

“He Who Was From The Beginning”

The Revelation of Jesus

THE CHRIST

As revealed to the apostle John



“All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” John 1:3

By: Leroy Surface

John's revelation of Jesus
“The Christ”

**(A verse by verse commentary
on the first epistle of John)**

By Leroy Surface

**Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ
is born of God.**

I John 5:1

Study Course

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John's revelation of Jesus **"The Christ, The Son of God"**

I John 2:22: *"Who is a liar but he that denieth that **Jesus is the Christ?**"*

I John 5:1: *"Whosoever believeth that **Jesus is the Christ** is born of God."*

This epistle, written by the beloved apostle John is a "*primer*" for young Christians. Due to the fact that most people receive their Christian education from the precepts of men rather than from the Word of God, it is commonly believed that John's epistle is too deep to be understood by new converts, but I present that it is only those who have recently and truly been "*born again*" who can readily believe what the apostle says. The traditions of man's religion have blinded the eyes of millions to the great truth of the gospel of Christ, and they cannot see because, as John says in I John 2:11, "*darkness hath blinded their eyes.*"

Not only is this epistle a "*primer*" for new converts, it is filled with numerous "*tests*" throughout, many of them beginning with the words "*hereby we know,*" and "*by this we know,*" testing the understanding of the child of God. If the "*student*" receives the "*knowledge of the truth,*" he will, as Jesus also said, "*be made free.*" Only then will he understand the conclusion that John gives in the final verses of his epistle:

I John 5:18: *"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not."*

I John 5:20: *"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ."*

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Introduction and Conclusion

The apostle Paul tells us that the “*riches of Christ*” are “*unsearchable*,” meaning that no one person or group of people will ever be able to see and understand everything there is to be seen and understood about Christ. That being understood, it is not an excuse for us to not be found searching the scriptures and diligently seeking God for understanding of those things that were first revealed to the apostles by the Holy Ghost. Sadly, most Christians are content to “*believe*” what someone else has written about the scriptures instead of searching the scriptures and seeking God for themselves. This is a great error, one which has caused the church of Jesus Christ to stagnate and die. I do not claim that this commentary which I have written contains everything that can be understood about the truth the apostle reveals in his epistle of First John. I am aware, however, that I have written things that many people have never heard in their lifetime, but that does not negate the truth of the things I have seen and heard from God and have written in this book. It is certain that someone will see and understand more than I have seen and understood, but when they do, they will not deny the truth you will find in this commentary. My purpose, which God has given me, is to point to things others may not have seen, and thus effect them to search the scriptures and diligently seek God for understanding of the same things. Those who do so will one day see and understand more than I have seen and understood and they will also know and enjoy the “*glorious liberty*” from sin, Satan, and the world that belongs to the children of God.

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Section One: “*The Word of Life*” I John 1:1-5

Section One

The Word of Life

1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

The purpose of John’s epistle is to give, for all time and to every generation, the proof that Jesus of Nazareth is “*The Christ, the Son of God.*” John is the last of the twelve original apostles when he writes this epistle to give his eyewitness account of Jesus Christ. The importance of understanding who Jesus is and what He came into the world to do is shown in I John 2: 22; “*Who is a liar but he that denieth that **Jesus is the Christ**? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son,*” and in I John 5:1; “*Whosoever believeth that **Jesus is the Christ** is born of God.*”

“That which...” John is not speaking about a “*thing*” in this epistle. He is not presenting another philosophy to be considered by men. Instead, his epistle is all about “*the person*” of Christ, who was “*from the beginning.*” It is of necessity that I point out an error in the translation of the first two words of this epistle. The Greek word that was translated as “*that which*” is “*hos hē ho,*” which Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary defines as “*the relative (sometimes demonstrative) pronoun, who, which, what, that.*” With that understood, it becomes obvious that John spoke of “*He who*” instead of “*that which.*” This first verse of I John should have been translated as follows:

He who was from the beginning, whom we have heard, whom we have seen with our eyes, whom we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.

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"He who was from the beginning..." Several years before writing his first epistle, John began his gospel with the words *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"* (John 1:1). This is who John speaks of when he writes *"He who was from the beginning."* Genesis, the first book of the bible, begins with the words *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). In John 1:2-3, the apostle makes the connection between *"He who was from the beginning"* and the Genesis account; *"The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."*

John wrote this epistle to give his eyewitness account of exactly who *"Jesus of Nazareth"* really is. The apostle Paul received the *"Revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Galatians 1:11-12) and gave us the *"Gospel of Christ"* (Romans 1:16), which tells us what Christ did for us when He shed His precious blood and died for us. The apostle John received the same *"Revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Revelation 1:1) and gave us the *"Doctrine of Christ"* (II John 1:9). The *"gospel of Christ"* begins with the incarnation, when Jesus was born to the virgin Mary. The *"doctrine of Christ"* begins with *"the beginning,"* before time began, when there were no heavens, no earth, but only God.

John's introductory words, *"He who was from the beginning,"* are a reference to his own words in John 1:1 which say, *"In the beginning was the Word."* Christ is ***"the Word"*** who was *"in the beginning with God,"* and who *"was God."* It is *"by Him"* that the universe was made, and *"without Him was not anything made that was made"* (John 1:3).

For a more complete understanding of John's words, we must look at the definition of the Greek word *"logos,"* which was

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translated as “*the Word*” in all of John’s writings. Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary defines “*logos* (#3056)” as follows: “*Something said* (including the thought); *by implication a topic* (subject of discourse), *also reasoning* (the mental faculty) *or motive*; *by extension a computation*; ***specifically (with the article in John) THE DIVINE EXPRESSION (that is, CHRIST).***” The word “*logos*” can be used to indicate “*something said*,” or a “*topic of discourse*,” but when the apostle John places the definite article “*the* (ho hē to)” in connection with “*logos*,” the proper definition is “*The Divine Expression*,” which always speaks of “*The Christ*” who was “*in the beginning with God*.”

“...whom we have heard, whom we have seen with our eyes, whom we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word (the ‘divine expression’) of life...”

John was one of the original disciples who walked with Jesus for three years before the crucifixion. From the first day he met Jesus, John believed He was “*the Christ*” that was promised to come into the world. The common thought among the Jews in that day, however, was that “*Christ*,” when he came would only be a “*man*,” the “*son of David*” (Matthew 22:41-45). When Philip first met Jesus, he told Nathanael, “*We have found him* (the Christ), *of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*” (John 1:45). The first of the disciples to believe that Jesus is “*the Son of God*” was Peter, who told Jesus “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16). John’s “*revelation of Jesus Christ*” goes far beyond anything the other eyewitness apostles wrote. John understood that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, “***whom*** we have heard, ***whom*** we have seen with our eyes, ***whom*** we have looked upon, and our hands have handled,” is also “*the Word of life*” who was “*in the beginning with God*” and who “*was God*.”

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There are several things John has established about Christ to this point; first, He was *"in the beginning"* (John 1:1); second, He was *"from the beginning"* (I John 1:1). There is a third thing we need to know about Christ that is staggering to the mind and imagination of man; He ***IS the beginning.***

Scholars believe that John actually wrote the book of I John after receiving his visions on the Isle of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation. If this is true, John understood that Christ was not only *"in the beginning"* and *"from the beginning,"* but that He ***is the beginning.*** There are four instances in the book of Revelation where Jesus told John in the visions, *"I am...the beginning...."* The first of these is found in Revelation 1:8; ***"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord."*** The other three instances are found in Revelation 3:14 (*"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginning** of the creation of God"*), Revelation 21:6 (***"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely"***) and Revelation 22:12-13 (*"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last**"*).

The apostle Paul also knew Christ as *"the beginning."* In Colossians 1:16, he writes, ***"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: WHO IS THE BEGINNING, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."***

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There were many false teachers in John’s day (the Gnostics), who said that “*The Christ*,” whom God promised to send into the world, is a “*spirit being*,” and that He did not come in the flesh as a man. According to their belief, Jesus of Nazareth was only a man, the son of Joseph, who “*became*” the Christ (anointed one) when the Spirit came upon him at John’s baptism. When John writes this letter, he is the only remaining “*eye witness*” apostle. His letter gives us, for all time, the basis to discern the truth from the lie, the light from the darkness, the Spirit of God from the spirit of antichrist, and the children of God from the children of the wicked one. John says to those whom false teachers seek to lead astray, “*I have heard Him, I have seen Him with my eyes, I have handled Him with my hands, and I have beheld His glory. I am God’s witness to you that the eternal Word of God, who was in the beginning with God, who was God, and who created all things, was made to be flesh and walked with us as a man. I am an eyewitness that Jesus of Nazareth is The Christ, The Son of the living God.*”

2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

“...the life was manifested...” Notice that John says it is “*The Life*” that was manifested, which refers to “*the Word of life*” in the previous verse, and is “*eternal life*” to everyone who “*trusts in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:12-13). Eternal life came into the world in a form that could be seen. “*In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.*” He who was “*in the beginning with God*,” and “*was God*,” became a man, but not just like other men, because, “*In Him was life.*” He was the “*divine expression of life*” in the midst of a fallen world.

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"...and we have seen it..." When John says *"we have seen it,"* he refers to *"eternal Life"* that was manifested in the flesh. He saw eternal life in Jesus of Nazareth.

"...and bear witness..." While John was the only eyewitness apostle remaining, there were many yet living who had seen and heard Jesus. John did not stand alone as he gave the true witness of eternal life. There were those among the old fathers of the church that had seen eternal life manifested in Jesus Christ, and they also were *"witnesses"* of what they had seen and heard.

"...and shew unto you that eternal life..." The Greek word *"apaggellō,"* which is translated as *"shew"* in this verse, simply means *"to announce."* With this in mind, notice the several parts of this verse to this point:

1. The life was manifested: *"The life"* always speaks of *"eternal life;"* which is so much more than a *"lifestyle."*

2. We have seen it: *"...and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father..."* (John 1:14). Eternal life can be seen. In this epistle, John will give multiple tests whereby you can recognize eternal life.

3. We ...bear witness: *"We were appointed by Him to be His witnesses. We witnessed His life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension to the Father; and He gave us specific instructions, saying, 'ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth'"* (Acts 1:8). Their witness that *"Jesus is The Christ"* turned the world upside down in their generation.

4. We ...shew unto you that eternal life: *"We were not appointed only to tell about the life we saw in Him, but to 'show forth His life' because He is 'our life'"* (Colossians 3:4).

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The apostle Paul, when writing to the church at Thessalonica, says, “...***our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake***” (I Thessalonians 1:5). To the Corinthians, Paul wrote “...*not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but **by manifestation of the truth** commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God*” (II Corinthians 4:2).

Eternal life can be seen in those who possess it. Everyone who is truly “*born of God*” has received eternal life, because they have received the “*Spirit of Christ*” (Romans 8:9), whom Paul says “...*is our life*” (Colossians 3:4). He who was “*in the beginning with God,*” who is “*from the beginning,*” and who “*is the beginning*” dwells in us and is our life. Jesus Christ is our Savior, but He must be more than our Savior. He is our Lord, but He must be more than our Lord. In Colossians 3:4 the apostle Paul speaks of “*Christ, our life....*” Consider this: Jesus Christ is the “*Savior*” for those who are yet lost. He is “*Lord of all*” (Acts 10:36), even over those who deny Him. He is, however, “*the life,*” of only those who trust in Him.

John will tell us in I John 5:11-12, “...*this is the record, that God hath given to us **eternal life**, and **this life is in his Son**. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath **not** the Son of God hath **not** life.*” Eternal life is our reality, only as Christ is our life. Paul reiterates in Colossians 3:4 that “*Christ...is our life.*” He is, in fact, our “*eternal life.*”

3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

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John is speaking directly to *"whosoever"* will hear and believe. At the time John wrote this Epistle, he was the only eyewitness apostle remaining, the other apostles having been martyred more than twenty years before. He understood that after his death there would be no living person with the credentials to resist the rising tide of Gnosticism by setting the record straight. This he determined to do before his death. He wrote the gospel of John to reveal who Jesus is. He wrote this, his first epistle, to reaffirm that *"Jesus is The Christ,"* and to reveal who the children of God are. He establishes the *"doctrine of Christ"* for all people and for all time. He shows the difference between light and darkness, the truth and the lie, and the children of God and the children of the devil. It is a message that is needed even more today than then.

"...that ye also may have fellowship with us..." The word *"that"* in this phrase is translated from the Greek word *"hina,"* and means *"in order that."* The basis for fellowship is the *"doctrine of Christ"* as given by John in this first epistle. John writes in II John 1:9-10, ***"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."*** The apostle is not seeking the fellowship of men, because he has fellowship *"with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."* He offers fellowship to everyone who will receive the doctrine of Christ and believe that *"Jesus is the Christ"* (I John 5:1).

"...and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ..." The Greek word John uses for *"fellowship"* is much stronger than the English word indicates. The Greek word *"koinonia"* which was translated *"fellowship,"* actually means *"partnership,"* and *"participation."* It

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should be noticed that John did not seek either “*partnership*” or “*participation*” with the world, but he preached the gospel of Christ to deliver lost souls from the bondage of sin and the world, and to bring them into fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the criteria John sets for fellowship. Those who have fellowship with both the Father and His Son Jesus would certainly have fellowship with John also.

No child of God is to seek fellowship with the world. If we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, we will also have fellowship with all those who truly have fellowship with the Father and His Son. The criterion for fellowship continues to be “*the doctrine of Christ*” even today. We must know “*who He is, what He came into the world to do, and how He did it through His death on the cross.*” John, “*the eyewitness,*” will tell us these things in this epistle.

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

The purpose of John’s epistle is not to condemn, but to bring fullness of joy through the knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (I John 5:1). John will say in the third chapter of this epistle, “*...ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins*” (I John 3:5). Oh what joy to be “*free from sin*” and to walk in fellowship with God. It is through “*fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*” that our joy is made full.

5. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

“**This then is the message...**” It is a message that John has preached for over sixty years at the time he writes these

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words. He has preached it to believer and unbeliever alike. He has preached it to both Jews and Gentiles everywhere he goes. It is a message that could be “*seen*” in John, just as he had seen it in Jesus. “*Light*” is a message that cannot be preached with words only. It must be “*seen with the eyes, heard with the ears, and handled with the hands*” of those whom we seek to reach with the gospel.

John received the message that “*God is light*” directly from Jesus. In John 8:12 Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*” It is a very simple message, but the implications are far reaching.

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

In this natural world we understand that darkness is simply the absence of light; but this is not necessarily true in the spiritual, because “*light*” and “*darkness*” are of two different kingdoms. Paul gives understanding of this in Colossians 1:12-13 where he says, “*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*” He speaks of “*the saints in light*” as those who have thus been “*delivered*” and “*translated.*” Peter rejoices with the Gentiles who have believed, saying, “*...ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*” (I Peter 2:9).

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Section Two: *“If We Walk in Darkness”* I John 1:6-10; 2:1-2

Section Two

If We Walk in Darkness

John makes a statement in chapter two that lets us understand what he refers to as “darkness.” *“Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the **true light** now shineth.”* (I John 2:8) John speaks of the “true light” as opposed to “darkness.” To the apostle, “darkness” is anything that is presented as “light” for men to walk in, but is not the “true light” of Christ. John does not refer to sin as “darkness;” instead, he will establish that “walking in darkness” is the reason men continue in sin.

There are three primary “sources” of darkness that John deals with in this epistle; *“The Law of Moses,”* which the Judaizers held to, *“Gnosticism,”* and *“the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.”*

The Law of Moses is that of which the apostle Paul said was *“added because of transgressions, til the seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise was made.”* According to the apostle it was *“the ministration of death”* (II Corinthians 3:7) and *“the ministration of condemnation”* (II Corinthians 3:9). It was darkness, and not light. Jesus cautioned the multitude in His *“Sermon on the Mount”* concerning religious darkness; *“If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”* (Matthew 6:23). All those among the Jews who clung to the Law of Moses and rejected Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, *“walked in darkness.”*

Gnosticism is the system that believes the human body is always unclean and corrupt, while the “spirit” is always holy and pure. Based upon that belief, the Gnostics, who professed to believe in Christ, did not believe that Jesus is *“The Christ”* because Jesus was a flesh and blood man, and *“Christ”* would

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not have *"come in the flesh"* as a man. Gnosticism is darkness, with no light in it (John 11:10).

The Nicolaitans were a sect of the **Gnostics** that took the error of Gnosticism to the next level. They taught that the body of man is inherently evil while the spirit is inherently holy. This is a common belief among many so called *"believers"* today. *"Sin doesn't matter"* as long as we *"believe in Jesus."* This is derived from the ancient **Gnostic** and **Nicolaitan** doctrines, which Jesus says He *"hates"* (Revelation 2:15). Such doctrines are *"gross darkness."*

The second century theologian, Irenaeus, said the Nicolaitans were followers of a heretic named Nicolas, who had been appointed as one of the original deacons of the church (Acts 6:5) before his *"heresy"* was discovered. Nicolas developed the belief system of the Gnostics into a lascivious *"doctrine"* and sought to inject it into the belief system of the church through the seduction of those who were newly converted to Jesus Christ.

The *"doctrine"* and the *"deeds"* of the **Nicolaitans** are the two things that Jesus Christ said He *"hates."* Part of our Lord's condemnation of the *"church in Pergamos"* is given in Revelation 2:15: *"...so hast thou also them that hold **the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**"* One of the *"redeeming factors"* in the church in Ephesus is found in Revelation 2:6, *"...this thou hast, that **thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**"*

Each of these, the **Judaizers**, the **Gnostics**, and the **Nicolaitans**, claimed to have fellowship with God, but the *"light"* they walked in, was actually *"gross darkness."* Jesus warned of this deception saying, *"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"* (Matthew 6:23). Any and every thing that people place their trust in apart from

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“*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,*” is darkness (I Corinthians 2:2). Those who deny that Jesus of Nazareth is “*the Christ, the Son of God*” (Matthew 16:16) who came into the world to “*make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity,*” and “*to bring in everlasting righteousness*” (Daniel 9:24-27), are those who “*walk in darkness.*” To some it is the religions of the world which deny that Jesus is both “*The Christ*” and “*The Son of God*” (Acts 2:36), such as Judaism, Islam, Hindu, and Buddhism. To others it could be that form of “*Christianity*” which professes Jesus Christ, but denies that Jesus “*did*” through His death on the cross, what God said the Messiah (The Christ) would “*do*” (Daniel 9:24-27).

In the remaining verses of this chapter, John shows the plight of those who “*walk in darkness*” by giving several “*hypothetical situations.*” We know that these are hypotheticals because John uses the word “*if*” in each one of them, and includes himself in them. We know that the apostle did not walk in darkness, but by including himself in these hypothetical situations, he lets it be known that these things are true of everyone who walks in darkness, regardless of who they might be.

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

Here, based upon the truth in the previous verse (“**God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all**”), John establishes that since God is light, no one who walks in darkness has fellowship with either the Father or His Son Jesus Christ. This would include those who trust in the Law of Moses and those who believe the teachings of the Gnostics and Nicolaitans, but it is not limited to them. There are multitudes in the churches today who profess to believe in Jesus Christ, but they do not know “*who Christ is,*” or the truth of “*what He*

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*came into the world to do.” Those who do not understand and believe these two simple things are doomed to walk in darkness. They are like the people described by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 59:9-11; “...we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, **but we walk in darkness.** We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; **for salvation, but it is far off from us.**”*

The people Isaiah describes in these verses are not rebels against God, but they are walking in darkness because those whom they have trusted to lead them are the “*blind leaders of the blind*,” which Jesus speaks of in Matthew 15:14; “*If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*” They have trusted in their teachers to bring them to truth and justice, but instead they have been made to trust in a lie. Jesus indicted such teachers as “*blind guides*” in Matthew 23:16-24.

Multitudes of people today are “*walking in darkness*” only because their “*teachers*” do not know the truth. They teach the people that they “*have fellowship with God*,” who “*is light*,” even while they are themselves “*groping*” and “*stumbling*” like blind men because of the darkness they walk in. These teachers are like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day, of whom the scripture says, “*...this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*” Sinful men and women, harlots and publicans alike, saw a great light shining into the midst of their darkness, and they came to the light. The scribes and Pharisees saw the same light and hated it, because it exposed the deadness and futility of their religious works. It was the “*dead works*” of their religion which were seen to be “*evil*” in the glorious light of Christ. Such leaders,

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whether then or now, continue in darkness because they hate the light, and refuse to come to the light. Those who follow them walk in darkness because they have never seen the light.

“...if we say...” There are three verses in this chapter that begin with the words *“If we say,”* and three verses in the next chapter that begin with the words *“He that saith....”* Each of these verses present the *“claims”* of those who *“walk in darkness,”* while at the same time they profess to have fellowship with God. I will list the verses from the second chapter to establish the meaning of these in the first.

1. I John 2:4: *“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* This verse is an exact parallel to verse six above; *“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”* This is yet another *“claim”* of those who walk in darkness. They claim to *“know Him,”* but they *“do not obey Him,”* either in the Word or Spirit. The apostle’s conclusion for each of these is the same; they *“... lie, and do not the truth.”*

2. I John 2:6: *“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”* There are those who claim to *“abide in Him”* who cannot *“walk as He walked.”* The apostle will say in the third chapter, *“Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not”* (I John 3:6). If they continue in sin, they do not *“abide in Him.”*

3. I John 2:9: *“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.”* There are those who claim to walk in the light, but have hatred and malice in their hearts. The *“claims”* of these mean absolutely nothing because the apostle says they are *“in darkness even until now.”*

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We should remember that every verse in this epistle that begins with *“He that saith...”* or, *“If we say...”* presents either a claim or a boast of those who *“walk in darkness.”*

“...if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness...” Notice that the apostle speaks of both *“what we say”* and *“where we walk.”* Many people have been taught to *“confess”* while being told they can never *“possess”* as long as they live in this present life. They believe they have a *“position”* in heavenly places while their *“condition”* is earthbound in every carnal activity. Their entire experience consists of a *“talk,”* without a corresponding *“walk.”* They are taught to *“claim (confess) fellowship with God”* without any regard to where or what their walk is. All of these *“claims”* are bound up in the words *“if we say.”* If there is not a corresponding walk that is equal to the talk, the *“claim”* is nothing more than a lie.

“...we lie, and do not the truth...” The apostle concludes that those who *“claim fellowship with God,”* while *“walking in darkness,”* are only pretending to have peace and fellowship with God. They are not free from sin, and they are condemned in their own hearts. These are the ones who must *“continue in sin”* because they *“cannot cease from sin”* (II Peter 2:14); they have never known the *“truth”* that Jesus said would *“make them free”* (John 8:33). The *“...light of the glorious gospel of Christ”* has never shone into their hearts (II Corinthians 4:4).

7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The hypothetical in this verse is the **exact opposite** of the one in the previous verse. Verse six presents a **claim** (*“...we say we have fellowship with Him”*), while verse seven presents a

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reality (“...we **walk** in the light, as He is in the light...”). The reality of those who “walk in the light” is “fellowship with God,” because they are walking “where God is (‘He is in the light’ and ‘the light’ is in them);” in fact, their “walk” is “in God,” because “God is light.” Notice in this seventh verse that John reverses the order of things. In verse six, we “...say we have fellowship with God and **walk** in darkness.” In verse seven, we “**walk** in the light and **have fellowship** with God.” The first is a “talk” and the second is a “walk.” The reality of life in an individual is never discovered in their “talk,” but in their “walk.” In verse six, they claim “fellowship with Him,” but the reality is, they “walk in darkness.” In verse seven, no “claim” is offered, but their reality is, they “**walk in the light** (their walk is ‘in Christ’ and the truth of the gospel)” and they “**have fellowship with God.**”

“But if we walk in the light...” What a contrast between the one who only “claims fellowship” with God while walking in darkness, and the one who actually walks in the “light” of Christ. The one who “walks in the light” has fellowship with God. The light they walk in is “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” (II Corinthians 4:4) which God “...hath shined in our hearts...” (II Corinthians 4:6).

Consider the “glorious gospel of Christ” for a moment. It is not a message that was invented by the apostles after Jesus suffered and died on the cross. Instead, it was revealed to man in bits and pieces during a period of four thousand years before Jesus was born to Mary. Preeminent among all the revelations for its simplicity and clarity is the message that was given to the prophet Daniel by the angel Gabriel. He told of the coming of one called “*The Messiah* (The Christ)” who would “*finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness*” (Daniel 9:24-25). This is the “glorious gospel of

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Christ” that shined into the hearts of those first disciples and apostles of our Lord. “*Jesus is ‘the Christ’!*” The gospel was first preached in only thirteen words by John the Baptist, saying, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” It was reduced to five words by Peter’s younger brother, Andrew, when he ran to Peter, shouting, “*“We have found the Messiah!’ which is being interpreted, the Christ*” (John 1:41). Andrew had found the one who would “*make an end of sins;*” He is “*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). That “*glorious gospel of Christ*” is the “*light*” of “*the truth,*” of which Jesus said, “*...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). To “*know the truth*” is to know that Jesus of Nazareth is “*the Christ*” who came into the world to make an end of sins. This is the “*light*” that God shines into the hearts of those who trust in Christ. Everyone who walks in that light has fellowship with God.

