, stucco” (LS 895). “Anything which is applied by smearing; ointment, unguent” (Moulton

- 439). In the OT, Kings (I Sam. 10:10), priests (Ex. 29:7) and prophets (Isa. 61:1) were anointed with oil to signify the validity and acceptance of Jehovah God to their office.
3. *Chrisma* is a Noun – Accusative, Neuter – Singular (Friberg 723). The *chrisma* is the object not the action.
 4. Clearly the anointing here is figurative and represents the validity of the disciple as he abides in all truth. The saint that abides in the teachings of Christ hath God and continues in God having God's anointing. Clearly the words "*anointing from the Holy One*" are used figuratively by metonymy to illustrate the effects of the gospel's call. One who answers the call of the gospel is recognized as a Christian. Like the priest who was anointed by oil into the official office, so the Christian is figuratively anointed with the gospel call and is now a qualified saint (cf. Jn. 6:44-45). I John 2:27 clearly indicates that the anointing has to do with the gospel (truth or Word of God). II John 9 continues to come to mind, and it seems to be a thematic verse for these three series of letters.
 5. The true disciple has knowledge of all truth available to him. He can refute all false teachings of antichrist nature (again, see the Appendix # 3; Can we know Truth?)..
- D. "*I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth*" (2:21)
1. Verse 20 boldly proclaimed the state of the saint who abided in the teachings of Christ. They had heard the call of the gospel and responded by faithful obedience (God's anointing). As they abided, God's anointing (gospel truths) continued to do its good work in their lives. John proclaimed, "*and ye know all things*" (2:20). Their knowledge was sufficient to lead them to heaven (cf. II Pet. 1:3).
 2. The contrast between verses 18-19 and 20ff is now apparent. Those who represent the spirit of antichrist are made evident by their works. The faithful child of God had truth at his beck and call. John was confident in the saints that they not only knew truth but could distinguish between those who are false teachers and liars (cf. Appendix # 6, Who is a False Teacher? And Appendix # 9; Who is Antichrist?).
 3. John had previously written that truth is knowable (Jn. 8:32), truth would provide instructions to unity (Jn. 17:17ff), God is truth (Jn. 4:6), Jesus is truth (Jn. 14:6), the Holy Spirit is truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) to say we cannot know truth is to be foolish (Eph. 5:17) (cf. Appendix # 3, Can we know Truth?).
- E. "*Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son*" (2:22).
1. John had already identified the "*liar*" in 1:6, "*If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*" Again, in 2:4 John said, "*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*" John recorded Jesus' remarks about such conduct in John 8:44, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.*"
 2. To be a liar is much more than denying that Jesus is the Christ (the longed for Messiah who would take away the sins of the world). A liar is one who claims fellowship with God while living in sin. A liar is one who claims to know Jesus yet does not walk by His commandments. A liar is one who has not the truth. One of the spirit of antichrist is a liar.
 3. One who denies Jesus is a liar living in sin. To "*deny*" (*arneomai*) that Jesus is the Christ is to "deny (to declare untrue; to refuse to believe; reject... to refuse to recognize or acknowledge; disavow), to decline to give, refuse... to say No, decline, refuse" (LS 118). Such a one is termed a "false teacher" by the apostle Peter (II Pet. 2:1-3). I conclude then that to have the spirit of antichrist is to not only be a liar but a false teacher.
 4. The spirit of antichrist is further defined as one who rejects the authority of God (i.e., denies that Jesus is the Christ). He is one who says he believes in God and the Son of God;

however, by his works he proves himself to be antichrist (cf. I Jn. 2:4). So Jesus said, “*By their fruits you shall know them*” (Matt. 7:16). These individuals appear to be godly (cf. Matt. 7:15); however, they are of their father the devil (II Cor. 11:13-15).

5. The second clause indicates that one who would reject the authority of Jesus has rejected the authority of God. Why? Because God gave Jesus “*all authority*” (cf. Matt. 28:18; I Cor. 15:27-28; Eph. 1:22-23).
- F. “*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also*” (2:23).
 1. The premise of verse 20-22 is that truth is knowable, you know truth, one who rejects truth is a liar, Jesus is truth, to reject Jesus is to reject the Father due to their equivalence.
 2. The conclusion is now stated in verse 23. To deny the Son is to reject the Father, and to accept the Son as the Christ is to have fellowship with the Father.
 3. To prove this point, we consider John’s statement in John 1:18, “*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*” Jesus made known Jehovah God to His disciples and they in turn “*declared we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:*” (I Jn. 1:3).
 4. To reject truth is to reject the Father and Son (II Jn. 9). He who abides in truth abides in the Father and Son. We show our true faith by our keeping his commandments (cf. I Jn. 2:4).

V. **Admonition to those who abide in truth (2:24-29):**

- A. “*As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father*” (2:24).
 1. This is that “*anointing*” of 2:20 and 2:27. The object (noun) is the truth (anointing). The call of the gospel moves one to obedience and diligence (II Pet. 1:5-11).
 2. Fellowship with God is contingent upon one’s abiding in truth. Notice the conditional word “*if*.” Salvation and fellowship with God is conditional.
 3. What abided in the saints “*from the beginning*” that puts one “*in the Son and in the Father?*”
 - a. The Word of God (cf. I Jn. 2:5, 24).
 - b. Walking in the steps of Jesus (cf. I Jn. 2:6).
 - c. Abiding in the light (cf. I Jn. 2:10).
 - d. Notice that denying the Son and Father (2:23) is equivalent to not abiding in the word of God, life of Jesus and light of God. The one who does such “*hath not God*” (II Jn. 9).
- B. “*And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal*” (2:25).
 1. God has given a promise to those who abide in the truth.
 2. That promise is revealed in Acts 2:38-39 as the “*gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him*” (cf. Appendix # 10; God’s Gracious Promise).
 3. The anointing represents the Christians’ qualified status as saint by metonymy of divine revelation. The gospel calls one to repentance. To answer the call is to take advantage of the promise of salvation. The promise of salvation is the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 13:23-39; Gal. 3:8-14).
- C. “*These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray*” (2:26).
 1. Following the context, the antecedent of “*them*” would have to be the “*they (who) went out from us*” of 2:19 and identified as antichrist in 2:18 (those who live a lie because they do not follow God’s commands but in application reject his authority in their lives even though they claim affinity with Jehovah God).
 2. Why write, John? Because there are false teachers (II Pet. 2:1) who tell us that we cannot know God, that we can remain in fellowship with God and brethren even if we or they

continue in sin and that Jesus was not God in the flesh. Such damnable heresies cause a multitude of brethren to lose their souls, and John would not have his “*beloved children*” so self-deluded by the spirit of antichrist.

3. To “*lead you astray*” is all one word in Greek (*planao*) and means “to make to wander, lead wandering about... to lead from the subject, in talking... to lead astray, mislead, deceive, ... to wander in speaking, digress...” (LS 643). The false teachers digress from truth and hath not God. They speak and cause others to wander from the truth as well.
 4. Question: What if this *planao* is done “sincerely and honestly?” A brother may be preaching error on accident and unknowingly. The scriptures clearly teach that anything that is not of the truth is a lie. Whatever the false teacher’s motives, if it is not truth, it is a lie. There are many sincere and honest Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics and Mormons; however, their sincerity is leading souls to hell because truth has been sincerely disregarded (cf. Luke 8:15).
- D. “*And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him*” (2:27).
1. A person qualified to wear the name Christian by receiving the anointing (gospel call of truth) abides in that truth.
 2. Some (Guy N. Woods) believe the anointing here to be a miraculous gift given to certain saints. I deny that for the following reasons:
 - a. The anointing process indicated official office in the OT (cf. passages above) as it is used by metonymy here of saints responding to the call of the gospel.
 - b. Those who have the “*anointing*” were those termed “*little children*” (2:18-20 i.e., every child of God that fits into the three classes of saints mentioned in 2:12-14).
 - c. The word anointing is a noun signifying truth, and it is this truth that abides in the child of God (2:27).
 - d. John showed confidence in every saint who had truth and admonished them to abide in that truth and to use the knowledge of that truth to distinguish between the spirit of error and the spirit of truth (2:20-23; 4:6).
 - e. Again, those who need no one to teach them have been taught themselves by this “*anointing*” (2:27).
 - f. The erring of the world would like to teach the saint of God a different doctrine; however, the anointing (truth) prevents such from happening in the one who truly abides (2:27).
 - g. Abiding in this anointing provides a living hope of receiving the gift of salvation (compare 2:25 with 2:27). If only those who miraculously receive the “*anointing*” have hope of receiving God’s promises, what about all others?
 - h. To use the word “*anointing*” as a verb of action (endowed with spiritual gifts) simply reverses the meaning of the verses in I John 2 because the word “*anointing*” is a noun.
 - i. To have the “*anointing*” abide in me is to have God abide in me. To abide in God’s word is to have God abide in me. The terms are equivalent (compare again, 2:24 and 2:27).
- E. “*And now, my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*” (2:28).
1. All saints are called upon to take up residency in the Lord and Word of God.
 2. The reason we must “*abide*” is so that we be not ashamed at His coming. When the Lord comes again, “*the dead in Christ shall rise (from the dead) first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*” (I Thess. 4:16-17).
 3. To be found “*ashamed*” is to be found in sin (II Thess. 3:14).

- F. *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him”* (2:29).
1. To be *“begotten”* (*gennaō*) “to bring forth... produce” (LS 162). Paul used the same word in I Cor. 4:15 where he stated that he *“began you through the gospel.”* Men and women who obey the gospel are brought forth or produced as a Christian through the teachings of Jesus Christ.
 2. The one who follows these teachings of Christ is or has been “brought forth” or “produced” as a Christian.
 3. There seems to be a connection between being brought forth (begotten) and anointed. The Christian is “brought forth” (begotten) upon receiving the word of God, and so the Christian who is anointed.

