

The First Epistle of John

The Epistle of Proofs

The Second Epistle of John
The Third Epistle of John

Translation and Commentary by Dr. Mark Spitsbergen Th.D., M.S.



The Epistles of Saint John, Translation and Commentary by Dr. Mark Spitsbergen Th.D., M.S.

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The First Epistle of John

The Epistle of Proofs

Chapter 1

1- That which was from the beginning¹, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked² upon, and our hands have felt concerning the Word³ of Life.

1 The opening statement of The First Epistle of John is similar to the Gospel of John, and reaches back to the words of Genesis 1:1. Jesus was the One that was there at the 'arche' (άρχή / the beginning). That which was from the beginning does not refer to God's beginning, but to the beginning of creation and its redemption. The beginning more specifically refers to the time before the creation of the world. John refers to Jesus as the Eternal Word, Who was there at the beginning when the heavens and the Earth were created. Yet, more importantly, He is the Eternal One Who has no beginning. John avoids using the name of Jesus, which is the name given to the Word of Life at His incarnation, thus further emphasizing that He is the Eternal One Who has no beginning. He is the Life from which all life was derived. The first occurrence of 'arche' in the Septuagint is in Genesis 1:1 – its Hebrew counterpart is 'resheet' (בְּרֵאשֵׁית), which is the first word of the Bible in Genesis 1:1.

 2 The Word was heard and seen. The Word was incarnated into flesh, and the very voice of God was heard in the ears of all who would listen and His body presented for everyone to see. He was not only seen, but gazed upon (θεάομαι / theaomai). Men would not only be allowed to see the One Who the seraphim must veil their faces before, but to gaze steadfastly into His glorious countenance. The apostles not only handled Him before His death and resurrection, but also afterwards. After He had risen from the dead and appeared to the apostles for about 40 days, He told them to handle Him and see – for a spirit has not flesh and bones (Luke 24:39).

Surely, John wanted to emphasize the certainty and accuracy of the message that he was about to deliver in this epistle. He would with absolute words, distinguish between those who know the Lord Jesus and those who are liars. He would leave no room for darkness, sin, and iniquity to remain justified among the community of the church. He would absolutely reveal the deceivers and those who refused the gospel as it was spelled out to him by Christ Jesus, Whom he heard, saw, and touched.

3 The Word of Life is the pre-incarnate Christ, Who is from everlasting to everlasting, the Word made flesh, and is called Yehoah's Salvation or 'Yehoshua' (אַרָּהֹשְׁבֶּי / Jesus). Still, He will continue to be called the Word again throughout the ages (Revelation 19:13). God the Word was the One by Whom God created all things (John 1:3, 10, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 1:2-3). He became flesh and was called the only begotten Son, so that as a man, He might redeem mankind (John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16, 1:18, Acts 13:33, 2 Corinthians 8:9, 1 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 1:5, 5:5, 1 John 4:9). The Word became flesh so that all flesh might become one with the Word. He Who knew no sin became the sin offering so that He might restore man to His life of holiness and purity (2 Corinthians 5:21). The Word of Life became Christ Jesus to speak the words of life, so that His life could be imparted into us. God is passionate for us to receive His life and return to union with Himself. It would be impossible to imagine a more perfect and complete union than the one that God has given to us in Christ Jesus, for the very life of Christ was imparted into us (John 14:21, 23, 17:21).

Before the revelation of the Word, Christ Jesus, redemption was a mystery ministered through types and allegories. But now, John reveals that Jesus and all of His glory may be heard, seen, and touched. Redemption and an unimaginable intimacy provided with the Eternal God has been made available to us. It is an intimacy and union that all creation cries out for, but few are willing to believe. Many who have been redeemed, who are born of God and made heirs and joint-heirs with Christ, long for such fellowship, but fail to lay hold of it, only because they fail to accept what the Word of Life has revealed.

Our eyes must be fixed upon Him, even as all eyes in Heaven are on Christ Jesus. He has been exalted above everything in Heaven and Earth, and we must exalt Him too (Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:9-11). As Father has honored Jesus with a name above every name, we must also place His name above all authorities and interests. We must exalt Him above all principalities, powers, mights, and dominions that might attempt to influence us in this world. Should we step into such adoration and exaltation of Jesus, surely we would begin to see Him like we have never seen Him before. Through this devoted fellowship of love and admiration, we would begin to adore Him like never before. Should we hear

- 2- And the Life was revealed, and we have seen and bear witness, and we proclaim to you that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was revealed⁴ to us.
- 3- What we have seen and heard we proclaim⁵ to you, <u>so that you may also have communion⁶ with us, and indeed our communion is with the Father and with His Son</u> Jesus Christ.
- 4- And these things we write to you that your joy may be full⁷.
- 5- Now this is the message⁸ that we have heard of Him and declare unto you: that **God is Light**⁹ and in Him is no darkness¹⁰ at all.

and see and handle the Word of Life, we would stand in awe of Him and the inhabitants of the Earth would see the glory of the only begotten Son of God.

