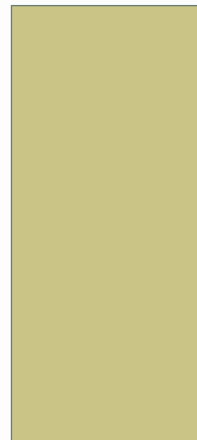


1 JOHN 1:1-5:21

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH OF ANN ARBOR
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TESTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

- John's first epistle or general letter is filled with tests of eternal life.
- These tests are not “works” that we do to get or prove that we have eternal life, but are evidences that flow naturally out of the life of a saved person.
- The tests come in **doctrinal** and **practical** forms. They have to do with what we believe and how we live. Sometimes one test has both aspects.
- The first test has to do with our doctrine and practice regarding sin. What do we believe about sin and how to we handle sin in our lives?

INSIGHT FROM JACK MCMAHAN

- John, the last surviving apostle, writes to his dear children in the faith.
- He wants us to enjoy fellowship with Jesus Christ and with one another. Four truths about God undergird John's counsel:
 - God is LIFE 1 John 1:1
 - God is LIGHT 1 John 1:5
 - God is TRUTH 1 John 4:6
 - God is LOVE 1 John 4:8

MCMAHAN, CONT.

- John develops these truths through the epistle in a spiraling and repetitive fashion.
- Each repetition of the concept spirals a bit deeper with fresh insight, like a tightening screw, fastening the truth in our thinking more firmly.

MCMAHAN, CONT.

- Key terms that describe LIFE are "fellowship", "abide", "joy", "confidence", "not ashamed", "born of Him".
 - Life means union
- Key terms that go with LIGHT are "walk", "not sin", "overcome", "practices", "confess."
 - Light means holiness
- Key terms that go with LOVE are "sent", "lay down", "give."
 - Love means doing what is best for others.
 - On a Divine level it means obedience to His will.)
- Key terms that go with TRUTH are "know", "believe."
 - Truth is God's Word

MCMAHAN, CONT.

- John mixes and matches these four concepts throughout his epistle:
- LIGHT & LIFE: "If we walk in the light, we have fellowship (life)...."
- LOVE, LIFE & LIGHT: "Whoever loves his brother abides in the light."
- LIGHT & LIFE: "If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father."
- LIGHT & LIFE (negative emphasis): "Whoever sins has never seen Him nor known Him."
- And on and on it continues throughout the epistle.

MCMAHAN, CONT.

- As you read the epistle notice how these four truths founded in God's nature interact.
- Here is a formula that seems appropriate to me from this epistle: $\text{LIFE} = \text{LIGHT} + \text{LOVE} + \text{TRUTH}$
- Remove any single element from the equation and it does not add up.

1 JOHN 1:1

**That which was from the beginning,
which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we have looked upon,
and [which] our hands have handled,

concerning the Word of life.**

1 JOHN 1:2

the life was manifested,
and we have seen,
and [we] bear witness,
and [we] declare to you
 that eternal life
 which was with the Father
 and was manifested to us--

1 JOHN 1:3

that which we have seen and heard
we declare to you,

that you also may have fellowship with us;

and truly our fellowship *is*
with the Father

and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 JOHN 1:4

**And these things we write to you
that your joy may be full.**

- Verses 3 and 4 contain John's purpose in writing. He wants his readers to have joy, and to have fellowship with himself.

1 JOHN 1:1-4

- The first four verses of 1 John are somewhat difficult to untangle grammatically.
- The main subject and verb is found in verse 3: “We declare to you.”
- The direct object—what is being declared—is described in verses 1, 2, and 3a.
- In short, John declares *Jesus* to the readers.

1 JOHN 1:1-4, CONT.

- That which John is declaring to us is a “thing” (neuter gender) which:
 - Was from the beginning
 - We heard
 - We saw with our eyes
 - We looked upon
 - Our hands touched
- Everything about this was concerning the Word of Life, which we know is Jesus Christ and eternal life.
- John says that this life was manifested, seen, testified of, and is now declared to the readers.

1 JOHN 1:1-4, CONT.

- The life was “with” the Father, which reminds us of John 1:1.
- The life was “manifested” – the second time this word was used, and that is essentially a repeat of what John has already said in verse 1. He is making a strong statement that the Word became actual flesh and dwelt among us (see 1 John 4:2-3).
- The purpose of John’s writing is two-fold (v. 3-4):
 - That the readers would share fellowship with him, and in turn with God and His Son.
 - That the readers would have full joy.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 5

**5 This is the message
which we have heard from Him
and declare to you,

that God is light
and in Him is no darkness at all.**

This is the foundational theology of verses 1:5 through 2:2.

SOMETHING TO NOTICE

- In the upcoming verses, take note of the alternating nature of the statements:
 - Verse 6 is negative
 - Verse 7 is positive
 - Verse 8 is negative
 - Verse 9 is positive
 - Verse 10 is negative
- If we combine the negative statements together, we get a picture of unbelief.
- If we combine the positive statements together, we get a picture of belief.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 6

6 If **we say** that we have fellowship with Him,
and walk in darkness,

[then] we lie
and do not practice the truth.

Saying and actually **having** are two different things. If
we say and manifestly do not have, we are liars.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 7

7 But if **we walk** in the light
as He is in the light,

[then] we have fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us
from all sin.

This fellowship is sharing of a common life principle,
that life given by Jesus Christ. Here, no saying is
needed. Just walking.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 8

8 If **we say** that we have no sin,

[then] we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.

Here is another “saying” that does not match reality.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 9

9 If **we confess** our sins,

[then] He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

To confess means to agree with God's estimation of our behavior, that it is wrong. It means to admit, acknowledge, or grant the truth of the idea that we have sinned. This admission accompanies the mindset of repentance.

CONFESSION

- Confession is a regular activity of believers. See, for instance, these texts:
 - 1 Kings 8:35
 - Ezra 10:1, 11
 - Nehemiah 1:6, 9:2-3
 - Psalm 32:5
 - Proverbs 28:13
 - Daniel 9:4, 20
 - James 5:16

MORE ON CONFESSION

- Unbelievers confess their sin when they come to Christ.
 - Matthew 3:6, illustrating the point but obviously before Christ's death and resurrection
- Apart from trusting in Christ, confession of sin is only a partial response to the gospel.

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 10

10 if **we say** that we have not sinned,

[then] we make Him a liar,
and His word is not in us.

COMBINING 7 AND 9: THE GOOD

Verses 7, 9

We walk in the light

We have fellowship

We are cleansed by the blood of Christ

We confess our sins

We are cleansed from sin by God

There is only one conclusion I can come to...

These are believers

COMBINING 6, 8, 10: THE BAD

Verses 6, 8, 10

We walk in darkness

We lie

We do not practice truth

We deceive ourselves

The truth is not in us

We make God to be a liar

God's word is not in us

Conclusion? Such people are not believers.

THE FIRST TEST, CONTINUED

- The opening verses of chapter 2 continue the thought of chapter 1, regarding the matter of sin.
- That is, they help us to continue thinking about how we relate to sin as a test of our own eternal life.
- The believer has a distinct and clear relationship to sin that is different than the relationship which the unbeliever has to sin.

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 1

1 My little children,
These things I write to you,

so that you may not sin. [John's purpose]

And **if** anyone sins, [if = when, for all sin]

[then] we have an Advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ADVOCATE

- Verse 1b fills in a blank that is not mentioned explicitly in 1:9. There, we confess, and God forgives and cleanses.
- But what stands between our confession and God's forgiveness? How can God forgive, because He is light and has no darkness at all (1:5)?
- He has to forgive on some basis, a just basis. Since has consequences, and God *cannot* overlook it. To overlook makes God a complicit party.

EXAMPLE OF OVERLOOKING SIN

- Eli, the priest, and his two sons Hophni and Phinehas
- 1 Samuel
 - 2:12, 17, 22 – wicked, very bad in God's sight, and Eli heard of all that they did.
 - 3:12-14 – God promised to destroy Eli's house because Eli knew what his sons were doing, and did not restrain them.
 - 2:27-36 – the record of the prophecy against Eli's house.
- Similarly, God cannot just let sin go unpunished or "un restrained." He has to do something about it.
- Jesus is the man in the middle who takes the punishment for sin, so that God can treat us kindly.

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 2

2 And He Himself is the propitiation
for our sins,
and not for ours only
but also for the whole world.

- *Jesus* is the propitiation, not just His act on the cross.
- Saving faith is the response of the whole man to the whole Christ, not just to the fact of His death.

PROPTIATION

- Typically, *propitiation* is understood to mean *satisfaction*, namely, the satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. It means to placate, pacify, or appease one's anger or wrath.
- This passage and 1 John 4:10 are the only two verses in the NT that use this particular word.
- The word is defined as the expiation (removal) or sin-offering that appeases God's judicial wrath against sin. It has to do with "our sins."
- Propitiation is distinguishable from *reconciliation*.

PROPITIATION, PART 2

- God has holy wrath against sin (John 3:36, Romans 1:18).
- There is a sacrifice that appeases that wrath by satisfying God's ethical demands against sin, and that is expressed in Romans 3:25-26. No animal sacrifice could do that (Hebrews 10:4).
- If you were to ask, "How can I, a sinner, satisfy God's just wrath against sin?" The answer is that you cannot. Only Jesus can. Only God can satisfy God's wrath against sin.
- The good news is that Jesus has already accomplished this!

THE SECOND TEST

- 1 John 2:3 to 6 introduce us to a second test of eternal life: that of keeping God's commands, also called "obeying God."

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 3

3 Now by this we know that we know Him,
if **we keep** His commandments.

Or, slightly rearranged:

If **we keep** His commandments, [A believer]

[then by that] we know that we know Him.

WE KNOW THAT WE KNOW HIM

- Actually the tense of the second “we know Him” is perfect. It means that “we have come to know Him.”
- To come to know God is one thing...
- To know that we have come to know God, that is, to have confidence that we know God, is another.
- Such knowledge, that is, that we know that we know God, is called...
- *Assurance*
- And 1 John 2:3 grounds this assurance in what?
- The ground is we keep his commandments. If not?

ASSURANCE

- The assurance of salvation is based on three truths:
 - The promises of God
 - The internal testimony of the Holy Spirit
 - Perseverance, which means continuing in the faith
- Perseverance itself is seen in three areas of the believer's life:
 - Continuing in personal faith
 - Continuing in sound doctrine
 - Continuing in good works
- John's statement in 2:3 is part of assurance the area of perseverance.

MORE ON ASSURANCE

- This is why the believer feels sometimes a lack of assurance when he sins or is struggling with a besetting sin.
- That is, if we do *not* keep God's commandments, we might wonder if we really know Him. And if we habitually do not keep His commands, we *ought* to wonder if we know Him.
- The solution to this is not to introspect forever, or to feel enough guilt to atone for our sins (which is impossible), but rather to confess our sin and begin afresh to walk with God.
- One of his commands is to confess our sin!

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 4

4 He **who says**, “I know Him,”
and does not keep His commandments,

[He] is a liar, [An unbeliever]
and the truth is not in him.

Note that once again, “I know” is in the perfect tense. It means the man is claiming, “I **have come to know** Him with the **ongoing result** that I still know Him.” The problem is the evidence points the other way. He is a liar.

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 5

5 But **whoever keeps** His word,
truly the love of God is perfected in him.
[A believer]

By this [keeping God's word]
we know that we are in Him.

Love for God is demonstrated by doing what God's word says. To the extent that we do keep God's word, that demonstrates that our love for God is perfected to that extent.

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 6

6 **He who says** he abides in Him
ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Or, slightly adapted to be in the form of verse 4:

6 **He who says**, “I abide in Christ”
ought to walk just as Christ walked.

The test is living like Christ. The statement is like verse 4, but the evidence is much better here than there.

WHAT IS ABIDING?

- Based purely on context, I conclude that abiding is basically synonymous with
 - Knowing Christ, 2:3
 - Keeping Christ's word, 2:5
 - Fellowship with Christ, 1:3
- Abiding = believing. See John 15:1-6. Abiding is “remaining” or “living” in Christ, and that is done by trusting in Him. Certainly if you do not believe, you cannot abide.

MORE ON ABIDING

- I believe we can see these as equals:
He who says, “I abide in Christ,”
He who says, “I know Christ,”
He who says, “I keep Christ’s word,” and
He who says, “I have fellowship with Christ”
ought to walk just as Christ walked.
- I cannot advocate “slicing and dicing” the meaning of abide/know/keep/fellowship into their own little compartments. They are basically saying the same thing. John does not intend to convey major theological differences between these terms.

EVIDENCE OF ABIDING

- Walking as Christ walked.
- 1 Peter 2:21 – follow in His steps
- Matthew 11:29 – learn from me
- Matt. 16:24 – follow me
- John 13:15 – do as Christ did to His disciples
- Philippians 2:5 – have the same mindset or attitude that Christ had

IS ABIDING (AB)NORMAL?