Synopsis of I John 2

The apostle Paul spoke of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who did the work of *“perfecting of the saints... that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind or doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error...”* (Eph. 4:11-14). Knowing that the saints had the opportunity to receive the promise of God (salvation) (I Jn. 2:25) through the forgiveness of sins (I Jn. 2:1-2) John encourages the saints to continue in the faith. The word *“abide”* is used by John to encourage the saints to remain in the Word of God (I Jn. 2:5) and in the light (I Jn. 2:10). Abiding in the Father and Son is contingent upon these facts (I Jn. 2:24).

John expresses confidence in the saint’s ability to abide because of their knowledge of truth (I Jn. 2:20-21). Factors working against the saints was *“the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life”* (I Jn. 2:16). In addition to the pleasures and temptations of the world, the Christians suffered the onslaught of false teachers who taught that one may sin and continue in fellowship with God and brethren (I Jn. 1:5-6), that no one can know all truth (I Jn. 2:20), that Jesus was not the Christ nor deity (I Jn. 1:1-4). The churches were apparently being accosted by these false teachers who themselves were Christians (cf. I Jn. 2:19, 26). The distinguishing characteristic that identified the false teacher from the one who hath God is their doctrine (Matt. 16:11-12). John terms the errorist *“antichrist”* for their rejection of truth and the authority of Jesus Christ (2:18ff). They (antichrist) are liars (I Jn. 1:6, 2:4, 22) and are of their father the devil; *“the father”* of all lies (Jn. 8:44).

Christian fellowship continues to be the theme of the book. Chapter one set forth the standard to be met to achieve fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5-6), and chapter two admonishes the saint to maintain that character of life by abiding in truth. The word of God abiding in the Christian will give way to abiding with the Father and Son (I Jn. 2:24). Salvation (eternal life) is at stake (I Jn. 2:25).

Chapter 3

I. The begotten children of God (3:1-12):

A. *“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not”* (3:1).

1. John continues the idea of true fellowship with Jehovah God. The line of discipleship will not be marred. There is one true disciple in good standing with the Lord. This idea will continue to be brought forth.
2. *“Behold”* (*eido*) = “to see, perceive, look at... to see mentally. I know... to know... I know well...to know that so and so is the case” (LS 227). John calls upon the saints common knowledge (cf. I Jn. 2:21) that the Father loves us. The Father has *“bestowed upon us”* (*didomi*) love. The word *didomi* means “to give, to tender an oath... to give over, deliver” (LS 199). The word “tender” means “a formal offer, as: a. Law. An offer of money or service in payment of an obligation” (AHD 1252). That which is tendered is the Father’s love. God had promised this love (the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ) from the days of the fall of man (Gen. 3:15; cf. Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:13; I Jn. 2:25).
3. The Father’s love has consequences to the one that would be a recipient. Such a one is called a *“child(ren) of God.”* The last verse of chapter two gave the state of a Christian. We are *“begotten of him.”* As the begotten (cf. notes on 2:29) of God we are his *“children.”* The apostle Paul said to the Galatian Christians, *“For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus”* (Gal. 3:26).
4. What this verse says: Jesus came to this earth as proof of the Father’s love toward man (Jn. 3:16). Through the blood of Jesus is the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:26-29). Forgiveness of sins places one in fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5-6). Such a new state of man (once in darkness) is referred to as a new birth (to be born again) (Jn. 3:3-7; I Pet. 1:23). Such a new birth gives a man a new name (Christian), new relationship (fellowship with God), a new life, and a new hope. Such a one is now an adopted son of God (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5).
5. *“For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”*
 - a. The meaning of *“world”* (*kosmos*) has already been discussed in this study (cf. notes at I Jn. 2:15). The word *“world”* relates to the state of spiritual condition. Figuratively, *kosmos* is used as the realm of the spiritually dead. “everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e., lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, ruined and depraved (I Jn. 5:19)” (AG 446).
 - b. Those of the world are lost in sin, know not God, and therefore know not us (cf. I Jn. 2:4-5).
 - c. Jesus said, *“If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before [it hated] you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”* (Jn. 15:18-19).

B. *“Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is”* (3:2).

1. There are things that the Christian can and must know (the divine revelation; i.e., the doctrine of Christ, cf. 2:21; II Jn. 9). Clearly from I Jn. 3:2 there are things that the Christian does not know simply because they have not been revealed (cf. Deut. 29:29).
2. That which we have no revealed information about is what we *“shall be”* in the days after the Lord comes again and His saints are resurrected from the dead.
3. What we do know about our existence after this life:

- a. We shall be raised from the dead to die no more (I Cor. 15:20; I Thess. 4:15-18).
- b. We shall have a body fit for eternal existence (I Cor. 15:53ff).
- c. We shall be like God (I Jn. 3:2).
- d. We do not fully understand what this eternal state will be like because it is not revealed. Paul said, *“For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be confirmed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself”* (Phil. 3:20-21).
- C. *“And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”* (I Jn. 3:3).
1. The hope of resurrection unto eternal life with the Lord. Secondly, to be like He is motivates the child of God to *“purify himself, even as he (God) is pure.”*
 2. This verse states the same thing that I John 1:5-7 does. Our hope of such eternal existence is predicated on our being pure as He is pure.
 3. The word *“purify”* (*hagnizo*) (Verb-Indicative-Present-Active—third person-singular) (Friberg 724). *Hagnizo* = “to cleanse away, esp. by water. To cleanse, purify, from a thing” (LS 6).
 4. The present tense (active) indicates a continuous act of cleaning. The active voice indicates the fact that it is the dirty one that does the cleaning. This verse in no way teaches the righteous imputation of Jesus Christ. Some teach that the blood of Christ or His righteous life is imputed to the Christian and therefore we do not have sin. One thing to remember is that John has already said that all do sin (I Jn. 1:8). The key to understanding this verse is I Jn. 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
 - a. When a Christian sins, he is impure and dirty with sin. Fellowship with God is severed (Isa. 59:1-2; I Jn. 1:5-7).
 - b. The remedy is to be cleansed (forgiven) by confession of our sins (unrighteous acts).
 - c. Those under consideration in this verse are those who have already obeyed the gospel. They have rendered obedience through hearing, believing, confessing, repenting, being baptized and are trying to live faithfully.
- D. *“Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness”* (3:4).
1. To *“doeth sin”* is to *“doeth lawlessness”* and so sin equals lawlessness.
 2. To participate in sin is to make oneself impure (I Jn. 3:3), unclean (I Jn. 1:7, 9), or defiled (II Cor. 7:1).
 3. This verse proves that we are under the Law of Jesus Christ. To violate Jesus’ laws is called sin. If there were no law for man to be under there would be no such thing as sin (cf. Rom. 4:15; 7:7).
 4. The point being that if our hope of being with the Lord for eternity is to continue then we must not participate in sin. Once again, 3:5 reminds us of the hope we do have in Jesus Christ regarding our sins.
- E. *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin”* (3:5).
1. The antecedent to *“he”* and *“him”* is Jesus Christ. Jesus came into the world to take away sins (Matt. 1:21).
 2. The Christian is to understand that sin is a violation of God’s laws, makes one unclean, impure, defiled, and causes one to lose fellowship with the Lord.
 3. There is no sin in Jesus (cf. Jn. 8:46; I Pet. 2:21-23).
- F. *“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him”* (3:6).
1. To abide in Jesus is to take up residency in the teachings of Jesus (law) (cf. 2:24; II Jn. 9).

2. John indicated that our seeing God in the future is conditioned upon our being pure as he is pure (3:2-3). Later in I John 4:12 John stated, “*No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us:*” Now John states, “*whosoever sins hath not seen him* (God).”
3. Let’s break down the words of this sentence for further study and understanding:
 - a. The word “*abideth*” (*meno*) (Verb-Participle-Present-Active...) (Friberg 725) indicates ongoing action of taking up residency in the word of God.
 - b. “*Sinneth*” (*hamartano*) (Verb-Indicative-Present-Active...) (Friberg 725).
 - c. The verse may be therefore paraphrased, ‘whosoever remains in the doctrine of Christ does not continue to sin: Whosoever continues to sin has not seen (perfect tense) God, neither knows (perfect tense) God because he has sinned in the past without repentance.’ Greek perfect tense indicates current results of a past action. The action {sin} is no longer considered. The current result is that the sinner does not see God and does not know God.
 - d. To see and know are at times used figuratively in scriptures to indicate spiritual perception (Matt. 13:15; Jn. 1:18; 6:46).
 - e. The individual who goes on sinning just simply does not know God’s word. Lest the Christian find himself in this case, we are admonished to know truth.
- G. “*My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous*” (3:7).
 1. The badge of true fellowship with God is to do “*righteousness*” (*dikaiosune*). *Dikaiosune* is defined as “right, lawful, just” (LS 202). The one in fellowship with God is the one who lives ‘right, lawfully, and just.’
 2. To “*lead astray*” (*planao*) is “to make to wander, lead wandering about... to lead from the subject, in talking, to lead astray, mislead, deceive, ... to wander in speaking, digress” (LS 643). The location one who is “*led astray*” from is the state of being ‘right, lawful, and just.’
 3. Question: what does being led astray have to do with the one leading astray? Absolutely nothing. If a brother attempts to teach me his erroneous views on a particular issue and I follow him, I am just as much at fault as he, though we both are ‘sincere’ in our belief. That which we both are digressing from is truth (i.e., ‘right, lawful, and just’ living). The false teacher’s sincerity has nothing to do with this verse. While self-deceived or deluded, the false teacher and those who follow him are termed “*liars*” (I Jn. 2:4, 21, 27) (cf. Appendix # 6; Who is a False Teacher).
 4. God’s view of the one who would lead one of His children astray is conveyed in the OT at Deuteronomy 13:1-11.
 5. Again, the determining factor of fellowship and true hope is one’s actions!
- H. “*He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*” (3:8).
 1. Counterfeit fellowship continues to be exposed. The Gnostics and many today tell us that we can sin and remain in fellowship with Jehovah God. Not so says the apostle John.
 2. “*He that doeth* (continues to do) *sin is of the devil.*” The liars who do not speak truth deceive and delude others with their smooth speech. They are of their father the devil for he is the father of all lies (Jn. 8:44).
 3. Again, a distinction is made. Those who are of God confess their sins in humility, knowing that Jehovah forgives (cf. I Jn. 1:9). Those who are of their father the devil sin and never repent. Sincere as they can be, they are those whom Paul said are, “*ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (II Tim. 3:7).
 4. These are the hard-hearted and self-deluded. They think all is well when indeed they are the very malignant tumor and disease that they profess to hate (cf. Matt. 13:14-15).
 5. What are the works of the devil?