“...as he (God) is in the light...” Verse five says “*God is light;*” and verse seven says “*He is in the light.*” You will never find Jesus Christ or His Father in the darkness of religious traditions, or man’s wisdom. He cannot be found in the eastern religions of Islam, Hindu, and Buddha; or in the various “*cults*” that claim to be Christian. A search of the “*spirit world*” will never discover the true God and Father of Jesus Christ. He is found only in “*the light of the glorious gospel of Christ*” (II Corinthians 4:4). Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6).

“...and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin...”

Millions of “*Christians*” today do not believe that the blood of Jesus Christ “*cleanses us from all sin.*” They believe that

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it only “*covers us*” so that God cannot see our sin. This also is “*darkness,*” and robs those who walk in it of fellowship with God. The words “*cleanseth us from all sin*” presents a contrast between the Old and the New Covenant: between the common blood of animals, which could never “*take away sins*” (Hebrews 10:4), and the precious blood of the Son of God, which “*cleanseth us from all sin.*”

To the one who is stumbling and groping in darkness while professing to have fellowship with God, your remedy is simple; God is calling you “*...out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (I Peter 2:9). It is what you believe about who Christ is, why He came into the world, and what He accomplished in His death and resurrection that is either “*darkness*” or “*light.*” John will tell us in I John 3:5, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.*” Believe this simple truth, walk in the light of it, and “*the blood of Jesus Christ His Son*” will cleanse you “*from all sin.*”

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

In this verse, John continues his response to those who claim to have fellowship with God, but walk in darkness. They deny their need for the blood of Jesus Christ, which “*cleanseth us from all sin*” (verse seven). Many who have never been “*cleansed from sin*” believe that they have no sin to be cleansed of. The “*Judaizers*” could say with Saul of Tarsus, “*...as touching the righteousness that is in the law, (they were) blameless*” (Philippians 3:6). Jesus spoke of the scribes and Pharisees in John 15:22 when He said, “*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.*” He so thoroughly exposed the condition of their hearts that they could no longer hide the sin that worked in them. Jesus told them, “*...ye also*

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outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matthew 23:28).

The scribes and Pharisees, whom Jesus called *“hypocrites,”* could easily have said *“I have no sin.”* They were the *“chosen people”* of God. Their mindset as Jews is revealed in the words of Paul to Peter in Galatians 2:15, *“We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles....”* The Jew had no concept of a *“sinful nature,”* and fully believed they were *“righteous”* and *“holy”* through obeying the commandments and ordinances of Moses.

The **Gnostics** and the **Nicolaitans** believed their *“spirits”* had no sin while their bodies reveled in sin. There are multitudes in the churches today who have believed the doctrine of the **Nicolaitans**, which Jesus says He hates. Darkness has deceived them, and they do not have fellowship with God as they claim.

The Pharisee’s objection to sin is identical to the objection the Jews had to the words of Jesus in John 8:33 when he told them *“...and ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free.”* They were offended at the declaration that they were slaves to anything. *“We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?”* When Jesus explained to them that the one who commits sin is a slave to sin, they became angry and accused him of having a devil. It is such as these, who *“walk in darkness”* and *“hate the light of truth,”* that are insulted by the suggestion that they need the blood of Jesus to cleanse them from sin.

Each of the groups mentioned above walks in darkness, not believing the gospel of Christ; therefore their claims to fellowship with God are invalid.

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John ends verse seven with these words: “...and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin....” This statement contains an obvious truth which many close their eyes to. **If the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, then the one so cleansed has no sin remaining in them.** Based upon the great truth revealed in verse seven, it is evident that verse eight speaks of those who claim to have no sin while walking in darkness.

John does not “*point the finger*” at certain people, saying “*you lie...*” or “*...you are deceived.*” Instead he gives a test for everyone who claims fellowship with God, to know for themselves where they stand. It doesn’t matter who we are, if we claim fellowship with God and walk in darkness, “*we lie and do not the truth.*” **If we walk in darkness** and say “*...I have no sin,*” we deceive ourselves and “*the truth is not in us.*” It is not John’s intention to prove that everyone is a sinner, but to establish that everyone who “*walks in darkness*” does have sin, and has deceived themselves if they believe they do not.

“...if we say that we have no sin...” It would be unwise for any believer to stand and declare, “*I have no sin.*” It is not for a believer to testify such things of themselves, but if they have indeed been cleansed from their sin by the blood of Jesus, their spirit and life will make that declaration for them. This is a great truth; those (and only those) who have been *cleansed from all sin* by the blood of Jesus, have no sin. To deny this is to deny the virtue of the blood the Son of God shed for us, and the cross He suffered for us.

It is a shame that so many people in the church today actually feel more spiritual when they say, “*I am a sinner and I will always be a sinner. I will sin every day as long as I am in this body of flesh.*” If you are one of these, you will also perish

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in your sin. Why did the apostle Paul tell us in Romans 6:11, *“Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord?”* If none have died to sin *“with Christ,”* then Paul was mistaken. On the other hand, all who have died with Christ in His death are *“freed from sin”* (Romans 6:6-7), and they have it no more. Walk in the light of what Jesus Christ accomplished for us in His death and resurrection, and you will also rejoice in the *“glorious liberty”* of the sons of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

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

John gives this admonition to those who walk in darkness while saying they have no sin. Confess your sin and God will not only forgive you, but he will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. David found that God could not be touched as long as He hid his sin. He said, *“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin”* (Psalms 32:3-5). The person who walks in darkness and denies their sin is also a deceiver and a liar, but if they confess their sins to God, He is *“faithful and just”* to forgive them and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness.

“...he is faithful...” Paul exhorts us, *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without*

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wavering; (*for he is faithful that promised*)” (Hebrews 10:22-23).

“...and just...” God is a *“just God.”* I hear preachers say, *“you don’t want the justice of God; you want mercy. If we received God’s justice, we would all perish in hell, because we are all sinners who are accepted only by mercy and grace.”* NO! If God were **not** a *“just God,”* we would all be lost. Romans 5:12 says, *“...by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”* That *“one man”* was Adam, who brought sin into the heart and nature of every man through his disobedience to God. Our righteous God says, *“It is not just for every man to be damned because of the disobedience of one man. Justice requires that there must be ‘a **second man**’ to ‘take away’ the sin that entered through the ‘first man.’”*

In Romans 3:23, Paul gives a blanket indictment of fallen man when he says, *“...**all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God.”* This verse reveals why there had to be a *“savior”* to redeem fallen man from sin. There had to be a *“second man”* to undo what the *“first man”* did. Sin entered into the heart and nature of man through the disobedience of the *“first man,”* Adam. According to Paul’s words in I Corinthians 15:47, the *“second man”* is Christ Jesus, the *“Lord from heaven.”* Romans 5:19 tells of the *“remedy”* that justice gives to everyone who will believe: ***“For as by one man’s (Adam’s) disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus Christ) shall many be made righteous.”***

Paul shows in Romans 3:25 that the *“righteousness of God”* was revealed when God *“set forth”* Christ Jesus to be the *“propitiation”* (sacrifice lamb) for our sins *“that are past.”* Notice that verse twenty-five covers only *“sins that are past.”* It is the next verse (Romans 3:26) that reveals God’s provision

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for our present and future. *“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, AND the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”* The “proof” that God is “just” is that He gave His Son to die on the cross, to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). He came into the world as “the Lamb of God” (the sinless sacrifice) to “take away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“...to forgive us our sins...” Proverbs 28:13 tells us, *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”* Even under the Old Covenant, those who confessed and forsook their sins obtained mercy. The New Covenant does *much more*. John says, *“...He is faithful and just,”* not only to “forgive us our sins,” but to **“cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** The “much more” of the New Covenant is **“cleansing from all unrighteousness.”** Sinners could be forgiven under the Old Covenant, but they could never be cleansed until Christ came and offered the *“one sacrifice for sins forever”* (Hebrews 10:12).

“...and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness...” According to the words of God in Exodus 34:6-7, God has always been *“merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and forgiving.”* Many Christians believe Jesus had to die on the cross in order to forgive our sins, but that is not true. He died on the cross to **“cleanse us from all sin”** (verse six). He did this through His cross where our *“old man is crucified with Him”* (Romans 6:6), and through His blood, which was shed to sanctify the people. Read very carefully, and pray for understanding of the words of Paul in Hebrews 13:12. *“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”* Why did Jesus “suffer” the death of the cross? It was to **“...sanctify the people with His own blood.”** Everyone who walks in the light of this truth, as the

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apostle says in Hebrews 10:10, “...*we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*”

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

Having given the remedy for those who walk in darkness, John lets it be known that if they continue to insist that they have not sinned, they are accusing God of being a liar and do not know the witness of the scripture against them. Paul warns us against those who strive about the law, “...*knowing he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*” (Titus 3:11). They can deny their sin, but if they walk in the darkness of the Law of Moses or any other dead religious form, you can know that sin works in them. Only in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ are people made free from sin.

There has never been a person since the fall of Adam that has not sinned, with the exception of Jesus Christ, who is the “*only begotten*” Son of God. If we say we have never sinned, we make God a liar, and His word is not in us. There is, however, another way we can “*make God a liar.*” John says in I John 5:11-12, “*He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*” (I John 5:11). The record that God gives of man is that “*all have sinned.*” The record He gave of His Son is that Christ came into the world to “*make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24-27). The angel Gabriel testified of Jesus to Joseph the carpenter, that “*He shall save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21), and John the Baptist introduced Him as “*The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). The children of God have been “*freed from sin*” (Romans 6:6-7), and do not continue “*in sin.*”

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There are three Old Testament verses that tell us there is no man that “*sinneth not*,” all of which are in the words of Solomon. The first is I Kings 8:46; “*If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that **sinneth not**)....*” The second is II Chronicles 6:36, which is actually a repetition of the first, which was taken from the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. The third is Ecclesiastes 7:20; “*...there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and **sinneth not**.*”

There are two New Testament verses that use the same words, “*sinneth not*,” to describe those who are “*born of God*.” The first is in I John 3:6; “*Whosoever abideth in him **sinneth not**...*” and the second is found in I John 5:18; “*We know that whosoever is born of God **sinneth not**.*” We do not believe the Bible contradicts itself, but does the “*New Covenant*” contradict the “*Old Covenant*?” Yes it does! It is this “*contradiction*” that abolished the Old Covenant and nailed it to the cross with Christ.

Hebrews 7:18-19: “*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before (the Old Covenant in the Law of Moses) for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. **For the law made nothing perfect** (complete), **but the bringing in of a better hope** (the New Covenant) **did**; by the which we draw nigh unto God.*” What the law “*could not do*” (Romans 8:3), “*the better hope **DID**.*”

Chapter Two

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

“My little children...” With this first verse of the second chapter, John turns his attention to those he calls “*my little children*.” He uses the Greek word “*teknion*” which means

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“*infants.*” While this is a general epistle, written to all who will read it, it is directed specifically to those who have only recently been converted to Christ and “*born again*” of the Spirit of God. In the first verses of this epistle he has revealed to them who Jesus is. In verses six through ten of the first chapter, he has guided them through the “*pitfalls*” of “*pretense*” that so many “*believers*” fall into when they do not continue on to “*know the truth*” that Jesus said “*will make you free*” (John 8:32).

“...these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...” These words may sound like a “*command*” for his “*little children*” **not** to sin; but they are so much more than that. The key to understanding this phrase is the word “*that,*” which is translated from the Greek word “*hina,*” which actually means “***in order that.***” The tenor of John’s epistle is not a commandment not to sin; instead, John relates “*the truth,*” which Jesus says, “...shall make you free” (John 8:30-32). Those who understand and believe “*the truth*” John gives in this epistle will certainly “*be made free from sin*” (Romans 6:7, 18, 22).

Notice the similarity between this phrase, “...these things write I unto you, (in order that) **ye sin not**...,” and the fourth verse of the first chapter which says, “...these things we write unto you, (in order that) **your joy may be full.**” It is easy to see that the believer is not “*commanded*” to have “*fullness of joy.*” If we were “*commanded*” to have fullness of joy, we would become “*pretenders,*” as many have. We would go through all the motions of joy; leaping, running, and shouting, not because our joy is full, but trying to get joy through the leaping, running, and shouting. John is telling all who read his epistle that if the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shines into their heart (II Corinthians 4:3-4), their joy **will** be full. In like manner, in this first verse of chapter two, John tells the same people that if the light of the gospel which he

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preaches shines into their heart, they **will not sin**, because they will be “*made free from sin*” (Romans 6:18, 22). John establishes in the first part of this verse that the church of Jesus Christ is **not** made up of sinners; neither do the “*members of Christ*” (I Corinthians 6:15) continue in sin.

“...and if any man sin...” Proper understanding of this simple phrase is crucial to understanding the entire epistle. Understanding this single verse can transform your thinking from sin consciousness into the fullness of joy that John promises the believer. John does not give, as many believe, a command “...*that you sin not*,” only to continue with the words, “...*and if you sin*.” Neither does Jesus give a contingency plan for those who continue in sin. From the lame man whom He healed at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:14), to the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:11), Jesus says to one and all, “...*go, and sin no more*.” He does not add, “...*and if you sin....*”

John’s words, “...*if any man sin....*,” are not written concerning believers who “...*have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ*” (I John 1:3). Those who “...*walk in the light, as He is in the light...*” (I John 1:7), **do not** continue in sin because they are “*cleansed from all sin*.” Who then is the “*any man*” John speaks of in this verse? It is exactly what the words indicate. These words, which he addresses to “*my little children*” (infant Christians), have been read by both believers and unbelievers alike, for almost two thousand years. Could “*any man*” then, be speaking of an unbeliever, or a member of another religion? Absolutely! The words, “*any man*,” apply equally to a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Buddhist, or even an atheist. They include every “*professing Christian*” who continues in sin, along with drug addicts, pornographers, pedophiles, drunkards, thieves, murderers, etc. “*Any man*” must include *every* man, woman,

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boy, or girl that lives on this earth at any given time. It is an all inclusive statement.

“...we have an advocate with the Father...” Is John saying that “*every man*” has an advocate with the Father? No, he is not! Instead, he is saying, “**WE** have an advocate with the Father.” Consider again the words of I John 1:3: “*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*” John offers fellowship to every man, woman, boy, and girl, if and when they come into fellowship with “*the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*” We are not to seek common ground for fellowship with unbelievers of any stripe. John does not say to the unbeliever, “**We** will find common ground, that **we** may fellowship with you in your religion, or the lack thereof.” Instead, he says, “**WE** have an advocate with the Father.” Of whatever religion they may be; Judaism, Islam, Hindu, Buddhism, cult Christianity, atheism, or just plain sinners; none of these have an advocate with the Father, but “**WE** have an advocate with the Father; (even) *Jesus Christ, the righteous.*” Jesus says, “*No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*” There is no religion on this earth that has Jesus Christ. Only those who have the life and light of Christ dwelling in them have Him. The church of Jesus Christ is not a weak, sinful, pretending people; it is a “*glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; ...holy and without blemish*” (Ephesians 5:27). It is “*His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:23). We alone have what the entire world is dying for the lack of; we have an “*advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*” Because of this, we must take the gospel of Jesus Christ to them, because they must have Him (our advocate) if they are to be saved.

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Jesus Christ is our “*advocate*,” which means he is our “*intercessor*.” Many believe that Jesus’ present ministry is to continuously intercede before the Father to forgive the daily sins of believers, but that is not so. Hebrews 7:25 says, “*Wherefore he (Jesus Christ) is able also to **save them to the uttermost** that come unto God **by him**, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession **for them**.*” Notice that **His** “*intercession*” is “***for them...that come unto God by Him.***” We are not in a lifetime struggle to “*come to God.*” In every generation since Calvary, those who “*repent and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15) have “*come to God **through Him.***” No religion has an intercessor to bring the people to God, but, “***WE** have an advocate with the Father.*” All people may come to God through Jesus Christ, but they cannot bring their religions and/or heathen ways with them.

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

In this verse, the word “*propitiation*” is translated from the Greek word “*hilasmos*,” which Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary defines as “*an expiator*.” To “*expiate*” means to “*remove something*,” or to “*take something away*.” Many people believe that Jesus died to take away the “*penalty*” of our sins, and in so doing, “*removes*” our guilt. This is most certainly **not** the truth of the gospel. Jesus did not suffer and die on the cross to take our “*penalty*,” nor did He take our “*guilt*,” instead, He is “*the Lamb of God (expiatory sacrifice) that **taketh away** (expiates) **the sin** of the world.*”

In Romans 5:12, the apostle Paul says, “*Wherefore, as **by one man** (Adam) **sin entered into the world**, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*” Since every descendant of Adam is born with sin in his human

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nature because of Adam’s disobedience, there had to be another man, a “*second man*” (I Corinthians 15:47), to make amends and reparations for what the first man did. Paul explains this in Romans 5:19, saying, “*For as by **one man’s** (Adam’s) **disobedience** many were made sinners, so by **the obedience of one** (Jesus Christ) shall many be made righteous.*” When Jesus gave Himself to die on the cross, He “*took away the sin of the world*” which entered the heart and nature of man through Adam’s transgression. He became the sin offering, not only for our sins, but for the sins of the entire world if they will trust in Him.

“...and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world...”

Jesus did not die for the Jew only; neither did He die only for the church. He died for sinners; for the ungodly; even for those who are enemies and hate God. When John says in the first verse of this chapter, “*...if any man sin,*” he speaks of the “*...sins of the whole world.*” Jesus died for all. He atoned for the sins of every person that would ever be born. This is expressed in the words of John 3:16, “*...**whosoever believeth in Him;***” in Revelation 22:17, “*...**whosoever will...***” and in Romans 10:13, “*For **whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.***”

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SectionThree: “*Knowing That We Know Him*” I John 2:3-17

Section Three

Knowing That We Know Him

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

The person who “*knows Christ*” will never break God’s commandments because they are written in the new heart of everyone that is “*born of God.*” In Jeremiah 31:33-34, God says, “*...this shall be THE COVENANT that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall ALL KNOW ME, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD.*”

In Hebrews 8:7-13, the apostle Paul quotes this passage and makes it very clear that the “*Old Covenant*” law that was “*engraved in stone*” has passed away, and has been replaced by the “*New Covenant*” which is “*God’s law*” written in the “*new heart*” (Ezekiel 36:26) of those who are “*born again*” of the Spirit of God. Notice the words of Hebrews 8:11; “*And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall KNOW me, from the least to the greatest.*” It is on this basis that John can say, “*We know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.*” Those who “*keep the commandments*” only because they are “*commanded*” to keep them do not know Him. In fact, they cannot keep His commandments, because the tenth commandment says “*Thou shalt not covet...*” and uncovers the secrets of the heart. It is a commandment that can be kept only by those who have received the “*new heart*”

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and the “*new spirit*” which God gives to His people under the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26).

“...keep his commandments...” Three days before God spoke His “*Ten Commandments*” to the children of Israel, He gave them a wonderful promise, saying in Exodus 19:4-6, “*Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will (1) obey my voice indeed, and (2) keep my covenant, then ye shall be (1) a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me (2) a kingdom of priests, and (3) an holy nation.*” Notice that there were two conditions to receive a threefold promise; “*obey my voice*” and “*keep my covenant.*” The “*covenant*” they were commanded to keep is not the Law of Moses. It is the same covenant that we are under today, which is the same “*covenant of blessing*” that God gave to Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law (Galatians 3:16-19), when He said, “***By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; BECAUSE THOU HAST OBEYED MY VOICE***” (Genesis 22:16-18).

The scripture says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*” (Romans 4:3). Paul paraphrased this from Genesis 15:6 and used it to explain “*justification by faith.*” It should be noticed (and preached), however, that Abraham also “*obeyed God*” (Hebrews 11:8). Abraham was “*justified*” because he “*believed God.*” He re

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ceived the covenant of blessing, however, because he “*obeyed the voice of God*” (Genesis 22: 18).

It must be understood, if we are to “*know the truth*” that Jesus said will “*make us free*” (John 8:32), that the “*Ten Commandments*” were not a part of the “*Law of Moses*” when God spoke them from Mount Horeb. Notice the words of Moses concerning the Ten Commandments; “***These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more***” (Deuteronomy 5:22). “*These words*” were the “*voice of God*” to the children of Israel which would have been “*written in their hearts*” if they had “*received Him that spoke*” (Hebrews 12:25). They would not have been “*written in stone,*” and the “*Law of Moses*” would never have been added. Paul dealt with this very issue in Galatians 3:19; “*Wherefore then serveth the law* (Why was the Law of Moses added)? *It was added because of transgressions* (Israel’s rejection of God at Mount Horeb; Exodus 20:19), *till the seed* (**Christ**, Galatians 3:16; and all who abide in Him, Galatians 3:28-29) *should come to whom the promise was made.*”

When John speaks of “*His commandments,*” he goes beyond the ten, which were spoken by God from Mount Horeb, to those which were “*spoken*” by our Lord Jesus Christ. What are the “*commandments*” of our Lord? Jesus began giving them with these words from Matthew 5:19-20; “*Whosoever therefore shall break one of **these least commandments**, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That **except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,** ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*” The “*righteousness*” of

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the scribes and Pharisees was “*the Law of Moses.*” The apostle Paul states in Philippians 3:6, that he was “*blameless*” according to the Law of Moses, even when he was killing Christians. Certainly, the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:19 do not speak of the commandments of Moses, but those of Jesus, which He called “*these sayings of mine.*” Jesus concludes His Sermon on the Mount by telling the sad estate of those who “*...hear these sayings of mine, and doeth them not*” (Matthew 7:26). He likened them to a man who builds his house upon the sand, without a foundation. John will make it very clear in the next verse of this study that those who claim to know Him and do not “*do*” the sayings of Jesus, are “*liars*” and the truth is not in them. Jesus expressed this same sentiment in Luke 6:46, “*...why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*”

“*...hereby we do know that we know him...*” The English word “*know*” is used twenty seven times in this epistle, beginning with this verse. The Greek text, however, uses two different words, the first being “*eidō*,” which means “*to see,*” and speaks of that “*knowledge*” which the children of God receive through spiritual insight. It is the word used in John 3:3 when Jesus told Nicodemus, the great teacher of the Jews, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” The apostle Paul used the same word in Ephesians 1:18 when he prayed for those in Ephesus who were both saved and Spirit filled; “*...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know (see)....*”

In this verse, John uses the word “*ginōskō*,” which speaks of absolute knowledge. “*Hereby we absolutely know that we absolutely know Him.*” John does not simply say, “*...we know Him if we keep His commandments.*” It is such believing that brings people into the religious struggle to “*know Him*” through the keeping of commandments. They have

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“the cart before the horse” in their theology. It is only those who *“know Him”* who can and do *“keep His commandments.”* In Philippians 3:4-10, the apostle Paul tells of the *“religious heritage”* he once trusted in. He was a zealot who kept every commandment of Moses to perfection, but he did not know Christ. His *“righteousness,”* which was by the law, was *“blameless”* (Philippians 3:6). When he met Jesus on his journey to Damascus, however, he *“suffered the loss”* of everything he had trusted in, and as he said, *“I...do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him”* (Philippians 3:8-10). He lost his *“righteousness”* which was *“engraved in stone,”* but in Christ he received the *“exceeding righteousness”* (Matthew 5:20) which is written in the heart and nature of every child of God.

John says, *“...we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments.”* We do not *“know Him”* **because** we keep His commandments, but we keep His commandments *“because”* they are written in the heart and nature of those who *“know Him.”*

“...hereby we do know...” This is the **first of eight places** in this epistle that John uses the word *“hereby,”* which gives a means of discerning the truth from the lie, the light from the darkness, the children of God from the children of the evil one, etc. We will call these the *“tests.”*

In each of these *“tests,”* the word *“know,”* as well as the word *“perceive”* in number three, is translated from the Greek word *“ginōskō,”* which speaks of an absolute knowledge.

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1. I John 2:3: *“Hereby we do know that we **know him.**”*
2. I John 2:5: *“Hereby know we that we are **in him.**”*
3. I John 3:16: *“Hereby perceive we the **love of God.**”*
4. I John 3:19: *“Hereby we know that we are **of the truth.**”*
5. I John 3:24: *“Hereby we know that **he abideth in us.**”*
6. I John 4:2: *“Hereby know ye **the Spirit of God.**”*
7. I John 4:6: *“Hereby know we **the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.**”*
8. I John 4:13: *“Hereby know we that **we dwell in him.**”*

In this third verse, the “*test*” is of ourselves, whether or not we “*know Him.*” Whether we know Him or not is not known by our “*talk,*” but by our “*walk.*” We are to step back from ourselves and look at our walk, not only the life we live, but at the attitudes we have. We are to see ourselves as others see us, and especially as God sees us, and discern whether we truly know Christ or not. In II Corinthians 13:5, the apostle Paul exhorts everyone who professes Christ to “*...examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.*” We will “***know that we know Him***” if we, from a pure heart, do keep His commandments. This “*test*” will continue through verse five.