- Some Christian teachers make a distinction between believing and abiding, or between believing and being a disciple/follower.
 - They would say that believing is “level 1 Christianity” and abiding is “level 2 Christianity.”
 - Similarly, they claim, believing in Jesus is “level 1” and being a disciple/follower is “level 2.”
 - This makes abiding and discipleship an abnormal kind of thing, more rare than even belief in Christ.
- This distinction is wrong.
 - A true believer abides in Christ; a true believer is a follower or disciple of Christ. It is wrong to make a distinction between the two categories.

ABIDING IS NORMAL FOR A BELIEVER

- Of course, not every apparent disciple is a real one, just the same way that not every apparent believer is a real believer.
 - See for instance John 6:60-66, particularly 64 and 66.
 - See also 1 John 2:19.
- Acts 6:7 ties discipleship to belief. So also Acts 11:26.
- John 15:6 ties abiding with salvation, for those who do not abide are thrown into the fire.
- So it is with 1 John 2:6. Those who abide are to walk as Christ walked. For a believer, the walk needs to match the claim. If you are temporarily not walking as Christ walked, that doesn't erase your abiding in Him.

ABOUT FELLOWSHIP

- The meaning of fellowship is sharing or partnership or contribution.
- The term fellowship is ambiguous in itself, apart from any context.
 - Fellowship with or in what?
 - If you say, “I am in fellowship with God,” then people in our circles normally think you mean, “I am on good terms with God right now. I don’t have unconfessed sin.”
 - In reformed circles, people normally think you mean, “I am saved.”

FELLOWSHIP, PART 2

- But if you just take the meaning of fellowship, then you are saying, “I am sharing with God.”
- But sharing what?
 - Money (Philippians 1:5, Romans 15:26, 2 Cor. 8:4, 2 Cor. 9:13)
 - Other material things (Heb. 13:16)
 - Spending time together with believers (Acts 2:42) and harmonious relations among believers (1 John 1:7)
 - Partaking the benefits of the blood and body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16)
 - Partnership with unbelief (2 Cor. 6:14)
 - Close association with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14, Phil. 2:1)
 - Official recognition of other believers with the right hand of fellowship (Gal. 2:9).
 - In the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3:10)
 - Eternal life (1 John 1:3, 6; 1 Cor. 1:9, Philemon 6)

FELLOWSHIP, PART 3

- Fellowship in 1 John 1 refers to salvation.
- To be clear: every true believer is always “in fellowship” with God in this sense.
- What traditionally has been known as “fellowship” is really the idea that a person is living in a way that pleases the Lord at a given time.
- We have not seen that type of “fellowship” in 1 John, and none of the examples in Scripture clearly mean exclusively that type of fellowship.
- This does not mean we have to abandon the traditional use of the term *fellowship*. It just means we need to be very clear about how we are using it.

FELLOWSHIP, PART 4

- Believers can be displeasing to the Lord, like King David was.
 - 1 Chron. 21:1-8, where God was displeased with David for proudly numbering Israel. The word for *displeased* also means *evil*.
 - 2 Samuel 11:27, where God was displeased about David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah
 - See also Acts 13:22, where the Bible tells us that David was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).
 - Mark 10:14, where Jesus was greatly displeased with the disciples who were keeping children away from Jesus
 - Numbers 11:1, where the people complained and this displeased God. We acknowledge that these were largely unbelievers.

FELLOWSHIP, PART 5

- Believers are called to live in a way that pleases the Lord
 - Colossians 3:20
 - Ephesians 5:10
 - Romans 14:18
 - 1 Timothy 2:3
 - 1 Timothy 5:4
 - 1 Peter 2:5
- You are living in a certain way right now.
 - Is that way of life pleasing to the Lord?
 - What needs to change?

THE THIRD TEST

- The **first test** of eternal life has to do with our doctrine and practice regarding sin (1:5-2:2). What do we believe about sin and how to we handle sin in our lives?
- The **second test** of eternal life is that of keeping God's commands, i.e., obedience to God (2:3-6).
- The **third test** has to do with the most important command that God has given, namely to love God first and to love others as oneself (2:7-17).

HOW DO WE KNOW THE TEST IS LOVE?

- In 1 John 2:7-8 seems vague about what the next test is. It speaks of “new” and “old” commandments as if we should know what they are.
- And, we should know them! Here are three reasons:
- First, we see in verses 9-10 that the test has to do with hating and loving one’s brother.
- Second, in verses 15-17 the test has to do with loving God and not loving the world.
- Third, we connect with 2 John 5-6.

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 7

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

- Recall “new” passages like Matthew 22:37-40, John 13:34-35, and “old” ones like Leviticus 19:18, and Deuteronomy 6:5. So there is nothing new here!

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 8

8 Again, a new commandment
I write to you,
which thing is true in Him
and [which thing is true] in you,
because the darkness is passing away,
and the true light is already shining.

- It is not new (verse 7), but it is new.

OLD LOVE, NEW LOVE

- If the command to love God and one another was given previously, how can it be *new*?
- It is not new in time, but is new in quality, or new in significance, or new in how we can appreciate it.
- This is because the command to love one another has been elevated by Christ's demonstration of how to do that, both by service and by death.
- See John 13:1, 15:12-14, 17
- "From the beginning" denotes from the beginning of their Christian lives—that's when they heard the commandment to love (not "the beginning of time")

HOW IS THE NEW COMMAND TRUE?

- The commandment is true in God. God is love (1 John 4:8, 16).
- The commandment is true in Christ. See Christ's entire earthly life and example.
- The commandment is also true in the life of believers. They love God and one another, and even their enemies (Matthew 5:44). That's just the way they are.

“BECAUSE”?

- The ground of John’s statement (the *because* part) alludes back to the foundational truth of 1:5 which says that God is light and there is no darkness in Him. Such light issues naturally in holy love.
- But what exactly does the “because” in v. 8 mean?
- Is it that John is *writing* about this new commandment because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining? No.
- Or is it that the commandment is true in Christ and us because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining? Yes.

MORE PRECISELY...

- The matter of love is true in Christ, obviously.
- But the text adds that it is true in us too. We as believers as a matter of normal course exercise love toward one another.
- This is the case because in our lives, darkness is passing away and the true light now shines. In other words, we have been brought out of darkness into His marvelous light.
- Note the tense: the darkness IS PASSING AWAY. It is not entirely gone yet. We still have some sin problems. But the light is shining! Thanks to God.

CHAPTER 2, VERSES 9-11

The following verses exhibit another negative-positive-negative pattern like what we saw in 1:5-10.

9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

COMPARE/CONTRAST

- Once again, we can do a comparison:

The Believer...(v. 10)	The Unbeliever... (v. 9, 11)
Loves his brother	Says he is in the light, but...
Abides in the light	Hates his brother (2x)
No cause of stumbling	Is in darkness until now (2x)
	Walks in darkness
	Does not know where he is going
	Blinded by darkness

LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP?

- Can a person love God and hate his brother?
- John would answer with a clear “NO!”
- Someone can “say” they are in the light, but they are not at all truthful if they hate their brother.
- The problem for this person is that his darkness has not passed away; the true light is not shining in his life. Rather, he remains in darkness (sin); he walks in that realm; he is lost—doesn’t know where he is going—and he is blind. This is all very bad.
- This is a good test for the presence of eternal life.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

- 1 John 2:15-17 expand on the third test as it concerns our love for God.
- We could treat it as a fourth test (loving God) by distinguishing it from the third test (loving our brothers).
- Instead, I've elected to keep the tests together as the test of one's love (2:7-17).
- We have already seen the test of our relationship to sin (1:5-2:2) and the test of our obedience to God's commands (2:3-6).

1 JOHN 2:15

Do not love the world
 or the things in the world.

[Why? Because...]

If anyone loves the world,
[then] the love of the Father
 is not in him.

We have two mutually exclusive states here.

EXAMPLE: DEMAS

- 2 Timothy 4:10 reads this way: “for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica.”
- I have commented on this before when we have studied passages that mention Demas (Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24).
- The basic idea of my evaluation is that things do not look good for Demas. Paul is not making excuses for Demas. He simply says that Demas loves this world.

1 JOHN 2:16

For all that is in the world—

the lust of the flesh,
the lust of the eyes,
and the pride of life—

is not of the Father
but is of the world.

1 JOHN 2:17

And the world is passing away,
and the lust of it [is passing away];

but he who does the will of God
abides forever.

We have two mutually exclusive outcomes here. Your cart is either hitched to the world or to the will of God, and the outcome corresponds to the outcome for the thing you are attached to: if to the world, judgment; if to God, you abide forever.

COMMANDS AND STANDARDS

- A question came up last week about how to consider the commands in Scripture, particularly those exhortations that are treated as evidence of one's salvation.
- For example, we see in James 1:26 a person who thinks he is religious but does not bridle his tongue.
 - We understand from this that a Christian is a person who bridles his tongue. Someone who doesn't bridle his tongue has a worthless kind of religion.
 - But do we have to do that perfectly? Can we? Is it ok to lapse in that responsibility?
 - How do we think about such exhortations and commands?

OTHER EXAMPLES

- What about 1 John 1:9? Do we have to be perfectly consistent in confessing our sins?
- What about 2 John 2:3? If we say we are Christians but do not keep God's commandments, what then?
- What about 2 John 2:9-11? Must we love our brother?

SOME OPTIONS

- Is the command:
 - Something we can ignore?
 - Optional? (may or may not be done)
 - Something we strive to do to gain merit?
 - Something we obey to please and glorify God?
 - What we do as a general pattern of life?
 - A standard that we cannot perfectly meet?
 - Something we must keep perfectly “or else”?

AND IF WE DON'T?

- How much do you don't? 😊

(A) Is it a general pattern that you ignore God's command?

This is a real problem, like an unsaved person's problem

(B) Or is it a general pattern that you take it seriously and do it?

This indicates you should confess your sin and work on doing better next time

(C) Or is it something you say that you take seriously and know you should be doing, but don't do anyway?

This seems the same as (A)

A DIVINE STANDARD

- The divine standard for Christian behavior is expressed in terms of Scripture's teaching, commands, exhortations, and prohibitions.
- These form a standard that is expected, but also is a standard that God knows we will fail to achieve.
- Like the OT law, it is impossible for us to be obedient to the entire body of God's requirements. This is why we need Christ to provide us with salvation.
- But this does not eliminate the standard of behavior. It is still something we are obligated to after salvation in order to glorify and please God.

WATER BAPTISM

- Is water baptism:
 - Something we can ignore?
 - Optional? (may or may not be done)
 - Something we strive to do to gain merit?
 - Something we obey to please and glorify God?
 - What we do as a general pattern of life? (One time...)
 - A standard that we cannot perfectly meet?
 - Something we must keep perfectly “or else”?

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

- Must we be water baptized? Yes.
- But then you object: “I don’t have to be baptized in order to be saved!”
- Don’t put words in my mouth! I did not say that we must be baptized **in order to be saved**. I said simply “we must be baptized.” What I mean is this:
- We must be water baptized in order to (1) obey Jesus’ command and (2) testify publicly of our faith.

OBEYING GOD

- Is walking in the light:
- Something we can ignore?
- Optional? (may or may not be done)
- Something we strive to do to gain merit?
- Something we obey to please and glorify God?
- What we do as a general pattern of life?
- A standard that we cannot perfectly meet?
- Something we must keep perfectly “or else”?

LOVING GOD

- Back to 1 John 2:15,
Is loving God and
not the world:
- Something we can ignore?
- Optional? (may or may not
be done)
- Something we strive to do to
gain merit?
- Something we obey to please
and glorify God?
- What we do as a general
pattern of life?
- A standard that we cannot
perfectly meet?
- Something we must keep
perfectly “or else”?

A CAUTION

- I don't want to give an impression that there is a squishiness to obedience.
- Yes, we know that our obedience is imperfect.
- But these commands are absolute standards. We fail to live up to them and need God's forgiveness through Christ.
- In addition, there are commands that if we do not obey *at all*, we are lost.
 - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.
 - If you do not believe, you will not be saved.
 - Love not the world, and that is evidence of salvation.
 - If as a general rule you do love the world, you are not saved.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

$$D = R \times T$$

Distance = Rate x Time

$$90 \text{ miles} = \frac{60 \text{ miles}}{\text{hr}} \times 1.5 \text{ hr}$$

How about Spiritual Progress?

It is not so mechanistic, but...

SOWING AND REAPING

- The $D = R \times T$ idea is another expression of the Biblical principle of sowing and reaping. If you sow much into the project of your sanctification, you will reap much. If you sow little, you will reap little.
- Some of us have had more time; some of us have put forth more effort; and some us have had both.
- But it is apparent that if you have not had a lot of time since salvation, or you have not put forth much effort, then you will not have come very far.
- See Hebrews 5:11-14.

THE FIRST THREE TESTS OF LIFE

- The **first test** of eternal life has to do with our doctrine and practice regarding sin (1:5-2:2). We could call this the **sin test**.
- The **second test** of eternal life is that of keeping God's commands, i.e., obedience to God (2:3-6). This is the **obedience test**.
- The **third test** has to do with the most important command that God has given, namely to love God first and to love others as oneself (2:7-17). This is the **love test**.