- a. Sin (I Jn. 3:8).
 - b. The consequences of sins (Prov. 13:15, *“The way of the transgressor is hard”*; *“Thorns and snares are in the way of the forward”* {Prov. 22:5}; pain, anguish, suffering, sorrows, hunger (Matt. 13:42; Rev. 20:15).
 - c. Death (I Cor. 15:26).
6. *“To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”*
- a. God said it would be so from the beginning (Gen. 3:15).
 - b. Jesus dealt a death blow to the devil when He went to the cross. The sacrificial offering of a sinless Jesus provides man with a way of escape from spiritual death (Eph. 1:3-9; Heb. 10:1-10).
 - c. Liberty is proclaimed in Jesus (Jn. 8:31), and death will be the last enemy the Lord destroys (I Cor. 15:25-26).
- I. *“Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God”* (3:9).
- 1. To be *“begotten of God”* is to be brought forth as a Christian through the call of the gospel (cf. I Jn. 2:29, 5:18).
 - 2. The Christian *“doeth no sin”* (*poiew ou hamartia*) (doeth is a Verb-Indicative-Present-Active- - third person-Singular; Friberg 725).
 - 3. Why is it that the Christian *“doeth no sin”*? It is because the *“seed”* of God (God’s word; cf. Lk. 8:11) takes up residency in the heart of the Christian and governs his actions. Therefore, the Christian *“cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.”*
 - a. John does not imply that once one becomes a Christian, he or she will never have the ability to sin. Such reasoning would contradict what he has previously said (cf. I Jn. 1:8).
 - b. *“Cannot sin”* (*ou dunamai hamartano*) (Cannot = Verb-Indicative-Present-middle voice- - Third person-Singular; Friberg 725). The Greek word *dunamai* is defined as “to be able, capable, strong enough to do” (LS 212). Clearly the definition and the tense indicate that it is not a matter of being unable to sin, but that the Christian is capable of not sinning on a habitual basis without repentance because the word of God abides in him. When we are tempted to sin, our knowledge of God’s laws are implanted wherewith we reject sin as Jesus did by saying, *“it is written”* (Matt. 4:1-11). The apostle Paul said, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom”* (Col. 3:16). Again, David saw the importance of abiding in the word of truth when he said, *“Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee”* (Psalm 119:11).
 - c. The Christian is not to partake of any sin (Rom. 6:1), not even one sin (Rom. 6:15). Yet if we through weakness, unintentionally, ignorance, or through out and out blatant error commit sin, we have Jesus Christ the *“propitiation for our sins”* (I Jn. 2:2) if we would but *“confess our sins”* unto *“cleansing”* (I Jn. 1:9).
- J. *“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”* (3:10).
- 1. True fellowship with Jehovah God and the devil is *“manifest”* (made known to all). Those who walk by sight rather than by the authority of Jesus Christ hath not God (II Jn. 9). Those who persist in sin without repentance through humility and great sorrow show themselves to be of their father the devil (cf. Isa. 57:15). Again the word *“righteousness”* (right, lawful, and just) is used. Clearly, the ‘right, lawful, and just’ is put in juxtaposition to the one who will not practice ‘right, lawful, and just’ living.
 - 2. The love of brethren is here introduced into the perfect form of the Christian. One who does not *agapao* (have a care and concern) for his brother in Christ truly is not of God.
 - a. This care is for a brother’s spiritual welfare (I Cor. 5:5; I Thess. 5:14).

- b. This care and concern is for the brother's physical well-being, too (James 1:27; I Jn. 3:17-18).
- K. *"For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another:"* (3:11).
 - 1. That gospel message that begot them as sons of God taught the brethren to love one another.
 - 2. Jesus said, *"a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even 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"* (Jn. 13:34-35).
- L. *"Not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous"* (3:12).
 - 1. The apostle John used the example of Cain and Able (Gen. 4:1ff) to illustrate the contrast between those who love brethren and those who hate.
 - 2. Cain *"slew his brother."* The word *"slew"* (*sphazo*) is to "slay, slaughter, properly by cutting the throat" (LS 784).
 - 3. Why did Cain kill his own brother Abel? *"Because his (Cain's) works were evil, and his brother's (Abel) righteous."*
 - a. We are given insight into this incident in Hebrews 11:4, *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh."*
 - b. Genesis 4:3-4 tells us that Cain's offering was of the fruit of the ground whereas Abel's offering was of the firstlings of the flock.
 - c. Clearly Abel made his offering *"by faith"* (in accordance with God's divine instructions) and Cain did not. Therefore, Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's rejected. Abel's works were *"righteous"* (i.e., right, lawful, and just).
 - d. Through jealousy and envy Cain killed his own brother because Abel did that which was 'right, lawful, and just.'
 - 4. What point is the apostle John making with this illustration?
 - a. Certainly the children of God and the devil are manifest by their attitude toward truth and righteousness (cf. I Jn. 3:10).
 - b. Able obeyed God's word and Cain did not!
 - c. Those who love truth will also love their brethren to the point of even seeing to it that their physical well-being is taken care of.
 - d. John's point was that if you do not care for your brother who is in spiritual or physical trouble, you do not truly love God and you are as Cain who murdered his brother.
 - e. Brethren who will not warn others of sin and brethren who will not help another brother in physical need are of their father the devil.

II. The contrast between love and hate (3:13-24):

- A. *"Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you"* (3:13).
 - 1. John told the saints not to *"marvel"* (*thaumazo*), meaning "wonder, marvel, be astonished... to look on with wonder and amazement, to wonder at, marvel at" (LS 359).
 - 2. Considering the illustration of Cain and Abel, one should not be amazed that those of the world hate the Christian. Cain's works were evil and Abel's good and the conclusion was jealousy and murder.
 - 3. Jesus and the apostles reminded us of this fact (cf. Jn. 15:17-19; 17:14; I Pet. 4:4).
- B. *"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death"* (3:14).
 - 1. The words *"have passed"* (*metabaino*) is "to pass over from one place to another" (LS 501). The area passed from is death (spiritual death) to life (spiritual life).

2. Paul commented on this passing from spiritual death to life saying, *“who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love”* (Col. 1:13). Again, Paul said, *“and you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins...”* (Eph. 2:1). Later, John said, *“He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life”* (I Jn. 5:12).
 3. The test of true life is whether or not we love the brethren. We are not as the world who hates Christians. The child of God is sanctified in that he or she loves the brethren. Jesus said, *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (Jn. 13:35) (cf. Appendix # 11; Two Distinguished Characteristics Revealed in the NT; i.e., I Jn. 3:10; 3:14; Isa. 57:15; Matt. 13:10ff etc...).
 4. As love is an indication of life, hate is a symptom of death (spiritual death).
- C. *“Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him”* (3:15).
1. This verse does not teach that one who hates is guilty of the sin of murder, but that murder resides within his heart. Cain hated Abel and went through with the hatred in murdering his brother.
 2. Jesus expressed this principle in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:21-22). Again, Jesus said, *“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* (Matt. 5:27-28). The act was not committed; however, the thought of the heart was a sin leading to the act. Murder and adultery in the heart have not yet found opportunity to express themselves.
 3. Eternal life is not for the murderer (cf. Rev. 21:8).
- D. *“Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* (3:16).
1. The words *“know we”* (*egnokamen*) (VIRA—XP) (Verb-Indicative-Perfect-Active- - - First person-Plural) (Friberg 726) are important to the study. The perfect tense indicates a present state of mind based on past studies. We (Christians) presently have knowledge of love because of Jesus’ past actions in this area.
 2. An investigation into the life of Jesus produces knowledge of love. Jesus laid down his life for mankind (cf. Jn. 10:11). Jesus looked upon man, saw the sinfulness thereof, and paid the price for that sin because he loved us (Isa. 53:8; Matt. 1:21; Jn. 3:16; II Cor. 5:21 etc.).
 3. Jesus is our example in life. What he did, we must do (cf. I Pet. 2:21). When we see a brother in sin, we must warn that brother (Isa. 62:6; Ez. 3:16-21; 33:7ff; Acts 18:6; 20:26; Gal. 6:1-10 etc.). When we see a brother in physical need, let us provide (James 1:27). John said, *“But whoso hath the world’s goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?”* (3:17). Clearly the love of God has not taken up residency in the one who would see his brother in sin or suffering and do nothing about it. Jesus said, *“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you”* (Jn. 15:12-14).
- E. *“My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth”* (3:18).
1. Our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20).
 2. When a brother is in sin, let us take action (cf. I Thess. 5:14). When a brother is in physical need, let us help (I Jn. 3:17). James said, *“If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?”* (James 2:15-16).
- F. *“Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him: because if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things”* (3:19-20).