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

This “*test*” is very similar to the one given in I John 1:6; “*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*”

“...he that saith, I know him...” This is the first of three verses in this second chapter that begin with the words “*...he that saith.*” They are written in the same tenor as the three verses in the first chapter, which begin with the words, “*...if*

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we say." Many people have been taught to make "*positive confessions*" about themselves. These mean absolutely nothing before God, and serve only to make the people feel better about themselves. Such claims as are made in chapter one, verse six, "...*I have fellowship with Him,*" in verse eight, "...*I have no sin,*" and in verse ten, "...*I have not sinned,*" mean absolutely nothing to God, because they are made by those who "*walk in darkness.*" Those who "*walk in the light*" **do** have fellowship with God, and they **do not** sin, because they **do not** "*have sin*" in their heart and nature; they have been "*cleansed from all sin*" (I John 1:7). They have no need to make claims about their fellowship with God because their lives are an "*open book, known and read by all men*" (II Corinthians 3:2). It is possible to say, "*I know Him,*" and it be nothing more than another "*positive confes-*

sion." We should understand that every claim of man will be tested, whether it is of God or not.

"...and keepeth not his commandments..." If Jesus' "*sermon on the mount*" were a law, it would be the harshest of all laws that have ever been written; one that would be impossible for even the best intentioned persons to obey. Yet, it was concerning His sermon on the mount that Jesus questioned the people, "*Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say*" (Luke 6:46). Saul of Tarsus could obey every command but two of Moses' law, and he could obey them to perfection, even while hating Jesus and making havoc of the churches. The two commands he could not obey were those which Jesus called the "*great*" commandments of the law; "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,*" and, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*" (Matthew 22:37-39). He said, "***On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets***" (Matthew 22:40). Saul's "*righteousness,*" which

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he said was “*blameless*” according to the Law of Moses (Philippians 3:6), meant absolutely nothing because he could not “*love God with all his heart,*” nor could he “*love his neighbor as himself.*”

The “*commandments of Jesus*” go far beyond the outward keeping of rules, because they deal with the content of the heart. The “*love commandment*” which Jesus gave goes far beyond Moses’ admonition to “*love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*” and to “*love thy neighbor as thyself.*” Jesus says, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, **Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;** that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*” (Matthew 5:43-45). Suddenly, it seems to be a “*light thing*” to “*love God, love your brother, and love your neighbor*” when we hear Jesus say “***love your enemy.***” It is as John says, “*hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*” This is the “*great commandment*” of grace.

“...is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” In this statement, John is not simply asserting that the person is a liar who claims to know Christ but cannot keep the commandments of God or do the sayings of Jesus. He is rather giving the reason for the “*lie;*” the “*truth is not in them.*” In John 8:33, Jesus spoke to those who claimed to believe upon him, saying, “*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” The truth these Jews did not know was that Jesus is indeed “*The Christ*” that God promised to send into the world to “*make an end of sins*” and “*make reconciliation for iniquity*” (Daniel 9:24-27). That truth of who Jesus is and what God

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sent Him to do is *“the truth”* that makes a person free. If a person cannot keep the commandments of God and the sayings of Jesus, it is evident that they have not yet *“believed the truth”* that will *“make them free.”* They continue to be *“slaves”* to sin that remains in them.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

To *“keep His word”* in this verse means the same thing God said to the children of Israel in Exodus 19:5 when He told them to *“obey my voice.”* *“His word,”* which is also called *“His commandments”* in the previous verse, is contained in all the *“sayings of Jesus.”* Merely *“trying”* to keep the commandment and *“do”* the sayings of Jesus is the source of great struggle and the failure so many people experience. John makes the point that if a person keeps the words of Jesus it is not because they *“try harder;”* but because the love of God is complete in them.

“...hereby know we that we are in him...” With these words, John comes to the conclusion of the *“test”* he began in verse three; *“Hereby we do know that we know Him...”* We keep His sayings, **because** the love of God is perfected in us. It is the *“divine nature,”* which Peter says the children of God partake of (II Peter 1:4). It is God’s divine law and the sayings of Jesus that are written in the *“new heart”* of those who are *“born of God.”* It is when these things are *“written in our heart”* that we *“know that we know Him”* and that we are *“in Him.”*

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

This is the second verse in this chapter that begins with the words, *“He that saith...,”* which indicates another mere

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“*claim*” of those who “*walk in darkness.*” The apostle shows no confidence whatsoever in the claims of men. He understands that true Christianity is a “*walk*” and not just a “*talk.*” Those who claim to abide in Him, “...*ought* (are under obligation) *to walk, even as* (just as) *He walked.*”

The “*sayings of Jesus*” in His “*Sermon on the Mount*” were not only His talk; they were also “*His walk.*” If we are to “*walk even as He walked,*” we must “*walk in the light, as He is in the light*” (I John 1:7). Those who walk in the darkness of religion, not knowing the truth that Jesus says will make them free (John 8:31-36), will never be able to “*walk as He walked.*”

It must be understood, that no man can “*walk as He walked,*” out of obligation; neither can he “*keep His commandments*” out of human will power. John will not mention “...*born of Him*” until the twenty-ninth verse of this chapter, but if we are to “*walk as He walked,*” we must be “*born again*” of the Spirit of God, with a “*new heart*” and a “*new spirit*” (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

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

With the use of the word “*brethren,*” John speaks to all those who are “*born of God.*” He makes it clear that the things he has written in this first “*test*” are not some strange new doctrine, but the same “*word*” they had “*heard from the beginning.*”

“...the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.” The “*old commandment*” which John speaks of is not the “*Law of Moses;*” it is instead

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the “*new commandment*” which Jesus gave to His disciples in John 13:34, “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*” John confirms that this “*new commandment*” of Jesus is the “*old commandment*” of the church in his second epistle; “*Not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but **that which we had from the beginning**, that we love one another*” (II John 1:5).

The apostle uses the words “*from the beginning*” nine times in this epistle. The subject of this entire epistle is “*He who was from the beginning*” (I John 1:1). In section one of this study, we saw that Christ was “*in the beginning*,” that He is “*from the beginning*,” and that He “*is the beginning*.” All truth proceeds from Him who “*is the truth*” (John 14:6). “*From the beginning*” cannot merely speak of a period of time in a person’s life. Multitudes of sincere people have heard nothing but lies from their “*beginning*.” Most people live their entire lives believing what they “*heard*” when they were little children, regardless of whether or not it is “*the truth*.” All “*gospel truth*,” however, is about Jesus Christ; who He is and what He came into the world to do. When John speaks of “*the word which ye have heard from the beginning*,” he speaks of that “*word*” which originates with Christ, who is “*The Word*,” and is revealed to us in the scriptures. There is no revelation beyond and apart from the scriptures. In this verse, however, “*that which we have heard from the beginning*” is the commandment to “*love one another, as I have loved you.*”

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

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In verse seven, John writes *“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you.”* When he says in this verse, *“Again, a new commandment I write unto you,”* he does not contradict himself. The *“new commandment”* does not invalidate the *“old commandment,”* but rather confirms and defines what it really means to *“love one another; as I (Jesus) have loved you.”* Everything the disciples saw and heard in Jesus gave them that definition.

“...which thing is true in him and in you...” In verse five, John speaks of those in whom the *“love of God is perfected.”* These are the ones who *“keep His word.”* The word *“thing”* is not in the Greek text, and should not have been added in this verse. John speaks of *“the new commandment, which is true in Him and in you.”* It is the *“love of God”* which is *“true in Him (Jesus),”* and is also *“true”* in every child of God.

What does Jesus mean when He says to *“love one another as I have loved you?”* In Matthew 5:39, it means to *“turn the other cheek;”* in verse 40, it means to *“let them have thy cloak also,”* and in verse 41 it means to *“walk the second mile.”* The great commandment of Christ is more than to *“love your brother;”* or to *“love your neighbor as yourself.”* Jesus said ***“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven”*** (Matthew 4:44-45). To those who are merely religious, to do these things will seem impossible, but to those who are *“born of God”* they are the manner of the kingdom of Christ. The *“New Commandment”* is the *“Old Commandment”* of love fulfilled in the children of God. John will confirm this repeatedly in the remainder of this epistle.

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"...because..." When the apostle says the new commandment "...*is true in Him and in you,*" he must give a reason for such a statement. The word "*because*" always indicates a "*reason.*" The Law of Moses had "*commanded*" the children of Israel to "...*love the LORD thy God with **all** thine heart, and with **all** thy soul, and with **all** thy might*" (Deuteronomy 6:5), and to "...*love thy neighbor **as** thyself*" (Leviticus 19:18), but never found a man that could obey its command. John, however, did not say these things "*should be true*" in us, but rather, "...*which thing **is true** in Him and in you.*" The reason the apostle gives for this absolute statement is, "*because the darkness is past...*"

"...the darkness is past..." Darkness has many "*sources,*" some of which we identified in the comments on I John 1:6, yet every source of religious darkness believes itself to be light. It is obvious, however, that the "*darkness*" and the "*light*" which John speaks of in **this particular verse**, is the old and the new covenants. In Galatians 3:19, Paul is speaking about the Law of Moses when he says, "...*it was added because of transgressions, **till the seed should come** to whom the promise was made.*" In Galatians 3:16, he clearly tells us that the "*seed*" that "*should come*" **is Christ**. Notice the words I have placed in bold concerning the Law of Moses; **"It was added ...till the seed (Christ) should come."**

The Law of Moses was not a source of light. In fact, the apostle Paul calls it a "*shadow* (Greek word '**skia,**' meaning '**shade**') of good things to come" (Colossians 2:17). Out of the word "*skia*" comes the Greek word "*skotos,*" which means "*shadiness,*" and out of "*skotos*" comes the Greek word "*skotia*" which means "*dimness*" and "*obscurity,*" which, in this verse, was translated as "*darkness.*" The Law of Moses is a "*veil of darkness*" which was placed over the minds of the children of Israel because of their refusal to hear

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the voice of God at Mount Horeb. It was not given as a blessing to them, but as a curse upon them (Galatians 3:10) which would continue until Christ came to *“redeem them that were under the Law”* (Galatians 4:4-5).

The scripture says in John 3:19, *“...this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, **and men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil.”* These words were not spoken as an indictment against the sinners and publicans; instead, it was the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and chief priests that hated Jesus and clung to the Law of Moses. They used the Law of Moses to condemn Jesus to death. The *“darkness”* they loved was the Law of Moses, and the *“light”* they hated was the Son of God.

“...and the true light now shineth...” Our *“light”* is Jesus Christ, and the light we walk in is *“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.”* When John speaks of the *“darkness”* that is past (I John 2:8), he speaks of the Old Covenant, the *“Law of Moses,”* which was nailed to the cross with Christ. When he speaks of the *“true light”* which *“now shineth,”* he speaks of the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ (Luke 22:20), which is revealed in the glorious gospel of Christ (II Corinthians 4:3-4). If we walk in the light we have fellowship with God and the *“light of His love”* will shine in the midst of the darkness of the world.

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

This is the third verse in this chapter that begins with the words *“...he that saith.”* Each of these relate to I John 1:6; *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, **and walk in darkness**, we lie, and do not the truth.”* A person who is not *“in the light”* is *“in darkness.”* Every religion of man that does not present *“Jesus Christ and Him crucified”* as the only

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hope of salvation for man, is “darkness,” and those who stay in those religions “walk in darkness” and will never have fellowship with God. This verse, however, speaks of those who claim to be “in the light.” Their “claim” goes beyond those in I John 1:6 who claim to have fellowship with Christ while they walk in darkness. These claim to have the light of truth, and to understand the gospel. They can say all the right things, yet they “hate their brother.” John says they are “in darkness even until now.”

John’s repeated use of the word “brother” may mislead some to think they can “hate” those who are not their “brother,” and love only those who believe just as they do. In Matthew 5:43-45, Jesus says, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*” He continues in verse forty-six, “*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans* (and the rest of the world) *the same?*” According to Jesus, the “publicans,” who were seen as traitors to Israel because they were tax collectors for Caesar, also “loved one another.” The children of God cannot limit their love to those of their fellowship only. Godly love (agape) extends to the ungodly also, to sinners, and even to our enemies (Romans 5:6-10).

It is probable that John was speaking of the unbelieving Jews as being their “brother.” As a general rule, the “unbelieving Jews” hated those Jews who believed that “Jesus is the Christ” (I John 5:1). They made themselves to be enemies to the church, even though they were “brothers” according to the flesh. John tells the believer to “love your brother,”

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even when your “*brother*” is your worst enemy. It is impossible to be “*in the light*” and have hatred in your heart.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

In Romans 9:1-4, the apostle Paul makes an incredible statement when he says, “*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites....*” Paul considered the unbelieving Jews to be his “*brethren*,” his “*kinsmen according to the flesh*.” His love for them was so great that if it would have saved them, he would have been willing to be “*accursed from Christ*” for their salvation. Yet, it was of these same Jews that he writes in II Corinthians 11:24, “*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*” These same Jews who Paul considered to be his brothers, whom he loved with his very life, were the same ones who persecuted him from city to city, seeking to take his life. In this, Paul discovered that to “*love his brother*” he must also “*love his enemy*.”

“...abideth in the light...” Abiding in the light is the reason a believer loves as Jesus loved. Those who “*walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us*” (Ephesians 5:2), also “*walk in the light, as He is in the light*” (I John 1:7), and there is no darkness in them. Those who stumble in their spiritual walk do so only because they walk in darkness.

“...there is none occasion of stumbling in him...” The phrase “*occasion of stumbling*” comes from the Greek word “*skandalon*,” from which the English word “*scandal*” is derived. It actually speaks of a “*snare*.” Those who love as Christ loves are abiding in the light and do not “*fall into*

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snare (scandals)” because *“there is no scandal (snare) in them.”*

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

This verse can be better understood if it is read without the words *“his brother”* in the text. *“He that hateth...is in darkness, and walks in darkness.”* They do not have fellowship with God and cannot keep the *“commandments”* of our Lord.

“...knoweth not whither he goeth...” The word *“knoweth”* in this verse is the first place the Greek word *“eido,”* which means *“to see,”* is found in this epistle. This entire verse is better understood to say, *“...he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and cannot see where he goeth....”* Due to the fact that they *“cannot see where they go,”* they will react and do things out of hatred which they would never consider in normal circumstances. They have *“fallen into the snare”* of unforgiveness.

“...because that darkness hath blinded his eyes...” Darkness cannot *“blind the eyes”* of those who *“walk in the light.”* However, there are many religious people who walk in hatred and malice while continuing to believe they have fellowship with God. Their religious darkness has blinded their eyes to the depravity of their walk. Saul of Tarsus could, on one hand, breath out threatening and slaughter against the believers while, on the other hand, believe he was doing the will of God. His religion was the darkness that blinded his eyes to the horrible condition of his own soul. Many professing Christians continue in sin while believing they are on their way to heaven, when in fact they are racing towards damnation. They cannot heed the warnings of the apostles against such things because the darkness of religious theology has

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told them that God cannot see their sin. Consider the warning given by the apostle Paul; “*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God***” (Galatians 5:19-21). Nothing could be clearer, but few can see the truth of it. Darkness has blinded the eyes of the multitudes.

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

In verses twelve through fourteen John speaks briefly to three classes of believers who are in the churches. He begins with those he calls “*little children.*” The words “*little children*” in this verse are translated from the Greek word “*teknon*,” which means, “*infants.*” In this particular verse, John is speaking to those who have been recently converted to Jesus Christ. They are “*new born babes*” in Christ. It is important that they understand John’s message to them, which is, “*Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.*”

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is from the beginning.* I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

“I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is from the beginning...*” What a wonderfully blessed group this is whom John addresses as “*fathers.*” While it is possible that these old fathers of the church had known Jesus in the days of His flesh, this was not the cause of their blessedness. The words “*have known*” in this verse were translated

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from the Greek word “*ginosko*,” which means “*to know*” with “*absolute knowledge*.” They are “*blessed*” because they “*know Him that is from the beginning*,” which speaks of the “*eternal Christ*.”

These old fathers knew Christ in the way that Saul of Tarsus wanted to know Him from the moment he met Jesus and knew that He is “*the Christ*.” It was “*for the excellency of knowing Christ*” (Philippians 3:8) that he gladly suffered the loss of everything he had previously trusted in. The apostle said, “*I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, (1.) That I may win Christ, (2.) and be found in Him... (3.) That I may know Him, (4.) and the power of His resurrection, (5.) and the fellowship of His sufferings, (6.) being made conformable unto His death*” (Philippians 3:8-10).

The “*fathers*” were established in the truth, and were steadfast in it. They were examples and role models to all who would come after them. Certainly there are those in the church today who also “*know Him that is from the beginning*.” Even though they have never seen Him in His flesh they know Him in the Spirit (II Corinthians 5:16). To these, the world holds no more attraction.

“**...I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one...**” This is the third group that John singles out for confirmation in this epistle. These are the “*young men*” in Christ, which speaks more about their spiritual maturity than about their age in the natural. They have “*overcome the wicked one*,” which has nothing to do with their physical prowess, but rather that they are “*strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might*” (Ephesians 6:10). In I John 4:4 the apostle reveals the reason why any of us may overcome; “*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in*

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the world.” In Revelation 12:11 John explains that they “*overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*”

“...I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father...” The words “*little children*” in this verse is not the same as in the previous verse. The Greek word is “*paidion*,” which means “*a childling*,” or “*a half grown boy or girl*,” which would actually indicate a fourth category of believers, based on their spiritual maturity. These would be in those “*growing years*” that begin when they are “*weaned from the breast*” and continue until they become strong young men in the Lord. A new born infant knows only that their sins are forgiven “*for His name’s sake.*” These “*half grown children*” also “*know the Father.*” An infant will soon recognize its father, but it has no comprehension of what a “*father*” really is. It is only when the young child is able to follow after its father, putting their little feet in his giant footsteps that they begin to know their father. They will be carried about on his great shoulders, and he will teach them both how to work and to play, as a relationship that cannot be broken forms between father and son. This verse, of course, is speaking of our “*heavenly Father.*” The “*infant*” may know who He is, but it is the “*child*” that spends time with the Father, who “*walks in His steps*,” and is “*carried about on His shoulders*,” who really comes to “*know Him.*”

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

John’s words to the fathers in this verse are exactly the same as in the previous verse; they “*know Him that is from the beginning*,” that is, they “*know Christ.*” Notice that the little

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children “*know the Father*,” but it is only the “*fathers*” that “*know Christ*.” It is a mystery that will unfold as we follow on to “*know Him*.”

“...I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one...” In the previous verse, John says to the young men, “*...because ye have overcome the wicked one*.” In this verse, John reveals why they have overcome; “*...because ye are strong (in the Lord), and the word of God abideth in you*.” The “*wicked one*” has no place in or any power over these “*young men*.” They could say with Paul, “*Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place*” (II Corinthians 2:14).

“...and the word of God abideth in you...” Jesus told the Pharisees, “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*” (John 5:39-40). It was not merely “*words*” from the scriptures that abode in the strong young men; it was the “*Word of God*,” the “*Logos*,” the “*divine expression of God*,” for that is the meaning of the Greek word which John used in this verse. There are those who can quote most of the bible, yet they have no life in them because they are blinded to those scriptures that “*testify of Jesus*.”

These young men were “*strong in the Lord*” because the “*words of life*” lived in them. These are those who “*search the scriptures*” and find Christ in them. They know by the scriptures “*who He is, what He came to do*,” and that He “*accomplished it all*” at Calvary. For them, the “*works*” are finished, and the “*wicked one*” has no place. “*And **they** overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of*

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their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11).

15 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.

When John says in John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world...*,” he speaks of the people who inhabit the earth. When he says in this verse, “*Love not the world,*” he specifies “*the things that are in the world.*” We are to love the lost person with the same love that caused Jesus to lay His life down for us, but we are **not** to “love” the “*lifestyles,*” the “*ways,*” or the “*things*” of the world. Jesus says in Matthew 6:24, “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.*” Based upon these words of Jesus, John could safely say, “*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*”

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

These three things, “*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,*” are indicative of that which moved Adam and Eve away from the tree of life and drew them to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and thus alienated them from the life of God. Genesis 3:6 says, “*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*”

“...the lust of the flesh...” This phrase should be understood as “*...the desires of human nature.*” It does not refer

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to *“sinful things.”* We should remember that Adam and Eve did not have a *“sin nature”* when they moved away from the *“Tree of Life”* to consider the forbidden fruit of the *“Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.”* It is not *“sinful things”* that can draw a child of God away from Christ, but *“the desire for other things,”* as Jesus says in Mark 4:19.

“...the lust of the eyes...” The forbidden tree was *“pleasant to the eyes,”* as were all the other trees of the garden. There are, however, *“beauties”* and *“riches”* in Christ that are far beyond anything the world could ever offer. In Hebrews 12:1, Paul exhorts us to *“lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset,”* and *“look unto Jesus.”* If Adam and Eve had turned their eyes from the forbidden tree to the Tree of Life,

they would have seen the greater riches and beauty that was prepared for them.

“...the pride of life...” The forbidden tree was a tree *“desired to make one wise.”* The Serpent had told Eve, *“...in the day ye eat thereof ...your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”* God had made Adam and Eve in His own image, but the Serpent promised something that in their sight was even greater, if they would eat of the forbidden fruit; they would *“become as gods, knowing (both) good and evil.”* They would become *“as gods”* unto themselves, meaning they would *“take charge”* of their own destiny. They would *“chart”* their own course, *“do”* their own thing, *“pursue”* their own ambitions, and *“live their own lives,”* without the *“restrictions”* of walking with God. They did not consider, however, until it was too late, that once they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they would be permanently alienated from God. Their eyes would be opened and they would know both good and evil. They would also know that

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they were naked, because the glory of God would depart from them. They would no longer bear the image and likeness of God, but rather, the shame of their nakedness, which they would try to cover with fig leaves (religious works) and hide among the trees of the garden. They would fear the presence of God, which they once loved, and would no longer have sweet fellowship with their creator. All these things would come upon them, because of the “...*lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*”

The “*pride of life*” takes many forms, but none are acceptable to God. In every form, the “*pride of life*” is that which will cause a person to seek to be exalted above others in some way. It could be the “*pride*” of “*feeling*” more beautiful, “*being*” more intelligent, or “*possessing*” more things. It is a pride that comes not from what we are, but from what we think we are. John says that none of these things are of the Father, but they are “*of the world.*”

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

When John says “*the world passeth away,*” he speaks of those who are “*of the world*” along with the “*things*” they possess. In the seventeenth chapter of John, Jesus prayed to His Father for all those who would trust in Him. In verse eleven He says, “...*these are in the world.*” In verse fourteen He says, “...*they are not of the world.*” It is those who are “*of the world*” and love the “*things of the world,*” that will “*pass away,*” but John concludes, “...*he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*”

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Section Four

Many Antichrists

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

“Little children, it is the last time...” With these words, the apostle returns to the young converts, those who are identified in the Greek text as “*paidions*,” which means “*half grown children*.” It is worth noting that John will never again address the “*fathers*” or the “*young men*” in this epistle. The “*fathers*” have “***known Him that is from the beginning***” and are well established in the truth. The “*young men*” are “***strong***,” because the word of God “*abideth in them*,” and they have “*overcome the wicked one*.” It is the young converts, recently converted and baptized with the Holy Ghost that John addresses in this section.

“...as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists...” The entire world is looking for “*antichrist*” to come. It was the same in John’s day; “*...ye have heard that antichrist shall come*.” John’s response, “***...even now are there many antichrists***,” points to several facts that should be understood in our day (almost two thousand years later).

1. John is the only writer in the entire Bible who uses the word “*antichrist*.”
2. Antichrist (singular) is mentioned only four times in the Bible, each time by the apostle John.
3. The title, “***The Antichrist***,” is never used in the Bible.
4. The word “*antichrists* (plural)” is used only one time. In

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every place the words “*antichrist*” or “*antichrists*” are used, the reference is to false teachers and false prophets anointed by the adversary to deceive young converts and move them away from faith in Christ (II Corinthians 11:12-15).

5. There is not a single scripture in the Bible that speaks of “*antichrist*” as a political figure.
6. There is absolutely no scriptural foundation for the modern day teaching of “*The Antichrist*. ”

The people in John’s day had heard that “*antichrist*” would come in the last time. John’s response was that there were many antichrists at work in their day. It was his proof that it was the “*last time*. ” As long as Christ is preached, there will be many antichrists, ranging from those who **fight against Christ**, to those who **pervert the gospel of Christ**, to those who **claim to be Christ**. All three of these were at work, even in John’s day, and they are still at work in our day.

The apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:14 that it is the “*children (infants)*” who are most susceptible to being “*...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*. ” It doesn’t matter how young or old they may be in the natural, they are yet “*little children*” because they have only recently received Christ. Revelation 12:4 uses the depiction of a “*dragon (Satan)*” who seeks to devour a “*child*” as soon as it is born. Certainly new converts and young Christians are the primary targets of the “*many antichrists*” that are in the world today.

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

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This first mention of antichrists may be a reference to certain Jews that had been swept into the church in the early days of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. They came in, professing to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, but later went out from the church to fight against it. John said, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us.”* He concludes that *“they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”* It is much better for the “many antichrists” to be on the outside, fighting against the church, than to be inside, pretending to be the church.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

The word “unction,” translated from the Greek word “*chrisma*,” speaks of the “anointing” of the Holy Ghost. We should take notice that these young converts have been “*baptized with the Holy Ghost*,” which could not be received until “*after they believed*” (Acts 19:1-2; Ephesians 1:13). It is only of those who have the Spirit presently working in them that John can say, “...ye know all things.” The Greek word the apostle used for “*know*,” actually means “*to see*,” and speaks of the knowledge that comes through spiritual insight. He is speaking specifically of the discernment the children of God have through the Holy Ghost actively working in them. They will judge all things by the Spirit, and by the Word of God. It is their “*protection*” against deception.

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

John is referring to the “*truth*” of who Christ is and what he came to do. This verse might better be understood like this: *“I have written to you because you know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and to remind you that*

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everything that is contrary to the truth is a lie. You know that no lie is of the truth.”

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

The apostle Peter, while preaching under the anointing and inspiration of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, said “...let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, **both Lord and Christ**” (Act 2:36). Notice that Peter’s revelation of Jesus, which he gave in Matthew 16:16, is “*Thou art **the CHRIST, the SON** of the living God.*” Martha, the sister of Lazarus, gave the same testimony in John 11:27 when she said to Jesus, “*I believe that thou art **the CHRIST, the SON OF GOD**, which should come into the world.*” This was Peter and Martha’s way of saying to Jesus what the Holy Ghost confirmed through Peter on the Day of Pentecost; “*Thou art **both Lord and Christ.***”

The same night Jesus was born to Mary, angels appeared to shepherds in the field with a wonderful message; “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, **which is Christ the Lord***” (Luke 2:11). Sitting at the right hand of God, Jesus is “*both Lord and Christ.*” Laying in a manger, a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, Jesus was “*both Lord and Christ.*”

The Gnostics deny that Christ “*came in the flesh,*” because in their doctrine, the flesh and blood body of man is always unclean and sinful. They believe that Jesus was just a man, the son of Joseph, who so completely denied his flesh that he became “*the Christ* (anointed one)” when the Spirit came upon him at John’s baptism. According to that heresy, he also “*became*” the son of God at the same time through adoption.

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John declared that all such doctrines are lies, promoted by liars and antichrists.

Christ (the Logos), who was “*in the beginning with God*” and who “*was God*” (John 1:1), and by whom “*all things were made*” (John 1:3), was “*made flesh, and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). John, the “*eyewitness apostle*” says, “*and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*” The Gnostics deny that Jesus was the “*begotten*” Son of God. We know the truth. We know that the flesh, blood, and bone body of Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God as much as it was the son of Mary. Jesus is “*the Christ*” of eternity; He is “*the only begotten Son of God*” who was “*born of a woman.*” He is both “*Lord and Christ.*” Those who teach otherwise, as the apostle John tells us, are “*liars*” and “*antichrists.*”

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

The Jews claimed that God was their Father because of the “*adoption*” (Romans 9:4); they had been “*chosen*” in Abraham, and God had called them His “*son*” (Exodus 4:22-23). The idea that God has a “*begotten Son*” was to them a cursed thought. John 3:16 says that Jesus is the “*only begotten Son of God*” in whom we must believe in order to be saved.

The “*only begotten Son of God*” was also “*begotten*” of the Virgin Mary, and is “*the seed of the woman*” whom God promised to “*bruise the head of the serpent*” (Genesis 3:15). Did Jesus fulfill this prophecy? Yes He did. Paul tells us in Hebrews 2:14, “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (The Christ) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (the serpent).*”

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Those who deny that Jesus did, through His death on the cross, everything that God promised “*The Christ*” would do, have denied that He is the Son of God. On the other hand, those who believe that “*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*” whom God “*sent into the world*” (John 11:27) to “*make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24) and “*destroy the works of the devil*” (I John 3:8), “*have the Father also.*”

Those who deny that Jesus of Nazareth is “*the Son of God*” do not have “*The Father,*” because the living and true God has a begotten Son. Multitudes in the world today deny that God is a father, because their “*god*” does not have a son. These do not know who God is; but we know. He is “*the Father of Jesus of Nazareth,*” and Jesus is “*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Those who deny this are the ones the apostle John labels as “*antichrist.*” On the other hand, those who “*acknowledge*” that Jesus is the Son of God have the Father also.

“...he that acknowledgeth the Son...” The Greek word “*homologeo,*” which is translated “*acknowledgeth*” in this verse, should have been translated “*confesseth.*” The word is used twenty nine times in the New Testament and is translated as “*acknowledgeth*” only in this verse, while being translated “*confess*” twenty five times. To “*acknowledge*” the Son of God is little more than “*mental assent*” in the presence of other believers, while to “*confess*” the Son of God before men has often brought rejection and persecution from a Christ hating world.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

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The word “*abide*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*meno*,” which means “*to stay*.” It is also translated as “*remain*” and “*continue*” in this same verse. The KJV translators, seeking to avoid repetition, sometimes used several different words to say the same thing, but in so doing they often obscured the meaning of the scriptures. Each of these words, “*abide, remain, and continue*,” is a good translation for the Greek word “*meno*,” but if only one of them had been used, it would have been much easier to understand the message of the apostle to the young Christians.

“...let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning...” John is still speaking to young converts, warning them against the “*antichrists* (the false teachers)” who deny that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And again, I paraphrase: “*You have heard from the beginning that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that He came into the world to take away our sin. Let this understanding **abide** (remain or continue) in you, for if it **abide** (remain or continue) in you, you will also **abide** (remain or continue) in the Son and in the Father.*” It is important to understand that we “*live in Him*,” only as His truth “*lives in us*.”

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

I John 5:11 says, “*...this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and **this life is in his Son**. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*” It is a mistake to believe we have eternal life apart from Christ “*abiding in us*,” and us “*abiding in Him*.” Many people mistake “*eternal existence*” for “*eternal life*.” They should understand that “*eternal existence*” without Christ, would be Hell itself (II Thessalonians 1:9).

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

Everything John has written, beginning with the eighteenth verse of this chapter, is concerning those who “*seduce you.*” They are the “*many antichrists*” he identifies in verses eighteen and twenty-two. He may be speaking of the unbelieving Jews of that day, of the “*Gnostics*,” or of the “*Nicolaitans*” which were a sect of the Gnostics in that day.

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

“...the anointing which ye have received of him...” In this verse, “*anointing*” is translated from “*chrisma*,” and is the same as “*unction*” in the twentieth verse. It speaks of the “*anointing*” of the Holy Ghost, “*which ye have received of Him.*” John the Baptist was speaking of Jesus when he said, “*I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost*” (Mark 1:8).

A common error today is to believe that we received the Holy Ghost when we received Christ. This is not true! We “*receive Christ by faith*” when we repent and believe the “*gospel of Christ*,” which tells us that “***Jesus is the Christ.***” We receive “*the Spirit of Christ*” when the Father “*sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father*” (Galatians 4:6). **We receive the Holy Ghost** with a mighty baptism, subsequent to salvation (after we receive Christ). Cornelius received both within a moment of time (Acts 10:44). This writer received the Holy Ghost within fifteen minutes of salvation. No one need wait, but everyone who has received

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Christ should immediately seek and expect the mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost.

“...abideth in you...” Jesus says, “*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He (the Holy Ghost) may abide with you forever*” (John 14:16).

“...ye need not that any man teach you...” This is not a blanket statement. John is referring to those “*teachers*” in the previous verse who sought to seduce them. These young Christians certainly did not need either the Judaizers or the Gnostics to teach them.

“...the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie...” The Holy Ghost is also called “*The Comforter*” (John 14:16), and “*The Spirit of Truth*” (John 14:17). In John 16:13, Jesus says, “*...when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.*” In John 15:26, again speaking of the Holy Ghost, Jesus said, “*...He shall testify of me.*”

“...even as it (the Spirit of truth) hath taught you, ye shall abide in him...” The message they heard from the beginning is that “*Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*” (John 11:27). The “*Spirit of Truth*” had come and borne witness of Jesus through many signs, wonders, and miracles which were wrought in His name. It is proven beyond any doubt, that “*there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Everything they had seen and heard from the Holy Ghost bore witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and they must “*abide in Him.*”

The apostle Peter defines the problem: “*...your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (I Peter 5:8). The “*Spirit of Truth (the Holy Ghost)*”

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gives the answer; “*Abide in Him.*” The “*Gnostics,*” the “*Nicolaitans*” and the “*Judaizers*” were among the “*many antichrists*” which John spoke of in verse eighteen. They were as dangerous to these young Christians as a “*roaring lion*” would be to young children. A parent would say to their child, “*Stay in the house! The lion cannot get you while you are in the house.*” The Spirit of Truth teaches us to “*stay in Jesus,*” knowing that “*Jesus is ‘The Christ.’*” Christ is our “*strong tower*” (Proverbs 18:10). He is the “*secret place of the most high*” (Psalms 91:1). We are safe from the adversary while we abide in Him.

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Section Five

Abide in Him

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

“And now, little children...” With this verse, John turns from the “*paidions* (half grown children)” to address those who in the Greek text are called “*teknions* (infants).” These are the ones who have only recently been converted to Christ. They can be people of any age, but they are new to the church and are not yet established in all the truth “*as it is in Jesus*” (Ephesians 4:21).

“...abide in him...” With these words, the apostle gives the answer to everything these young converts will ever face in life; simply “*abide in Christ.*” The word “*abide*” is translated from the Greek word “*meno*,” which means “*to stay*,” and is variously translated in this epistle as “*abide*,” “*abideth*,” “*continue*,” “*remain*,” “*dwelleth*,” and “ *dwell*.”

“...that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming...” In the previous section the reason given to “*abide in Him*” is that “*in Christ*” is a place of safety from the many “*antichrists* (false teachers)” that were seeking to seduce the young converts. “*Stay in Christ.*” We will see numerous reasons given throughout the remainder of this epistle for the admonition to “*abide in Christ.*” In this verse, John turns from his warning against the seducers, and points to the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ at His second coming. Only those who abide in Christ will have confidence when He appears. Those who do not will be ashamed before Him at His coming.

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

“If ye know that he is righteous...” The word “*righteous*” is translated from the Greek word “*dikaios*,” which means “*equitable in character or act.*” When referring to the character of God, “*He is righteous*,” but when referring to His actions, “*He is just.*” It is very important to understand that “*justice*” and “*righteousness*” do not define what God is. Instead, “*what God is*” defines both righteousness and justice.

God is righteous and does righteousness (justice). The “*proof*” that He is righteous is that Christ came into the world in a body of flesh to “*make an end of sins*” and “*bring in everlasting righteousness*” (Daniel 9:24) through His sufferings and death on the cross. “*Christ-crucified*” is the greatest demonstration of justice (righteousness) that has ever, or ever shall be seen.

Righteousness is the nature of God. It is the “*divine nature*” that Peter said we, who are “*born of God*,” are partakers of (II Peter 1:4). Human efforts to do righteousness, while they may improve the culture, can never make the one doing them righteous. These are what Isaiah spoke of when he said, “*All our righteousness-es* (our human efforts to do righteousness) *are as filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6). It was of those who sought to “*establish their own righteousness*” (Romans 10:3) through the keeping of the Law of Moses that Paul spoke of when he said, “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one*” (Romans 3:10-19).

There was not one person who lived in the period between Adam and Jesus Christ who did righteousness “*as He is righteous*” (I John 3:7). The apostle Paul, however, tells us that “*many are made righteous*” by the obedience of Jesus Christ to the death of the cross (Romans 5:19). We can recognize

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those who are “*righteous*” because they “*do righteousness* (justice)... *even as He is righteous* (just)” (I John 3:7). These are those who are “*born of Him.*” They are righteous in all their dealings, whether with God or man. The prophet Micah dealt with this same issue in Micah 6:8, saying, “...*what doth the LORD require of thee, but to **do justly**, and to **love mercy**, and to **walk humbly** with thy God?*” This is the nature of the children of God.

Chapter Three

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

“...behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us...” With the word “*behold*,” John calls our attention to the great love that God has “*bestowed upon us.*” Notice that it is the “*manner*” and not the “*magnitude*” of His love that we are to see. The “*manner of love*” is revealed in John 3:14-15. “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, **EVEN SO** must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” When the next verse, John 3:16, says “*For God **SO** loved the world...,*” the Greek text actually says, “*For God **in this manner** (as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness) loved the world, **therefore** He gave His only begotten Son, **in order that** whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but **would have** everlasting life.*” The apostle Paul confirms this “*manner of love*” when he speaks of Christ, “... *who loved me, and **gave Himself for me***” (Galatians 2:20). It is this “*manner of love*” that reveals the “*magnitude of His love*” for the lost world.

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“...hath bestowed upon us...” If “*manner of love*” speaks of Christ’s death on the cross, then the word “*us*” in this verse cannot indicate only “*us who believe;*” instead it must indicate every person on earth, because Christ “*died for all*” (II Corinthians 5:14-15). God bestowed His love upon sinners, the ungodly, and even His enemies, when Jesus gave His life to take away the sin of the world.

“...that...” The word **that**, which is used in this verse, was translated from the Greek word “*hina,*” which means “*in order that,*” and points to the reason for the wonderful love which was “*bestowed upon us*” at Calvary when the Son of God laid His life down for us.

“...that we should be called the sons of God...” He delivered us from Satan and redeemed us from sin by His death on the cross, “*in order that*” we could be “*born again*” as “*the sons of God*” through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Peter 1:3). It is those who have “*known and believed the love of God*” (I John 4:16) which the Father bestowed upon us when Christ died for us who are “*born of God.*” It is “*the Father*” who now calls us His “*sons.*”

“...therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not...” The word “*therefore*” is translated from two Greek words, “*dia touto,*” which mean “*through that thing.*” We were sinners exactly like the world around us, but we have believed upon Him who died for us and rose again from the dead. We are “*born again*” of the Spirit of God, but the world does not understand this. They see the change that has taken place in the lives of those who are truly “*born of God,*” and they fear it. In the days of Jesus’ ministry, everyone who saw His works and heard His words knew that He was different than other men, but they did not know why He was different. They **did not know** He was the “*only begotten Son of God.*”

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If they do not know who He is, they will never believe who we are, who are “*born of God*” and “*abide in Christ*.”

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

“...beloved, now are we the sons of God...” John speaks expressly to the new converts, “*Now are we the sons of God.*” We do not “grow” into son-ship, but we are sons of God the moment we are “*born of God.*”

“...and it doth not yet appear what we shall be...” The word “*appear*” is translated from the Greek word “*phaneroo*,” which means “*to render apparent.*” When a son is born to earthly parents, we have no idea what he will be at maturity. He may grow up to be a janitor, or he may grow up to be the president, but neither is apparent at the time of his birth. Being “*born again*,” Peter became an **apostle**; Phillip became an **evangelist**, while John was both an **apostle** and a **prophet**. Although we cannot know what a newborn child of God will be in the kingdom of Christ, there is one thing we can have the assurance of, which John tells us in the next phrase.

“...but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him...” The words “*when he shall appear, we shall be like Him*,” connect directly to the **twenty eighth verse** of the **previous chapter**, which says, “*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*” John gives assurance to new converts that if they “*abide in Christ*,” they will “*grow up into Him*” (Ephesians 4:14-15), and they will be “*like Him*” when He appears in His second coming. They will have “*confidence*” and “*not be ashamed*” when

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they stand before Him. John deals with this same issue in I John 4:17: “*Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as he is, so are we IN THIS WORLD.*” Notice that it is “*in this world*” that we “*shall be like Him.*”

“...for we shall see him as he is...” There is no word for “*shall*” in the Greek text of this phrase. Literally, “...we shall be like Him *because we see Him as He is.*” Oh how blessed John had been to be one who had “*seen, heard,*” and even “*handled*” Him in the days of His flesh (I John 1:1), yet this was not the “*secret*” to who and what John was for Christ. The soldiers who drove the nails into his hands and feet had also seen Him, heard Him and handled Him. The apostle Paul says, “...though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more” (II Corinthians 5:16).

In Ephesians 3:3-4, Paul speaks of the “*mystery of Christ.*” To see the one who was “*in the beginning with God*” and who “*was God*” (John 1:1-2) manifested in the flesh as Jesus of Nazareth is a “*great mystery.*” He tells Timothy, “*Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...*” (I Timothy 3:16). To see Christ “*as He is*” is a great revelation, which Paul calls “*the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Galatians 1:12).

John will tell us in I John 5:1, “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*” Those who “*see Him as He is*” know that Jesus of Nazareth is the one spoken of in Daniel 9:24-25 as “*the messiah (the Christ),*” who would come into the world to “*finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.*” Jesus is “*the Christ.*” He did everything that God promised He would do through His death on the cross and His resurrection the third day. We should

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understand that everything He did on the cross, He does **in** everyone who believes the truth and trusts in Him. ***“We shall be like Him, because we see Him as He is.”***

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

In Colossians 1:27, the apostle Paul speaks of a “*glorious mystery*,” which is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*.” The proper understanding of “*hope*” is “*expectation*.” Christ is the “*hope*” that works in the children of God. An old gospel song says, “*I’m possessed of a hope that is steadfast and sure, since Jesus came into my heart*” (words by Rufus McDaniel; 1914). Notice that he did not say “*I possess a hope...*,” but “*I’m possessed of a hope*.” A barren woman may “*possess a hope*” that she will someday become a mother, but a “*pregnant woman*” is “*possessed of a hope*.” Once the child is conceived in her womb, it is neither her will nor her work that will bring the child to full term. She is not “*producing*” a child; she is “*bearing*” a child. So it is with those who “*have this hope in them*.”

“...purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” It is an obvious, but often overlooked fact that if a person could “*purify themselves*” from sin, then Jesus shed His blood in vain. We sing the precious old song, “*What can wash away my sin?*” and forget that the answer is “*nothing but the blood of Jesus*.” Those who trust in “*their abilities*” to “*purify themselves*” most often grow old with the question gnawing on their heart, “*Have I done enough?*” If the “*hope*” that dwells in us is “*The Christ*” of eternity, we have been purified in spirit, soul, and body by faith in the precious blood He shed for us. The apostle Paul tells us, “*...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” (Hebrews 10:10). If we are to truly trust in Christ, we must know “*who He is*,”

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and “*what He came into the world to do.*” We must understand that everything He came into the world to do, He did when He died on the cross. When He said “*It is finished*” (John 19:30), it was finished for everyone who “*trusts in Him.*” Set your affection “*on things above*” (Colossians 3:1-2), and “*rejoice in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:3). You will “*purify your soul*” through the knowledge of the truth (I Peter 1:22).

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

The word for “*law*” is not found in the Greek text of this verse. Neither are the words for “*transgresseth*” and “*transgression.*” A better translation of this verse is “***Whosoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness***” (NKJV). It is true that sin is identified by the ten simple commandments which God spoke from Mount Horeb (Exodus 20:1-17). God promised, through the prophet Jeremiah, that He would “***make a New Covenant***” with His people. He said, “***I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more***” (Jeremiah 31:33-34). The prophet Ezekiel revealed a little more of the “*new covenant*” in Ezekiel 36:26-27; “***A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.***”

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This great promise is fulfilled in the “*covenant of grace*” that God has given to those who trust in Christ. God’s “*law*” is written in the “*new heart*” and the “*new spirit*” of everyone who is “*born of Him*” (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Those who “*continue in sin*” (Romans 6:1-2) do so only because they do not have the “*heart*” and “*spirit*” of a child of God.

It is not the breaking of a law or the lack of a law that makes a person lawless. A person is “*lawless*” when God’s law is not in their heart. We live in a culture in which almost every activity of man is regulated by law, yet the average citizen today is completely “*lawless*” when it comes to the condition of their heart. Sin is rampant in our culture, not for the lack of “*laws*,” but because of the “*lawlessness*” of the heart of man.

A child of God is not governed by external laws such as those which are “*engraved in stone*” or “*written*” by man. We are governed by the “*nature of Christ*” which is written in our hearts by the “*Spirit of the living God*” (II Corinthians 3:3). We are “*delivered from the Law*” to “*serve in newness of spirit*” (Romans 7:6). We are “*dead to the law*,” not to be “*lawless*,” but to be “*married to Jesus*” and “*bring forth fruit unto God*” (Romans 7:4). Those who commit sin do so because they are “*lawless*.” God’s law is not written in their heart.

The proper definition of sin, however, is found not only in the “*absence*” of God’s law in the heart of man, but in the “*presence*” of the “*lawless nature*” of the serpent. Sin is the “*nature of the serpent*” that deceived Eve and caused Adam to disobey God. When Adam “*disobeyed God*,” he submitted himself to the words and the will of the serpent. The apostle Paul explains the “*entrance of sin*” in the fifth chapter of Romans; “*...by one man sin entered into the world, and death*

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by sin...” (Romans 5:12), and “...by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Romans 5:19). “The serpent” is “lawless,” and “sin,” which is the nature of the serpent, is “lawlessness” in the heart and nature of man.

“...whosoever committeth sin...” It is extremely important to understand the meaning of the word “committeth” as it is used in this phrase. Many people erroneously believe the phrase should say, “whosoever practices sin,” which would speak of habitual sinning. The word “committeth” is translated from the Greek word “*poieo*,” which Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary defines as “to make or do,” and refers to “a single act” (see Strong’s definition of “*poieo*,” #4160, and compare it with “*prasso*,” #4238). The proper definition of the English word “make” is “to bring into existence.” The definition of the word “do” is “to perform or execute.” The children of God do not “make” or “do” those things that are contrary to the nature of God.

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

When John begins this verse with the words “...and ye know,” he establishes several things that were common knowledge among the believers of his day. But how can we “know” these great truths? We “know” because they were written in the law and prophets hundreds of years before Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary.

Over five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, God sent the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel with the promise of “The Messiah (The Christ)” who was to come. His mission would accomplish **six things, five of which** were accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Among these, He would “...make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity,” and “bring in everlasting righteousness.”

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The word “*know*,” used in this verse, is translated from the Greek word “*eido*” which means “*to see*,” and speaks of spiritual perception. Correctly understood, this phrase says, “... ***you see*** (by the scriptures) *that He was manifested to take away our sins.*” This great truth is as clearly written in the scriptures as any doctrine of the Bible, yet there are very few who can “*see*” it. Many are like the Jews that argued with Jesus in the eighth chapter of John. Jesus diagnosed their problem in John 8:43; “*Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.*” They had eyes, but they could not “*see*,” they had ears, but they could not “*hear*,” and they had hearts, but they could not “*understand*” (Acts 28:27).

“...he was manifested...” The first verse of this epistle begins with the words “*That which was from the beginning.*” Properly translated, we know that John actually introduced “***He who*** *was from the beginning,*” and identifies Him as “*the Word of life*” (I John 1:1). John first introduced Him in John 1:1 with the words “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” He tells us in John 1:14, “*...and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*” This is what John means when he says “*He was manifested.*” It is “*the Word, made flesh*” that John speaks of in the first verse of this epistle when he says (properly translated) “...***whom*** *we have heard, whom we have seen with our eyes, whom we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.*” He speaks of Jesus of Nazareth, “*the Christ of God.*”

“...to take away our sins...” John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the Jews in Judea with the words, “*Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). There can be little doubt that John the Baptist made this statement based upon the angel Gabriel’s prophecy that Messiah

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would make an end of sins and bring in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24-27). The apostle John confirms the words of John the Baptist when he says, “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.*” The Greek word “*hamartia*,” which was translated “*sin*” in this verse is a noun, which always names a person, place, or thing. It is used to indicate the sinful nature that is in fallen man as well as the “*sins*” that a sinner commits. Jesus explains the relationship between “*sin*” and the “*sins*” that are committed in Matthew 7:17-19 when He gives the analogy of sin as a “*corrupt tree*” that can only produce “*evil fruit.*” He says, “*...every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree (Sin) bringeth forth evil fruit (sins). A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*” Notice that He does not take away the “*evil fruit*” of the “*corrupt tree;*” instead, He cuts the tree down. This is what John the Baptist spoke of when he said, “*And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire*” (Matthew 3:10).