THE FOURTH TEST OF LIFE

- The **fourth test** is whether we are deceived or not regarding the true Christ (2:18-27). We could call this a **belief test** or **doctrinal test** or the **Christology test**.
- Actually, this test reminds us of 1 John 1:1-4 where John describes that he was an eyewitness of Jesus, and that he was proclaiming Him who is eternal life so that the readers could share in that blessing, as well as in the joy of it.
- Some interpreters treat the initial section of 1 John 1 as a test of eternal life. I treat it as an introduction to the book. The test comes at this point, in 2:18-27.

1 JOHN 2:18

Little children,
it is the last hour;

and as you have heard
that the Antichrist is coming,
even now many antichrists have come,
by which we know that
it is the last hour.

MORE ON VERSE 18

- Often this question comes up: Are we in the last days?
- Answer: Yes. In fact, John says we are in the last hour.
- We have been taught that a very deceptive false christ will arise called the Antichrist. We read of him in Daniel 9:24-27 and 2 Thess. 2:3-10.
- In a similar way, many antichrists have already come (notice lowercase a and plural s at the end).
- This fact reminds us that we are at the end of the age.

WHAT IS AN ANTICHRIST?

- Anti = against or adversary; they try to deceive.
- Many “small fry” antichrists have come and gone
- Bigger ones have come and their teachings have remained, like the prophets of Islam, Mormonism, and the Watchtower, or like the popes of the Catholic Church.
- These prominent figures are supposedly “anointed” by God to lead a new movement or reform of the church. In fact, they are demonically motivated.
- Sense of urgency: time is short; enemies are active.

1 JOHN 2:19

They went out from us,
but they were not of us;

for if they had been of us,
[then] they would have continued with us;

but *they went out*
that they might be made manifest,
that none of them were of us.

THEY WENT OUT...

- We must not be so “tribal” or “provincial” to think that if someone leaves our particular church, association, or even “denomination” that they are lost.
- We do not have a corner on the truth.
- But if someone departs from the faith, rejects true doctrine and expresses disbelief in Christ, that is when verse 19 happens. That is called *apostasy*.
- Then, because they did not persevere in the faith, we know that they were false disciples. See the book of Hebrews on the matter of persevering faith.

THE CHURCH IS PURIFIED

- For the individuals who leave the faith, it is bad.
- But for the church, their leaving removes a problem. It purifies the church and protects it. Such departure is good for the church.
- 1 Corinthians 11:19 has the same idea.
- Church discipline is not quite the same thing. It is making a declaration that a person's conduct is not consistent with a Christian profession, even if they still insist that they hold onto their profession. However, church discipline has a similar result in that it purifies and protects the church.

LEAVING IS EVIDENCE

- The end of v. 19 says “in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.”
- When someone walks away from the Lord and from his church, this clearly shows on whose side he is.
- They have gone to the “passing away” world instead of staying with the “abiding forever” people of God.
- They have been deceived, probably by themselves and perhaps by others too.

1 JOHN 2:20

But you have an anointing from the Holy One,
and you know all things.

- Note the contrast with the word *but* (in English).
- The immediate difficulty with this verse is “how do I know all things?”
- The second difficulty is that modern translations render this as, “all of you know...” (all as subject) instead of “you know all things” (instead of all as object).

VERSE 20, CONT.

- x The difficulty of “you know all things” is almost insurmountable in terms of the idea of omniscience. Perhaps the idea is “you know all of this.”
- ✓ The textual variant in “you all know” is troublesome also, but the sense is more harmonious with new covenant passages like Jeremiah 31:34.
- ✓ This is even more so the case when you examine Ezekiel 36:26-27 and remember that God promised a special ministry of the Holy Spirit, a kind of ministry that we now experience as a normal part of the Christian life.
- ✓ Simplest solution is to take “you all know” in contrast with the all of verse 19 (“not all=none of them were of us”).

CONTRAST TO V. 19

- There is a notable contrast between the two groups which are in focus in verse 19 and 20.
- In verse 19, “not all of them are of us.”
- In verse 20, “all of you have knowledge.”
- A major difference between the two groups is the ministering presence of the Holy Spirit, this “anointing” in which He teaches us truth and keeps us from being deceived.

1 JOHN 2:21

- As believers, you are not deceived about the truth of Jesus, sin, obedience to God, and love for God and others.
- John is not writing to a group of believers to inform them of basic truth that they have never heard.
- On the contrary, they know the truth. This is assuring.
- He writes precisely because they know truth, and he wants them to continue in it and not be deceived by a lie, whether of the Antichrist or any of the many antichrists out there.

1 JOHN 2:22

Who is a liar

but he who denies

that Jesus is the Christ?

He is antichrist

who denies

the Father and the Son.

- Jesus is the Messiah, and anyone who denies that is a liar. Unfortunately, most Jews are in this category.
- Most Gentiles don't even know what Messiah means.
- A person who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar and an antichrist. Period.

1 JOHN 2:22, CONT.

- If you deny that Jesus is Messiah, you deny God the Father too, because He proclaimed His Son as the Anointed One. See Psalm 2:2, 6-7.
- This is very cut-and-dried; very plain. There is not any wiggle room.
- Humans have a tendency to want to make everyone “OK” before God, but that doesn’t correspond with how God looks at things.
- By the way, John uses *liar* 5 times in 1 John; he uses *lie* four times. He uses *deceive* three times.

1 JOHN 2:23

Whoever denies the Son
does not have the Father either;
he who acknowledges the Son
has the Father also.

- Notice how a person receives the Father and Son together as a package deal, or the person does not receive either of them.
- You cannot have the Son and not the Father; nor can you have the Father but not the Son.

1 JOHN 2:23, CONT.

- See John 5:23.
- Practically, this truth knocks out the “Jesus only” movement (oneness Pentecostalism). You have to have the Father AND the Son.
- It also knocks out those who affirm God the Father but deny full deity to the Son of God. You must have both.

REVIEW 1 JOHN 2:18-23

- So far, we have seen that antichrists do two things:
 - They depart from the faith (v. 19).
 - They deny the faith (v. 22-23).
- Believers are different:
 - They know that the Antichrist is coming (v. 18) and that many similar people have already come.
 - They have an anointing of God, the Holy Spirit (v. 20).
 - As a result, they know the truth of the gospel (v. 20, 21).
 - They do not depart from the truth; they do not deny the faith; they do not deny the Father or the Son (opposites of v. 19 and 22-23).

1 JOHN 2:24

Therefore

let that abide in you

which you heard from the beginning.

If what you heard from the beginning
abides in you,

[then] you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

- Therefore: following the thought from verse 23, continue to properly acknowledge the Son and Father.

BI-DIRECTIONAL ABIDING

- Question: What is it that you heard?
- Answer: The Gospel of Christ.
 - Who He is and what He did.
 - See 1:1-4.
- Here is the bi-directionality of the abiding:
 - The truth of the gospel abides in you, and
 - You abide in the Son and the Father.
- This is also the “how” of abiding. How do you abide in Christ? By really believing the truth that was proclaimed to you and the Savior who is truth!

1 JOHN 2:25

And this is the promise
that He has promised us—
eternal life.

- The gospel does not change, so it must remain unchanged in you.
- The end result letting that truth abide in you is eternal life. That is the promise that is at the end of our walk of faith. There is no bait-and-switch.

1 JOHN 2:26

These things I have written to you
concerning those who try to deceive you.

- Every Christian minister is concerned about false teaching. The apostles were especially concerned.
- Jesus spoke of false teachers (Matthew 7:15-23).
- They deceive, or rather *try to deceive*, believers.
 - 1 Timothy 4:1
 - Matthew 24:24 // Mark 13:22
- Anyone who brings a different gospel is a deceiver.

REVIEW ANTICHRIST BEHAVIORS

- Antichrists do three things:
 - They depart from the faith (v. 19).
 - They deny the faith (v. 22-23).
 - They try to deceive true believers (v. 26).

1 JOHN 2:27

But the anointing
which you have received from Him
abides in you,
and you do not need that anyone teach you;
but as the same anointing teaches you
concerning all things,
and is true,
and is not a lie,
and just as it has taught you,
you will abide in Him.

1 JOHN 2:27 EXPLANATION

- That which God has given to us—the Holy Spirit and the truth and the corresponding acceptance of that truth—remains in us. It is not given and then taken away. It is given, period.
- Some have twisted this verse to say that they need not to be taught anything about Christian doctrine. But such an approach rips the verse out of its context.
- You don't need any *false teachers* to teach you *new stuff*! The Christian faith has not changed. It remains constant.

ANOINTING AND TRUTH

- This anointing brings certainty of the truth. It teaches you concerning all things.
 - I note the word *concerning*. It doesn't teach you every fact or figure of the Christian life. It teaches you generally about them.
 - At the start of the Christian life you need instruction; and throughout it you need instruction. But the Spirit is illuminating you to truth "concerning" all things so that you accept them.
- There is no deception in this anointing; there is no lie; there is just truth, and constant truth. You can bank on it that the promise of eternal life is solid.

MORE TWO-WAY ABIDING

- The true believer will continue to abide in Christ, even though there will be fits and starts along the way.
- The anointing abides in you, and you abide in Him.
- We must keep in mind that salvation is not a one-time happening in our lives. It is not a one-way commitment or belief only.
- It is a two-way street in which the believer dwells in God, and God in the believer, and this continues forever.

LOSS OF ABIDING?

- If we were to consider the possibility of loss of salvation, we would see that to be impossible. Both abidings would have to cease!
- God would have to abrogate his promise to the believer. The believer would have to become a non-repentant non-believer. Such a transformation could never occur.

1 JOHN 2:28

And now, little children,
abide in Him,
[in order] that when He appears,
we may have confidence
and not be ashamed
before Him at His coming.

- This is a command to abide. How do we do this?
- Go back to verse 24 and see: you let the truth of the gospel abide in you.

MORE ON 2:28

- We are exhorted to continue abiding because Christ is coming back, and when this occurs we don't want to:
 - Lack confidence as we stand before Him (in judgment?)
 - Be ashamed about ourselves in front of Him.
- In other words, we want to stand tall (figuratively) in persevering belief, rather than cower because we have believed and lived stupidly.
 - I say figuratively, because initially, at least, we will not be standing at all. See Deut. 9:18 (Moses); Luke 5:8 (Peter); Acts 9:4 (Paul); Revelation 1:17 (John).

1 JOHN 2:29

If you know that He is righteous,
[then] you know that everyone
 who practices righteousness
 is born of Him.

- This is a preview of the theme of chapter 3.
- The assumption is that we know God is righteous. He is light, after all (1:5). Given that assumption, then we know those who “look” like God in terms of righteous behavior have to be born again.

JOHN'S TESTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

1. Has our attitude toward sin changed (1:5-2:2)? We could call this the **sin test**.
2. Do we keep God's commands (2:3-6)? This is the **obedience test**.
3. Do we keep the most important commands that God has given, namely to love God first and to love others as oneself (2:7-17)? This is the **love test**. Or do we love the world?
4. Do we believe the true doctrine of Christ (2:18-28)? This is the **Christ test**.
5. Do we practice righteousness (2:29-3:10a).

1 JOHN 3

- The first three verses continue the idea about the coming of Christ and the future hope of our complete transformation into his likeness.
 - This has an application for how we should conduct ourselves today (v. 3).
- Then, verses 4-24 address two more tests of salvation:
 - The test of the practice of righteousness (3:4-10a).
 - The test of loving one's brother (3:10b-24).

1 JOHN 3:1 – WHAT LOVE!

Behold what manner of love

the Father has bestowed on us,

that we should be called children of God!

Therefore the world does not know us,

because it did not know Him.

- Pause to think about how God loves you, that you should be called His child! That means, not just a child by creation, but a child by new birth.

1 JOHN 3:2

**Beloved, now we are children of God;
and it has not yet been revealed
what we shall be,
but we know that when He is revealed,
we shall be like Him,
for we shall see Him as He is.**

- It is a settled reality for the believer that he/she is a child of God.
- What will we be? Don't know—it hasn't been revealed!

1 JOHN 3:2, CONT.

- But we do know something—we will be like Christ.
- We will not be little Christs. Rather:
 - We will be *like* Him in the sense of morally conformed to His character (as in “communicable” attributes)
 - We will be *like* Him physically in terms of a glorious resurrection body outfitted for the life of heaven.
- What we will be like will be evident because we will see what we should be like in Him.
- This is a real hope—something to really look forward to and something to expect because God has promised it.

1 JOHN 3:3

**And everyone who has this hope in Him
purifies himself,
just as He is pure.**

- Do you have this hope in yourself? Do you ponder on it? Do you live like it is true?
- Do you purify yourself by keeping from sin, seeing as how you will eventually be purified anyway?
 - Our “purification standard” is Christ Himself.
 - That is, 0 ppb (parts per billion) of sin...