1. “*Hereby*” indicates what has just been said. We know that “*we are of the truth*” because we love our brethren. The Christian will not sit back with indifference as their brethren are destroyed either spiritually or physically. When I provide that which is lacking in a brother’s life, I am assured that I am “*of truth*.” Jesus said to Pilate, “*Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice*” (Jn. 17:38). When a brother supplies that which is lacking in my life, I know he truly loves God and me as his brother. The mature Christian will not be offended when a brother comes to him exposing his sins. The mature Christian will not be embarrassed and offended at a brother bringing food or other helps to him in his time of need. The mature Christian will rejoice not only over the help but over the fact that his brethren are practicing truth (cf. II Jn. 4).
 2. The Christian’s heart will therefore be “*assure(d)*.” To be “*assured*” (*peitho*) is “the faculty of persuasion, winning eloquence, persuasiveness... a persuasion in the mind. A means of persuasion, inducement, argument” (LS 616). We are persuaded of our stand in truth and fellowship with God because of our active love for brethren. “*If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*.” It may be that I do all that I can do in the realm of brotherly love for one, and he or she continues in sin or continues in physical needs beyond my ability to help. The fact of the matter is that we need not feel guilty in said cases but understand that we have performed our duty. God has seen our actions and approved of them.
- G. “*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight*” (3:21-22).
1. To have “*boldness*” (*parrhesia*) toward God is to have “free-spokenness, openness, frankness” (LS 611).
 2. The thought is that when I perform acts of love toward my brother, there is no fear of condemnation from God. I am open and frank with God in my prayers for the object (individual) of my prayers as He (God) is open and frank with me through His word.
 3. As I abide in the teachings of Jesus Christ, I understand my responsibilities in the realm of love. Therefore, I pray to the Lord for the spiritual and physical well being of my brethren and am confident that I shall receive an answer to my prayers.
 4. Keeping the context of this verse guards against the idea that the Christian prays for anything (such as a million-dollar home) and should receive it (Ps. 37:4).
- H. “*And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment*” (3:23).
1. The previous verse indicated that if we keep God’s commandments, He is pleased with us. Verse 23 tells us what that commandment is.
 2. First, we are told to “*believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ*.” Notice that this is a commandment. A condition placed upon the Christian for salvation is belief. Following the context of this section, it is apparent that belief in Jesus is much more than a simple faith that Jesus is (cf. Col. 3:17). Belief in the name of Jesus indicates a willingness to do what Jesus commands of us to do and thereby we are recognized as His friends (cf. John 13:34; 15:14; Rom. 5:1-2).
 3. Secondly, we are told to love one another. Love and faith go hand in hand. If I love, I will do the Lord’s commandments (cf. I Jn. 2:4-5).
 4. I conclude then that to live righteously; i.e., “right, lawfully, and just” is to express my true faith in Jesus Christ.
- I. “*And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us*” (3:24).
1. Here is more confidence and assurance on the part of the child of God that ought to make us more joyous in this life. I know that God is in me (through purpose) as I abide in His words.

2. This verse has a familiar ring to it (cf. I Jn. 2:24, 28; II Jn. 9). As the Christian abides in the doctrine of Christ, God (the Father, Son and Spirit) dwells in the Christian through purpose. That purpose is spiritual and antithetical to dark deeds of the devil. As Christ dwells within us in purpose (Col. 1:25), so the Father and Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:2; I Jn. 2:24, 3:24) dwell within the Christian. Abiding in the word is to be in fellowship with Jehovah God!

Synopsis of I John 3

The Distinguishing Characteristics of Christians

I John three makes a distinction between the one in fellowship with God and those out of fellowship with God. Those in fellowship with God are referred to as “*children of God*” (3:1), those who do not continue in sin (3:6), those who love their brethren (3:11), those who love in word and deed (3:18) and those who keep God’s commandments (3:24). Those out of fellowship with God are referred to as “*children of the devil*” (3:10), the “*world*” (3:13) and those who are spiritually “*dead*” (3:14).

The one in fellowship with God will make mistakes; however, through a spirit of love and determination he will with a spirit of humility and contrition of heart, keep himself pure from sin (Isa. 57:15; I Jn. 3:3). This is not the case with the one out of fellowship with God. He is lawless in his deeds (I Jn. 3:4). The erring is of the devil due to continued practice in sin (I Jn. 3:8).

The test of true fellowship is found in I John 3. The individual who truly loves is in fellowship with God. This love is expressed in two ways (I Jn. 3:23). First, the child of God expresses love through obeying God’s commandments (I Jn. 3:24). Secondly, love is expressed in the Christian’s attitude toward other Christians (I Jn. 3:15). Cain stands as an eternal example of one whose works were evil and who did not love his brother Abel (I Jn. 3:12-13). The true Christian will care for the souls of others (I Jn. 3:14). The Christian expresses godly love by considering the physical well being of his fellow brothers (I Jn. 3:17). True love looks to the well being of others and is evidenced in the lives of those whom keep God’s commandments.

Chapter 4

I. A distinction between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (4:1-6):

- A. *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world”* (4:1).
1. The word *“spirit”* (*pneuma*) was discussed in I Jn. 2:18-19. This is not the Holy Spirit but the spirit of man; i.e., his character and disposition (cf. Jn. 4:23; I Cor. 5:3; 6:17 etc.). John admonished the brethren not to *“believe”* every teaching (cf. Eph. 4:14).
 2. Brethren are to *“prove”* each character and disposition or teaching (spirits). To *“prove”* (*dokimazo*) is to *“test metals, to see if they be pure... of persons, to put to the test, make trial of, scrutinize then, to approve”* (LS 208).
 - a. The test is given by divine revelation. John said, *“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”* (I Jn. 3:10).
 - b. He who practices truth and loves his brother is one of proven character. Truth reigns supreme in his heart. Brethren are considered with great love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us due to our sin (I Jn. 3:16) (cf. Appendix # 7, NT Biblical Love). The one who cares not for his brother when in sin or physical need is one who is of his father the devil. Let us therefore watch for the souls of men (Ezek. 3:16ff). Those who would call us watchdogs make manifest that they are of their father the devil. They truly have no love for brethren.
 3. The reason for such a test is that *“many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* That which makes them *“false”* is their teaching, not their character (cf. Appendix # 6; Who is a False Teacher?).
- B. *“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already”* (I Jn. 4:2-3).
1. The character of God is put in contrast with the world and false teachers. Each individual that *“confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.”*
 - a. Notice that the context reveals such a confession to be more than a simple, ‘I believe that Jesus came to the earth in the flesh’ much like we discussed in chapter three regarding the issue of having faith in Jesus being much more than a simple ‘I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.’ To say that I believe that Jesus is the Son of God is to be faithful to His commandments (I Jn. 3:23; 5:1).
 - b. To confess that Jesus came in the flesh is to be *“of God;”* i.e., to practice righteousness (‘right, lawful, and just living) and love your brother (I Jn. 3:10; 4:16). Those *“of God”* are *“abiding”* in the teachings of Christ (I Jn. 2:24; II Jn. 9). Such a one *“purifies himself”* (I Jn. 3:3) and does not habitually practice sin without repentance (I Jn. 1:9; 3:8-9).
 - c. It is the spirit of antichrist that will not *“confess the Son”* (cf. I Jn. 2:23). This clearly states that the *“spirit of antichrist”* is the mind of one who will not live ‘right, lawful, and just.’
 2. The *“spirit of antichrist”* is now fully exposed. To be antichrist is not to simply deny that Jesus came in the flesh, but to deny the authority and laws of Jesus Christ (I Jn. 3:10). The spirit of antichrist is to hate your brother rather than expose his sins and care for his physical needs (I Jn. 3:10, 13-17). The spirit of antichrist is murder (I Jn. 3:15) and lies (I Jn. 1:6, 4, 2:21, 27). This spirit sins and does not confess with humility and contrition of heart his wrongdoing (I Jn. 3:3, 8). This *“spirit”* is an attitude and disposition that is now in the world. Conclusively, the Christian can be one that is truly of the world rather than of God (cf. Appendix # 9, Who is Antichrist?).

- C. *“Ye are of God, my little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world”* (4:4).
1. The true saints are those who have “*overcome*” the false teachers of 4:1 who are clothed with the spirit of antichrist. To “*overcome*” (*nikao*) is to “conquer, prevail, vanquish...to win one’s cause... to win victory over one... to conquer, to overpower” (LS 533). The Galatian brethren had lost the battle against false teachers and thereby Paul said, “*O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?*” (Gal. 3:1). John rejoiced with the brethren who have overcome and overpowered the false teachers of their day who claimed that truth could not be fully understood by all and that fellowship with God may be maintained while one continues in sin. These brethren were not “*simple*” (cf. Rom. 16:19), but “*wise as serpents and gentle as doves*” (Matt. 10:16). Those “of God” are separated from those who would lead astray in that those “*of God*” live ‘right, lawfully, and just.’ Those of the world do not live ‘right, lawfully, and just.’
 2. The reason these brethren overcame the false teachers is that the word of God dwelled richly within. They were abiding in the doctrine of Christ, and thereby God was abiding in them (I Jn. 2:14; 4:16; II Jn. 9). God was “*greater*” in their hearts than the devil. The word “*greater*” (*meizon*) is from the Greek root word *megas* meaning “great, mighty, weighty, important... to esteem of great importance... what is most important” (LS 491). Clearly the reason for the conquering of the spirit of antichrist and false teachers was that the saints held the word of God as more “weightier and important” and certainly esteemed the word of God with great importance. Here is an attitude that clearly defines the child of God. God’s words are more important than human reasoning! Verse five indicates this to be the case.
- D. *“They are of the world: therefore speak they as of the world, and the world heareth them”* (4:5).
1. The antecedent of “*they*” is the false teachers with the spirit of antichrist; i.e., those who would “*lead astray*” (I Jn. 3:7).
 2. To be “*of the world*” is to be spiritually dead and of the devil (cf. comments on I Jn. 2:15-16 and I Jn. 5:19).
 3. Apparently John did not want the true disciples of Christ to be alarmed by the overwhelming popularity of these false teachers. Many heard and followed as they spoke because their words were not of God but of the devil. As we examine I Jn. 2:19, we see clearly what took place. The reason these Christians went out from the faithful brethren was that they were not able to endure the sound doctrine of Jesus Christ (cf. II Tim. 4:1-4). They were of their father the devil and displayed the spirit of antichrist because they loved not the Father in truth. Their words and actions did testify against them as the bleating sheep did testify against Saul (I Sam. 15:13-14). Saul claimed fellowship and righteous deeds, yet the evidence of his lack of faith was all about him.
 4. Jesus was never concerned with numbers and neither should we be (Jn. 6:60ff). Truth alone sees one into heaven; therefore, we cannot change nor add to the word of God (Deut. 4:2).
- E. *“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error”* (4:6).
1. Here again John militantly opposed the idea that only certain individuals can know truth. We all can know and will know even who it is that is of truth by this simple test John gives us.
 2. He that is “*of God*” first, “*knows God.*” To know God is to abide in the commandments of God (cf. I Jn. 2:4). Secondly, he that “*hears us*” is “*of God.*” Hearing truth is a matter of desiring to know truth (cf. Parable of Sower; Matt. 13:10ff). Many have no desire to know