The truth is that God has always forgiven the sins of those who have repented. The Son of God did not suffer and die on the cross to merely forgive us; instead He died to “*take away*” the “*sin*” that entered the heart and nature of man through Adams’s transgression against God.

Romans 5:19: “*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*”

Jesus did not die on the cross to “*take the punishment*” for our sins. Neither did He “*take away the penalty of sin.*” The purpose of Jesus’ death on the cross was to “*take away our*

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sin” through **our** “death” with Him. Paul told us that our “old man of sin” is nailed to the cross “with Him” (Romans 6:6-7). This great truth of who Christ is and what he came to do is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes it” (Romans 1:16). It is, however, “...foolishness to them that perish” (I Corinthians 1:18).

“...and in him is no sin...” The **second thing** John establishes in verse five is that “...in Him is no sin.” Jesus confirmed this fact only three hours before being arrested in Gethsemane and placed on trial for His life; “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: **for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me**” (John 14:30). Sin, which is the nature of the serpent, was not in Christ; it is not presently in Christ; nor shall it ever be.

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

“...whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...” This statement is built upon John’s words in verse five, “in him is no sin.” If there is no sin in Christ, then those who continue in sin cannot be abiding in him. Remember that it is to new converts that John addresses these words. He does not say, “...stop sinning and you will abide in Him;” instead, he says, “abide in Him and you will not sin.” Some believe a “mature Christian” has “power over sin,” but this is not the case. Jesus does not offer “power over sin,” but “freedom from sin.” There is a glorious difference in these for those who will receive it. Look again to John’s exhortation to the “little children” in I John 2:28. He says to them, “...**abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**” Whosoever abideth in Him “sinneth not” because of the two reasons given in the previous verse; He was “manifested to take away our sins”

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and “*in Him there is no sin.*” Jesus promises “*rest*” to everyone who comes to Him (Matthew 11:28). What a glorious place of sweet rest Christ is for those who abide in Him.

Those who “*abide in Christ*” abide in a kingdom, and “*Christ*” is that kingdom. Paul called it “*the kingdom of God’s dear Son*” (Colossians 1:13). In Ephesians 5:5, he calls it “*the kingdom of Christ and of God,*” which it is. **Christ is the kingdom of God.** Those who “*abide in Christ*” are not alone in this present evil world, trying to overcome in the face of all that Satan and the world can throw at them. They abide in the kingdom of the one who has overcome the world. Jesus’ last recorded words before entering Gethsemane the night before He died on the cross are these words of great encouragement; “*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33).

“...whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

This is the fourth of four great truths John has given us in two verses that should be common knowledge to every child of God. **1.** “*Christ was manifested to take away our sins.*” **2.** “*In Him is no sin.*” **3.** “*Whosoever abides in Him does not sin.*” **4.** “*Whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him.*” The fourth of these is the most offensive of all to those who claim to “*know Him*” while they continue in sin.

“...hath not seen him...” Remember the phrase from the **second verse of this chapter**, “*...we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*” Those who continue in sin have never seen Him “*as He is.*” The Greek word “*horaō*,” which was translated “*seen*” in this verse, means “*to stare at,*” and implies “*to discern clearly*” according to Strong’s concor-

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dance and Greek Dictionary. The apostle makes it clear that those who continue in sin have never “*seen Him as He is.*”

Many people may have had an experience with the Lord, but have never seen him except through the clouded veil of religious tradition. They think they see Jesus, but they have never seen the one who died to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). They know nothing of the “*Jesus*” who is “*the Christ*” that came into the world to “*make an end of sins*” (Daniel 9:24-25). Everyone who has “*seen Him as He is*” has ceased from sin.

“...neither known him...” The prophet Hosea spoke of those “*who follow on to know the Lord*” (Hosea 6:3). Many people have had a religious experience and some of these can truthfully claim to have “*met*” Jesus Christ. But John is clear; no one who continues in sin has “*known him.*”

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

John continues to address the “*little children* (new converts),” warning them, “*let no man deceive you.*” Deceivers teach that the children of God are still sinners, and continue in sin. In this verse and the next, John repudiates that deception in words that cannot be misunderstood except by those who are “*willingly ignorant*” of the truth (II Peter 3:5); they are those who cannot see the truth because they do not love the truth, and have no desire whatsoever to hear the truth because their “*pleasure*” is in “*unrighteousness*” (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

“...he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” Remember the words of the apostle in I John 2:29; “*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*” How can this be an

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absolute truth? It is because “*righteousness*” is the “*nature of God*” exactly as “*sin*” is the “*nature of the serpent*.” What God is defines what righteousness is. Based upon this truth, John gives newborn Christians an absolute test by which they can understand who is righteous and who is not. It is the one who “...*does righteousness, even as He is righteous*,” that is righteous. Those who are born of God “*do righteousness*” because it is the “*new nature*” that God gives to His children. The apostle Paul says, “...*they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:17). We know that the righteousness which God gives is not an “*invisible quality*” that only God can see in His children; neither is it a set of principles or rules that a person lives by. The “*righteousness which is of God by faith*” (Philippians 3:9) is a very real righteousness. It is the righteousness that Jesus spoke of when He told His disciples, “*except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 5:20). It is a gift from God, and like a “*city that is set on a hill*,” it “*cannot be hid*” (Matthew 5:14).

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

“He that committeth sin...” Who could read these words and not understand what John is telling us. The word “*committeth*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*poieo*,” which means “*to make or do*.” It does not mean “*practice*,” as many teachers believe and teach. If John had intended to say “*practice*,” he would have used the Greek word “*prasso*.” It is in Strong’s definition of “*prasso*” that

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we learn something about “*poieo*” and the “*truth*” that John intended to give:

Strong’s #4238 *prasso* (pras’-so); a primary verb; to “*practise*”, i.e. perform repeatedly or habitually (*thus differing from 4160 (poieo), which properly refers to a single act*).

“...is of the devil...” When John says “*He that committeth sin is of the devil,*” he does not indicate that certain individuals are “*born of the devil,*” but rather that the entire human race received its fallen nature from the devil (the serpent) when Adam disobeyed God. This is precisely why Jesus said to Nicodemus, who was a great teacher of the law and a member of the Sanhedrin, “*You must be born again*” (John 3:1-7). Those who are “*born again*” are “*born of God;*” they have received their life and nature from God. The apostle Paul tells us that a child of God is “*...made free from sin,*” and becomes “*...the servant of righteousness*” (Romans 6:18). They no longer have the “*nature of the serpent,*” but they have received the “*nature of God,*” which is “*righteousness.*” When we were “*servants to sin*” (Romans 6:20-22) we “*obeyed sin,*” not because we were “*commanded*” to do so, but because it was our “*nature*” to do so. In the same way, those who are “*servants to righteousness*” do not “*obey*” because of “*commandments,*” but because “*righteousness*” is our new nature, which has been given to us as a “*gift*” (Romans 5:17). It is “*God’s law,*” written in *our* heart (Jeremiah 31:33).

“...for the devil sinneth from the beginning...” The word “*for*” is translated from the Greek “*hoti,*” which gives a reason why those who commit sin are “*of the devil;*” it is “*because*” the devil is a sinner and the original source of sin. His

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nature is sin; he “*sinneth from the beginning,*” and those who continue in sin have his nature remaining in them.

“...for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil...” In the same day that sin entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience, God promised a “*seed of the woman*” which would “*bruise the head of the serpent.*” The “*seed of the woman*” is the “*firstborn son of Mary*” whom she named “*Jesus*” in obedience to the angel Gabriel who had appeared to her. He was “*conceived of the Holy Ghost*” and “*born of a virgin*” (Matthew 1:20-23), and thus the “*seed of the woman*” is the “*Son of God*” whom God sent to “*destroy the works of the devil*” by “*bruising the head of the serpent*” through His death on the cross.

“...that he might destroy the works of the devil...” The apostles used several different Greek words that were translated “*destroy.*” The word “*katargeō,*” which the apostle Paul used in Romans 6:6 and Hebrews 2:14 means “*to be (render) entirely idle (useless).*” The word that John used in this text is “*luō,*” which means to “*loosen,*” that is “*to reduce to the constituent particles*” (see Strong’s #3089 and #4486). Christ’s purpose when He came into the world was to “*destroy the devil,*” to “*undo his works,*” and to “*reconcile fallen man back to God.*” He accomplished these and so much more when He died on the cross to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

Where would we be if Adam had not disobeyed God? We would live on planet earth without sickness, sorrow, pain, or death. We would live in a paradise where nature would work for man and not against him. There would be no evil, because the serpent would have been banished from the beginning. We would be “*just a little lower than God,*” in the image and

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likeness of God, and much higher than the angels. In the “*new creation*,” which we are in Christ, there is no devil, and there is no sin. It should be understood that everything necessary to destroy the devil and undo his works was finished to perfection when Jesus Christ died on the cross. There will be a “*new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*” (II Peter 3:13), and the old, which is contaminated with sin, will “*pass away*” (Revelation 21:1).

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

As the “*son of Mary*,” Jesus is the “*only begotten Son of God*” (John 3:16), but as the “*Son of God*,” He is the “*first-born among many brethren*” (Romans 8:29). It is on this basis that John can say, “*Whosoever is born of God* (Jesus and His ‘many brethren’) *doth not commit sin.*” It is in the next phrase that we understand why this is so.

“...for his seed remaineth in him...” In order to understand the power of this phrase, we must determine exactly who or what “*His seed*” refers to. The answer is found in a wonderful prophecy of the “*new creation*,” given in the Psalms of David.

Psalms 22:30-31: “*A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation* (the sons and daughters of God). *They shall come, and shall declare his* (God’s) *righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*”

According to David, “*the seed*” that would come would be counted as the “*generation*” of the Lord. This means they would be the children of God by new birth. And they would preach the gospel (His righteousness) to those that “*shall be*

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born (born again),” saying, “*He* (God) *hath done this*” through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, which David describes in great detail in the same chapter (Psalms 22:1-29).

The words “*His seed*” in I John 3:9 refer to the children of God of which David prophesied. Therefore, John is correctly understood to say, “...*because God’s seed* (the children of God), *remaineth in Him....*” The word “*remaineth*” is translated from the Greek word “*meno*,” which means “*to stay*” and is most often translated as “*abide*.” This ninth verse simply repeats and strengthens the message of verse six, which says, “...*whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not*.” We are “*His seed* (God’s children)” and we “*abide in Christ*” where there “*is no sin*” (I John 3:5).

“...and he cannot sin...” There is no Greek word for “*he*” in this phrase. Instead, it is those who are “*born of God*” that “*cannot sin*” as long as they “*abide in Christ*” where there “*is no sin*.” If we think the translators erred in verse six where they translated, “...*whoso abideth in Him sinneth not*,” John confirms in this ninth verse that they did not. If we believe the words “*cannot sin*” in verse nine actually mean something else, a correct understanding of language will show that they do not. John does not say that we who are “*born of God*” are “*able*” to “*not sin*,” instead, he says we are “*absolutely not able to sin*.” The reason he gives is “...*because His seed* (God’s children) *abide in Him*” where there “*is no sin*.” All who are “*moved away*” from Christ, however, will have an awakening of sin as they wither and die like a branch separated from the vine.

“... because he is born of God...” What more can be said? We are “*born of God*,” we are “*new creations in Christ*,” and we “*abide in Him*” where there is no sin. It would be

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very foolish to believe, after all that Christ has done to deliver us, that we are still sinners. There is only one qualification to all that is spoken; we must abide in Christ where God birthed us when we first “*trusted in Him*” (Ephesians 1:12). No one can keep themselves from an awakening of sin in their heart if they do not “*abide in Him.*” John’s answer for every trial or test is simply “*abide in Him,*” that is to say, “*stay in Christ Jesus.*” Do not be moved away from Him.

Some people are so determined to show that the children of God are also “*sinners*” that they actually teach that Jesus, who is the “*only begotten Son of God,*” could have sinned in the days of His flesh. They believe that if Jesus could not have sinned, there was no reason for Him to be tempted. The truth of this matter is found in the Greek word “*peirazō,*” which was translated “*tempted,*” but actually means “*to test.*” Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was “*...in all points tempted (tested) like as we are, yet without sin.*” It is possible to “*test*” that which is perfect, but it is not possible for “*that which is perfect*” to fail the test. Adam, who was formed of the dust of the earth, and his wife Eve were both “*tested*” by the serpent (Satan), and they failed the test, because, even with all that God had made them to be, they were still “*of the earth, earthy*” (I Corinthians 15:47). The first creation was “*flawed,*” so God made a “*new creation in Christ,*” and “*tested*” **Him** (Christ) in every point that fallen man has failed in, “*yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15). Paul gives a comparison of Adam and Christ in I Corinthians 15:47; “*The first man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy: the second man (Jesus Christ) is the Lord from heaven.*” There was no possibility that He would fail in what the Father sent Him to do. Neither is it possible for those who “*abide in Him*” to fall, if they “*stay*” in him.

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

“...in this the children of God are manifest...” It is the basic truth of John’s epistle that the children of God are not sinners. How many times must he repeat himself before we believe him? “*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...*” (I John 3:6). “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...*” (I John 3:9). He brings the conclusion to his epistle in the fifth chapter, saying, “*And we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...*” (I John 5:18). It is ***in this*** that the children of God are manifest; they “*do not commit sin.*” Even so, there are other qualities that are manifested in the children of God. “*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him*” (I John 2:29). “*He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous...*” (I John 3:7). “*...every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love...*” (I John 4:7-8). Notice! “*God is righteous;*” everyone who is born of God does righteousness, “*even as He is righteous*” (verse seven). “*God is love;*” everyone who is born of God loves, because “*God is love*” (I John 4:8). The children of God partake of the nature of their Father, and it is manifested as light in a darkened world.

“...and the children of the devil...” It would be a terrible injustice to conclude from John’s words in this tenth verse that everyone who is not “*born of God*” is “*born of the devil.*” It is true however, that everyone who has not been “*born of God*” is lost. No one has been “*born of the devil,*” but we were all “*born of the flesh* (human nature),” which was polluted by sin. There are untold millions of lost people in the world who are “*lost*” for no other reason than they have never been told about Jesus, who is “*the Christ*” that came into the

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world to make them free. Many of them would believe if they heard the truth of the gospel. While technically every lost person would fall into the category of those John calls “*the children of the devil*,” the apostle actually designates those who are so deceived by the devil that they have become enemies to the truth. They have “*heard the truth*” and refused to believe it (Mark 16:15-16); they have “*seen the light*” and have hated it (John 3:19-21). Some of these make the claim to be “*Christians*.” It is of these that Paul warns the church at Philippi when he says, “*Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example (example). (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that **they are the enemies of the cross of Christ**: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*” (Philippians 3:17-19).

Peter designates these “*enemies of the cross*” as the “*false teachers*” of II Peter 2:1. He describes them further in II Peter 2:14-15 as, “*...having eyes full of adultery, and **that cannot cease from sin**; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have **forsaken the right way, and are gone astray**, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.*” The “*children of God*” are those who have been “*born again*” of the Spirit of God. They “*abide in Christ*,” and “*cannot sin*” as long as they “*abide in Him*.” The children of the devil are those who seek a place among the righteous, but have “*forsaken the right way*,” and “*cannot cease from sin*.” They are “*tares among the wheat*” (Matthew 13:24-30). They are the “*many antichrists*” which John warned of in I John 2:18.

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“...whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother...” Jesus tells us how we will recognize the children of the devil; “*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matthew 7:15-20).

It is such a simple test that anyone, believer or unbeliever, can know the difference. The children of God are not sinners; the children of the devil “*cannot cease from sin.*” The children of God do righteousness; the children of the devil cannot. The children of God love as Jesus loved; the children of the devil are filled with hatred and bitterness against their perceived enemies.

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Section Six: “*Love One Another*” I John 3:11-24

Section Six

Love One Another

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

Jesus says that the “*second great commandment*” is “*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*” (Matthew 22:37-40). In John 13:34, Jesus gives an even greater commandment; He says, “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*” Jesus defines this love in the next verse; “*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*” (John 15:12-13). Notice, however, that He defines the greatest love that a man can have for his “*friend.*” The love of Christ extends far beyond that. Paul shows the superiority of the love of Christ in Romans 5:7-8; “*Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*”

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

The counterpart to the children of God who “*love one another*” is Cain, whom John says “*was of that wicked one.*” Cain was a spiritual “*child of the devil.*” He was not, as some erroneously teach, the actual “*seed of the serpent*” through natural means. He was born of Adam and Eve exactly as his brother Able was, but envy and jealousy found a place in his heart against his brother. Over a period of time, it turned into bitterness and hatred, which caused him to murder his righteous brother.

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“...wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous...” The matter of Cain and Abel is a precursor for all time for the relationship between the righteous and those who are merely “religious.” It reached its pinnacle in the rejection and murder of the Son of God, which was plotted by the chief priests and elders of Israel. Christ loved the world that hated Him, and Abel loved the brother that murdered him, and so it will be for all time.

Cain wanted God to be pleased with him, and Able wanted to please God. There is a tremendous difference in those two attitudes. An “Abel” says, *“I want to please God. I will obey His voice and offer what He asks of me.”* A “Cain” will seek unconditional approval from God with total disregard for what God has said. He believes that God should be pleased with his “offering” whatever it may be.

Cain is disappointed every time he offers his sacrifice. He goes home with a *“fallen countenance”* and an *“angry heart,”* because God will not receive what he offers. He sees Abel rejoicing in the presence of God and enjoying the blessings of God, and hates him because of it.

“...his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” This phrase answers the question, *“Why did Cain kill Abel?”* The “works” of these two brothers refer to the offering they brought to God. Cain tilled the soil and brought an offering of the *“fruit of the ground”* (Genesis 4:3). Abel was a *“keeper of sheep”* and sacrificed a firstborn lamb from his flocks. Cain’s offering (works) was said to be *“evil,”* and Abel’s offering (works) was *“righteous.”* The word “evil” in this verse does not refer to the essential character of the things he did, but of the nature of his service to God. The spirit that worked in Cain is the same spirit that motivated the scribes and Pharisees in the days of Jesus. John 3:19 says

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*“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, **because their deeds were evil.**”* It is the religious works of the scribes and Pharisees that are called *“evil”* in this verse. As Cain rose up and killed Abel, it was the scribes, Pharisees, and the chief priests that plotted the death of Jesus, because the *“light”* of Christ’s righteousness exposed the futility of their religious works.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

When John speaks of *“my brethren,”* he speaks to those who *“trust in Christ”* and are *“born of God.”* They are the *“children of God”* because they, like Abel, have offered the *“more excellent sacrifice”* (Hebrews 11:4). They trust, as Paul says in I Corinthians 2:2, in *“Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,”* and just as Cain hated Abel, the world hates them.

“The world” that hates the children of God is not made up of mere *“unbelievers.”* The *“haters”* are those who have heard the truth and refused to believe it; these are *“disbelievers.”* The *“believer”* and the *“disbeliever”* may be *“brothers”* according to the flesh, but *“according to the spirit”* they are of two different natures. It is no *“marvel”* if the *“disbeliever”* hates those who have believed.

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

With these words John gives one of many *“tests”* by which the young convert may know their standing with God. Those who have passed *“from death to life”* now *“love the brethren”* whom they once hated. Saul of Tarsus hated the Christians, and most of all, he hated Jesus. However, the moment that he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus and discovered that *“Jesus is the Christ,”* everything changed for

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Saul of Tarsus. From that moment, he “*loved*” Jesus with all his heart, and he loved the “*brethren*” who also believed that Jesus is “*the Christ*.” Saul did not “*learn to love*,” he “*loved*” because he had “*passed from death unto life*.”

When Saul of Tarsus converted to Jesus, those Jews who had “*loved him*” while he persecuted the church, now “*hated him*” because he preached Jesus. Saul of Tarsus, who became the greatest among the apostles of Jesus, never ceased to love those Jewish brothers who now hated him, and tried repeatedly to kill him.

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

In Matthew 5:43-44, Jesus says, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies....*” The children of God do not “*hate their brother*,” nor do they “*hate their enemies*.” It does not matter who a person hates, whether it is their “*brother*,” their “*neighbor*,” or their “*enemy*,” it is all the same; “*he that hateth is a murderer, and no murderer has eternal life*.” An undeniable truth becomes evident in this verse: No one who carries hatred in their heart has eternal life abiding in them.

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

The Greek word “*ginosko*,” which is translated “*perceive*” in this verse, actually means “*to know*” with an “*absolute knowledge*.” John will tell us two times in this epistle that “*God is love*.” If God “*is love*,” He has always been love, because God “*changes not*” (Malachi 3:6). The Law of Moses commanded man to “*love God*,” but it did not reveal

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God’s love to man. In fact, Moses’ law was a ministration of condemnation and death, according to the apostle Paul (II Corinthians 3:7-9). There was no way for fallen man to know the love of God until Christ laid His life down for us. It is in this that we “*perceive the love of God.*”

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

This verse actually explains the last phrase of verse sixteen; “...and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Certainly the same love of God that caused Christ to come into this world specifically to die for sinners, the ungodly, and enemies of God, will cause the children of God to lay down their lives one for another. This does not mean that we will die for others so much as it means that we will give our lives to be a blessing to others.

In this verse we are faced with a question as to who our brother is. Perhaps the best test is that which Jesus gave in the parable of the “*Good Samaritan*” (Luke 10:30-37). A man on a journey to Jericho fell among thieves, who robbed him, stripped him of his clothes, and left him half dead by the road side. Both a priest and a Levite saw him (at different times) and “*passed by on the other side.*” Finally a Samaritan man found him, bound up his wounds, carried him to an inn, and provided for him until he was restored to health. Jesus asked the question, “*Which...of these was neighbour to the man who fell among the thieves?*” The answer came from a lawyer who had tried to trap Jesus; “*He that shewed mercy.*” Jesus answered, “*Go, and do thou likewise.*” Don’t “*seek*” a neighbor; “*go*” and “*be a neighbor*” to those who are in dire need.

We miss the point of John’s message if we believe we can “*shut up the bowels of compassion*” from unbelievers or even

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from our enemies. Paul says, “...if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink” (Romans 12:20). John has not left his analogy of Cain and Abel, when he gives this exhortation. There is no way the children of God can distinguish between their “brother” and their “enemy” if they have the love of Christ abiding in them. It is true that we have spiritual brothers who are very special and easy to love, but **every** person is our “brother” or “sister” in the flesh, and we dare not “shut up our bowels of compassion against them” when we see their need.

“...seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion...” It is not a contradiction to say that the “church” is **not** responsible to feed and clothe those who are of the world. The church is **not** responsible to pay the light bills or the rent of those who spend their money on drugs, alcohol, etc. In II Thessalonians 3:10-12, Paul says, “...when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”

There was an occasion in the scriptures that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed the feet of Jesus with precious ointment. Judas objected, saying, “Why was this not sold and the money given to the poor?” Jesus answered Judas, “The poor ye have always with you.” The resources of the church should be “poured upon the feet of Jesus,” through publishing the gospel of Christ to every living person in every nation of the world.

Jesus was “moved with compassion” to do the works of His Father. It was the Holy Ghost that moved Him. A child of

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God can also be “*moved with compassion.*” We, as individuals, are responsible to every person that God “*moves us with compassion*” toward, even if it is a stranger on the street. We are moved with compassion because God is moved, and He would minister to their need through us. Many people, however, have denied the work of compassion for so long that they have become hardened, and sadly, the “*love of God*” no longer dwells in them.

“...how dwelleth the love of God in him...” If God cannot move us with compassion for the lost, sick, or truly impoverished, it is because the love of God is not in us. There are thousands of people living around us who have great needs, but they are not “*advertising*” their need. They are diligently trying to live with what they have, but often that is simply not enough. Open your eyes and see. It may be one in your church, or it may be one in your neighborhood. It will seldom be the one who “*advertises their need,*” or who knocks on your door, or calls you on the phone, begging for money.

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

God spoke to Ezekiel concerning those who sat under his ministry in the days of the captivity: “*...they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness*” (Ezekiel 33:31). Our love must be more than the words, “*I love you,*” which everyone likes to hear. Love must become an “*action verb*” that expresses itself in everything we do. Jesus did not tell us to “*have love one for another,*” but to “*have love one to another*” (John 13:35). Love is not love until it is delivered by acts of kindness. James 2:15-16 says, “*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwith-*

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standing ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” We may tell the brother or sister how much we love them, and that we are praying for them, but they will never know our love until we deliver it to them in the form of clothes to the naked, and food to the destitute.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

It is only as we love “*in deed and in truth*” that we can know that “*we are of the truth.*” Our hearts (our conscience) will be reassured and comforted before Him, by this knowledge.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

It is, in fact, the content of the heart that either condemns or justifies a person. In Matthew 15:19-20, Jesus explains that it is the evil things in the heart of man that defile the man. “*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, (and) blasphemies.*” These things in the heart of a person will condemn them even if they do not feel condemned. Others may say they do not have those “*evil things*” in their heart, yet they feel condemned. Remember, it is not only the “*absence of evil,*” but the “*fullness of love*” one to another that reassures our heart and gives us confidence before God.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

What a wonderful condition of which this speaks. The heart is purified from all evil through faith in Christ, and filled with the love of God. Now, we have confidence toward God.