PRACTICING RIGHTEOUSNESS

- In verses 4-10a, we come to the test of practicing righteousness.
- This passage has thrown people for a loop as respects the matter of assurance and perfectionism. The Christian must keep in mind:
 - We *can* have assurance of salvation despite sins that we commit.
 - We can *never* be perfect before heaven.
 - We *must not* live in a pattern of sin. John will go so far as to say that we *cannot* live in a pattern of sin. And I agree with that, because it is BIBLE!

1 JOHN 3:4

**Whoever commits sin
also commits lawlessness,
and sin is lawlessness.**

- Sin is lawlessness, so if you do the one, you are automatically guilty of the other.
- Lawlessness helps to define what sin is: breaking the law of God.
- The moral law of God is, today, the Law of Christ.

THE LAW OF CHRIST

- The law code that the Old Testament (Jewish) believer was obligated to abide by is called the Law of Moses—the Law given by God through Moses.
- That law code did two things:
 - Regulated the life of the Israelite—in terms of civil duties, religious duties, and moral obligations.
 - Revealed the holiness of God
- When Jesus died, the regulatory function of the Law of Moses ceased.
- The revealing function of it continues.

THE LAW OF CHRIST, PART 2

- That is, it reveals the holiness of God.
- Those portions or principles that are still binding on the believer today are restated in the New Testament in a body of law or instruction that we call the Law of Christ.
 - Some instructions are not forwarded to us today, e.g., Sabbath and dietary restrictions.

THE LAW OF CHRIST, PART 3

- The Law of Christ is the instruction that Christ gave to the disciples to propagate to the whole earth.
 - Remember Matthew 28:19-20, wherein Jesus said, “and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”
- We are in fact obligated to keep certain things in the New Testament. It is most emphatically not *legalism* to say that, believe it, or practice it.
 - For instance, God says, “be angry and do not sin.” I must obey that. The difference from legalism is this: God has *enabled* me to obey in Christ. I also *want* to obey it! It is liberating to obey it. It is not burdensome to obey it.

1 JOHN 3:5

And you know that

**He was manifested
and in Him**

**to take away our sins,
there is no sin.**

- If there were sin in Jesus, He could not have taken away our sins. But, there was no sin in Jesus, so he could take away our sins.
- And in fact, He did come to take away our sins. So then.....shall we live in sin?
- The Christian is to live as one whose sins have been taken away—not as one who is still in sin!

1 JOHN 3:6

Whoever **abides** in Him **does not sin.**
Whoever **sins** **has neither seen Him**
nor known Him.

- **Abides** and **sins** = present active participle.
- **Does not sin** = present active indicative.
- Seen and known = perfect active indicative.
- Two kinds of people: abiders and sinners.
- Abiders do not present-tense-sin.
- Sinners **have not come to see** and **have not come to know** Him.

1 JOHN 3:6, CONT.

- This is where people get tripped up.
- But a little help from Greek grammar will help. (See Wallace's Greek Grammar, starting at p. 517).
- The present tense in Greek has various nuances. In other words, authors use the present tense to express different kinds of meaning. For example:
- Instantaneous, "right now" present tense.
 - "I **commend** to you our sister Phoebe" (Romans 16:1).
- Progressive, "in progress" present tense.
 - "Our lamps **are** [in the process of] **going out**" (Matthew 25:8).

MORE ON THE PRESENT TENSE

- Past-into-present present tense.
 - “The devil **sins** from the beginning,” which means, “The devil **has sinned** from the beginning” (1 John 3:8).
- Customary/habitual/iterative present tense.
 - “He often **falls** into the fire,” Matthew 17:15. This is a repeated activity.
 - “I **fast** twice a week,” Luke 18:12. This happens every week.
- Historical present tense. Vivid portrayal of an event.
 - “Then they **came** to Him, bringing a paralytic...” Mark 2:3. This verb is present tense, but translated as a past.

MORE ON THE PRESENT TENSE

- Gnostic present tense. Makes a statement about a general, timeless fact, like a proverb. It is something that *does* happen, not that *is happening*.
 - “God [always] **loves** a cheerful giver,” 2 Cor. 9:7.
 - “God **does love** a cheerful giver.”
- The Conative or “trying to” present tense.
 - “I have written these things to you concerning those who **try to deceive** you,” 1 John 2:26. If you translated it literally, it would read, “Those who are deceiving you,” but that doesn’t seem quite right.

MORE ON THE PRESENT TENSE

- Futuristic present tense.
 - “Messiah **is coming**,” John 4:25, or “Messiah **comes**.” This means, in the mind of the woman speaking the words that, “He is on the way and will arrive at some point in the future.”
 - Of course, the Messiah was already right in front of her!
- So what type of present tense is John using?
 - Wallace attempts to explain this as a gnomic, and there is some value to his idea, in that righteous living is generally what believers do. This is just how believers *are*.
 - I think the customary or habitual present tense is the best way to explain what John is doing here.

1 JOHN 3:6, CONCLUSION

- I understand present-tense-sin as a habit or pattern of sin. We could translate it thus:
 - Abiders do not live in consistent sin.
 - Abiders show a pattern of right behavior.
 - Abiders may stumble, but they are generally on the right track.
 - Abiders have a righteous lifestyle.
- Do not get hung up on the perfection thing. We know no one is perfect. We should look at the big picture. Are you following Christ or not? And I mean **following**, not just talking about following.

1 JOHN 3:7

**Little children, let no one deceive you.
He who practices righteousness is righteous,
just as He is righteous.**

- Some sophisticated false teachers have come along and said that you can live however, and it reflects nothing on whether you are saved or not.
- That is a deceptive, false, and dangerous teaching.
- **Practices** = present active participle.
- It is the doing of righteousness that shows who is righteous. I hear an echo of “Faith without works...”

1 JOHN 3:8

He **who sins** is of the devil,
for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

For this purpose
the Son of God was manifested,
that He might destroy the works of the devil.

- **Who sins** is a present active participle again. The pattern of life is characterized by sin.
- Jesus came to break us away from sin. How can we live in it more?

1 JOHN 3:9

Whoever **has been born** of God
does not sin,
for His seed remains in him;
and he **cannot sin**,
because he **has been born** of God.

- The verb **has been born** is perfect tense, passive voice; same with “**has been born**” of God.
- The phrase “**does not** sin” is present tense, as is “**cannot sin**.”

PLEASE NOTICE

- There is a distinction between **does not** and **cannot**.
- John says both are true of “born of God” believers.
- **Does not**: the fact is that the believer lives a righteous life.
- **Cannot**: the fact is that believers are unable to go on sinning all the time because they are regenerated and have God’s “seed” in them—they have His nature and likeness.
 - What happens if we “try” to go on sinning? God convicts, rebukes, chastises, or even kills the believer (John 16:8, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Hebrews 12:5, 1 Cor. 11:30).

1 JOHN 3:10

In this the children of God
and the children of the devil
 are manifest:
Whoever **does not practice** righteousness
 is not of God,
nor is he who **does not love** his brother.

- The first portion of the verse summarizes the prior text. The proof is in the pudding.
- The last portion of the verse deals with the next test: loving one's brother.

JOHN'S TESTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

1. Has our attitude toward sin changed (1:5-2:2)?
2. Do we keep God's commands (2:3-6)?
3. Do we keep the most important commands that God has given, namely to love God first and to love others as oneself (2:7-17)? Or do we love the world?
4. Do we believe the doctrine of Christ (2:18-28)?
5. Do we practice righteousness (2:29-3:10a)?
6. Do we love our brother (3:11a-24)?

OUTLINE

- In 3:1, we saw the wonder and privilege that it is to be called children of God.
- God's children purify themselves and walk in righteousness.
- Constant sin shows that you are a child of the devil.
- Another characteristic of a child of God is that he loves the other children of God.

1 JOHN 3:11

**For this is the message
that you heard from the beginning
that we should love one another,**

- “From the beginning” appears again (see 3:8, and particularly 2:24). The message that we heard from “the beginning” was the gospel, and it was from the beginning of our hearing the gospel, not from the beginning of the world.
- The message? Simple. **Love one another.** Present tense. Not perfect, but consistent practice.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

- Reminder: This is a teaching as old as Leviticus 19:18 and is reiterated in Matthew 22:39.
- John 13:34-35, 15:12, and 15:17 are portions in the upper room where Jesus instructs the disciples to love one another. These passages in John are the only place where we find this precise instruction in the gospels. Apostle John is concerned about this.
- Our instruction is to love one another.
 - Not compete with one another for positions of prominence (Matthew 20:21).
 - Not argue about who is the greatest (Mark 9:34).

CONNECT TO 1 JOHN 3:10

- The connection is clear: those who love their brothers are giving clear evidence that they are children of God.
- We might mollify our conscience by saying, “I don’t feel any hate, or any bad feeling at all, toward my brother.”
- But that is not the same as saying you truly love your brother.
 - The do-nothing person in James 2:15-16 might not feel anything negative toward the needy brother. But NOT doing something about it is itself an evidence of lack of love (and faith).
- That is to say, love is not the absence of negative feelings. Love is more than that.
- Next up: two negative examples of love: Cain, and the world.

1 JOHN 3:12

Not as Cain

**who was of the wicked one [see 3:8]
and [who] murdered his brother.**

And why did he murder him?

**Because his works were evil
and his brother's righteous.**

- Love certainly does not murder! John 8:44
- Cain was “of” the Devil—a son of the Devil.

TWO REASONS FOR MURDER

- The reason for the murder was not terrorism or a hate crime (what murder isn't those two things?)
- The reason John gives is two-fold:
 - First, Cain's works were evil. Not only was his murder evil, but his offering was not in accordance with the instructions he received. It was not just neutral. It was evil. The evilness of his works indicates the evilness of his internal character.
 - Second, Abel's works were righteous. This is an additional motivation for Cain's awful action. He didn't like his brother's good works. He was jealous. See Matthew 27:18.

1 JOHN 3:13

**Do not marvel, my brethren,
if the world hates you.**

- It should be no surprise that the world hates Christians. If it is a surprise, **stop** being surprised!
- Are you surprised?
 - Sometimes I am taken back by the ferocity of the hate.
 - Sometimes I wonder at the energy that is spent hating Christians, and the irrationality of it all.
 - But it is nothing new.
 - See John 15:18-19, 17:14, Matthew 24:9, Luke 6:22.
- But the world certainly does not love the believer. It is like Cain, “of” the wicked one.

1 JOHN 3:14A

We know

**that we have passed from death to life,
because we love the brethren.**

- This verse goes along with verse 10. Suppose someone asks, “How can I know that I am saved?”
- John responds: You can know you are saved
 - because you love your brothers – characteristically
 - because you practice righteousness.
- These are objective measures of assurance.

1 JOHN 3:14B-15

**14b He who does not love his brother
abides in death.**

**15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer,
and you know
that no murderer has eternal life
abiding in him.**

- These are parallel statements:
 - not love = hate (no middle ground)
 - abides in death = no eternal life

HATE AND MURDER

- John says that the person who hates his brother IS a murderer.
 - This does NOT say “A person who kills another person is a murderer.” (As in a police officer or state executioner).
 - This does NOT say “A hitman or serial killer is a murderer.” He is a murderer, but you don’t have to go that far to be one.
 - This does NOT say “A person who murders another person is a murderer.” That is true, but you do not have to go to the extent of murder to be a murderer!
 - In other words, you can be like Cain without “doing the deed.” Hatred is the issue.
 - This does remind us that hate and murder are morally equivalent. Hatred means you want the brother gone.

JESUS' TEACHING ON MURDER

- See Matt. 5:21-22.
- The internal sinful attitude that leads to anger and insults is the same internal attitude that drives a murderer to kill.
- And it is THIS internal sin that Jesus condemns as worthy of death. The Law of Moses said the same, though it was not generally recognized to be so strict.
- Burdick, p. 59: "Hatred is the brutal cold poison that is the primary ingredient of murder."

MURDERERS AND SALVATION

- A murderer can confess Christ and be saved. The sin of murder can be forgiven.
- A born-again person, with the true Christian kind of love, and with the Holy Spirit, will not murder.
- It was well accepted truth that this was the case.
 - “You know that no murderer has eternal life...” The believers in John’s audience knew this and accepted it as truth without questioning and all kinds of “what ifs.”

1 JOHN 3:16

**By this we know love,
because He laid down His life for us.**

**And we also ought to lay down our lives for the
brethren.**

- The example is clear: love extends to dying for others. Jesus did it. His love is real, and a model.
- We should do likewise. Laying down our lives need not always extend to death, but it certainly includes service to others that may be inconvenient.

1 JOHN 3:17

**But whoever has this world's goods,
 sees his brother in need,
 shuts up his heart from him,**

how does the love of God abide in him?

- Rhetorical question alarm! The love of God does NOT abide in such a person.
- Note the three conditions: *ability, knowledge, and refusal*. Watch how you think about this!