truth and thereby think it is impossible for anyone to know truth. Their standard is their own apathy, and thereby they condemn themselves.

3. Those who truly desire, hear and obey truth have the “*spirit of truth.*” Those who have no desire represent the spirit of antichrist and the “*spirit of error.*”
4. The test of true fellowship with God is simple; those who live righteously (i.e., right, lawfully, and just) are “*of God*” and those who do not live according to righteousness are not “*of God*” (I Jn. 3:10) (cf. Appendix # 11; Two Distinguished Characteristics Revealed in the NT).

II. God is love and His saints must portray the same love (4:7-21):

A. “*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God*” (4:7):

1. The word “*love*” (*agape*) is defined as “brotherly love” (LS 4). Love equals “a strong affection (fond or tender feeling toward) for or attachment to another person based on regard or shared experiences or interests” (AHD 744).
2. To love one another is to be in fellowship with God and His word (cf. I Jn. 3:10).
3. To be “*begotten of God*” is to be brought forth or produced (cf. comments on I Jn. 2:29). To be brought forth of God is to be produced a Christian by the word of God, and knowing God equates abiding in the teachings of Jesus

B. “*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love*” (4:8).

1. The spirit of the antichrist has not love within the heart (I Jn. 4:3 compared to 3:10).
2. As God is light (I Jn. 1:5), even so God is love. Remember, to know God is to keep his commandments and to abide in Him (I Jn. 2:4). Therefore, John now equated love with keeping the Lord’s commands. Truly love is a commandment of God’s.

C. “*herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him*” (4:9).

1. This verse states the same as I John 3:16. Each of these two passages defines what true Biblical love is. True love takes into consideration the state of man in relation to eternity. True love seeks the betterment of mankind and especially brethren. True love speaks up when a brother’s soul is in jeopardy as Christ spoke up so often in view of man’s sinfulness. Jesus went to the cross, gave himself for man because man was in sin, and needed a way out of it. Christians today ought to love as Christ loved and speak up when a brother is in sin.
2. To “*live through him* (Jesus)” is to live by His divine standards and thereby receive an eternal home (cf. I Jn. 5:11), but more specifically it is to have spiritual life through Christ as opposed to spiritual death.

D. “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*” (4:10-11).

1. Here John stated clearly what loving our brethren was all about. To love a brother is to love as God loved us.
2. God sent His Son to save a lost and dying world because he cared that man was separated from Him in sin (Jn. 3:16).
3. John’s reasoning was that if God so loved, should not we? Why should I enjoy all the spiritual blessings offered in Christ and hoard them for myself? Why not love others by teaching and admonishing them to come out of error?
4. For a study of “*propitiation*” see notes on I John 2:2.

E. “*No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us:*” (4:12).

1. This verse appears to be the beginnings of an argument regarding love based on human sight and faith (cf. I Jn. 4:20).
2. Who is God and why has no man beheld Him?
 - a. The scriptures tell us that there is only one God (cf. Deut. 6:4; Isa. 46:9 etc.).
 - b. God is made up of three distinct persons:
 - 2a. God the Father (compare I John 4:9 and I John 4:14).
 - 2b. God the Son (Jesus) (John 1:1-3, 14, 29-30).
 - 2c. God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4).
 - c. The name “*God*” (*theos*) is, therefore, a proper name for the nature of the godhead (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9). God is one; yet the scriptures define this oneness to include three separate persons; i.e., the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit (cf. Appendix # 5 on the Godhead). The word of God states, as a fact, that no man has ever seen the complete glory of the godhead (cf. John 1:18). Yet, Moses saw God and multitudes of people saw Jesus; however, no man has seen the complete glory of the godhead.
3. *“If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”*
 - a. Love has been clearly defined as having a care and concern for brethren’s spiritual and physical well being (cf. I Jn. 3:16-17; 4:10).
 - b. This verse helps us clearly see what having the indwelling of the godhead is all about. We are not physically invaded and forced to do things beyond our control by the godhead, but we display that nature of God (godhead) dwelling within when we keep God’s commandments (cf. Appendix # 12; The Indwelling of God).
 - c. God abides (takes up residency in our hearts) when we love as He has instructed us to love. It is God’s instructions that we study, heed, and thereby have we the godhead within (his nature). Remember, *“God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (I Jn. 1:5-7).
 - d. As I walk by God’s divine revelation (truth), I am in fellowship with God and any other brother who walks the same. Truly we can say then that brethren who walk in righteousness are in each other and are thereby one. This then is what Jesus had in mind when He said in his prayer to the Father, *“Neither for these only do I pray (the apostles), but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me”* (Jn. 17:20-21). It was *“the word”* that was to cause brethren to be one and thereby be one with God. *“The word”* (truth) gave and gives disciples a relationship of being *“in us* (godhead).” Unity (oneness) among brethren is on equality with being one with God. That which Jesus prayed (oneness among disciples and the godhead) is achieved by a mutual stand for truth gained by a uniform understanding of truth. This verse destroys the ecumenical idea of unity and diversity!
 - e. Two consequences result from having the divine standards of God’s word instructing us to proper love of each other: First, conformity and unity of Christian’s minds result as God abides in all (Rom. 15:5-7; I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27). Second, God’s *“love is perfected in us.”*
 - 3a. God’s love is made known by the manifestation of His Son to take away sin from mankind (the very thing standing between God and man) (cf. I Jn. 3:16; 4:10).
 - 3b. This love is expressed by God’s people as we do not fellowship sin but expose it in the lives of our beloved brethren (Eph. 5:11). Such actions (along with caring for the physical needs {I Jn. 3:17}) illustrate the *“perfecting”* process of God’s love within us. The word *“perfect”* here (*teleioo*) is translated *“having been perfected”* (NM 943) and conjugated “Verb-Participle-Perfect-Passive-Nominative-feminine-singular”

(Friberg 728). The perfect tense indicates a present state based on past action as in I John 2:5 (“*but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected*”). What took place in the past was my understanding and obedience to truth, and thereby I am currently perfected. Liddell and Scott define the word perfect as “to make perfect, complete: of things, to make it perfect, complete, accomplish... to be accomplished” (LS 797).

3c. Now let us consider the whole of verse 12. Though no man has beheld the godhead, we know that He abides in us as we love each other. God’s love (care for the sinner) is perfected (accomplished) in me as I exercise the same love toward an erring or physically needy brother (Cf. Appendix # 13; Perfection in Christ).

- F.** “*Hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*” (4:13).
1. Though we have not beheld God, we have confidence (i.e., “*we know*”) that we are in Him and He in us.
 2. This confidence comes from our outward actions based on an inner faith. Paul said, “*faith comes of hearing and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17). The word of God instructs me to love my brother. The same apostle told the Galatians, “... *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” (Gal. 3:2).
 3. There is a connection between the “*hearing of faith*” and “*receiving the Holy Spirit.*”
 4. As Peter gave a defense in Acts 5, he said, “*The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him*” (Acts 5:30-32). To the Galatians Paul said, “*And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son then an heir through God*” (Gal. 4:6-7).
 5. We must understand that to have God in us is to have the Father (I Jn. 4:9-14), the Son, Jesus (Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27) and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11; II Tim. 1:13-14) dwell within us. What is said of one is said of the whole (Eph. 5:18-20). Therefore to have the Spirit is to have faith, just as having Jesus dwell within is to have the word of God dwelling richly within. Paul explained this saying, “*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...*” (Eph. 3:17).
 6. Therefore we have confidence that God is in us “*because*” He has given us the Spirit. If we have the Spirit in us, we have the godhead in us! All of which occurs through the indwelling of faith produced by the gospel message.
- G.** “*And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*” (4:14).
1. John and a multitude of others had actually “*beheld*” Jesus (cf. I Jn. 1:1-3). The Spirit served as a witness of this fact as well (cf. Acts 5:32).
 2. Jesus was sent into the world to save it from sin (Matt. 1:21).
- H.** “*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God*” (4:15).
1. How shall one confess that Jesus is the Son of God if the word of God did not reveal that fact? Again, “*faith* (that Jesus is the Christ; the Son of God) *comes of hearing and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17). Yet all may believe, as did the demons of Mark 1:24, but a simple belief is not what John has in mind here.
 2. The formula is now complete. To confess Jesus is to know and accept the word of God by divine revelation and make application of that word in my life. To do otherwise is to have the spirit of antichrist.
 3. When God’s word is received and accepted as fact, I have God abiding in me and He in me. This is a state of mind! To confess Jesus is to accept all of his teachings. To confess

Jesus is to know Jesus and to keep his commandments (I Jn. 2:4). I may not know or have knowledge of all Jesus' teachings; however, my character is such that as truth is revealed through study I accept it (II Tim. 2:15). I give diligence (II Pet. 1:10ff). Such diligence in study presents me as one having the love of God perfected in Christ Jesus.