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

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Do we really believe there is a place in Christ where *“whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him?”* Jesus said, *“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you”* (John 15:7). It is those who *“trust”* and *“abide”* in Him who have a nature to *“keep his commandments.”*

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

In Hebrews 13:20-21, Paul speaks of *“the blood of the everlasting covenant... **working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.**”* The children of God are not *“commandment keepers;”* they are *“covenant keepers,”* who by nature also keep His commandments.

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

His commandment is fulfilled in *“faith”* toward Jesus Christ and *“love”* toward one another. These are the two things the apostle recognized as proof of the children of God among the Gentiles. To the *“saints at Ephesus”* Paul writes, *“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers”* (Ephesus 1:15-16). It is the same in his letter to the Colossians; *“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints...”* (Colossians 1:3-4).

“...believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ...” Know who He is. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, expressed what this means perhaps better than any other when she said to Jesus, *“I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, **which should come into the world.**”* She had been taught in the synagogues about the soon coming of *“The Messiah (the Christ)”*

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from the time of her childhood. He was the one prophesied of in Daniel 9:24-25, who would “*make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.*” Mary believed that “*Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary*” was also “*the Christ, the Son of God*” whom all the prophets of God had said would come into the world. John the Baptist was ordained by God and anointed to introduce Him to the nation. It was the day after John saw the Holy Ghost descend upon Jesus that He said, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). Most people today believe in the existence of one named “*Jesus Christ,*” but there are very few who believe that Jesus is “*The Christ*” of eternity, whose sole purpose in coming into the world was to “*take away the sin of the world*” which “*entered into the world*” through the disobedience of the first man Adam (Romans 5:12). “*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*” (Romans 5:19).

“...love one another, as he gave us commandment...” The apostle Paul confirms the second great commandment of the Law of Moses in Galatians 5:14; “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*” Jesus gave us a “*new commandment,*” however, “*That ye love one another AS I HAVE LOVED YOU*” (John 13:34). He also gave the command to “*love your enemies*” (Matthew 5:44). These commandments of Jesus are far greater than the love commandments Moses gave, and they supersede and fulfill all commandments.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

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The words “*dwelleth*” and “*abideth*” in this verse are both translated from the Greek word “*meno*,” which literally means “*to stay*.” If the translators had given us “*abideth*” instead of “*dwelleth*” in this verse, it would have been easier to understand the apostles meaning.

“...he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth (abideth) in him, and he in him...” This is a direct reference to the words of Jesus in John 15:4-5; “***Abide** in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it **abide** in the vine; no more can ye, except ye **abide** in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that **abideth** in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*”

Perhaps you have heard of the natural law of “*cause and effect*.” Sometimes it is difficult to discern which is “*the cause*” and which is “*the effect*” when reading the scriptures. Jesus, however, clearly shows that “*abiding in Him*” is “*the cause*” that brings “*much fruit*” which is “*the effect*.” In the phrase, “*He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth (abideth) in Him...*,” “*abiding in Him*” is “*the cause*” that brings “*the effect*,” which is “*keeping His commandments*.” The same is true in I John 2:3 where the apostle says, “*Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments;*” the “*cause*” is “*knowing Him*,” and the “*effect*” is “*keeping His commandments*.” To reverse the order of cause and effect is to enter into a lifetime of struggle, trying to please God, but receiving no better results than Cain’s sacrifice brought to him.

“...hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us...” It is with these words that John lays the foundation for chapter four.

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Section Seven: “*Try the Spirits*” I John 4:1-6

Section Seven

Try the Spirits

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

John concluded the previous chapter with the words, “... *hereby we know that he **abideth** in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*” He begins this chapter by telling us to “*try the spirits;*” that is, to “*test*” the spirits to see whether they are of God. The apostle Paul tells us, “...*if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*” (Romans 8:9). Before any person can receive the Holy Ghost, he (or she) must first receive the “*Spirit of Christ.*” The Spirit of Christ is that which Paul speaks of in Galatians 4:6 when he says, “*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth **the Spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*” If any should doubt the necessity of receiving “*the Spirit of Christ* (the Spirit of the Son)” before receiving the Holy Ghost (the Spirit of the Father; Matthew 10:20), they should consider two verses in Romans 8:10-11.

Romans 8:10: “*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*”

Romans 8:11: “*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*”

Verse ten speaks of “*the Spirit of the Son,*” while verse eleven speaks of “*the Spirit of the Father.*” When judging the spirits of the prophets, whether they are of God or not, Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:15-20, “*Beware of false prophets, which come*

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to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree CANNOT bring forth evil fruit, NEITHER CAN a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” The proof of whether the “spirit” of a prophet is of God or not, is not the “signs and wonders,” and apparently “great anointing” they may have. These things would seem to indicate that they are full of the Holy Ghost, but the “proof” is whether or not they have “the Spirit of Christ.” This is the reason Paul tells at the very beginning of his exhortation on the “Spirit filled life” that “If any man have not **the Spirit of Christ**, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9). The “Spirit of Christ” is manifested in “righteousness” and “love,” which when found together are the “divine nature,” which is of God. Righteousness without love is “self-righteousness,” and “love” without “righteousness” is “lasciviousness.” Those who have Christ have these qualities, but those without righteousness and love have neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit of the Father. False prophets may demonstrate great “power, signs and wonders” but they are identified as false prophets because they do not have the “Spirit of Christ” and thus they are not of God.

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

Many teachers believe that John is speaking explicitly of the Gnostics of his generation. They were a people who believed that the “fleshly body” of man is inherently evil, so Christ could not have come in a fleshly body. While it is true that any person who denies that Christ came in a fleshly body is

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not of God, the counterpart of that statement is not true. Demon spirits recognized Christ in the flesh when He taught at Capernaum, and cried out, saying, *“I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God”* (**Luke 4:34**). Certainly there are both spirits and people who readily *“confess”* with their mouths that *“Jesus is the Christ who came in a body of flesh,”* yet they have never been *“born of God.”*

The *“key”* to understanding the test which John gives to *“try the spirits,”* is found in the words, *“is come,”* which are translated from the Greek word *“erchomai,”* which means *“to come or go.”* This word is used only in the present and imperfect tenses, and does not refer to whether or not Christ *“came* (past tense) *in the flesh.”* The *“imperfect tense”* indicates that His *“coming in the flesh”* was not a onetime event that was finished when Jesus was born to Mary. It can be properly said that Christ *“...has come in the flesh”* (of Jesus of Nazareth), *“...is come in the flesh”* of all who trust in Jesus, and He *“...will come in the flesh”* (though incorruptible and immortal) at His second coming.

The *“mystery of the gospel,”* which was *“hidden”* from the time of Adam’s transgression until redemption and reconciliation was made by Jesus Christ on the cross, is *“Christ in you, the hope of Glory”* (Colossians 1:26-27). Christ, who is the *“eternal Word of life”* (I John 1:1), was made flesh in the womb of Mary and was born into this world as Jesus of Nazareth; it is thus that He *“came in the flesh”* as the *“only begotten Son of God.”* The *“present and imperfect tense”* of this event is the great mystery that *“Jesus Christ is come in the flesh”* of everyone that is *“born again of the Spirit of God.”*

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

I refer once more to the words of Paul in Romans 8:9; “*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.*” Based upon this, we can know the true from the false by comparing them to Jesus. If Jesus Christ “*is come*” in “*their flesh*,” their “*fruit*” will be the good fruit of righteousness and love.

There is a very simple test given throughout this epistle to determine whether Jesus Christ “*is come in the flesh*” of those who profess Him. We should keep these four things in mind:

1. “*God is light... those who walk in darkness have no fellowship with Him*” (I John 1:5-6).
2. “*He is righteous... (I John 2:29) ...whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God*” (I John 3:10).
3. “*In Him is no sin... (I John 3:5) ...whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not*” (I John 3:6).
4. “*God is love...he that loveth not knoweth not God*” (I John 4:8).

When “*trying the spirits*” of the prophets, do they “*walk in the light of truth*” as John reveals it in this epistle? Do they “*do righteousness*” or do they “*continue in sin?*” Of most importance, do they “*love*” their brother, their neighbor, and even their enemies, “*as Jesus Christ loved us?*”

“...this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world...” The apostle John had absolutely no concept of “*antichrist*” as a world leader or a political figure. John is, however, the only one that ever mentioned or even used the word “*antichrist*.” According to John, those “*deceivers*” (II

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John 1:7) and “*seducers*” (I John 2:26) who sought to turn the people from Christ were the antichrists. They were “*false teachers*” and “*false prophets*,” and their goal was to infiltrate the church to destroy it with their lie. Jude spoke of these in Jude 1:4, saying, “*There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Those who believe that a child of God will continue in sin because of the grace of God have fallen prey to their lie. They are the “*tares among the wheat*” (Matthew 13:25) which the enemy has sown.

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

John speaks to the “*little children.*” These are the “*infants*” in Christ. The Greek word actually calls them “*little darlings.*” They are the “*children of God*” because they are “*born of God.*” From the moment of their “*new birth,*” Christ is in them. “*Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*” People tremble at the thought of “*antichrist,*” but it is the “*spirit of antichrist*” that the “*infant*” in Christ has overcome from the moment they first believe that “*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*” (John 11:27). “*Ye are of God*” says it all concerning those who are “*born of God.*” They are “*the sons of God*” (I John 3:2), and Jesus Christ “*is come*” in their flesh.

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

The children of God are “*of God*” and not “*of the world.*” Those false prophets and teachers, whom John calls “*antichrists,*” are “*of the world*” and not “*of God.*” They speak

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of the things they know, which are the things of the world. John tells us in I John 2:15 to *“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.”* They promise the *“things of the world”* to those who will *“confess Christ,”* but they bring them to *“the god of this world,”* to fulfill their promise (Luke 4:6-7). They believe that *“gain is godliness;”* they teach that *“prosperity”* in the things of this world is God’s greatest desire for you. They *“speak of the world, and the world heareth them.”*

“...the world heareth them...” These *“false teachers”* have successfully built churches with tens of thousands in attendance and millions of followers worldwide, because *“the world heareth them.”* They will never speak contrary to the *“way of the world”* because they are *“of the world.”* With them, there are no *“absolutes.”* There is no such thing as sin, immorality, perversion, or heresy, as long as a person *“professes Christ.”* In fact, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhist, and every other religious way may be considered a *“way to God”* as long as they *“honor Jesus”* as a prophet, teacher, or messiah; but they will never honor Him as **THE CHRIST**, whom God sent into the world to *“make an end of sins”* (Daniel 9:24-25).

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

John is very bold in this absolute statement. *“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us.”* The apostle John had been ordained by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to every people. He speaks the words of God to everyone who will listen, and those who *“hear”* the truth he speaks will also *“live”* (John

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5:25). Those who refuse to hear the words of eternal life actually judge themselves to be unworthy of that life (Acts 13:46).

John begins this epistle by giving His “*credentials*.” “*I have heard Him with my ears; I have seen Him with my eyes; I have handled Him with my hands; I know Him, and I declare Him unto you.*” In this verse John says, “*He that knoweth God heareth us.*” It is an “*eye-witness apostle*” who makes this statement. Those who “*know God*” will “*hear*” what John says in his epistle. Those who disregard the great “*truth*” of John’s epistle, do not know God, and are not of God. John says it is by this that we recognize “*the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*” The basis for John’s words in this verse is given by Jesus in his confrontational discourse with the Jews in John 8:45-47; “*...because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth (can convict) me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*”

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Section Eight: “*Love Made Perfect*” I John 4:7-21

Section Eight

Love Made Perfect

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

We recognize that the overriding theme of John’s epistle is “*love*,” because he returns to the subject repeatedly to reveal a little more of the depths of what it means to love. In I John 3:1, he speaks of the “*manner of love*” that is “*bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.*” In I John 3:16, John says we can “*perceive*” God’s love for us in that Christ died for us. In this verse, he tells us “*love is of God.*” It is on this basis that he can say, “*...every one that loveth is born of God.*” It is a powerful statement, and one that can be twisted to our own detriment if we do not understand what it means that “*love is of God.*”

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

“**...God is love...**” It is only when we understand that “*God is love*” that we can understand the statement in the previous verse that says, “*everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*” What God is, defines what love is, because “*God is love.*” He is the source of love, because “*love is of God.*” The natural man can be very loving, but he cannot “*love*” with the love that God is. In Luke 6:32, Jesus establishes that even sinners “*...love those that love them.*” There are people who are very loving by nature, but human love does not prove the presence of God. If a person manifests the “*love that God is*” we know that God is in them, because “*God is love.*” On the other hand, any person who is void of love does not know God, because “*God is love.*”

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Section Eight: “*Love Made Perfect*” I John 4:7-21

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

The love of God toward man is proven by the fact of the incarnation; that Christ, who was “*in the beginning with God*” and who “*was God*,” became a man in order to reconcile fallen man to God. The greatness of His love is manifest in the manner of His love; He died for us, a sacrifice sufficient to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29) in order that we might receive life “*through Him*,” and live “*in Him*.”

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

Abraham loved God, and when God tested his love, he was found to be willing to offer his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice for his sin. That “*manner of love*” (I John 3:1) would have done absolutely nothing for either God or Abraham. It did however, give a preview of how God would love the world; He would offer His beloved Son to take away the sin of the world. Jesus said, “*Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad*” (John 8:56). Abraham caught a glimpse of Calvary, where God would offer His beloved and only begotten Son to be the sacrifice for our sin. God said to Abraham, “*By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice*” (Genesis 22:16-18). Abraham had set the pattern for

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God, and so it is written, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).

Man’s love toward God is not the motivating factor in our redemption. We were enemies to God when He loved us and gave His Son to redeem us. Paul says, *“For his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, (God) hath quickened us together with Christ...”* (Ephesians 2:4-5).

“...the propitiation for our sins...” The “love of God” is not proven because we love God, but because He loved us, and sent His Son to take away our sin. He is the “*propitiation*,” that is, the “*expiator*” of our sins, meaning that what Jesus did for us through His death on the cross was sufficient to free us from sin and reconcile us to God.

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

“...if God so loved us...” The word “so” is translated from the Greek word “*houto*,” which means, “*in this way*,” and indicates the “*manner*” in which God loved us; He gave His Son to die for us. Understand John’s words to say, “*...if this is the way God loved us, we ought to love one another in the same self sacrificing way.*” The “*new commandment*” that Jesus gave in John 13:34 is “*...that ye love one another as I have loved you.*” Such love is beyond the human capacity, but those who “*receive Christ*” receive the capacity to love.

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

“...no man hath seen God at any time...” John wrote these same words in John 1:18; “*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Fa-*

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ther, he hath declared him.” Jesus Christ, in the days of His flesh, was the “*image of the invisible God*” (Colossians 1:15), and “*the express image of His person*” (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus told Phillip in John 14:9, “*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*” He explains this in the next verse, saying, “*Believest thou not that **I am in the Father, and the Father in me?** the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but **the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works***” (John 14:10). There was no person on earth that had seen God, but those who saw the life and work of Jesus were seeing what God is.

“...If we love one another, God dwelleth in us...” Earlier in this commentary I introduced “*the natural law of cause and effect.*” It is important that we recognize which is the “*cause*” and which is the “*effect*” in this verse. It is easy to err into believing that God will “ *dwell in us*” if we “*love one another,*” when the opposite is true. We “*love one another*” because God “*dwells* (abides) *in us.*”

“...and his love is perfected in us...” The only way the unbelieving world can see God is in the children of God, when “*His love is perfected in us.*” His love will be perfected in us only as He abides in us and we abide in Him. Only then can we love others as Christ has loved us, and “*the world*” will “*see God.*”

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

The wording of this verse is very similar to that of the last verse of the third chapter, but the meaning is somewhat different. The previous verse, I John 3:24, speaks of the Spirit of Christ when John says, “*...hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*” The apostle Paul says, “*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*” (Romans 8:9). We should understand that while the

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“*Spirit of Christ*” and the “*Spirit of God*” are “*one*,” they are not the same. In Romans 8:10, Paul speaks of the condition of the person who has received the “*Spirit of Christ*,” but not the Holy Ghost (the Spirit of God). In Romans 8:11, he speaks of the condition of those who have also received the Spirit of God.

“...hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us...”

” Verse twelve (the previous verse), speaks of “*God*” dwelling in us, and “*His love*” perfected in us. In this verse, the apostle gives a sure way to know if in fact we do “*dwell in God and God in us*.”

“...because he hath given us of his Spirit...” This speaks of the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of God (our Father; Matthew 10:20). Jesus said “*rivers of living water*” would flow out of those who “*believe upon me as the scripture has said*” (John 7:38). John explains the words of Jesus in the next verse; “*This spake He of **the Spirit**, which they that believe on him should receive: for **the Holy Ghost** was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified*” (John 7:39). We know that Christ abides in us because God has “*sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father*” (Galatians 4:6). The Spirit of Christ is manifested in the life we live out of a pure heart. We know that we “*dwell (abide) in God, and He abides in us*” by “*His Spirit (the Holy Ghost)*” which He has given to us. The greatest manifestation of those who have truly received the Holy Ghost is the “*perfect love*” that flows out of them.

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

God sent Christ into the world through the womb of the Virgin Mary, where He was made in the likeness of men to be the Son of God. The Father sent His Son to the cross to be the

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“sin-offering” that would *“take away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29); thus He would *“save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21). John had given this testimony previously in two verses; *“...ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins”* (I John 3:5), and *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil”* (I John 3:8).

In the same day sin entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience, God gave the first promise of His Son, but He veiled the promise in a *“mystery;”* His *“Son”* would also be the *“seed of the woman.”* God promised that *“the seed of the woman”* would *“bruise the head of the serpent”* (Genesis 3:15). He was God’s *“only begotten Son* (born of a woman),” but the world did not know who He was (I John 3:1). Mary and Joseph were told to *“call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21). *“The Father”* sent *“His Son (Jesus)”* to the cross *“to be the Saviour of the world.”* John 3:16 says, *“...that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* John’s purpose in both his *“gospel of John”* and this *“epistle”* is to show through his eyewitness testimony that *“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* He is the *“Savior of the world.”*

The seventeenth chapter of John is the prayer Jesus prayed the night before going to the cross. In verse three, He says, *“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, **whom thou hast sent.**”* In verse eight, He prays for His disciples, and tells the Father, *“...they have believed that **thou didst send me.**”* In verses twenty and twenty-one, He prays for everyone who would ever believe upon Him, that *“...they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: **that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**”* In verses twenty-two and twenty-three, He prays, *“And the glory which thou*

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*gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world **may know that thou hast sent me.***” From these verses we understand that Jesus considered it to be of great importance that the entire world should “*know*” that **God sent Him** to “*take away the sin of the world.*”

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

This verse is the third of three great confessions that John speaks of in this epistle. The first is found in chapter one verse nine: “*If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” A person’s confession or acknowledgement of their own sin before God is a prerequisite to them finding both forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness.

The second great confession is found in verse two of this chapter: “*Every spirit that **confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** is of God.*” Jesus, the Christ of prophecy, who made an end of sins at Calvary, is also the “*seed of the woman*” that God had promised. He was born by natural birth, lived, ministered, was crucified and died, all in a body of flesh, blood, and bone. He truly “*came in the flesh.*”

This third great confession is “***Jesus is the Son of God.***” Although the Jewish nation believed (in part) the prophecies of the coming Christ, most rejected the assertion that he would be the Son of God. This is made clear in Jesus’ question to the Pharisees: “*What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord,*

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*how is he his son?” (Matthew 22:42-45). It was expected that Christ would be a great leader and prophet sent from God, but they believed he would be just a man. This is made even more clear in the Jews response to Jesus’ words in John 5:18; “**My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God**” (John 5:18). The Jews understood that if Jesus was the Son of God then he was on the same level with and equal to God. This meant that he was “divine.” To them this was blasphemy. It was his claim to be the son of God that the Jews used as justification to demand his death. “The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God” (John 19:7). John is very clear that Christ did not begin in the womb of Mary but “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3). This great truth is at the very heart of the gospel and those who deny it cannot come to the Father. John writes: “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (I John 2:23). Jesus Christ was not just a man; He was and is the Lord from heaven! There are numerous groups even today who accept that Jesus is Christ but do not acknowledge that He is in fact divine, the Son of God. John’s repudiation of such still stands true: “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.”*

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

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This is the second time in this epistle that John tells us that *“God is love.”* Love is the fifth of the *“attributes of God”* that John gives in this epistle. It must be understood that none of these define what God is. Instead, *“what God is”* defines what the attributes are, and the attributes define what the children of God are.

1. God is Life. I John 1:2 says, *“...the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.”*

2. God is Light (I John 1:5). The seventh verse says, *“...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

3. God is Righteousness. I John 2:29 says, *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”*

4. God is sinless. I John 3:5 says, *“...in Him (Christ) is no sin.”* The sixth verse draws this conclusion; *“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.”*

5. God is Love. Again, God is the definition of love just as He is the definition of righteousness. It is only as God *“is love”* that it can be said, *“Everyone that loveth is born of God,”* and *“He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.”* Human love cannot reach to such heights.

“...we have known and believed the love that God hath to us...” John began the third chapter of this epistle with the words *“...what manner of love is this, the Father hath bestowed upon us...”* (I John 3:1). It is that *“manner of love”* that God bestowed on us at Calvary that John refers to in this verse. *“We have known and believed”* that God sent Christ

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to be the savior of the world. “*We have known and believed*” that He “*made reconciliation for iniquity*” (Daniel 9:24) when He died on the cross. “*We have known and believed*” that Jesus Christ is “*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). In His introduction to “*The Revelation*,” John rejoices in Jesus, saying, “*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...*” (Revelation 1:5).

The scripture does not tell us that God “*loves the world*,” but it does tell us that He “*so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*” (John 3:16) in order to “*take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). God’s love “*for the world*” is always expressed in the past tense, and in every case speaks of His great love that caused Christ to die for the ungodly. The “*love that God hath to us*” was given to us on the cross, where “*Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8); “*God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*”

“...God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him...” It is a mistake to believe that God’s great love is only in the past tense, however. “*God is love*” and the children of God abide in love because they abide in God, and God abides in them. God loves His children with an everlasting love. The apostle Paul was aware of God’s great love for him even when he was in the midst of great suffering and persecution; “*I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 8:38-39).

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

“...Herein is our love made perfect...” I John 2:5 says “...whoso keepeth his word, **in him verily is the love of God perfected.**” I John 4:12 says “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and **his love is perfected in us.**” This verse speaks not of “**His love perfected in us,**” but “...**our love made perfect.**” John says “**herein is our love made perfect,**” referring to the last words of the previous verse which say, “*He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God....*” It is only as we “ *dwell in love*” that our love is perfected.

When our love is perfected (complete), so is every other attribute, and as John said in this text, “...*as He is, so are we in this world.*” In Ephesians 3:17-19, Paul explains that everyone who is born of God begins in the “*love of Christ,*” and arrives in “*all the fullness of God.*” In His own words, “...that ye, **being rooted and grounded in love,** may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And **to know the love of Christ,** which passeth knowledge, **that** (in order that) ye **might be filled with all the fulness of God.**”

“...boldness in the day of judgment...” In Hebrews 9:27, we read, “...*it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*” The apostle Paul makes it very clear that “...*we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ*” (Romans 14:10). Again, in II Corinthians 5:10, Paul says, “...*we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*” In Acts 10:42, Peter tells Cornelius that it is Jesus who is “*ordained of God*

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to be the Judge of quick and dead.” Many erroneously believe that those who have “believed in Jesus” will not be judged by Christ. The truth is, we will all stand before Christ to give account. Many would take this lightly, because Jesus Christ is the one who “loved us and gave Himself for us.” If He loves us so much, surely He will never condemn us. Jesus Himself spoke of the Day of Judgment in Matthew 7:22-23, saying, “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

In II Corinthians 5:11, when speaking of the judgment seat of Christ, Paul says “*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men....*” In Hebrews 10:31, concerning the Lord judging His people, Paul says, “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”

How shall we have boldness in the day we stand before the judgment seat of Christ? John gives the answer, which cannot be denied by any who are of the truth; “*because as He (Christ) is, so are we in this world.*”

“...because as he is, so are we...” John says in I John 3:2, “*...we shall be like Him....*” Read the commentary on that verse, and see how it connects with this verse. Look again at the five attributes of God which we have shown in the previous verse. Two of these indicate the “*new nature*” that is given to a child of God. They are “*righteousness*” and “*love.*” Concerning righteousness; “*If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him*” (I John 2:29). Concerning love; **God is love!** “*...every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God*” (I John 4:7). God is righteousness and God is love. Neither

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of these defines what God is, but God defines what righteousness and love are. It is only in this truth that we can understand that *“everyone who doeth righteousness is born of Him”* and *“everyone that loveth is born of God.”* These statements are true only because we are *“born of God.”* Righteousness and love are the nature of God and the *“new”* nature of the children of God. Please consider what I say, because it is of utmost importance to understand, that *“righteousness without love”* is *“self righteousness,”* and *“love without righteousness”* is *“lasciviousness.”*

It is very common for people to take one of these *“attributes”* and build a doctrine around it as though it were the only necessary thing. Some trust in their personal righteousness, but display little love. Others believe that love is the only necessity, and display little righteousness. With the *“eternal life”* we have in Christ, however, comes every attribute of God.