1 JOHN 3:17, CONT.

- You may not have possessions with which to help.
 - But you may need to re-evaluate whether you do or not.
- You may not see your brother in need.
 - But you may need to look again.
- You may think you are being compassionate in terms of emotion.
 - But you need to translate emotion into action.

1 JOHN 3:18

**My little children,
let us not love in word or in tongue,
but [let us love] in deed and in truth.**

- This is an exhortation, a command.
- See James 2:15-16.
- There is a nice parallel construction in the text.
- Talk versus action.
- *Mere* word and tongue are essentially synonyms.
- *Real* deed and truth are basically synonyms.

TWO PRODUCTS OF LOVE

- In terms of outlining the remainder of the chapter, there are two basic truths that arise out of true Christian love.
- The first is **assurance**, v. 19-21
- The second is **answered prayer**, v. 22-24

ASSURANCE: 1 JOHN 3:19

And by this

**we know that we are of the truth,
and [we] shall assure our hearts before Him.**

- “By this” refers to loving in deed and truth, and this brings assurance. It is assuring because the unbeliever does not live this way.
- Assurance is gained not by focusing on subjective feelings but on objective realities (“by this”).
- Being “of the truth” means to be associated with the truth and in fact to be a son of it.

1 JOHN 3:20

**For if our heart condemns us,
[then] God is greater than our heart,
 and [He] knows all things.**

- How exactly might our heart condemn us?
 - Wrongly? False guilt. Love is present, but we doubt.
 - Rightly? True guilt. Love is absent or needs improvement.
- God knows the full story of our lives, all the ins and outs. He knows if we love Him or not. (See John 21:15-17).

1 JOHN 3:21

**Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us,
[then] we have confidence toward God.**

- This sounds good.
- Is it ever possible to be in a bad spot? With verse 20, our hearts may condemn us, but it sounds like we will be fine. With verse 21, our hearts don't condemn us, and that is good too. So what's the downside risk?
- The “verse 20” condemnation may be accurate if we are unloving. And God knows whether it is accurate or not. With love comes confidence—to enter God's presence, to live eternally with Him.

ANSWERED PRAYER: 1 JOHN 3:22

And whatever we ask
we receive from Him,
because we keep His commandments
and [we] do those things
that are pleasing in His sight.

- **Keep** and **do** reiterate the same point basically. However, it is not legal obedience that he commends, but willing obedience is commendable before God.
- The asking happens in our prayers—regularly.
- Got is not a candy dispenser. If we are keeping His commandments, we are not asking for candy!

1 JOHN 3:22, CONT.

- Notice that the asking happens regularly...
- ...AND the receiving happens regularly as well.
- Are you asking? Or not?
- Are you receiving? Or not?
- Are you keeping God's commands? Or not?
- Receiving happens BECAUSE we keep and do His commandments. That's what the text says.
- Assurance, from 3:19-21, plays into this as well. Without confidence toward God, how can we expect our prayers to be answered (James 1:6-7)?

1 JOHN 3:23

**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.**

- The “commandment” is actually two-fold.
- It is commanded that we believe in Jesus.
- It is commanded that we love one another.
- These are not optional. These are super-headings in John’s letter—the two highest-level tests of life.

1 JOHN 3:24A

**Now he
who keeps His commandments
abides in Him,
and He [abides] in him.**

- Verse 24a reiterates one of the proofs of eternal life that we have run into several times: keeping God's commandments (see 2:3).

KEEPS HIS COMMANDMENTS

- The truth is that the one who keeps the commandments abides in God, and God abides in that believer.
 - I am not saying that John presents commandment-keeping as RESULTING in abiding.
 - All he is saying is that the two—commandment-keeping and abiding—go together. They are correlated.
 - Otherwise, someone might try to keep the commandments in order to get into the abiding relationship. But abiding = believing!!
 - Or, they might try to say they abide but not keep His commandments. That's a false profession.

MORE KEEPING COMMANDMENTS

- Verse 24 also reminds us of the bi-directional nature of the abiding that we talked about in 2:24.
 - This two-directional relationship is unbreakable.
 - Again, it is a general pattern of abiding on the part of the believer that we are talking about.

1 JOHN 3:24B

**And by this we know
that He abides in us,
by the Spirit whom He has given us.**

- The last verse of chapter 3 offers another proof of salvation via the language of abiding: the indwelling Holy Spirit. “By this” = “by the Holy Spirit He has given.”
- God and Jesus dwell in the believer by means of His Holy Spirit indwelling the believer.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- It is possible to know that you have this blessing, but it is somewhat 'subjective' as we say. That is, it has to do with the particular 'subject' (you). John 3:8.
- But it is not merely a mystical feeling. It is a reality which you can apprehend by asking yourself a few honest questions.
 - Has the Holy Spirit caused you to embrace the truth of the Bible?
 - Has He convicted you of sin? Of righteousness? Judgment?
 - Is He teaching/illuminating and guiding you?
 - Is He helping you keep God's commandments, helping you love one another, and helping you believe in Christ?

1 JOHN 4 OUTLINE

- Verses 1-6 address a doctrinal test regarding various “spirits.” We read something similar in 2:18-19.
 - You can convince yourself of this by looking at a key word that occurs multiple times in the section. Maybe highlight or underline them.
 - That is, the word **spirit** or **spirits** occur six times in these verses: two in verse 1, two in verse 2, one in verse 1, and one in verse 6. There is a seventh (v. 3) that is implied and supplied by translators--*spirit* (italicized in NKJV and NAS).
 - The antecedent of “them” and “they” in verses 4-5 are these same spirits John wrote of in the prior verses.
 - So this subject matter is found throughout verses 1 to 6.

1 JOHN 4 OUTLINE, CONT.

- Verses 7-21 show the apostle John circling back to discuss a topic that he has addressed before: the test of Christian love.
 - Love is mentioned in verses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21.
 - We previously read teaching on love in 2:7-11 and 3:10-24
- This is not useless repetition. The command of Christian love is so important, and runs so counter to sinful human nature and practice, that it must be emphasized, examined, encouraged, and exhorted from every possible angle.

1 JOHN 4:1

Beloved, **do not believe** every spirit,
but **test** the spirits,
whether they are of God;
because many false prophets
have gone out into the world.

- You cannot be gullible! You have to reject some things—a lot of things—that you hear.
- You are responsible, both individually and corporately, to carefully weigh what you hear.
- Good example: Acts 17:11.

1 JOHN 4:1, CONT.

- Who are these “spirits”?
- The last part of the verse defines it for us as the false prophets who have **gone out into the world**. Those who have gone out into the world try to **come back into the church!**
- Just like in the Old Testament, there is an abundance of false prophets (false teachers). Do they number more than true ones?
- But why are they called “spirits”? These false prophets are energized and moved by demonic spirits. This is scary...

1 JOHN 4:1, CONT.

- False systems have leaders who are either indwelt by or deeply influenced by fallen angelic spirits.
- Where have the false prophets gone out from? Sadly, some of them went out from the churches! See 1 John 2:19. Thankfully they are gone from the churches.
- I'm guessing that they went out to start their own 'non profit preaching company' which may have actually been a 'for profit' venture in which they hawked some false gospel as if it were true.

1 JOHN 4:2

By this you know the Spirit of God:
Every spirit that confesses that
Jesus Christ has come in the flesh
is of God,

- Here is the first test question. Do you believe Jesus has come in the flesh?
- The idea of “coming in the flesh” is two-fold.
 - First, Jesus lived in actual human **flesh**. He had a literal, physically real body. He was not a mere apparition of God.
 - Second, Jesus **came**. This means that He came from somewhere—and that somewhere is Heaven. He existed there before He came. In fact, He always existed.

JOHN'S TESTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

1. Has our attitude toward sin changed (1:5-2:2)?
2. Do we keep God's commands (2:3-6)?
3. Do we love God first and to love others as ourselves (2:7-17)? Or do we love the world?
4. Do we believe the doctrine of Christ (2:18-28)?
5. Do we practice righteousness (2:29-3:10a)?
6. Do we love our brother (3:11a-24)?
7. Do we have the Spirit of God (3:24, 4:13)?
8. Do we agree that Christ came in the flesh (4:1-6)?

1 JOHN 4:2, CONT.

- These two thoughts combine to convey the full humanity and full deity of Jesus Christ. He is God come in the flesh.
 - He is not an angel come in the flesh.
 - He is not any other kind of heavenly being.
 - He was not made. He made all things that are made.
 - There was no time when He was not.
 - He is very God of very God, and man of very man,

1 JOHN 4:2, CONT.

- We agree with the ancient declarations of the church formulated at Nicea and Constantinople:
We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (ages), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, **not made**, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, **came down from heaven, and was incarnate** by the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, and **was made man**; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

1 JOHN 4:2, CONT.

- Why is this confession (v. 2) so important?
 - Because this is what it means when we say that we believe Jesus is the Son of God—He is actually GOD. That confession is integral to the confession of salvation.
 - If you deny who Jesus is, then you do not believe in the one way of salvation. You then believe in a made-up way of salvation, which is no salvation at all.
 - Even the demons cried out, “You are the Son of God!” Mark 3:11, Luke 4:41.
 - Satan cast doubt on the proposition that Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 4:3-6, Luke 4:3-9). The crowds mocked Jesus for saying He is the Son of God (Matthew 27:40).
 - John 11:27 Martha confessed that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God who is to come into the world.

1 JOHN 4:2, CONT.

- I understand that this profession is a bare minimum confession of faith. It is very necessary and a great start.
- However, in and of itself, in isolation from a more complete doctrinal review, it is insufficient. Necessary, but not sufficient.
- Someone might say they believe in Christ has come in the flesh, but they may be terribly heretical on many other essential points of doctrine.

1 JOHN 4:3

And every spirit that does not confess that
Jesus Christ has come in the flesh
is not of God.

And this is the spirit of the Antichrist,
which you have heard was coming,
and is now already in the world.

- Here is the contrasting confession. Anyone who denies that Christ has come in the flesh is not from God.

1 JOHN 4:3, CONT.

- This is a sufficient condition to determine that someone is not from God.
- This is also a sufficient condition to know that the person who teaches thus is an antichrist (that is, an adversary of Jesus Christ).
- Any gnostic or dualist who says that God could not dwell in flesh is of this sort. Any monadic is also. Same for anyone who posits a deification of a normal man called Jesus.
- There have been dozens of such heresies over the centuries since Christ came.

1 JOHN 4:3, CONT.

- Anyone who says Jesus is created also falls under this condemnation.
- Also, anyone who denies Jesus *rose* in the flesh, Luke 24:39.
- You might object and say that John has not gone this far in this passage. I know what you mean, but when you combine this passage with his other teachings on Christ, you can come to no other conclusion than I have. Prime example: John 1:1-3. The Word that became flesh **is** God. About that, there can be no debate.
- See 1 Cor. 12:3 for something similar to 1 John 4:2-3.

1 JOHN 4:3, CONT.

- Example: **Jehovah Witnesses**, aka the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.
 - They confess that Michael the archangel has come in the flesh to “become” Jesus. That is, Jesus pre-existed not as Jesus, but as an angel.
 - **That is opposite of what the apostle John says.** He says **Jesus came in the flesh**. Jesus was already the Son of God before He came, and He remains that way always.
- **Docetism** (from the Greek to seem; apparition, phantom), is the doctrine that the phenomenon of Christ, his historical and bodily existence, and above all the human form of Jesus, **was mere semblance without any true reality** (Wikipedia)

1 JOHN 4:4

You are of God, little children,
and [you] have overcome them,
because He who is in you is
greater than he
who is in the world.

- Those of us who hold to the true Christ are “of” God in the sense of being “from” God and “born of God.” We are children of God, opposite of the false prophets. We belong to God, not the world!!!!

1 JOHN 4:4, CONT.

- Furthermore, we (true believers) have overcome them (false prophets). We have prevailed against their false teaching and are headed for eternal life.
- Our overcoming is not on our own horsepower (or man-power), but because of the indwelling and anointing of the Holy Spirit (2:20, 27).
 - With this, we see again how tightly John's letter hangs together and reinforces itself in multiple places.
- The one "in the world" refers to the devil. Many of the false prophets are in fact influenced or indwelt by demons. We are indwelt by God!

1 JOHN 4:4, CONT.

- It is a wonderful thing that we do not have to fear false teachers or the devil.
 - We “have overcome” them. We are on the winning side of the battle against sin and error.
 - We can resist the devil (James 4:7).
 - We can overcome the flesh and world (Romans 8:12).
- The One who dwells in the believer, the Holy Spirit, is greater than anyone or anything in the world.
 - Nothing out there can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8 again).
 - Remember that the Spirit shares all the attributes/perfections of deity with God the Father and God the Son.

1 JOHN 4:5

They are of the world.

Therefore they speak as of the world,
 and the world hears them.

- Note the contrast with the prior verse. We are of God; they are of the world.
- That worldly quality about them means that they speak as if they come from the world. They speak world-ish.
- Those of the world understand that “language.”