- I. *“And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him”* (4:16).
1. To have the godhead within is to accept the word of God as truth in our lives and to have faith in that truth.
 2. Truth instructs us to love, and when I love I am displaying the indwelling of the Father, Son and Spirit. To be one with God is to share in His purpose which is revealed in the scriptures for our salvation.
- J. *“Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world”* (4:17).
1. The formula of love being now complete, John offered the consequences. To love as God is to be as God. God is perfect and so must the one who would confess the name of Jesus. To be perfect is to love as God loves and to illustrate a spirit of desire for truth through diligence.
 2. To have boldness in the day of judgment is to stand confident (in a spirit of contrition and humility) before God knowing that we have accomplished His perfection through faith by the instruction of truth (cf. Matt. 7:15-27; 25:30-46).
- K. *“There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love”* (4:18).
1. Solomon said, *“The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction”* (Prov. 1:7). Again, the Psalmist said, *“The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all they that do his commandments: His praise endureth for ever”* (Ps. 111:10). The child of God is to work out their salvation *“with fear and trembling”* (Phil. 2:12) and perfect holiness *“in the fear of God”* (II Cor. 7:1). Paul said, *“knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...”* (II Cor. 5:11).
 2. To fear is to reverence and respect the name of God. We fear God because we know of His fierce wrath against those who are disobedient. Paul said, *“much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him”* (Rom. 5:9).
 3. The wrath of God will be unleashed, *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness”* (Rom. 1:18). Again, *“The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb”* (Rev. 14:10).
 4. When our love is perfected through care and diligence, we have no fear of said punishment (cf. I Jn. 3:21). Our fear of God moves us to righteous living and thereby eliminates fear, not the fear of God but the fear of punishment. Hereby we see that the child of God can and must have confidence. One who walks in fear of punishment must be one who continues in sin.
- L. *“We love, because he first loved us”* (4:19).
1. Here is an explanation of our love as Christians. We are told to love as God loves because He is love (I Jn. 4:8, 16). God illustrated His love toward us through the sending of his Son to save sinners. Paul said, *“But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8).
 2. Such love on the part of God provokes love on our part. God proves His love to be genuine, and so our love responds by obedience to Him.

- M. *“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, cannot love God whom he hath not seen”* (4:20).
1. A *“liar”* shall have his part in Hell (Rev. 21:8). A *“liar”* has not the truth (I Jn. 2:21). A *“liar”* is one that does not keep the commandments of God (I Jn. 2:4). A *“liar”* is one who claims fellowship with God yet walks in error (I Jn. 1:6).
 2. To hate a brother is to not exercise CARE (love) for a brother’s spiritual nor physical welfare. Such a one who would claim to love God yet have such hatefulness is a liar and shall have his part in hell.
 3. Though no man has seen God (I Jn. 4:12), we are confident that God dwells in us through His word (I Jn. 4:15). God’s word instructs us to love our brother. If I do not love my brother, then it is apparent that I do not have the word of God and the godhead dwelling within me. Though I may make such claims, I am a liar by my very actions and thoughts. John then concluded with the question: How can I lay claims to loving God (whom I have not seen) while hating my brother (whom I see on a regular basis)? The rhetorical question leaves the answer obvious.
- N. *“And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also”* (4:21).
1. Clearly the love of God and the love of brethren cannot be separated.
 2. Jesus commanded that we love God and thereby love brethren (Matt. 22:35-40; Jn. 13:34-35; 15:13).

Synopsis of I John 4

The word *“abide”* is used six times in I John 4. The abiding concept of I John has been established previously in I John 2. To abide in God is to abide in His word (truth) (cf. I Jn. 2:4-6). John said, *“As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father”* (I Jn. 2:24). Truth instructs the Christian to love our fellow brethren (I Jn. 3:11; 4:7). When we abide in this truth (love of brethren) then God abides in us and we in Him (I Jn. 4:16).

A grand principle was laid down by the apostle John when he said, *“Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world”* (I Jn. 4:17). God so loved the world that He *“sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (I Jn. 4:10). Such grand love (affection and care for one) was illustrated through one great act as Jesus hung upon the cross. However, if one fails to recognize the reason Jesus went to the cross, we fail to understand the love of God and the love God expects of His saints. Jesus went to the cross to make *“propitiation”* of sins. While man was in sin, he could have no hope of eternal life. God so loved that He exposed sin in man’s life through the Mosaic Law and Law of Christ (Rom. 7:7-8; Gal. 3:19). God also offered a remedy; i.e., the blood of His own Son to remit man’s sins (Col. 1:13, 14, 20-22). How shall our love duplicate the love of God? God desires us to love as He loves. We duplicate the love of God when we expose sin in the lives of brethren and those of the world that they might be saved (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 5:11). Second, we duplicate the love of God in that we preach gospel truths to edify brethren and teach the world. Third, we duplicate the love of God when we care for the physical welfare of brethren as did our compassionate Savior.

Those who will not love as God loves expose their true identity. They are antichrist (I Jn. 4:3), liars (I Jn. 4:20), haters (I Jn. 4:20), ones who deny that Jesus came in the flesh (I Jn. 4:2), those who do not confess that Jesus is the Son of God (I Jn. 4:2, 15), those who do not hear the gospel (I Jn. 4:6) and those who do not know God (I Jn. 4:8). Those who do love as God loves will prove every spirit (I Jn. 4:1), love their brethren as God loves (I Jn. 4:7-11, 16), hear, understand, abide in truth (I Jn. 4:2, 6, 12-13), confess that Jesus is the Son of God and that He has come in the flesh (I Jn. 4:2, 15).

While some brethren confuse confidence for arrogance, the word of God exposes their error. The true child of God will exhibit an attitude toward truth. The word of God will be of *“great(est)”* importance in their lives (I Jn. 4:4). This individual will give diligence in study to know God (II Tim. 2:15; II Pet.

1:10ff). Truth reveals the Christian to be as God and so the person strives to be (I Jn. 4:17; cf. I Pet. 1:15-16; 2:21-22). There is no fear of punishment in this person because he is confident that he abides in God and God in him (I Jn. 4:18). The Christian in fellowship with God is confident because he abides in truth (I Jn. 4:17). Where do you and I fall into the picture of I John 4?

Chapter 5

I. The begotten of God (5:1-5) (Cf. Appendix # 14; “The Begotten of God”):

- A. *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him”* (5:1):
1. To *“believe that Jesus is the Christ”* is to be *“begotten of God.”*
 - a. The word *“begotten”* (*gennaō*) is “to bring forth... produce” (LS 162). We first examined the word in I Jn. 2:29 where John said, *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him.”* Again, John said, *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God”* (I Jn. 4:7). I Jn. 5:18 stated, *“We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not.”*
 - b. Here are the facts regarding one being *“begotten of God.”*
 - 1b. The one who does righteous acts is begotten of God (I Jn. 2:29).
 - 2b. The one who loves others is begotten of God (I Jn. 4:7).
 - 3b. The one who believes that Jesus is the Christ and loves those who so believe is begotten of God (I Jn. 5:1).
 - 4b. The one who is begotten of God does not go on sinning in life without repentance and confession (I Jn. 3:9; 5:18).
 - c. Conclusion: to believe that Jesus is the Christ is to do righteous acts, love others and especially those who love Jesus, and not to continue in sin without repentance and confession. Therefore, to *“confesses that Jesus is the Son of God”* (I Jn. 4:15) is to be of (I Jn. 4:2) and abide in (I Jn. 4:15) God. Those *“of God”* are *“abiding”* in the teachings of Christ (I Jn. 2:24; II Jn. 9). Such a one *“purifies himself”* (I Jn. 3:3) and does not habitually practice sin without repentance (I Jn. 1:9; 3:8-9). Furthermore, John stated that the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God is one who has *“overcometh the world”* (I Jn. 5:5). Here is proof that the justifying belief (faith) Paul spoke of in Romans 5:1 is an obedient faith! Those who overcome are distinguished from those who are antichrist (cf. I Jn. 4:4; and appendix # 9; Who is Antichrist?). The conquerors in faith do not follow the unfaithful faction described in I Jn. 2:19 because their faith is what is *“greater”* in their lives (cf. I Jn. 4:4) (cf. Appendix # 11; Two Distinguished Characteristics Revealed in the NT).
 - d. Question: Is one who is not a member of the body of Christ lying when he states that he believes Jesus is the Son of God or confesses that Jesus is the Christ? I aver that he is lying due to I John 2:4.
 - e. Question 2: What is one who confesses Jesus Christ before being baptized stating? He is stating that He purposes to abide in the teachings of Christ, keep himself pure, and now places himself (by the mercy of God) in a victorious position over the devil and his evil works (cf. Appendix # 15; What must one do to become a Christian?).
 2. *“and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him”*
 - a. Here again is the true test of discipleship.
 - b. If I say that I love God, then truly I love my brethren (I Jn. 3:10).
- B. *“Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments”* (5:2).
1. The Christian is confident in his faith. To love God is to love His children. I John 4:20 states that one who would do half (i.e., love God but not his brother) is a liar (regarding loving God).
 2. True love for God equates to true love for brethren.
- C. *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* (I Jn. 5:3).