⁴ The life, the Eternal Life, which is the very Life of God Who also was with God, was incarnated into flesh and revealed to all mankind. To have Jesus is to have life, and to be without Him is to be dead while you live. Jesus was the Eternal Life Who revealed the eternal life that God made available to all who would believe. The very Life of God was not only manifested, but also imparted through the redemption that God had granted. Jesus as the Son refers to God as His Father more than a hundred times in the writings of John. It was the Father Who gave us His Son, and Who was also active in bringing men to Jesus. He draws them to present them to His Son, Who alone can give them life (Matthew 16:17, John 6:44). Many people encountered Jesus, but they refused to see that He was the Life.

⁵ The only way that anyone can receive this life is through the proclamation of the gospel. The life of God imparted and received through the gospel results in fellowship with the community of the redeemed, which is the family of God. The fellowship is with both the Father and the Son. This fellowship or communion is that of oneness. He imparts His glory to us, so that we may be one with them, even as they are one with each other (John 17:22-23). The verb 'apangellomen' (ἀπαγγέλλομεν) is translated as "proclaim" or "announce," and belongs to the same family of verbs and nouns as 'euangelion' (εὐαγγέλιον), from which "announce good news" or "gospel" is translated. These verbs can be used somewhat interchangeably. ⁶ The important message, which lays the foundation for what will be ministered in the First Epistle of John, is the Greek word 'koinonia' (κοινωνία). 'Koinonia,' though difficult to translate, can roughly be understood as being equivalent to the Hebrew word 'yachad' (יַתְהַנוּ), which is translated as "oneness," "unity," or "community." The Greek expression here (κοινωνίαν ἔχητε / koinonian echete) may express an even stronger message than "communion" - we may accurately translate this as "joined in communion." In either case, the communion or fellowship that all are being invited into is one of both real external experience with God and a oneness with God's people that is produced by the Holy Spirit. The 'koinonia' is only possible when one is born of the Spirit. Paul said that we are all baptized into one body by one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Our joy is made full through the relationship that has been granted to us by the gift of salvation (John 15:11, 16:24). This gift has made us holy and acceptable to God, and brought about our union with Him, having delivered us from all sin and condemnation (Romans 8:1, Colossians 1:13-14). The depth of the fellowship that we have been given with God has no limits (Ephesians 3:16-20). As we grow in grace, we come to realize that through this wonderful act of God's love and mercy, He has made us one with Himself, so that we may enjoy the beauty of His love that brings joy unspeakable (John 1:16, Colossians 2:10, 4:12, 1 Peter 1:8). The cares of this life would impose the burdens of earthly things and unrealized dreams, but God has made a way for us to live in a heavenly realm and inherit His promises (Mark 4:19, Acts 26:18, Ephesians 1:13-14, 2:6-7, Philippians 3:20, Colossians 1:12, 3:1-4, 24, Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 1:4). We have been given the sweet fellowship (koinonia/κοινωνία) of the Holy Spirit, Who brings to us the indwelling presence of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Through this fellowship and the knowledge of all that He has done for us, our joy is made full. As we walk with the Holy Spirit every day, we discover more and more how much God loves us (Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 2:19, 1 Thessalonians 4:10). As we yield to the Holy Spirit and believe the love that God has for us, we discover a joy unspeakable that floods our souls (Ephesians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 1:8, 1 John 4:16). It is a great joy to discover that Father has taken us and brought us into the shelter and comfort of oneness with Himself (John 14:16, 20, 23, 15:4, 10, 17:21, 23, 1 John 3:24). Today, you can realize more of this fullness of joy by embracing what God has said about you. Father wants us to believe what He has done for us through His Son Christ Jesus. We are part of the family of God, and His heirs (John 20:17, Romans 8:15-17, 29, Galatians 4:6, Hebrews 2:11). We should fully embrace His love and the report that He has given of His Son and say, "I'm in Him and He's in me" this is how our joy is made full (John 6:56, 1 John 4:13, 17).