1 JOHN 4:5, CONT.

- But more than “understanding,” the idea of hearing a false teacher implies listening with agreement and approval.
 - Examples: how the world talks about marriage these days; how it talks about tolerance; how it worships the environment; how it hates restrictions on sin.
- The believer should hone his/her skill at identifying what the world sounds like so as to make sure that when he hears what the world is saying, he doesn’t actually “hear” it in the sense John is talking about.
 - That is, he hears, but also disagrees and disapproves of the kind of philosophy being pushed by the world.

1 JOHN 4:5, CONT.

- False teachers and the world share a combined existence as kind of an echo chamber:
 - They are of the world.
 - They speak out of a worldly way of thinking and behaving.
 - The world hears them.
 - Then the world speaks as they speak.
 - The cycle or “echo chamber” repeats.
- Speaking like the world, hearing the world, and being heard by the world all indicate something—that the person is unsaved and may even be a false teacher.

1 JOHN 4:6

We are of God.

He who knows God hears us;
he who is not of God does not hear us.

By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

- Note again the contrast with the previous verse.
- We speak the “Christian language.” Those who are believers understand that language and “get it.”
 - We think and speak much differently about marriage and tolerance and the environment and restrictions on sin.
- Your origin, your speech, and your hearing ability are consistent with one another.

1 JOHN 4:6, CONT.

- A person who does not have the indwelling Spirit (and therefore does not belong to Christ, Romans 8:9), does not “hear” the Christian teacher.
 - He may hate Christian doctrine so much that he does want to even listen to a Christian person speak.
 - In any case, the not-of-God person certainly doesn’t agree with good Christian teaching.
- So here’s John’s test: do you accept spiritual truth? If not, you are not of God! The fact is that the true church and its individual believers accept the Bible and its gospel. And that’s how we know who belongs to God.
- Read John 10:4, 14, 27...It is extremely troubling when people do not listen to good spiritual truth.

1 JOHN 4:6, CONT.

- Following is John 10:28-29 where we are reminded of the doctrine of eternal security of the believer—even in the face of false teachers.
 - No false teacher can trick a true believer forever or take away their salvation. Not even the devil can deceive the elect (Mark 13:22).
 - See 1 Peter 1:23. Jesus purchased for us this secure salvation and no one can take it away.
- Application: A teacher that is popular with the world is certainly not from God.
 - Of course, many who are not popular are not from God either.
 - Popularity in itself is not a sign of truth. We must test against Scripture.

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6. Do we love our brother (3:11a-24, 4:7-10)?
7. Do we have the Spirit of God (3:24, 4:13)?
8. Do we agree that Christ came in the flesh (4:1-6)?

1 JOHN 4:7-21

- We enter a new segment of John's letter, this one again focusing on Christian love.
- Several times the text speaks about love that is perfected (4:12, 17, 18).
- This is not the "perfect love" doctrine of Methodist theology.
 - In this type of "perfectionism," a Christian can supposedly reach a higher plane and does not commit any known sin.
 - John Wesley taught that the believer can be free of willful sin of known divine law. He taught that the believer acts in "perfect love" toward God and others.
 - You attain to this level by a simple act of faith, he said, and basically become "sinless." How does that sound?

1 JOHN 4:7-21, CONT.

- This doctrine was later morphed into a full-blown Pentecostal second blessing by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - In some variations that baptism was accompanied by speaking in tongues, or the filling of the Spirit.
 - Thus there were two levels of Christians—ones who were justified but carnal, and ones who were justified **and** had moved to the next level, also known as sanctification.
- All this to say that the apostle John was not teaching that idea of perfect love!

1 JOHN 4:7-21, OUTLINE

- Verses 7-8: Love for Christian brothers and sisters is a test of true Christian life.
- Verses 9-10: God's love is demonstrated in His Son.
- Verses 11-12: The implication of **God's** love is that **we** love one another.
- Verses 13-15: Tests of the Spirit's presence and confession that Jesus is the Savior and Son of God.
- Verses 16-19: The outflow of love from God through the believer.
- Verses 20-21: The test of loving one's brother, again.

1 JOHN 4:7-21, CONT.

- John is now going to revisit some of the themes that he touched on in earlier sections of his letter.
- The individual tests that we have examined are not sufficient if they stand on their own.
- The tests are meant to demonstrate collectively a life that is regenerate:
 - Ethical/Practical tests: walking in the light, keeping Christ's commandments, loving one's brother, not loving the world, not being deceived by false teachers, purifying oneself, habitual practice of righteousness, helping the needy, presence of the Holy Spirit
 - Doctrinal tests: correct doctrine of sin, belief that Jesus is the Messiah, belief that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, belief that Jesus is the Son of God

1 JOHN 4:7

Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is of God;
and everyone who loves is born of God
and knows God.

- Love = a selfless, sacrificial concern and giving toward those who do not deserve it.
- God is love, and those who belong to Him show the same characteristics that He does.

1 JOHN 4:7, CONT.

- The phrase “is born of God” uses a perfect passive verb form.
 - Perfect: “has become born.” Something happened to them in the past, and it has continuing effects.
 - Passive: God did the begetting, and the believer simply received the action.
- Love comes out of being born of God and knowing God. That is, love comes after, not before, salvation.
 - “...and everyone who loves *demonstrates that he HAS BEEN BORN* of God and *consequently* knows God.”

1 JOHN 4:8

He who does not love does not know God,
for God is love.

- A person who characteristically does not love other people does not know God = is not saved.
- Why? God is love. And? God's character transfers to the believer when he is born of God.

1 JOHN 4:7-8

- Both true theology and true practice are necessary signs of salvation. You must hold sound doctrine *and* true love. The Pharisees “knew” the Scriptures (in a way—John 5:39, Mark 12:24, John 3:10) but had no love. They hated Jesus, and His followers.
- It is also possible to have a kind of love not bounded by truth, that is, not to hold to true doctrine.
- Either way, you have false religion.

THEOLOGY OF LOVE

- Following is what happens to make love a part of the believer's life:
- God is love (v. 8)
- God loves sinners (Romans 5:8)
- Consequently, God sent His Son (v. 9)
- God gives life to a person through Jesus propitiatory work = salvation (v. 7, 10)
- God takes up residence in the person by the Holy Spirit (v. 12, 13)
- God who is love, overflows that love in the life of the believer (love is of God, v. 7)
- See also Romans 5:5

THEOLOGY OF LOVE, CONT.

- John expects Christian love in the life of a Christian.
- How can he expect it? Because Christian love is God's love working in the believer.
- If that love is missing, then it has to be the case that God is absent, that is, not resident inside the person.
- Why? If God were present, His love could *not* be absent.
- If God is absent, then the chain of events on the prior slide is broken and eternal life is absent.
- God's love absent = God absent = eternal life absent.

1 JOHN 4:9

In this the love of God was manifested toward us,
that God has sent His only begotten Son
into the world,
that we might live through Him.

- Above, we had the source of true love, from God.
- Here, we have the manifestation of God's love.

1 JOHN 4:9, CONT.

- Here's HOW God's love was manifested:
 - God sent His only begotten Son into the world
 - Think about this: only begotten Son (precious and valuable)
 - Think about this: into the world (yucky and dangerous)
- Here's WHY God's love was manifested:
 - So we could live through Christ (instead of die)

1 JOHN 4:10

In this is love,
not that we loved God,
but that He loved us
and sent His Son
to be the propitiation for our sins.

- Love doesn't originate with us. Rather, it originated with God by means of His sending His Son as the propitiation for our sins.
 - This will be broadened in v. 14 where the Son is said to be sent as Savior of the world (not just "us")

PROPITIATION

- Propitiation = satisfaction. For what? God's wrath against sin.
- Jesus is THE propitiation. There is no other.
- Sin causes God's wrath at sin, enmity between us and God, our enslavement to sin, and guilt that demands punishment.
- **Propitiation** means that Jesus satisfied God's wrath against sin. Jesus *appeased* that wrath.
- Jesus' work also **reconciles** us to God, and **redeems** us from bondage to sin, and **expiates** our guilt.

1 JOHN 4:11

Beloved, if God so loved us,
[then] we also ought to love one another.

- The word **so** in this verse is one of the most misunderstood in the Bible!
- Look at John 3:16 – “God **so** loved the world....”
- **So** does not mean “God loved the world *to this extent*” or “this much.”
- **So** means “God loved the world *in this way*” or “in this manner.” It means “thus,” not “so much.”

1 JOHN 4:11, CONT.

- In other words, God loved the world in the way we just read about in verses 9 and 10—by sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- By the way,
 - God did not send Jesus to be merely an **example**.
 - God sent Jesus to be a propitiatory **sacrifice**.

1 JOHN 4:12

No one has seen God at any time.

If we love one another,

[then] God abides in us,

and His love has been perfected in us.

- The fact is that God the Father does not have a body. Therefore He is not visible (“see-able”). God the Son does now have a body.
- Any manifestation of God that has been seen by people is a form or appearance of God—that is, the Father—or an incarnate or pre-incarnate appearance of the Son.

1 JOHN 4:12

- This invisibility of God has been a problem for some people. Exodus 33:18-23.
- Jesus solved their problem by appearing and revealing God in human form. We have an authenticated testimony of his appearance in the Bible.
- But now Jesus is absent. And that has again become a problem for some people. John 20:24-29.
- So how do people see God today?
- God abides in the believer and exercises His love through the believer toward the world. This is how the world sees God.

1 JOHN 4:12

- Get this: Besides seeing God in creation and in conscience, YOU may be the only evidence of God that your neighbor ever sees.
 - The unbeliever has a hard time seeing God in those places because their minds are darkened, and they don't have the Bible to help them properly understand what they are seeing. "What am I looking at????"
 - But you are demonstrating God's love toward your neighbor (right?)
- Love for one another is an evidence that God abides in us.

1 JOHN 4:13

**By this we know that we abide in Him,
and He [abides] in us,
because He has given us of His Spirit.**

- Remember Romans 5:5 – God’s love is poured out into us through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us. His presence in our lives is “given away” by the fact that we love our brothers—and others.
- So the evidence of Spirit-indwelling is not simply a “feeling” or “I say so, so it must be true” kind of thing. The evidence is objective.

1 JOHN 4:13, CONT.

- Review:
 - God has saved us and given us His Spirit.
 - This Spirit works in us to love others (Gal. 5:22-23).
 - This proves to us that God dwells in us, and we in Him.

WHAT IS SPIRIT INDWELLING?

- Different than omnipresence, Ps. 139:7, which we could say is “passive.”
- Indwelling is a special “active” manifestation of His presence to accomplish the sustenance of our spiritual life; to teach us, to function as an earnest and down payment for future spiritual benefits.
- In short, indwelling is how the Spirit accomplishes His saving and sanctifying work.
- Indwelling is known by its effects or fruit. See John 3:8 and the following pictorial examples.

THERE WAS NO WIND HERE...



BUT THERE WAS WIND HERE!



APPLYING THE ILLUSTRATION

- The tornado winds show results. The outcome is bad.
- In a similar way, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a person shows results. The outcome is good.

WHEN ARE WE INDWELT?

- Right at the moment of salvation. We don't have to "tarry" for the Spirit to come to us. Delays in the reception of the Spirit were only for the apostles to witness and validate the reception of the Spirit in the book of Acts (8:14-20).
- Regardless of momentary obedience. The Corinthians were indwelt by the Spirit but had serious problems.
 - In Acts 5:32 "obedience" refers to the obedience of faith (salvation, Acts 6:7), not day-by-day obedience.
 - "Fullness" of the Spirit is a different matter.

WHEN ARE WE INDWELT? PART 2

- Permanently, John 14:16. We don't intermittently have Him indwelling.
- Text wrongly used to suggest impermanence
 - Psalm 51:11. This is related to 1 Sam. 16:14.
 - Believers once saved, whether OT or NT, cannot lose what God had given them.

WHERE DOES INDWELLING HAPPEN?

- In our bodies, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, John 7:37-39.
- With our human spirit. It is a “spirit-ual” thing and not merely a physical thing.
- Corporately and individually (1 Cor. 3:16 [you is plural, the church], 6:19-20 [your body is referring to the individual]).

WHO IS INDWELT?

- All believers, Rom. 8:9, 1 John 4:13.
- There is a question about whether indwelling applied to Old Testament saints. We need not worry ourselves about this.
 - In the first place, we do not live in that era. Therefore it doesn't concern us.
 - In the second place, God always does the right thing and provides the needed enablement for the era in which someone lives.
 - In the third place, we can see that they benefited from some ministry of the Spirit of God (Prov. 1:23, for example), but they were relatively impoverished when compared to us in terms of the Spirit's ministry, baptism, and the full kind of indwelling we enjoy.

MUTUAL INDWELLING

- God the Father in the believer: 1 John 4:12; and by extrapolation of John 17:23
- Believer in God: 1 Thess. 1:1
- Jesus in the believer: John 15:4, 17:26, Romans 8:10, Colossians 1:27
- Believer in Jesus: John 14:20, 15:4
- Holy Spirit in the believer: 1 Cor. 6:19-20, 3:16, Romans 8:9
- Believer in the Holy Spirit
 - Several verses are like Revelation 1:10, 4:2, Ezekiel 37:1 where a prophet/apostle is “in the Spirit” but this is not a mutual indwelling idea. It has to do with being in the prophetic office.
 - Then there are verses like “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16) but that is not mutual indwelling.