1. One who claims to love God will not only love his brethren but keep God's commandments. Therefore, if one tells me that he loves God, yet does not keep his commandments, again, I know he is a liar (I Jn. 2:4-5).
 2. The true lover of God keeps the Lord's commandments, and these words are not "*grievous*" (*barus*). *Barus* is defined as "heavy in weight... heavy to bear, grievous... burdensome, oppressive... to hear with disgust... wearisome, offensive (LS 147). The true Christian is not "oppressed" with God's words.
- D. "*For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith*" (5:4).
1. The faithful child of God happily keeps God's commands and thereby "*overcomes the world*." It is the seed (word of God; cf. I Jn. 3:9; Lk. 8:11) that abides within and thereby we "*overcome*" (*nikao*). *Nikao* is to have "victory, conquer, overcome, vanquish, subdue" (Moulton 277). Liddell and Scott's Greek English Lexicon define the word *nikao* as to "conquer, prevail, vanquish...to win one's cause... to win victory over one... to conquer, to overpower" (LS 533). *Nikao* (*nika*) (overcome) is a present tense verb (Friberg 729) which indicates ongoing action. The saint continues to conquer the world (the realm of the devil) (cf. I Jn. 2:13; 4:4). The word "*victory*" is *nike* in Greek. The word means "victory in battle; in the games... victory over opponents... generally, the upper hand, ascendancy... to keep the fruits of victory... Nike, the goddess of victory" (LS 533). Apparently the shoe giant NIKE received its name from this Greek source. Interestingly, it is the Christian who is represented in the word Nike in relation to the ungodly world about us (Cf. Appendix # 16; Victory in Christ).
 2. The begotten of God is depicted as a conqueror, one who subdues his enemies and comes away victorious over our opponent Satan (cf. Eph. 4:10ff; I Cor. 9:25; 16:13; James 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10b). The blood of Jesus Christ enables such victory and so the Devil's head has been bruised (cf. Gen. 3:15).
 3. "*Faith*" in Jesus is the key to our victory, a faith that is not a simple belief in Jesus but is evidenced by an abiding obedience and love for God's truth. The true saint is a warrior for the faith (Jude 3).
- E. "*And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*" (5:5).
1. The victorious Christian conquers the world of Satan through faith in Jesus.
 2. The believer in Jesus is begotten of God, does not continue in sin, purifies himself continuously and abides in the words of Jesus with the hope of heaven being his motivation (I Jn. 2:25; 5:13).
 3. Again, this verse clearly indicates that believing in Jesus is not a mere mental accent of saying, 'yes, I do believe that Jesus is the Son of God,' but rather it is a life of faith. Abraham stands as an example of one whose obedient faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness (cf. Romans 4) (Cf. Appendix # 14; The Begotten of God).
- II. **The reality of Jesus revealed in witnesses (5:6-12):**
- A. "*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood*" (5:6).
1. The antecedent to "*he*" is Jesus Christ. Jesus came into the world, was baptized in water (Matt. 3:13-17) and shed His blood in death (Jn. 19:34).
 2. The phrase, "*he that came*" (*ercomai*) is defined as "to come within a little of, be near a thing" (LS 317). Jesus came near to mankind through baptism and His death, and so He remains near to the faithful.
 3. The water and blood signify the Lord's completed mission in this world that He may ever be near to the begotten of God.
- B. "*And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth*" (5:7).

To “*bear witness*” (*martureo*) is to “be a witness, to bear witness, give evidence, bear testimony... to give hearsay evidence...” (LS 488).

1. The Holy Spirit gives evidence and testimony that Jesus is the Son of God because He is truth and there is “*no lie in truth*” (cf. I Jn. 2:21). The Holy Spirit, being a part of the godhead, cannot lie because He is truthful (cf. Acts 5:3-5).
 2. John the baptizer bore witness to the Holy Spirit’s witness (cf. Jn. 1:32-34).
- C. “*For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one*” (5:8).
1. Three give testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ, i.e., the Holy Spirit, water and blood.
 2. That which the deity of Jesus points toward is found in I Jn. 5:11, “*and the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in the Son.*”
- D. “*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son*” (5:9).
1. This verse states that which the King James and New King James spuriously add to the text in I John 5:7-8, i.e., that the Father, the Word (Jesus) and Holy Spirit (God) bear witness to the deity and soul saving power of Jesus Christ.
 2. Here, then, is an argument of logic (reasoning from the lesser to the greater). If I can believe the witness of a human being, how much more should I accept the witness of deity? God (the godhead) bears witness (gives testimony) to the truths of Jesus’ saving work.
- E. “*He that believes on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son*” (5:10).
1. Again, to believe that Jesus is the Son of God is to have God abide in you, to abide in truth, to continuously cleanse and purify your way and so forth as discussed above.
 2. Such a one “*hath the witness in him.*” To abide in Jesus is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and to understand that eternal life is through Him alone.
 3. Again, the Holy Spirit is truth (I Jn. 5:7) and God is of truth with no darkness at all (I Jn. 1:5). The one who rejects the soul-saving power of Jesus has rejected the witness of the godhead and thereby makes Jehovah a liar (cf. Appendix # 5; The Godhead).
 4. This is the spirit of antichrist. The spirit of antichrist wants to claim faith in Jesus; however, this spirit does not want to subject self to Christ and thereby has not the witness of the godhead within nor does he have a true hope of eternal life (Cf. Appendix # 9; Who is Antichrist?).
- F. “*And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in the Son*” (5:11).
1. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, He explained to her that He could offer her “*living water*” (Jn. 4:10). This “*living water*” would cause her to “*never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life*” (Jn. 4:14). This water is mentioned by the prophet Isaiah (55:1), referred to as the well of salvation (Isa. 12:3), and mentioned again in Revelation 21:6, 22:1. Those who desire salvation will be distinguished from those who have no desire (cf. Matt. 13:16-17 and Appendix # 11; Two Distinguished Characteristics Revealed in the NT).
 2. The “*life*” mentioned here is eternal life. God gave this unto us (the begotten of God). Here is a statement of condition! When one understands that this life belongs to the one who would confess and believe in Jesus, one understands the conditions involved and lovingly accepts and obeys.
- G. “*He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life*” (5:12).
1. The life that is now had by the true saints is the hope of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 8:24). This eternal life will be collected as a reward from those who remain steadfast and faithful (Mk. 10:29-30).
 2. Again, John stated in II Jn. 9, “*whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and*

the Son.” The spirit of antichrist goeth onward, yet the faithful child of God abides in the teachings of Christ (God’s commandments) and thus he *“hath God.”*

3. Abiding not in the teachings of Jesus is equivalent to one who would deny rather than confess that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. I Jn. 2:23). To confess the name of Jesus is to abide in God and God in him (I Jn. 4:15). To abide in God is to keep the commandments of God (I Jn. 2:4-5). Therefore, we are confident that the teachings of Jesus mentioned in II Jn. 9 are much more than teachings concerning the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. The Lord’s teachings involve all the commandments of God! No such commandments, not even one, are too grievous for the begotten of God to keep (cf. I Jn. 5:3).

III. Prayer and its relation to sin in the lives of brethren (5:13-17):

- A. *“These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God”* (5:13).
 1. The *“these things”* John intended seems to be the contents of the entire epistle.
 2. *“That ye may know”* once again points to the confidence John instilled in his readers (cf. Appendix # 3; Can we Know Truth?).
 - a. We are to have confidence in our knowing God and being known of God (4:13).
 - b. We are to have confidence in our knowledge and understanding of truth (I Jn. 2:20, 21, 27; 3:2; 4:6; 5:20).
 - c. We are to have confidence in our obtaining eternal life with the Lord if we abide in Him and His word (I Jn. 2:25; 5:13).
 - d. We are to have confidence in God’s hearing our prayers regarding spiritual matters, eternal life and physical maladies (I Jn. 3:21-22; 5:13).
 - e. Said confidence helps us *“overcome”* the devil and his workers in the world (I Jn. 4:4; 5:4).
 3. Note that the word *“believe”* is a present tense verb in Greek, indicating ongoing action (cf. Friberg 730). The one who keeps on believing is the one who keeps on in obedience (cf. I Jn. 2:29 / 5:1).
- B. *“And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:”* (5:14).
 1. To have *“boldness”* (*parrhesia*) toward God is have *“free-spokenness, openness, frankness”* (LS 611). *“Outspokenness, frankness, plainness of speech, that conceals nothing and passes over nothing. Joyousness, confidence is the result or the accompaniment of faith”* (AG 630).
 2. This *“boldness”* was stated in I Jn. 3:21-22. Our joy of a future heavenly home is conditioned upon faithful obedience and thereby gives us confidence (boldness) while on earth that as we *“ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.”*
 - a. The subject matter of the petition or prayer must be in harmony with our confidence of a heavenly home (eternal life).
 - b. In this realm of promise (I Jn. 2:25), we may ask anything and the Lord will hear us!
 - c. As was stated in the comments of I Jn. 3:21-22, the petition will have nothing to do with earthly gain and everything to do with spiritual gain. However, as we examine the love of God toward his created being and the love He demands of us (I Jn. 4:8, 17), we find that our prayers may include relief from physical maladies and suffering, too (cf. I Jn. 3:16-17). Because we sin from time to time, our prayers must include confession of said sins (I Jn. 1:9; 3:3). Because of my love for my brethren and those lost in the world, I must include them in my prayers as well (Gal. 6:10; I Jn. 4:20) (cf. Appendix # 18; Praying with Confidence {Nehemiah’s prayer; LS; elders; church; members, family etc...}).
- C. *“And if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him”* (5:15).