“...as He is so are we in this world...” We live in *“this world,”* but the *“day of judgment”* is in *“the world to come.”* It is in *“this world”* that we must receive boldness to stand before God in the world to come. That *“boldness”* is ours *“because as He is, so are we in this world.”* The question is, *“How do we become as He is?”* There is only one way, which is found in the last phrase of the previous verse and the first phrase of this verse; *“God is love; and he that dwelleth (abideth) in love dwelleth (abideth) in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment....”* It is not our human efforts or abilities that can cause us to be like Him. When we are truly *“born of God”* we are *“made in His likeness.”* It is as we *“abide in Him”* that we *“abide in His love,”* and *“our love is made perfect.”* This is what it means to be *“as He is”* in this present world.

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

This scripture is a continuation of the thought introduced in the previous verse. “*Our love made perfect*” gives us “*boldness in the day of judgment.*” Hebrews 9:27 says, “*...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*” It is the fear of death and judgment that John speaks of in this verse, and not that healthy fear that causes people to avoid poisonous snakes, spiders, and dangerous circumstances. A person may fear a “*manner of death,*” but God has provided such full salvation that no child of God need fear either death or judgment. When John says, “*There is no fear (of death or judgment) in love; but perfect love casteth out fear,*” it is when “*...our love*” is “*made perfect*” (verse seventeen) that fear vanishes away. We have the assurance of “*boldness in the Day of Judgment.*”

“...he that feareth is not made perfect in love...” Consider the words “*made perfect in love.*” It is only the love of God abiding and working in us that can perfect in us every attribute of God. Paul hints of this in I Corinthians 13:13 when he says, “*...and now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity* (the love of God).” Love will do what nothing else can do. Love will prevail when all else has failed. Perfect love will perfect our walk and our talk. It will perfect our righteousness and holiness. It is only through perfect love that it can be said, “*As He is, so are we in this world,*” and perfect love will present us “*holy and unblameable and unreprouvable*” (Colossians 1:21-22) when we stand before Christ to be judged.

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19 We love him, because he first loved us.

John could have simply said, *“We love, because He loved us.”* If Jesus Christ had not loved us and gave Himself to suffer the death of the cross for us, we could not love with a godly love. His love, which was *“bestowed upon us”* (I John 3:1) at Calvary, is the source for all things of God unto those who believe. We are *“rooted and grounded in love”* (Ephesians 3:17). We abide in love, and we draw our life from the love of Christ that we are rooted in. When we are filled with His love, He fills us *“with all the fulness of God”* (Ephesians 3:19).

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

It is easy to say, *“I love God.”* Such a statement means absolutely nothing coming from a person who holds bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness in their heart against their brother, or against any person. John calls such a person a *“liar;”* because it is impossible to *“love God”* whom *“no man has seen at any time”* (twelfth verse), and not love our brother whom we have seen. Many profess to *“love lost souls”* they have never seen, in distant lands where they have never been, yet they cannot love the brethren in their home church. John exposes the hypocrisy of all such statements.

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

It is the *“new commandment”* Jesus gave in the thirteenth chapter of John, that we *“love one another;”* as He has loved us. If we love God, we will also love our brother.

The Christ

Section Nine: “*Born of God*” I John 5:1-12

Section Nine

Born of God

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

“Whosoever believeth...” Previously, in chapters one through four, John has spoken of the three great confessions of the children of God.

1. Confess our sin.
2. Confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.
3. Confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

Beginning with this verse, John speaks of not only what we confess with our mouth, but of what we believe in our heart. The apostle Paul speaks of this in Romans 10:9-10, *“If thou shalt **confess with thy mouth** the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe in thine heart** that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For **with the heart man believeth** unto righteousness; and **with the mouth confession is made** unto salvation.”* What we “*believe in our heart*” is much stronger than what we “*confess with our mouth*.” For example, “*confessions*” are often made through coercion. In a religious setting, many people will “*confess Christ*” who will never confess him among those in the world. Such a “*confession*” means absolutely nothing. A child of God will confess Jesus Christ in every circumstance because they truly “believe with their heart.” They will confess Christ even when they are coerced to deny Him. They would confess Jesus Christ even if it meant the loss of their job, their friends, or even their own life to do so. It is impossible for one who truly believes with

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their heart that Jesus is “*the Christ, the Son of God*” to deny Him before men.

To believe in Jesus is to trust in Jesus. To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to trust that he has done and will do everything that God sent Him into the world to do. John will use the word “*believe*” seven times in the next several verses. He will show that the one who truly believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, has the proof abiding within them that they do, in fact, believe.

It is impossible to believe that Jesus is the Christ if you do not first “*know who Christ is*” and what he came to do. While there are dozens of places in the law and prophets that foretell the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, there is only one prophesy that speaks specifically of “*the Christ* (the Messiah)”, and it is found in Daniel 9:24-27. It is this prophecy that the apostle John has in mind when he says “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*”

“**...Jesus is the Christ...**” There are nineteen places in the New Testament which tell us that “*Jesus is the Christ.*” Each of these is a reference to the promise given in Daniel 9:24-27 of one called “*the Messiah* (the Christ)” whom God would send to “*make an end of sins*” and “*bring in everlasting righteousness.*” When Jesus asked His disciples, “*Whom say ye that I am,*” Peter answered, “*Thou art ‘the Christ,’ the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:15). Jesus then told His disciples that this was a revelation from the Father, and they should “*tell no man that He was Jesus, ‘the Christ’*” (Matthew 16:20). If the disciples had spread the word that Jesus of Nazareth was “*the Christ,*” the high priests, along with the scribes and Pharisees would immediately have stoned Him to death as a blasphemer.

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The entire nation of Israel was expecting the appearing of “*The Christ*” in the same year that Jesus was baptized by John and the Holy Ghost came upon Him. The Jewish Rabbis had studied the prophecy of “*The Messiah (The Christ)*” in Daniel 9:24-27 and understood from verse twenty five the exact year of His appearing. Luke describes the atmosphere of expectation that was among the Jews that year. “*The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not*” (Luke 3:15). The Jews were expecting their “*Messiah*” to come that very year, and it was generally accepted by the multitudes that John must be He. The fervor of anticipation arose among the Jews until they sent a committee of priests and Levites from Jerusalem to question John the Baptist. The apostle John gives the account; “*And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ*” (John 1:19-20).

Not only did the Jews know the exact year of His appearing, they also understood the “*purpose*” of His coming. According to the promise that God gave to Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), there were six things “*The Messiah (The Christ)*” would accomplish when He came.

1. He would “*finish the transgression;*”
2. He would “*make an end of sins;*”
3. He would “*make reconciliation for iniquity;*”
4. He would “*bring in everlasting righteousness;*”
5. He would “*seal up the vision and prophecy;*”
6. He would “*anoint the Most Holy.*”

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God had been shown by many infallible proofs that Jesus is "*the Christ, the Son of God.*" A multitude of people had seen The Holy Ghost descend upon Jesus in the bodily form of a dove when He was baptized by John (Matthew 3:16). They had heard the "*voice from heaven*" saying, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17). They had heard the testimony of John the Baptist, saying, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). Vast multitudes followed Him because His works were not the works of a man, but of God. When John the Baptist sent from prison to enquire of Jesus, "*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another,*" Jesus told them, "*Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: **The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them***" (Matthew 11:3-5). Even with all these visible proofs, the scribes and Pharisees refused to believe that Jesus is the Christ. In John 8:24, Jesus told the Pharisees plainly, "*If ye believe not that I am he (the Messiah), ye shall die in your sins,*" yet, for all the wonderful works He did, they did not believe in Him. Many years later, John wrote these words in his gospel; "*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and **the world knew him not.** He came unto his own, and **his own received him not.** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*" (John 1:10-12).

If the scribes and Pharisees could see the visible proofs of Christ, yet refuse to believe what they saw, certainly they had no eyes to see the "*invisible*" proofs of Christ. The prophet Isaiah wrote of Jesus' death on the cross almost seven hundred years before Calvary: "*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet **we did esteem him stricken, smitten***"

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of God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:4). Isaiah spoke of the blindness of the unbelieving Jewish nation in this verse. In the next verse, he spoke of what those who believed would see; “*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:5). It was through His death on the cross that Jesus fulfilled all the wonderful promises of “*the Christ*.” He “*made an end of sins*” and “*brought in everlasting righteousness*” for everyone who would trust in Him. Those who believe that “*Jesus is the Christ*” are “*born of God*” and they are “*freed from sin*,” those who do not believe that Jesus is “*the Christ*” will die in their sins.

“...whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...” Carnal people, on the other hand, love to find a statement like this and embrace it as though it had no meaning at all beyond a carnal “*belief*” in Jesus that has even less effect on the “*believer*” than a small child’s “*belief*” in Santa Claus. Those who understand what it means to believe that “*Jesus is the Christ*” discover that He has “*made an end of sins*” in their heart and nature, and has given them “*everlasting righteousness*” as a gift. They are “*born of God*,” and it is no longer just a matter of “*faith*” with them; it is their new reality. Sprinkled throughout this epistle are those verses in which the apostle defines the reality of those who are “*born of God*.”

1. “*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is BORN OF HIM*” (I John 2:29).
2. “*Whosoever is BORN OF GOD doth not commit sin...*” (I John 3:9).

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3. “...every one that *loveth* is **BORN OF GOD**, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (I John 4:7-8).

4. “Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ is **BORN OF GOD**” (I John 5:1).

5. “...whatsoever (whosoever) is **BORN OF GOD** overcometh the world” (I John 5:4).

6. “We know that whosoever is **BORN OF GOD** sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (I John 5:18).

“...every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him...” The greatest emphasis is given on love. In the previous chapter (I John 4:20), John said, “*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar.*” The apostle shows that it is impossible to love God, who is our Father, and not love His children, who are our brethren, if we are born of God.

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

“...by this we know...” This is one of the numerous “tests” that John gives for our understanding. Many people think they “love the brethren” even though their love toward God has become “lukewarm” (Revelation 3:16). In truth, it is only as we “love God” that we can truly “love the children of God.” It is commonly believed that “love” is a “choice,” but this is not true. We may “choose” to “act in a loving manner,” but we cannot choose to love. Moses “commanded” the children of Israel to love God (Deuteronomy 30:16), while knowing that they could not “love Him” if they, as their fathers did at Horeb, refused to “hear His voice” (Exodus 20:19, Deuteronomy 5:24-25). It was the last full day

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of Moses life on earth that he pleaded with the children of Israel, saying, “*I have set before you **life and death, blessing and cursing**; therefore **CHOOSE LIFE**, that both thou and thy seed may live: **That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for HE IS THY LIFE, and the length of thy days**” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).*

Jesus also “commanded” us to love in John 13:34; “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*” This was an impossible command for His disciples to keep until sometime after Jesus was raised from the dead, when they finally “chose Him,” and left their fishing boats a second time to “follow Him.” It was at the “last supper” that Jesus told His disciples, “*Ye have not chosen me...*” (John 15:16). No one will be able to obey His commandment until they “choose Him,” because “*He is our life*” (Colossians 3:4). “*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you*” (John 15:12).

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

If His commandments are “grievous” to us, it is because we are not “born of God;” we do not possess the “new heart” or the “new spirit” of His children (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Those who “love God” also “keep His commandments,” because they are “written in the heart” of the children of God (Hebrews 8:10-11).

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

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We do not “*overcome the world*” in order to be “*born of God*,” instead, we overcome the world **because we are** born of God. Remember what the apostle spoke to the “*infant Christians*” when he said, “*Ye are of God (born of God), little children (new converts), and have overcome them (those who are of the world): because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*” “*Overcoming the world*” is not the result of effort or even maturity, but is rather the “*evidence*” that we are “*born of God.*”

“...this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith...” “*Our faith*” must be “*The faith of Christ.*” It is not based upon our “*ability to believe,*” but rather upon “*what we believe.*” In Galatians 2:16, Paul says, “*...we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ....*” The “*faith of Christ*” is defined by the “*gospel of Christ.*” Its “*root*” is found in those things the law and the prophets promised in one called “*The Messiah*” (the Christ) hundreds of years before Jesus was born to Mary. The principle prophecy of Christ is found in Daniel 9:24-27, where the angel Gabriel told the prophet Daniel of the coming of Christ (the Messiah) to “*make an end of sins...and bring in everlasting righteousness.*” The “*focus*” of the “*faith of Christ*” is the three days in which Jesus, who is “*the Christ, the Son of God*” (Matthew 16:16), died on the cross and raised again on the third day. Its “*message*” is redemption and reconciliation for “*whosoever believeth in Him*” (John 3:16), that He is “*the Christ.*”

In John 8:24, Jesus spoke very clearly to the Jews when He said “*If ye believe not that I am he (their Messiah), ye shall die in your sins.*” Believing that Jesus is “*The Christ*” is the “*truth*” (John 14:6) which Jesus said would “*make you free (from sin),*” because that is what God sent Him into the world to do. “*Ye shall know the truth (Jesus is the Christ), and the*

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truth shall make you free” (John 8:32), and “...ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). Everything God sent Christ into the world to do, He did through His death on the cross. Jesus told His disciples, “*In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33). “*His victory*” is “*our victory*” when we trust in Him who loved us, died for us, and rose again from the dead.

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

This fifth verse completes a “circle” and brings us back to verse one, which says “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*” In this five verse circle several qualifiers have been added;

1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*
2. *Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.*
3. *The one who overcomes the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

These three things show the necessity of believing that Jesus of Nazareth is both “*the Christ*” and “*the Son of God.*” That is the testimony of those disciples that knew Him best. Peter said, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:16). Martha said, “*I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*” (John 11:27). The Jews, while not believing that Jesus is the Christ, believed that Christ would be only a man, the “*son of David.*” There were those among the disciples at the beginning who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was “*the Christ*” of prophecy, but that he was also the son of Joseph the carpenter (John 1:45). The truth about Christ that the Jews did not understand is that He is eternal. He is “*The Word*” which

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was “*in the beginning with God*” and “*was God*” (John 1:1). “*The Christ*” was neither created nor born. He was not only “*in the beginning,*” but three times in the book of Revelation Jesus says, “*I am...the beginning.*” He is both the “*root* (the Christ)” and the “*offspring* (the Son)” of David (Revelation 22:16). It is because Jesus is “*the Christ*” that He can say “*...before Abraham was, I am*” (John 8:58).

Jesus was born of Mary, but He was also born of God, the “*only **begotten** Son of God.*” The apostle Paul tells us, “*When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, **made of a woman**, made under the law...*” (Galatians 4:4). He grew up in Nazareth exactly as the prophet Isaiah said, “*as a tender plant, and a root out of dry ground*” (Isaiah 53:2). He was subject to Mary and Joseph in Nazareth until His thirtieth birthday while He “*...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man*” (Luke 2:52). He was a man, but that “*man*” was (and is) “*the Son of the living God.*” Being the only begotten Son of God from His mother’s womb, Jesus is divine. His birth fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, “*a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel* (God with us)” (Isaiah 7:14). The “*angel of the Lord* (Gabriel)” announced His birth; “*...unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*” (Luke 2:11). God, His Father, introduced Jesus to the Jews at John’s baptism when the Holy Ghost came upon Him; “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (Matthew 3:17). The next day, John the Baptist introduced Him to his disciples, saying, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). His miraculous works also declared that He is the Son of God, but the undeniable “*proof*” was when God raised Him from the dead. The apostle Paul gives this testimony in his introduction to the book of Romans; “*Concerning his Son*

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Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:3-4). Jesus of Nazareth sits today at the right hand of God in heaven, and He is “*both Lord and Christ*” (Acts 2:36). Those who know Him as both “*Lord and Christ*” are those who also “*overcome the world.*”

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

“...this is he...” These words connect the sixth verse to the fifth verse to further qualify “*who*” it is that “*overcomes the world.*” The words do not speak of Jesus as many believe; instead they reveal why those who believe that Jesus is “*The Christ, the Son of God*” are born of God and do “*overcome the world.*”

“...that came by water and blood...” The little word “*by*” in this phrase was translated from the Greek word “*dia*,” and should be understood as “*through*.” Those who are “*born of God*” do “*overcome the world*,” because they have come to God “*through*” the blood and water that flowed from the side of Jesus (John 19:34).

“...even Jesus Christ...” The word “*even*” is italicized and does not belong in the text. Correctly translated without the word “*even*,” we see that the term “*water and blood*” is synonymous with “*Jesus Christ*.” The only way to come to God by “*water and blood*” is to come through the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3). Those who have come to God through Jesus Christ have of necessity come through the “*water and blood*” that flowed from His side.

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“...not by water only...” The use of the word water in this verse has nothing to do with “*water baptism*.” Instead, this verse confirms that “*water and blood*” flowed out of Jesus when the soldiers pierced His side. A living body will always bleed when it is cut. Blood flowed from the wounds of Jesus when they beat the crown of thorns into His brow. He bled when they beat Him with thirty nine stripes, and nailed Him to the cross. He was alive when He suffered all these things. If, on the other hand, a dead body is cut, it will not bleed, because dead men do not bleed. When they pierced the side of Jesus, He was already dead. Nothing but water should have flowed out of His side when His body cavity was pierced, but the scripture bears record in John 19:34, that “*...one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out **blood and water.***”

“...but by water and blood...” Jesus died on the cross as the “*propitiation* (sacrifice victim)” for our sins. His offering, which he offered only once, fulfilled every sacrifice and ordinance of the Law of Moses. The millions of bullocks, goats, lambs and turtledoves which were offered under the Law of Moses were only a type and foreshadow of the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. For these sacrifices to end, they had to be fulfilled to perfection, which Jesus did through His one offering. The “*necessity*” of both “*water*” and “*blood*” is revealed in Hebrews 9:19-20; “*For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, **he took the blood** of calves and of goats, **with water**, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and **sprinkled** both the book, and all the people, saying, **This is the blood of the testament** which God hath enjoined unto you.*” The “*blood of sprinkling*” under the Law of Moses was always mingled with water. If Jesus’ offering was to be perfect, His blood, which

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is called “*the blood of sprinkling*” in Hebrews 12:24, must be mingled with water.

John gives the record of the death of Jesus in greater detail than any other. In John 19:28-30 we see an example of how Jesus Himself watched over His offering, to see that it was complete. Not only must every ordinance of the law be fulfilled in His offering, everything that was prophesied of His death must also be fulfilled. “*After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, **that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst***” (John 19:28). There was, in fact, a prophecy of Jesus’ passion that had not yet been fulfilled. Psalms 69:21 says, “*They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*” Jesus knew exactly what would happen when He cried “*I thirst.*” John 19:29-30 gives the record of the apostle John, who was an “*eye witness*” to these things. “*Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished*** (Greek: ‘**it is accomplished**’): *and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (died).*”

“**...and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth...**” There were many prophecies that had to be fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross if the sacrifice was to be perfect. It was for that reason that the Holy Ghost watched over the sacrifice to see that it was complete. Even after the death of Jesus there were several prophecies that had to be fulfilled before He was placed in the tomb. John 19:31-37 gives this record: “*The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the*

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*legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out **BLOOD AND WATER**. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, **A bone of him shall not be broken**. And again another scripture saith, **They shall look on him whom they pierced**.”*

Notice the words I have placed in capital letters. It was “*blood and water*” that poured out of the side of Jesus, and “*not water only*.” John saw it but seemed to be more impressed that His legs were not broken, and His side was pierced, “*that the scripture might be fulfilled*.” John saw the blood and water that poured out of Jesus’ side, but there was another who watched over Jesus’ offering that day. John was speaking of the Holy Ghost when he said, “*...he that saw it bare record, and his record is true*” (John 19:35).

There is no way to correctly understand this sixth verse without seeing its connection to the events at Calvary as recorded in the nineteenth chapter of John. The “*Spirit (the Holy Ghost)*” saw the blood and water that poured from the side of Jesus. He “*bears witness*” that the sacrifice is perfect, fulfilling all the law and prophets. The blood and water that flowed from the side of the Son of God is the New Covenant “*blood of sprinkling*.” It is by that “*blood and water*” that the believer is sanctified and made to be an overcomer.

“**...beareth witness...**” These words are translated from the Greek word “*martureo*,” which means “*to be a witness*.” This same Greek word is translated as “*bear witness*,” and

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“*bear record*” in verses six, seven, and eight, and “*hath testified*” in verse nine.

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

“...three that bear record...” The Law of Moses required two or three witnesses before the truth of any matter could be established (Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15). The “*law*” of “*two or three witnesses*” was observed by Jesus concerning the question of who He is. In the book of John, Jesus presents three witnesses, all of whom testify that Jesus is the Son of God. The first of these is John the Baptist. In John 1:34, John the Baptist says, “*...I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God.*” The “*second witness*” is found in John 5:36, where Jesus said, “*...I have greater witness than that of John: for **the works** which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, **bear witness** of me, that the Father hath sent me.*” The “*third witness*” is found in the next verse, “*...the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me*” (John 5:37). The “*witness of the Father*” is found in Matthew 3:17, “*...and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” These three witnesses were given to confirm that Jesus of Nazareth is, in fact, the Christ, the Son of God. The three witnesses that John speaks of in this text, “*the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*” have testified of Jesus since the foundation of the world, promising through both the law and the prophets, a redeemer to come. They foretold the “*sufferings of Christ*” (I Peter 1:11), they witnessed the sacrifice, and they testify of its perfection, fulfilling all the law and the prophets. They “*bear record*” that “*Jesus is the Christ.*”

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8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

There are three witnesses in heaven, and they are one. There are three witnesses in earth, and they “*agree in one.*” These are the Holy Ghost that was with Him in life and the blood and water that poured from His side in death. These three witnesses “*agree*” that Jesus is indeed “*the Christ, the Son of the living God, which should come into the world*” (John 11:27).

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

Human courts of law will accept the testimony of two or three witnesses to establish the truth. Sadly, the witness of men is sometimes a lie, and justice is abused. The apostle John is giving the witness of God and not the witness of men. He establishes, “*...this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.*”

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

John has written this entire epistle to identify the children of God and the children of the wicked one. In this verse, he brings positive proof of who the children of God are.

“...he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself...” A “*believer*” believes everything God says about any particular subject. This is what it means to “*believe God.*” The scripture says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*” (Romans 4:3).

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When Abraham first “*believed God*” it was at least forty years later before he understood anything about “*the lamb*” which God would provide (Genesis 22:8). In order to “*believe God*” today, we must believe the record He has given of His Son; who He is, and what He came into the world to do. The “*proof*(evidence)” of a believer is *in* the believer. It is a “*witness*” that can be seen by those who come in contact with them. John will reveal that witness in verse eleven.

“...he that believeth not God hath made him a liar...” If God has said something, those who refuse to believe what He has said have, in effect, called Him a liar.

“...because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son...” The same day that sin entered through the disobedience of Adam, God gave a promise of “*the seed of the woman*,” that would “*bruise the head of the serpent*.” Abraham said, “*God will provide Himself a lamb*” (Genesis 22:8), and “*In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen*” (Genesis 22:14). The law and the prophets all testify of Jesus. Job, who lived before the law, is the first one to tell us about the “*redeemer*.” He says, “*I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*” (Job 19:25). Over a thousand years later, Isaiah tells us “*the redeemer shall come to Zion*” (Isaiah 59:20). Isaiah also tells us of “*Immanuel* (God with us)” (Isaiah 7:14), whose name shall be called “*Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6), and of His sufferings for us at the hands of unbelievers. Preeminent among the prophecies, however, is the one that tells us exactly who the redeemer will be (the Messiah, the Christ), and exactly what He will do. He will come “*to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness*” (Daniel 9:24). This is the “*record*” that God gave of His Son. To

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“*believe the record*” is what it means to “*believe God*.” “... *he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*”

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

This verse is connected to the first phrase of verse ten above; “*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness (evidence) in himself...and this is the record (evidence) that God has given to us....*” The translators most certainly punctuated this verse incorrectly. This verse should be understood as “*And **this is the evidence** that God has given to us, **eternal life**; and this life is in His Son.*” The first verse of this chapter says “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is **born of God**.*” John 3:15 says, “...*whosoever believeth in Him...shall have eternal life.*” Eternal life is the “*evidence*” that a person has been “*born of God*.”