1 JOHN 4:14

**And we have seen
and testify
that the Father has sent the Son
as Savior of the world.**

- Have seen is a perfect tense—pointing to the past event of John’s eyewitness account of Jesus.
- That “seeing” issues forth in a continual (present tense) testimony of the facts that he witnessed, namely that God the Father sent the Son of God into the world to be its Savior.
- We (ought to) do the same today.

1 JOHN 4:15

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God,
God abides in him,
and he [abides] in God.

- We have once again the mutual indwelling that we saw in 4:13. Think of the power inherent in that.
- It is the same Spirit that causes us to love Who also causes us to confess (agree, testify) that Jesus is the Son of God. See 1 Cor. 12:3.
- We make this confession around the Lord's Table—along with confessing other facts.

1 JOHN 4:16

**And we have known
and believed
the love that God has for us.**

**God is love,
and he who abides in love abides in God,
and God [abides] in him.**

- Reiterating what we read in 4:12.
- Notice in 4:15-16 that we have two accompanying factors w/ mutual abiding: (1) confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, and (2) abiding in love. These are absolutely normal for the believer; their absence is devastating.

1 JOHN 4:16, CONT.

- Pause and think for a moment: that love that God has for us, which arises from the core of His nature as God, was expressed in Jesus the Son of God.
- God sent His Son into the world as an expression of His love—not just *how much*, but *what sort* of love He has for the world (John 3:16's so).
- We must plainly tell ourselves that God loves us. He loves us in a way that causes Him to want to lift us out of sin and death. He doesn't allow the believer to remain in sin and death – because of His holy love.

1 JOHN 4:17

Love has been perfected among us in this:

that we may have boldness

in the day of judgment;

because as He is, so are we in this world.

- Above is NKJV, which makes “in this” point forward. Better translations take it this way:

In this [4:16b] love has been perfected among us:

in order that we may have boldness

in the day of judgment;

because as He is, so are we in this world.

1 JOHN 4:17, CONT.

- God's abiding in us produces true love.
- This love grows perfect—more and more mature as time goes on.
- This results in us being able to have confidence...
 - Confidence when? The day of judgment
 - Confidence where? At the judgment seat of Christ [implied]
- Why is this? Because as Jesus is...related to the Father, with a mutual kind of indwelling by the Father in Jesus...we are also that way. Not the same, obviously, but “as He is.” Before God, we are in Him.

NET NOTE AT 1 JOHN 4:17

- [In this] refers to what *precedes* in 4:16b, and this also would make logical sense: "By this - by our residing in love so that we reside in God and he resides in us - is love brought to perfection with us." This has the additional advantage of agreeing precisely with what the author has already said in 4:12: "If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is brought to perfection in us."
- Thus [this] option...is best, with the phrase ἐν τούτῳ [in this] referring to what precedes in 4:16b, and the ἵνα clause which follows indicates the *result* of this perfection of love in believers: In the future day of judgment they will have confidence. The ὅτι clause would then give the *reason* for such confidence in the day of judgment: because just as Jesus is, so also are believers in this world - they are already currently in relationship with God just as Jesus is.

1 JOHN 4:18

**There is no fear in love;
but perfect love casts out fear,
because fear involves torment.
But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.**

- Fear is in the context of judgment—being afraid at the judgment of God.
- Real and mature love doesn't have un-confidence in it. Said in reverse, a truly loving relationship with God will naturally banish tormenting fear.

1 JOHN 4:18, CONT.

- A measure of real fear or terror about judgment indicates an imperfect love for God.
- But true love for God doesn't erase respect.
- God loves you and you love God, and that loving relationship is not one where there is terror about judgment.
- The lack of confidence that some systems of theology promote indicates that they miss the very core of what it means to have a relationship with God were we love Him more than anything and He loves us.

1 JOHN 4:19

**We love Him
because He first loved us.**

- Make no mistake—we cannot think that we invented or self-generated love for God.
- The whole “love program” started from God. His love is causal of our love.
- His love underlies our assurance of salvation.

1 JOHN 4:20

**If someone says, “I love God,”
and [he] hates his brother,
[then] he is a liar;
for he who does not love his brother
whom he has seen,
how can he love God whom he has not seen?**

- Saying you love God and yet hating a brother is possible, and too often is done. Such inconsistency is incompatible with Christianity.

1 JOHN 4:20, CONT.

- The truth is that the person who has such two-faced behavior is a liar. (Ouch, but true.)
- It's kind of like, "Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or, 'Rise up and walk'?" Jesus showed something concrete (healing) in Matthew 9:5 to demonstrate something that could not be seen (forgiveness).
- Similarly, if we do not show something concrete (love for brothers who we can see) then we give no demonstration of that which cannot be seen. And if we actually hate the brother we can see, then we demonstrate the opposite of the "love claim."

1 JOHN 4:20, CONT.

- Have you ever thought about John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, calling someone a “liar”?
- He is very direct for being such a lovable disciple.
- The problem with being indirect is that you effectively tip-toe around an issue and this allows people to misunderstand what you mean.

1 JOHN 4:21

**And this commandment we have from Him:
that he who loves God
must love his brother also.**

- No surprise here. You simply cannot claim to love God without love for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. See Matt. 22:37-40.
- Love for God and brother are tied together in 1 Peter 2:17, 1 John 3:10, 3:17, and here in 4:20-21.
- Love = no gossip, no hate, no losing patience.

JOHN'S TESTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

1. Has our attitude toward sin changed (1:5-2:2)?
2. Do we keep God's commands (2:3-6)?
3. Do we love God first and to love others as ourselves (2:7-17)? Or do we love the world?
4. Do we believe the doctrine of Christ (2:18-28)?
5. Do we practice righteousness (2:29-3:10a)?
6. Do we love our brother (3:11a-24, 4:7-10)?
7. Do we have the Spirit of God (3:24, 4:13)?
8. Do we agree that Christ came in the flesh (4:1-6)?
9. Do we believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1)?

1 JOHN 5:1

**Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ
is born of God,
and everyone who loves Him who begot
also loves him who is begotten
of Him.**

- The rebirth is needed in order for someone to really believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

1 JOHN 5:1, CONT.

- The second phrase of v. 1 boils down to this:
Everyone who loves [God] also loves [Jesus].
- This means that if someone doesn't love God or Jesus, they don't love the other one, despite any claims they might make to the contrary.
- I see a little bit of an implication here of the distinct persons of Father and Son...for it is teaching a two-way kind of love that every believer has. You are not loving one "person" who simply has two aliases.

1 JOHN 5:2

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

- “By this” points forward in this verse (unlike in 4:17)
- You know that you truly love God’s children – other believers – when you love God and keep His commandments. (Particularly those in relation to your “one another” people.)

1 JOHN 5:3

**For this is the love of God,
that we keep His commandments.
And His commandments are not burdensome.**

- God's commandments aren't a drudgery. They are a delight. We know they protect us, guide us aright, and keep us from the evil way. What's there not to be happy with about that?
- So if you say you love God, you should also keep His commandments. No question. No complaining.

1 JOHN 5:4

**For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
And this is the victory**

that has overcome the world—our faith.

- To obey God's commands, you have to overcome the pressure of the world that wants to mold you into its pattern of thinking and conduct.
- "Overcome" is from "nikaw" from which comes the brand name "Nike." It means to conquer.

1 JOHN 5:5

**Who is he who overcomes the world,
but he who believes
that Jesus is the Son of God?**

- It is possible to overcome the world. By it happens by one way—FAITH. Faith in Christ as the Son of God.
- This overcoming by faith applies to the initial aspect of salvation, but also to its ongoing aspect, namely sanctification.
- You have problems with sin? Believe in Christ.

1 JOHN 5:6

This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ;

**not only by water,
but by water and blood.**

And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

- He *came* so that we could *overcome*.
- Notice that we have three factors in Jesus' coming: water, blood, and Spirit, with the last as a testifier.

1 JOHN 5:6, CONT.

- We must note that John specifies “the water” and “the blood.” So they point to specific, well-known things.
- The water is the water of Jesus’ baptism, which marked the beginning of his public ministry.
- The blood is the blood of Jesus’ death, which marked the end and completion of his ministry.
- These two things mark Jesus’ coming.
- But then the Spirit adds another testimony. He bore witness in a visible form at Jesus’ baptism, and continued to bear witness as He brought the NT Scriptures to completion.

1 JOHN 5:7-8

⁷ For there are three that bear witness (in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth:) the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

- The red text is the *Comma Johanneum*. I do not believe it is original to the text of the Bible. Why?
- Mainly external evidence, that is, manuscripts we possess.
- The KJV and NKJV are wrong to include it.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

- The external evidence weighs against including the Comma.
- The Comma is found in nine late manuscripts, out of a total of 5,800 manuscripts (granted, most of those do not include the entire New Testament). Some of these MSS have the reading in the margin; most are 1500s or later. The earliest one with the reading in the text is from the 1300s; an earlier one from the 900s includes it in a marginal note.
- No Greek MS, church father, or Greek translation of other versions, has this reading until 1215 A.D.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE, CONT.

- That is over 1,100 years after the text was finished!
- So neither the majority of manuscripts, nor any old manuscripts, nor the “critical text” include the Comma.
 - The critical text is sometimes called or abbreviated as the NU – the “Nestle-Aland text and the United Bible Societies text).
 - You may see this “NU” symbol in your reference or study Bible footnotes.

WHERE IT CAME FROM

- Likely from a sermon that interpreted the rest of the verse allegorically to refer to the Trinity.
- This then was included in later Latin manuscripts and became part of Catholic tradition.
- When Catholic scholar Erasmus could not find any Greek texts that had the Comma, he did not include it in his text, which later became known as the *Textus Receptus*. This caused such an uproar that by the third edition, he was convinced to include the reading in his TR. His annotations are clear that he didn't believe it was genuine.
- It appears that someone created a MS for the purpose of convincing him to include it. Politics...

WHERE IT CAME FROM, CONT.

- The *comma* is found in 7th through 9th century Latin manuscripts. But it is not found “in the two oldest pure Vulgate manuscripts...”
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comma_Johanneum)
- Even St. Jerome, who produced the text known as the Latin Vulgate, doubted it, and said that Latin copyists had introduced it to refute the Arians.
- It is not sound to rely upon an old Catholic translation when it is not supported by any Greek MSS, which MSS we know to be basically complete and accurate in every other place.

ITS UTILITY

- It certainly seems to be a strong proof text for the Trinity which would have been very helpful in the Trinitarian debates of the first three centuries.
 - But the text was not used in these debates!
- Its strength is vastly overrated, however, given the questions of its origin and originality. It appears to the objective observer to be constructed just for the purpose of winning a debate.

PEOPLE IT HAS AFFECTED

- English speakers, all of whom were influenced by the KJV, have had the most difficult time of it.
- KJV-only advocates, who then have propagated this translation into other languages by way of translation.
- Spanish speakers, because the popular Reina Valera 1960 and 1995 editions include the Comma. Other translations omit it.
- Not Germans, at least those who followed Luther's translation, since it were derived from Erasmus' second edition, which did not include the Comma.
- This list is far from comprehensive.

HOW PROVE THE TRINITY THEN?

- If we don't have this text, how do we demonstrate from the Bible the doctrine of the Trinity?
- We must use the numerous other texts which show it.
 - We know that God the Father is God and He deserves worship.
 - The Bible calls Jesus the Son God: Romans 9:5; Matthew 22:44; Hebrews 1:8.
 - The Bible ascribes worship to the Son: Hebrews 1:6; Matthew 2:2, 28:9.
 - The Bible calls the Holy Spirit God: Acts 5:3-4.
 - All three are treated as equals: Matthew 28:19.

1 JOHN 5:7-8 - ITS MEANING

- Now we come back to the verse itself.

7 For there are three that bear witness:

**8 the Spirit,
 the water,
and the blood;**

and these three agree as one.

- Notice context: v. 6 proof or testimony.
- The testimony of these three witnesses agrees about something (not three things that are “equal” to one another like in the Trinity). But what and how?

1 JOHN 5:7-8 - ITS MEANING, CONT.

- Deut. 19:15 requires two or three witnesses to establish any fact.
- The testimony has to do with the incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ.
 - The Spirit testifies that He came. By the way, He testifies presently to this effect—through the Word of God.
 - The water of His baptism makes clear he came.
 - The blood of His death seals the deal.

1 JOHN 5:7-8 – IT'S MEANING, CONT.

- In other words, you have three strong proofs of Jesus' incarnation. The testimony of the Spirit to Jesus' followers and in the pages of Scripture; the well-attested event of Jesus' baptism; and the undisputed fact that He died.
- If you want to provide proof to a skeptic about Jesus' first coming, give them these three: Spirit, water and blood.
- A second interpretation is one based on John 19:34-35 "blood and water." This reduces the number of witnesses down to two—with blood and water referring to Jesus' death.
- A third interpretation says water is the ordinance of baptism and blood is the communion. These don't testify of Jesus' incarnation as the view I espouse above.