1. We are to have confidence that as we abide in the teachings of Jesus, the Lord hears our prayers. God, however, does not hear the prayers of sinners unless it is for repentance (Ps. 34:15-16; 66:18; 109:7; Prov. 28:9; Isa. 1:11-15; Matt. 7:7-11; Jn. 9:31; Jn. 16:23-24).
 2. At times, the faithful may pray and not receive that which is asked for, but something even better, though at the present it may not seem pleasant (cf. Paul's request and God's denial for his betterment II Cor. 12:7-10).
- D. *"If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request"* (5:16).
1. The context to this point indicates that a Christian is confident in the future heavenly home as he abides in truth. Such confidence moves us to pray to the heavenly Father in confidence with relation to our earthly dwelling. Such a prayer takes into consideration heaven at all times.
 2. Since we are commanded to love our brethren's soul and care for their physical well being (I Jn. 3:10, 17; 4:20), John now commanded that we pray for our **brother** who is in sin.
 3. Let's view the facts about prayer and sin:
 - a. Sin equals lawlessness and unrighteous acts (I Jn. 3:4; 5:17).
 - 1a. The one *"of God"* does not continue in sin (I Jn. 3:9).
 - 2a. The one *"of the devil"* continues in sin (I Jn. 3:8, 10).
 - 3a. A premise is therefore established; i.e., All sin, but the righteous do not continue in sin. The righteous repent and confess their sins and those of the devil do not.
 - b. Repentance is demanded and brought forth by truth (Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38, 17:30; II Cor. 7:9).
 - c. Repentance moves one to *"confess"* his sins (II Cor. 7:9; I Jn. 1:9).
 - d. Desire for heaven and truth motivates one to so purify self (Matt. 13:16-17; I Jn. 3:3).
 - e. Another premise is therefore established: God will forgive the sinner who confesses his sin (I Jn. 1:9); however, he will not forgive nor hear the prayers of a sinner who continues in his sin through stubbornness and hardness of heart (Ps. 51; Isa. 57:15; 66:2).
 - f. The sin *"not unto death"* must therefore be the sin a Christian commits and receives forgiveness through humility and contrition of heart (I Jn. 1:9; 3:3).
 4. How then shall a brother pray for a sinning brother who is currently in sin? Clearly the text indicates the brother is *"sinning a sin not unto death."* I believe there are two scenarios that will fit this mold.
 - a. Our prayers are to be directed at the sinning brother, yet forgiven through humility and prayer, to help him remain strongly opposed to his temptations.
 - b. Secondly, if the brother is presently continuing in his sin yet has displayed a *"spirit"* of truth in our past dealings, we shall pray that he see the error of his ways and repent (I Jn. 4:6).
 5. There is also a *"sin unto death."* The *"sin unto death"* can only be a statement that indicates the character of a brother who continues in sin. This brother has no real desire for truth and he has manifested a *"spirit of error"* (I Jn. 4:6). A judgment is therefore made on the faithful child of God's part regarding this erring brother. If the brother has fallen away and clearly has no intentions of returning to the Lord, I am commanded not to pray for such because he has no real desire to serve God.
 6. What I John 5:16 helps us understand is that we are to be on the lookout for our brethren in sin. John used the word *"see."* Herein is true love exhibited toward a brother in Christ (I Jn. 3:16; 4:10). To pray for a brother in sin to come to his senses and repent is to have the love of God (I Jn. 4:17; cf. II Pet. 3:9). We are commanded, however, to not pray for one who has fit the description of the spirit of error (I Jn. 4:6).
- E. *"All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death"* (5:17).

1. As lawlessness is sin (I Jn. 3:4), so unrighteousness is sin (5:17). We earlier defined righteousness as “right, lawful, and just” living. To be “*unrighteous*” would be a life not “right, lawful and just” in relation to the Law of Christ.
2. Given that God’s commandments are righteous (Ps. 119:172), it stands to reason that sin is considered lawlessness. God’s commandments are law, and therefore to violate God’s law is to practice sin. Sin is, therefore, properly defined as “unrighteousness, unlawful, and unjust” living.
3. Again, the only sin “*not unto death*” would be the sins I ask God to forgive me of. Otherwise, spiritual death awaits the un-repenting sinner.

IV. The true character of the Godly and final admonitions (5:18-21):

- A. “*We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not*” (5:18).
 1. To be “*begotten of God*” is:
 - a. To “*Believe that Jesus is the Christ*” (I Jn. 5:1).
 - b. “*Everyone that loves*” (I Jn. 4:7).
 - c. “*Everyone that does righteousness*” (I Jn. 2:29).
 2. Chapter 5:18 now reveals God’s desired character as one “*begotten of God sinneth not*” (cf. I Jn. 3:9). The word “*sinneth*” is a present tense Greek word indicating ongoing action (Friberg 731). The Godly man or woman will have a heart willing to repent and press forward after sin.
 3. Secondly, the Godly character “*keeps himself*.” The word “*keep*” (*tereo*) means “to watch over, keep watch... to watch or look out” (LS 805). Not only is the Godly character one who watches for the souls of his brethren (cf. 5:16), but he watches over his own soul’s condition.
 4. With such a deliberate purpose in life, John said, “*the evil one touches him not*.” The evil one is the devil (I Jn. 3:8). To “*touch*” (*haptomai*) is to “fasten oneself to, cling to, hang on by, lay hold of, grasp, touch... to set up, attack, assail” (LS 112). Moulton adds that the word means to harm (49). This character trait of the Christian is powerful. The character that takes care of sin as it occurs (I Jn. 3:3) thereby gives no place for the devil to abide. The Christian is not to allow the devil to attach himself to us.
- B. “*We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one*” (5:19).
 1. To be “*of God*” is to have the “*spirit of truth*” (cf. I Jn. 4:1-6). The child of God is one who is begotten or produced by truth as a Christian. These are the foreknown, foreordained, called, justified and eventually glorified (Rom. 8:29-30).
 2. On the other end of the spiritual spectrum is the spiritually dead. These comprise the “*world*” (cf. I Jn. 2:15-17) and are of the devil who rules the world (Eph. 2:2, 6:11).
- C. “*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we 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*” (5:20).
 1. To confess that Jesus has come in the flesh is to be “*of God*” (I Jn. 4:2).
 2. To have understanding through faith that Jesus is and that this truth abides within is to be “*of God*” (I Jn. 2:29).
 3. To be “*in him*” (Jesus) is to be in fellowship with the Lord abiding in His truths (I Jn. 1:3, 5-6; 2:6, 24; cf. Gal. 3:27).
 4. “*This is the true God, and eternal*.” The deity of Jesus now proclaimed, John takes us back to the very beginning of his epistle. He had said that “*we*” (the apostles) had declared unto you Jesus who is “*the eternal life*.” Eternal life exists in prospect only through Jesus for those whose character fit the mold the Lord has formed through His word!
- D. “*My little children, guard yourselves from idols*” (5:21).
 1. The word “*idols*” (*eidolon*) is from the root word *eido* and Latin *Video*. It is defined as “a form, shape, figure; image or statue; hence, an idol, image of a god” (Moulton 117). The

word *eido* is used in II Cor. 5:7, “*for we walk by faith, not by sight.*” Liddell and Scott define *eido* as “to see, perceive, behold” (227). The act of worshipping an image based upon human perception is idolatry. The Christian does not worship based upon “*sight (eido)*” but upon “*faith*” (divine revelation). Many today are looking for a feel-good see-something religion. The word of God, however, is a system of instructions for Godly living. Those who reject the teachings of Christ and use their own human perception are practicing idolatry. Humanism is therefore idolatry defined.

2. Idolatry comes in a variety of forms other than worshipping false gods. One may exclaim with vigor that they would not participate in idolatry, yet have no problem with worshipping God in unauthorized ways. Consider Isaiah 46:12 in its context of idolatry. Those idolaters of Judah were “*stouthearted, that are far from righteousness.*” I Samuel 15:23 stated the nature of idolatry as well. “*For rebellion is as the sin of withcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou has rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*” The rebellious are stouthearted and stubborn as is evidenced by their rejection of the authority of God. Saul did what he thought was best rather than what God commanded, and so it was with Judah in the days of Isaiah. Many today want to do what they think best rather than following God’s divine standard. Children’s church, theatrics, food fest, lock-ins, and games to name a few are ways some churches are attempting to raise attendance.
3. Christians are to therefore “*guard*” ourselves from idols (human reasoning). The word “*guard*” (*phulasso*) = “to keep watch and ward, keep guard... be on one’s guard against, shun...” (LS 874-875).

Synopsis of I John 5

Evidences of true faith in Jesus

A true faith in Jesus as the Son of God is evidenced in one’s obedience to truth. Truth is not oppressive or offensive to the one who is of God (I Jn. 5:3). Through this faith in truth the Christian is able to “*overcome the world*” (I Jn. 5:4-5). Faith in Jesus eventually leads the victorious saint to eternal life (I Jn. 5:11-12). I John 5 is a chapter of confidence. The child of God can be confident in his eternal abode (I Jn. 5:13). The child of God can be confident in his understanding of truth (I Jn. 5:20). The child of God can be confident in the fact that God answers our prayers on behalf of ourselves and others (I Jn. 5:14-15).

John’s final words display a heart that truly cares for people’s souls. We are to be on the watch for our own soul’s sake (I Jn. 5:18). Second, Christians are commanded to be on the look out for brethren who may be in sin and help them out of it (I Jn. 5:16). A clear distinction is made between the one who is “*of God*” and the one who is not of God. Those of God understand and follow truth (I Jn. 5:20). Those not of God are of the world and “*lie in the evil one*” (I Jn. 5:19). The clear distinction between those “*of God*” and those “*not of God*” is now complete (cf. I Jn. 3:10).