Eternal life can be seen in those who possess it. Remember the words of John in the second verse of this epistle; “...*the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us*” (I John 1:2). Eternal life is manifested in all who possess it. It is the “*proof*” that they are the children of God.

“...**eternal life...**” The proper understanding of “*eternal life*” is not “*eternal existence*.” Many will have “*eternal existence*” in death itself. When John says in John 1:4, “*In Him was **life**; and the life was the **light** of men,*” he speaks of “*eternal life*,” which “*lights*” everyone who possesses it.

“...**and this life is in his Son...**” “*Eternal life*” is only found in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Those who reject Jesus

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as “*the Christ, the Son of God*” have no claim whatsoever to eternal life.

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

No one has eternal life apart from having the Son of God. The apostle Paul said, “*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*” Who can have Christ and Christ not “*live*” in them? Paul says again in Colossians 3:4, “*Christ...is our life.*” The evidence of eternal life is that Christ lives in us and is seen by the world.

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Section Ten

Our Confidence

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

“**These things have I written...**” In chapter two, verses twelve through fourteen, the apostle identifies four classes of believers he has written this epistle to; the infants (newborn babies in Christ), the half grown children, the young men, and the old men, all of which speaks of their level of maturity in Christ. With this verse, which begins the “*closing remarks*” of the epistle, he tells not only “*to whom*,” but also “*why*” he has written the epistle.

“**...unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God...**” With this phrase, John refers to the tenth verse; “*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*” These are those who have “*believed the record that God gave of His Son.*” To “*believe on the name of the Son of God*” is to know “*who He is, what the Father sent Him to do, and that He accomplished it through death and resurrection at Calvary.*” This is the record that God gave of His Son hundreds and thousands of years before Jesus was born to Mary.

“**...that ye may know...**” The word “*that*” in this phrase was translated from the Greek word “*hina*,” which means “*in order that.*” The word “*know*” was translated from the Greek word “*eido*,” which means “*to see*,” and by extension, “*to know*” because we see. The same Greek word is used in John 3:3, where Jesus said, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” Paul uses the same word in his prayer for the believers at Ephesus: “*That the God of our Lord*

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*Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened**; that (in order that) ye **may know (may see)** what is the hope of his calling...*” (Ephesians 1:17-18).

“...that ye have eternal life...” In this phrase, the word “that” is translated from the Greek word “*hoti*,” which, according to Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary, can be properly translated as either “that” or “because.” In this verse, the apostle says “we see **because** we have eternal life.” We have been “*born again*,” therefore we “see” the kingdom of God. Understand this verse to this point as saying, “...I have written these things unto you that believe Jesus is ‘the Christ, the Son of God’ **in order that** you may see the things of God, **because** you have eternal life.”

“...and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God...” This verse ends exactly as it began; “*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God...that* (in order that) *ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*,” which redundancy is difficult to understand at face value. Believing, however, begins at one level and finishes at another. Paul says in Galatians 2:16, “...we have **believed in Jesus Christ**, that we might be justified by the **faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law.” In Ephesians 1:13, Paul speaks of “*trusting*” in Christ, saying, “**In whom ye also trusted**, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” Young converts have “heard” the “word of truth” and they have “believed” what they have heard. These are those John says he has written to, “...in order that ye may see **BECAUSE** you have eternal life, and in order that ye may trust in Him with full confidence of faith.”

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According to verses ten and eleven of this same chapter, “*eternal life*” is the “*evidence*” that God gives to those who believe; it is the “*proof*” that they are “*born of God.*” Look again at verse eleven, and see that “*eternal life*” is “*in His Son;*” and in verse twelve, “*He that hath the Son hath life.*” The apostle Paul expresses it this way; “*...I live, yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me.** The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20).

Do we know that we have eternal life because we believe? ... or do we know that we believe because we have eternal life? Is it possible for a believer to have eternal life and not know they have eternal life? And is it possible for a “*believer*” to have eternal life without that “*life*” being seen? John uses what I call “*circular reasoning*” throughout this epistle. It is the same principle that is used when a student “*proves*” a math problem. For example, if two plus four equals six, then six minus four must equal two. If trusting in Christ brings “*eternal life,*” then “*eternal life,*” which *can be seen* in the believer, must be the “*proof*” that we “*trust in Christ.*”

A prime example of “*circular reasoning*” is found in verses one, four, and five of this same chapter (I John 5:1, 4-5)

Verse 1: “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:*” This is given by the apostle John as an absolute statement of truth concerning those who believe that Jesus is the Christ; they are “*born of God.*”

Verse 4: “*For whatsoever (whosoever) is born of God overcometh the world.*” This is an absolute statement of truth concerning those who are “*born of God;*” they “*overcome the world.*”

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Verse 5: “*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*” This is an absolute statement of truth concerning those who “*overcome the world;*” they “*...believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*” Each of these is an absolute statement of truth that John has given to us. The “*proof*” however, that we are “*born of God*” is that we “*overcome the world,*” and we do so **because** we believe that Jesus is “*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” This kind of reasoning uses “*cause*” and “*effect.*” The “*cause* (trusting in Jesus)” produces the “*effect,*” and the “*effect* (overcoming the world)” is proof of the “*cause* (that we trust in Jesus).”

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

This is the third time John mentions “*confidence*” in this epistle. In I John 2:28 he says, “*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*” This is the confidence we receive through “*abiding in Him.*” It translates into “*boldness in the day of Judgment*” (I John 4:17). I John 3:21-22 says, “*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*” We receive confidence through “*abiding*” in Him and “*doing*” those things that please Him. Jesus says “*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*” (John 15:7).

“...he heareth us...” Many times people pray and do not have confidence that God hears them. It is not enough that one would say, “*Of course he hears you; after all, He is God.*” We know that God “*hears*” when a leaf falls in the

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forest, but such “*hearing*” is not what the apostle speaks of in this verse. The Greek word that was translated “*heareth*” is “*akouo*,” which simply means “*to hear*,” but was translated as “*give audience*” in four separate places in the New Testament. **“He gives us audience!”** He brings us into His presence as one would be brought before a king, and gives us a “*hearing*” in which He listens closely to our petition. It is the one who “*asks according to His will*” that receives an “*audience with God*.”

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

It is when He brings us into His presence (gives us audience) that “*...if we ask any thing according to His will...*,” we will receive whatsoever we ask of Him.

“...if we know that he hear us...” Literally translated from the Greek text, this phrase would say, “*...if we see that He gives us a hearing,*” we will receive whatsoever we ask, if we ask “*according to His will*.”

“...we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him...” This phrase is definitely qualified by the phrase in the previous verse, which says, “*...if we ask any thing according to his will*.” In Ephesians 3:8, the apostle Paul speaks of the “*unsearchable riches of Christ*.” These are the “*things of God*” (I Corinthians 2:11) which He has prepared for those who “*love Him*” (I Corinthians 2:9). He describes them in Ephesians 1:3 as “*...all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*.” These are the things we can absolutely know are “*according to His will*” for every child of God. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:32, “*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*”

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There is a reason why people pray and never receive an answer; they do not receive a “hearing” because they do not ask “according to His will.” James 4:3 confirms what John says, “Ye ask, and receive not, **because ye ask amiss** (because you do not ask according to His will), *that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*”

16-17 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Under the Law of Moses these verses would be easily understood. There were those “*atrocious sins*” that were punished by death to the transgressor. There were also those sins that were atoned for year by year by the sacrifices for sin. Due to the fact that the Law of Moses was abolished at the cross, it would be strange indeed if this were what John was speaking of in these verses. It is more likely that Jesus gives the key to understanding this text in His Sermon on the Mount.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Matthew 7:15-20

Jesus told His disciples, “*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing*” (John 15:5).

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It is very clear in this analogy that Christ is the “good tree” and the children of God “abide in Him” exactly as “a branch abides in a tree.” Abiding in Him, it is impossible for them to bring forth the evil fruit of sin. The apostle John, after a lifetime of “abiding in Christ,” tells us, “*Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...*” (I John 3:5-6). In I John 3:9, he says, “*His seed remaineth (abideth) in Him and he cannot sin because he is born of God.*” Those who have not received Christ are still attached to the “corrupt tree,” which cannot produce anything but that which is sin. We should understand, however, that these may be very religious or they may be very sinful, but in either case, their “fruit” is the fruit of the corrupt tree, and they are capable of those atrocious sins which are “sins unto death.” Even those religious works which may appear to be good are sin if they come out of a sinful heart.

“...there is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it...” The apostle Paul gives a list of those sins which are “sins unto death” in I Corinthians 6:9-10: “*...Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*” God Himself adds to this list in Revelation 21:7-8; “*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*”

These are the “fruit” of the corrupt tree. The apostle Paul tells us, “*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but*

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ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:11). We were all sinners, but now we are “*washed, sanctified, and justified*” by the blood of Christ, which we have received by faith. Notice that Paul used the word “*were,*” which means that a child of God is no longer a sinner. In the past we were sinners, but we have received Christ who has taken our sin away. “*While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8). There is salvation and deliverance for every kind of sinner. None are so vile or so evil that the precious blood of Christ cannot cleanse them “*from all sin*” (I John 1:6) if they call upon Him. Certainly, we are to pray for the lost and bring the gospel of Christ to them. There are those, however, who claim to be “*brothers*” while living their lives in atrocious sin. It is these of whom John says, “*there is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*” The apostle Paul writes of these in I Corinthians 5:11; “*I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator; or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat,*” that is, “*do not entertain them as brothers.*” Those who claim to be the children of God, but commit atrocious sins are identified by their “*fruit*” that they are of the corrupt tree, and cannot bring forth the good fruit. If they were ever saved, they have moved away from Christ exactly as Adam moved away from the tree of life to eat of the forbidden fruit, and are become slaves to sin once more.

“...there is a sin not unto death...” If it is true that “*whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not*” (I John 3:6), how is it possible that one who is a “*brother*” could “*sin a sin*” and it not be “*unto death?*” Let us look once more at the two trees. Those “*atrocious sins*” are “*sins unto death.*” Those who do such things have no inheritance in the Kingdom of God, be-

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cause their *“fruit”* is the fruit of the corrupt tree. The fruit of the good tree is listed by Paul as the *“fruit of the Spirit,”* which are these; *“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.”* He says, *“Against such, there is no law.”* John tells us to pray for those *“brothers”* that *“sin a sin not unto death.”* The *“sin”* that he speaks of is a shortage of the fruit that grows on the good tree. They are *“branches in Christ”* that lack in *“love, joy, peace, etc.”* Their *“love”* has not been *“made perfect”* (I John 4:16-18), which can lead to fear and doubt. We should understand that a shortage of love is not the same as hate, and a shortage of faith is not the same as unbelief. One is the shortage of a good thing, and the other is the presence of that which is evil. Jesus did warn, however, of a continued lack of the good fruit. He said, *“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit”* (John 15:2).

Lack of fruit in a child of God is a dangerous thing; they are in danger of being *“taken away.”* It is for these that John tells us to pray that God will *“give life to them that sin not unto death.”* When the life of the vine flows once more to the branches, they will bring forth *“much fruit”* (John 15:8).

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

We said in the foreword to this commentary that John’s epistle is a *“primer”* for newborn Christians. With this verse, John begins to review several essential points he has made. This verse and the next two verses (19-20) begin with the words *“we know,”* which should be understood by the Greek word *“eido”* to mean *“we have seen.”* In this verse, John says, *“We have seen that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.”*

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The matter of whether or not those who are “*born of God*” continue in sin is the number one issue in this epistle. The only conclusion that can be reached by the honest student of John’s epistle is that they do not sin because they “*cannot sin*” if they “*abide in Christ*.”

“...but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself...” I John 3:6 says “*whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.*” Paul tells us in Colossians 1:22-23 that we will be presented before God “*holy, unblameable, and unproveable*” if we “*continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.*” **Abide** in Him! **Continue** in the faith! **Be not moved away** from the “*hope of the gospel.*”

Jude gives the correct understanding of this admonition in his short epistle. “***Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen***” (Jude 1:21-25).

“...and that wicked one toucheth him not...” Jesus says, “*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me*” (John 15:4). Jesus Christ is our dwelling place. As long as we “*abide (stay) in Him,*” the “*wicked one*” cannot touch us, or do us harm. Remember the words of John in I John 3:5-6, “*...in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not....*”

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

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John continues his review of the truth he has given in this epistle. “*And we have seen that we are of God...*” In I John 4:4 he has assured the new converts of this very fact when he said, “*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*”

We are “*of God*” because we have been “*born again of the Spirit of God.*” We have received a “*new heart*” and a “*new spirit.*” Though we are “*in the world,*” we are not “*of the world,*” because we are “*of God.*” Our nature is contrary to the nature of the world. Those who can obey John’s admonition in I John 2:15 to “*...love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,*” can clearly see that “*the whole world lies in wickedness.*” The world hates those who trust in Jesus Christ. They accuse us of hatred and bigotry because we do not continue in sin. Jesus told us that it would be so. In John 15:18-19, He says, “*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*” A full generation later, the apostle John confirms Jesus’ words from his own experience as an apostle of Christ; “*Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you*” (I John 3:13). It is in this that John sets the dividing line between the children of God and the children of this present evil world. “*We are of God...the whole world lies in wickedness.*”

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

“*We have seen that the Son of God is come....*” The Greek word that is translated “*is come*” actually means “*to be pres-*

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ent." Notice that he did not say *"has come,"* or *"will come,"* but that He is ever present with those who abide in Him to give understanding of the things of God. Millions of people are perishing while they *"believe"* something, but *"see"* and *"understand"* nothing. Both Paul and John go into great detail concerning the things that every child of God will *"see,"* and thus *"know."*

"...that we may know him that is true..." John tells us that the Son of God is *"present with us"* to give us understanding, *"...in order that we may know* (with absolute knowledge) ***Him that is true.***" In John 17:3, Jesus said in His prayer to the Father, *"...this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."* The word *"know"* in each of these verses is translated from the Greek word *"ginōskō,"* which speaks of *"absolute knowledge."* Many people think they know God because they have studied the doctrines of the *"church."* Philip and Thomas were two among the chosen twelve apostles, but neither of them truly knew who Jesus was until after the resurrection. It was at the last supper, the evening before the crucifixion that Jesus said to Thomas, *"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also"* (John 14:7). It was only about four days later that Thomas refused to believe the reports that Jesus had risen from the dead, saying, *"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe"* (John 20:25).

Jesus also questioned Philip at the last supper; *"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"* (John 14:9). Philip was among the first to follow Jesus but according to John 1:45, he believed that Jesus was *"the son of Joseph."* Surely Jesus had this in mind when He asked, *"...hast thou not known me, Philip?"* If two of the

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twelve could walk daily with Him for over three years and still not “*know Him*,” how much more can we not know Him through mere religious education?

The apostle John tells us that the Son of God is present with us, and abides in us as we “*abide in Him*.” Philip and Thomas only knew Him “*after the flesh*” until the time they knew Him “*in the power of His resurrection*.” It is only those who know

Him “*after the Spirit*” that truly “*know Him*.” To “*know Him that is true*” is to know the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

“...and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ...” Jesus says, “*...no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*” This is not a riddle! No man can come to Jesus except the Father draws him (John 6:44). No man can come to the Father unless Jesus brings him (John 14:6). We “*...know Him that is true* (the Father),” because we are “*...in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ.*”

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

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Addendum

Keys to Understanding

The repetitive use of words and phrases is a key to understanding this epistle of I John. In this addendum, I will give a few of these that really stand out.

“If we say...”

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

I John 1:8: *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*

I John 1:10: *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”*

Each of these is a “hypothetical situation” that refers to those who claim fellowship with God while they walk in the darkness of dead religion.

“He that saith...”

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

I John 2:6: *“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”*

I John 2:9: *“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.”*

Each of these is a continuation of the “claims” of those who “walk in darkness.”

“Whosoever” The Greek word “pas”

The definition of the Greek word “pas,” as given in Strong’s Concordance and Greek Dictionary, is “all, any, every, the whole.” The apostle John used this word sixteen times to ex-

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press “*whosoever*,” and “*every*.” Keep in mind as you read these verses that they are all inclusive; there are no exceptions to the statements of the apostle when he says “whosoever” or “every.” We should also understand that each of these statements are only true concerning the one for whom all these statements are true.

1. “Whosoever”

I John 2:23: “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (*but*) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.”

I John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

I John 3:6: “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

I John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

I John 3:10: “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God**, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

I John 3:15: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

I John 5:1: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

I John 5:4: “For whatsoever (whosoever) is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.”

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

2. “Every”

I John 2:29: “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that **EVERY ONE that doeth righteousness is born of him.**”

I John 3:3: “And **EVERY MAN that hath this hope in him purifieth himself**, even as he is pure.”

I John 4:2: “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **EVERY SPIRIT that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.**”

I John 4:3: “And **EVERY SPIRIT that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God**: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

I John 4:7: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and **EVERY ONE that loveth is born of God**, and knoweth God.”

I John 5:1: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and **EVERY ONE that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.**”

“Abiding” The Greek word “meno”

The definition of the Greek word “*meno*” is “*to stay*.” The translators have translated it as “*abide*,” “*continue*,” “ *dwell*,” and “*remain*.”

John’s great theme in his message to the children of God is to “*abide in Christ*,” which he speaks of ten times in this epistle. He also speaks of “*abiding in light*” and “*abiding in love*”

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one time each, and in one place he speaks of those who “*abide in death.*”

1. Abiding in Him

I John 2:6: “He that saith he **abideth** (stays) **in him** ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”

I John 2:10: “He that loveth his brother **abideth** (stays) **in the light**, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.”

I John 2:24: “Let that therefore **abide** (stay) **in you**, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning **shall remain** (stay) **in you**, ye also **shall continue** (stay) **in the Son**, and in the Father.”

I John 2:27: “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, **ye shall abide** (stay) **in him.**”

I John 2:28: “And now, little children, **abide** (stay) **in him**; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

I John 3:6: “**Whosoever abideth** (stays) **in him sinneth not**: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

I John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for **his seed remaineth** (stays) **in him**: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

I John 3:14: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother **abideth** (stays) **in death.**”

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I John 3:24: “And he that keepeth his commandments **dwelleth** (stays) **in him**, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

I John 4:13: “Hereby know we that **we dwell** (stay) **in him**, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

I John 4:16: “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that **dwelleth** (stays) **in love dwelleth** (stays) **in God**, and God in him.”

2. That which abides in us

John speaks once of the “*word*” abiding in us, twice of “*that which we have heard*,” once of “*the anointing*,” once of “*eternal life*,” once of “*the love of God*,” and three times he speaks of “*God*” abiding in us.

I John 2:14: “I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and **the word of God abideth** (stays) **in you**, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”

I John 2:24: “**Let that therefore abide** (stay) **in you**, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning **shall remain** (stay) **in you**, ye also **shall continue** (stay) **in the Son**, and in the Father.”

I John 2:27: “But the anointing which ye have received of him **abideth** (stays) **in you**, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, **ye shall abide** (stay) **in him**.”

I John 3:15: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath **eternal life abiding** (staying) **in him**.”

I John 3:17: “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compas-*

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sion from him, **how dwelleth** (stays) **the love of God in him?**”

I John 3:24: “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that **he abideth** (stays) **in us**, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

I John 4:12: “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, **God dwelleth** (stays) **in us**, and his love is perfected in us.”

I John 4:15: “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, **God dwelleth** (stays) **in him**, and he in God.”

Evidence

*John was an eyewitness of “eternal life.” His purpose in writing this letter was to bear witness, or “give evidence” whereby others could recognize “eternal life.” When evidence is being given, John uses the Greek word “**martureo**” which means to “**be a witness**” or “**give evidence**.” He uses this word seven times in this letter.*

I John 1:2: “(For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and **bear witness**, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)”

I John 4:14: “And we have seen and **do testify** that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.”

I John 5:6: “This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that **beareth witness**, because the Spirit is truth.”

I John 5:7: “For there are three **that bear record** in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

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I John 5:8: “And there are three **that bear witness** in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

I John 5:9: “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath **testified** of his Son.”

I John 5:10: “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record **that God gave** of his Son.”

*John not only gave his witness of eternal life, but he also told us what the evidence of “eternal life” is. The first evidence is the prophecies of Christ (the record God gave of His Son) that were given hundreds of years before Jesus was born to Mary. The second evidence is in the believer. It is the manifestation of eternal life in those who possess it. When John speaks of the evidence itself, he uses the Greek word “**marturia**” which means “**evidence given**.” He uses this word six times in this letter.*

I John 5:9: “If we receive **the witness** of men, **the witness** of God is greater: for this is **the witness** of God which he hath testified of his Son.”

I John 5:10: “He that believeth on the Son of God hath **the witness** in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not **the record** that God gave of his Son.”

I John 5:11: “And this is **the record**, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

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Seeing and Absolutely Knowing

There are two different Greek words that were translated “*know*” in John’s epistle. The first is “*eido*,” which means “*to see*,” and the second is “*ginosko*,” which means “*to know* (absolute knowledge).” To “*see*,” as John uses it in this epistle, is best understood by the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3). When a person is truly born of God, they begin to “*see*,” and then, through “*seeing*” the things of God they come to an “*absolute knowledge*” of Him. To “*see*” does not speak of a special revelation apart from the scriptures; rather it speaks of the spiritual perception to understand that which was given to us by the apostles (John, Peter, Paul, etc).

There are thirteen verses in I John that uses the Greek word “*eido*,” which means “*to see*.”

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

I John 2:20: “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know (see) all things.”

I John 2:21: “I have not written unto you because ye know not (**see not**) the truth, but because ye know (**see**) it, and that no lie is of the truth.”

I John 2:29: “If ye know (**see**) that he is righteous, ye know (absolute knowledge) that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

I John 3:2: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know (**see**) that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

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I John 3:5: “And ye know (**see**) that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

I John 3:14: “We know (**see**) that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

I John 3:15: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know (**see**) that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

I John 5:13: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know (**see**) that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

I John 5:15: “And if we know (**see**) that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know (**see**) that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

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

I John 5:19: “And we know (**see**) that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

I John 5:20: “And we know (**see**) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know (**absolute knowledge**) 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.”

There are twenty one verses in I John that uses the Greek word “*ginosko*,” which means “*to know (absolute knowledge)*.” Principal among these are eight verses that tell us how we can know the difference between that which is true and that which is not.

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I John 2:3: “Hereby we do know (**absolute knowledge**) that we know him.”

I John 2:5: “Hereby know (**absolute knowledge**) we that we are in him.”

I John 3:16: “Hereby perceive (**absolute knowledge**) we the love of God.”

I John 3: 19: “Hereby we know (**absolute knowledge**) that we are of the truth.”

I John 3:24: “Hereby we know (**absolute knowledge**) that he abideth in us.”

I John 4:2: “Hereby know (**absolute knowledge**) ye the Spirit of God.”

I John 4:6: “Hereby know (**absolute knowledge**) we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”

I John 4:13: “Hereby know (**absolute knowledge**) we that we dwell in him.”

The Truth that will “Make You Free”

First: We must know who Christ is. The apostle John tells us in John 1:1-3, “*In the beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.***” Christ is the eternal Word of God, by whom God created all things. He is as eternal as God is.

Second: We must know what Christ came into the world to do. This is a message so precious that God sent His angel Gabriel to tell the prophet Daniel about it. Everything you need to know about the purpose of Jesus Christ is found in the prophecy of “*the Messiah (the Christ)*” in Daniel 9:24-27. The twenty fourth verse tells us what Christ came into the world to do. He came “...*to **finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...***” (Daniel 9:24).

Third: We must know that Jesus of Nazareth is “*the Christ (the Messiah),*” and that He did everything He came into the world to do when He died on the cross for us. The apostle Paul says in Hebrews 2:14 that He became flesh and blood in order that “...***through death, He might destroy he that had the power of death, that is, the devil.***” He tells us in Romans 5:10, “*we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*” In Colossians 1:21-22, he tells us we are “*reconciled in the body of his flesh **through death,***” to present us before God “*holy and unblameable and unproveable.*” I John 5:1 says, “*Whosoever believeth that **Jesus is the Christ** is born of God*”

Fourth: We must “*trust in Christ*” who did it all at Calvary. When Jesus cried “*It is finished*” (John 19:30), it was finished. Everything Christ came into the world to do, He does it in the heart and nature of everyone who simply “*trusts in Him.*” He has “*finished the transgressions;*” He has “*made an end of sins;*” He has “*made reconciliation for iniquity;*” and He has “*brought in everlasting righteousness,*” and He has done it all in the hearts of those who believe and trust in Him.