1 JOHN 5:9

- Previously, we saw that there are three witnesses:
 - The **Holy Spirit** in the Word (John 1:45, 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44)
 - The **water**, that is, Jesus baptism and the inauguration of His public ministry
 - The **blood** of Jesus' death on the cross
- John now makes a lesser to greater argument:

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.

- Read “testimony” in place of witness three times.

1 JOHN 5:9, CONT.

- The point is that if we listen to “sworn testimony” of men and take that seriously—in fact, so seriously that upon it a person can be put to death—then we ought to listen to the testimony of God which is greater—and upon which *not* listening results in spiritual death!
- What John is talking about are testimonies that God has given about Jesus. There are three witnesses that are testifying. “In the mouth of two or three witnesses...” (Deut. 19:15 and 2 Cor. 13:1).
 - Witnesses can sometimes be repeated episodes.

JOHN'S TESTS OF ETERNAL LIFE

1. Has our attitude toward sin changed (1:5-2:2)?
2. Do we keep God's commands (2:3-6, 5:2-3)?
3. Do we love God first and to love others as ourselves (2:7-17)? Or do we love the world?
4. Do we believe the doctrine of Christ (2:18-28)?
5. Do we practice righteousness (2:29-3:10a)?
6. Do we love our brother (3:11a-24, 4:7-10, 5:1-2)?
7. Do we have the Spirit of God (3:24, 4:13)?
8. Do we agree that Christ came in the flesh (4:1-6)?
9. Do we believe the gospel testimony about Jesus that He is Christ, Son of God, and was incarnate (5:1-13)?

REMEMBER: TESTS DON'T OBTAIN LIFE

- The tests listed on the previous slide are evidences that you have eternal life. They are not ways to GET eternal life.
- The way to get eternal life is to “get” the Son of God, by being converted.
 - Converted, side 1: repent of sin
 - Converted, side 2: believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
- Jesus lived and died for sinners such as yourself, that if you believe in Him, you would receive eternal life.
- Only *then* will you be able to pass the above tests.

1 JOHN 5:10

**He who believes in the Son of God
has the witness in himself;
he who does not believe God
has made Him a liar,
because he has not believed the testimony
that God has given of His Son.**

- Two kinds of people: believers and non-believers
- The first has the witness in himself (God's Spirit inside)
- The second calls God a liar. He is saying the three witnesses are not correct and God has sent us false info.

1 JOHN 5:11

- Thus far the verses have focused on the testifiers.
- To make the content of their testimony clear, John focuses on it now:

And this is the testimony:

**that God has given us eternal life,
and this life is in His Son.**

- This is what the original and all true present Christian witnesses have said. Life is not available elsewhere.

1 JOHN 5:12

**He who has the Son has life;
he who does not have
the Son of God
does not have life.**

- There is an obvious antithetic parallelism here.
- There are only two conditions in humanity.
- At root of those conditions is whether Jesus is “had” or “not had.” If He is “had” then eternal life is “had.”
- You “have” Jesus by savingly trusting in Him.

1 JOHN 5:13

**These things I have written
to you who believe
in the name of the Son of God,
that you may know that you have eternal life,
[and that you may *continue to believe*
in the name of the Son of God.]**

- John's writings are helpful because they say why he wrote. See John 20:30-31 (which also connects back to 1 John 5:12).

1 JOHN 5:13, CONT.

- The bracketed text is found in the NKJV and KJV but not the other modern English editions.
 - There is no reason to worry...the testimony of Scripture is clear that true believers continue to believe in Jesus.
- By those who emphasize “once saved always saved,” often the focus in this verse is on the part that you can “know” you have eternal life.
 - This is true.
- But we have to add to that the fact that John has written not just for us to have certainty, but for us to have the *means* of certainty, that is, “these things.”

1 JOHN 5:13, CONT.

- What are “these things” that give certainty?
 - Walking in the light and confessing sins
 - Keeping God’s commandments
 - Loving our brothers (heavily emphasized throughout)
 - Not loving the world
 - Acknowledging Jesus as the Christ
 - Not habitually practicing sin
 - Confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh
 - Abiding presence of the Holy Spirit
 - Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah
- Certainty is also called “assurance.”

EPILOGUE

- John has written about tests of genuine eternal life, which help us identify false teachers and know our own assurance of salvation. These tests also warn and exhort us how to live.
- These tests can give us assurance (5:12-13).
- This assurance, aka confidence, passes over into the realm of prayer in that we naturally want to know whether God hears our prayers.
- Verses 14-15 answer that question.
- Then verses 16-17 speak about a particular and difficult issue of prayer.

PRAYER: GREATER TO LESSER

- If you have assurance of salvation—something you asked for from God—then why not have confidence in prayer when you ask God for something smaller than salvation?
- See Romans 8:32 on this idea. If God gave up His own son, how could we be surprised that God would freely give us more?
 - Not things to spend on our own lusts, but things like justification, sanctification, eternal glory, etc.
 - God will give us what is best, not what we think is best.

1 JOHN 5:14

**Now this is the confidence that we have in Him,
that if we ask anything according to His will,
[then] He hears us.**

- This section begins what seems to be a post-script to the main point of the letter, which ended at 5:13.
- This doesn't mean it is less inspired! It just means it comes toward the end and has new subject matter!
- If we ask anything NOT according to His will, then ?

1 JOHN 5:14, CONT.

- Prayer has to be offered such that the requests comport with God's will. If they do not, God does not "hear," meaning He does not respond favorably.
 - In the extreme, we might ask for something sinful. God is not party to answering that kind of request.

1 JOHN 5:14, CONT.

- From other passages on prayer, we learn that prayer must have certain qualities:
 - It must be according to God's will.
 - It must be offered in faith = confidence that God hears and can answer our prayer. James 1:6-7.
 - It must come from a righteous life. Sin must be confessed by prayer. 1 John 3:22, James 5:16.
 - It must be for a righteous life. Prayer can be hindered by impenitent prayer or unrepentant prayee. 1 Pet 3:7.
 - It must be persistent. Don't give up until the answer is evident.

1 JOHN 5:15

**And if we know that He hears us,
whatever we ask,
[then] we know that we have the petitions
that we have asked of Him.**

- The “if” is an assumption, not a point of doubt.
- The assumption is that we are asking according to the will of God and not outside that will.
- Condition met = confidence justified.

1 JOHN 5:15, CONT.

- God “hearing” = “we have.”
- We believe that God will take care of the request as He sees fit and we must not worry about it further.
- The asking is present tense. Keep on asking!
- Note “whatever we ask” – a whole variety of requests.
- If it is true that our requests are in accord with God’s will, we can ask them, no matter how many or how seemingly un-workable according to the worldly mind.
- Considering 1 John 3:22 and 5:14: both our requests and our conduct must line up with the will of God!

1 JOHN 5:16

If anyone sees his brother sinning
a sin *which* does not lead to death,
[then] he will ask,
and He will give him life for those who commit sin
not *leading* to death.

There is sin *leading* to death.

I do not say that he should pray about that.

- This verse raises many questions.

1 JOHN 5:16, CONT.

- What kind of sin is this sin?
 - John leaves it general. Therefore, I believe it can refer to any number of sins, and not just high-handed, presumptuous, or blasphemous sins.
 - I take it that it is a sin that is damaging to the name of Christ, a sin that the person does not repent of, and which he or she persists in for some time.
 - It is either a sin that doesn't lead to death, or one that does. God decides the outcome.
 - We don't know if it is going to lead to death until time passes.

1 JOHN 5:16, CONT.

- Who does the sin?
 - It is John's assumption that he is addressing a believer who has a believing brother who has been involved in some sin.
 - Of course, that assumption may prove to be false, but we proceed on the basis that it is true.

1 JOHN 5:16, CONT.

- What kind of death is John talking about?
 - It is physical death, for a couple of reasons:
 - A brother has spiritual life already and that life cannot be lost.
 - And if it is an unbeliever, they have spiritual death already...they cannot do something that leads to more or another kind of spiritual death.
 - Our experience would tell us that such a death usually has a natural explanation, as in a consequence of sin. God almost always works that way.
 - Foolish action leads to accident.
 - Sinful activity like drugs leads to premature death.
 - Crime can lead to capital punishment.

1 JOHN 5:16, CONT.

- What kind of life is John speaking about?
 - If the above is **physical** death, this life has to be **physical** life.
- See 1 Corinthians 11:30-32 and Acts 5:1-11.
- So, this sin leading to death is some behavior that results in physical death.

1 JOHN 5:16, CONT.

- The confidence we have is that if we ask God about this, then He will graciously deliver the brother, and bring him to repentance and restoration.
- God may use another person to answer your prayer (James 5:19-20, Gal. 6:1).

1 JOHN 5:17

**All unrighteousness is sin,
and there is sin not leading to death.**

- There are no special categories of sin like “mortal / venial.” All sin is unrighteousness. And all sin leads to death (Rom. 6:23, James 1:15).
- At the same time, God decides that some sins, persisted in for a long enough time, are cause for Him to remove a person from this life.
- But there are some sins that do not result in death. God works with the person in ways other than death.

1 JOHN 5:18

We know that

**whoever is born of God does not sin;
but he who has been born of God keeps himself,
and the wicked one does not touch him.**

- This and the next two verses say “we know” three times.
 - These are certainties.
- This verse teaches that the follower of Christ:
 - Avoids ongoing sin. Sin has been put away.
 - Is protected by God. Sin cannot return as master.

1 JOHN 5:18, COMPLICATIONS

- Verse 18b is variously translated:
 - ESV: but he who was born of God protects **him**...
 - NKJ: but he who has been born of God keeps **himself**...
- The deciding factor for me is the change in the subject and verb tense:
 - In 18a, it says, “**everyone** who has been born of God...”
 - In 18b, it says, “**he** who was born of God...”
 - 18a deals with the believer.
 - 18b deals with Christ, who keeps the believer, not the believer keeping/guarding himself.
 - See also John 17:12.
 - Bottom line: ESV translation is preferred.

1 JOHN 5:18, CONT.

- Still, perseverance is true; preservation is also true.
- How do we harmonize the idea of a believer sinning and a believer not sinning?
- 5:18 talks about a believer not sinning.
 - That is the general rule. ← This is the harmonizing idea...
- 5:16 talked about a believer sinning.
 - That is the exception to the general rule. ← along with this
- Wicked one does not touch.
 - Satan or demons cannot indwell a believer, or control a believer, or take God out of control of the believer's life.
 - Christ ensures that.

1 JOHN 5:19

**We know that we are of God,
and the whole world lies
*under the sway of the wicked one.***

- Those who belong to God know it. The devil cannot capture the believer.
- The world doesn't understand, but it is doing the will of its "god," the devil. He has massive amounts of power, and it is only by God's restraining hand through the Spirit and the righteousness of His people that the devil is kept under any kind of control.
- Who is your lord? God, or the wicked one?

1 JOHN 5:20

And we know that

the Son of God has come
and has given us an understanding,
that we may know Him who is true;
and we are in Him who is true,
in His Son Jesus Christ.

This is the true God and eternal life.

- Do you hear an echo of John 17:3?
- Certainty: Incarnation...illumination...knowledge of God...union with God and Christ. This is life!

1 JOHN 5:21

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

- Here is a command to keep yourself from idols. This is not an option for the believer. Remember OT Israel...
- What are idols? I consider it fairly broad:
 - Praying to anyone other than God through Jesus.
 - Praying to the wrong god, even if “called” the Christian God.
 - Placing anyone or any thing higher than God.
 - Material things. Greed (Col. 3:5).
 - Our selves, our own autonomy, our own rebelliousness.
- Someone who belongs to Christ wants nothing to do with idolatry.

1 JOHN 5:21, CONT.

- The placement of this verse in 1 John—with its emphasis on orthodox Christology—indicates that we should be extra attentive to idolatries that center around false christs.
 - Those who deny the incarnation of Christ.
 - Those who deny the deity of Christ.
 - Those who deny the sufficiency of the work of Christ.
- False christs like these are in fact **idols**. Those who hold to them are idolaters. They are not just “off a little bit.” They are off a lot.

MORE ON IDOLATRY

- 1 Samuel 15:23 – equated to stubbornness
- 1 Cor. 10:14 – we must flee idolatry
- Galatians 5:20 – idolatry a work of the flesh
- Colossians 3:5 – covetousness is idolatry which is a thing that must be “put away” from our lives.
- The OT is full of idols and the people of Israel going after them. Athens was full of idols (Acts 17:16). The NT Roman world was full of idols (1 Cor. 8:1, 4, 10; 10:19, 28; 12:2).
- 1 Thess. 1:9 – turn to God from idols
- Revelation 2:14, 20 – some churches had problems with idolatry.