6- If we say that we have communion¹¹ with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

7- But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light¹², we have communion with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses¹³ us from all sin.

⁸ The Greek verb 'apangello' (ἀπαγγέλλω) has appeared twice so far in verses 2 and 3. The noun 'angelia' (ἀγγελία) is now used and may properly be rendered as "gospel." There is a question if this noun should be 'angelia,' as found in 1 John 3:11, or if it should be 'epangelia' (ἐπαγγελία). Although their meanings may be interchangeable in that they are both from the same family of verbs, one may argue that the better choice of translation would be "message." However, John does not use the word 'euangelion' (εὐαγγέλιον), which is used elsewhere in the Gospels for 'gospel'. Therefore, it may be safe to conclude that 'angelia' is John's equivalent for 'euangelion.' The meanings of 'anangellein' (ἀναγγέλλειν) and 'angelian' (αγγελιαν) in the Septuagint are for the most part equivalent to 'euangelizein,' (εύανγγελίζειν) (refer to Isaiah 28:9, 52:7). ⁹ God is light and there is no darkness in Him. There is nothing that can be as pure as light, for it is impossible to contaminate light. There is no darkness in us, because we are now in Him, and no darkness can be in Him. The contrast being made between light and darkness serves to absolutely describe the state of God's truth, righteousness, holiness, and purity – and the total absence of anything less. To have 'koinonia' (κοινωνία) with Him is only possible in the realm of light, where there is no darkness. God granted such holiness and purity to us when we received His life. ¹⁰ We cannot say that we are in Him, and that we are in communion with Him, and walk in darkness. As light represents God, His life, and His righteousness, darkness represents Satan, his death, and his iniquity.

10 We cannot say that we are in Him, and that we are in communion with Him, and walk in darkness. As light represents God, His life, and His righteousness, darkness represents Satan, his death, and his iniquity. The symbolisms of light and darkness are laid out from the beginning. Earth was in a lifeless and chaotic state because of sin and rebellion, and darkness was over the face of this desolate and waste place (Genesis 1:2). When God commanded the light to shine into the darkness, the darkness was removed, and the life and creation of God began to spring forth. Darkness is the place of sin and death, a place separated from fellowship with God. When Jesus came, the light shined into the darkness, and the darkness vanished. There is absolute division between light and darkness, and they can never mingle. Darkness is the absence of light, and in this respect, it is the absence of the life of God. All who will come to the light and receive the life of God may now walk in 'koinonia' (κοινωνία), where there is no darkness at all.

¹¹ Fellowship with God is only made possible by the impartation of the life of God. The life of God is imparted to us when we are born again. Through the new birth, the Holy Spirit Who now lives in us leads us, teaches us, and establishes us in all the ways of God. If we say that we have 'koinonia' (κοινωνία) and yet walk in darkness, then we are lying, because we cannot be interacting with God while sin reigns over us. There is no darkness in God – He has no relationship with it any more than light has with darkness. John makes it very clear in the 15th chapter of the Gospel of John that we are to dwell in Him as a branch in the vine. Paul describes the new birth in terms of being "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The first epistle of John uses a very simple and radical contrast to make an absolute difference between those who know God and those who do not know Him. What could be more simple and clear than the differences between: light and darkness, God and Satan, children of God and children of the Devil, righteousness and sin, truth and lie. There certainly is no gray area, and no place of transition or uncertainty. If you are in the light, you are a child of God and the fruits of righteousness are manifested – if not, then you are a child of the Devil. Paul establishes the same contrast, saying that we are righteous not unrighteous, light not darkness, Christ not Belial – the very temple of the Living God where He lives and dwells (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

¹² The message that John delivered to both the believer and unbeliever was that God has called everyone to come to the light and walk in the light as the Father is in the light. Certainly, this is one of the most radical statements made by John, for God is in light that no man can approach unto (1 Timothy 6:15-16). The light of God is a place of purity and holiness – a place where sin certainly cannot exist. The premise set in verse 5 that "God is light" defines the light we are called to walk in as both the nature of God (Who is light) and the presence of God (Who is in the light).

¹³ The blood of Jesus carries the life of God. When the blood of Jesus is applied to our lives, the life of God is imparted. The blood of Jesus swallows up death and sin. It is such a powerful purification agent to cleanse and purge our sins, that once we are touched by the blood of Jesus, the sins are completely removed and never again remembered (Hebrews 8:12, 10:2, 17). They are completely wiped away from the heavenly record. When John speaks of the removal of sin, he uses words like:

^{1 – &}quot;take away" ('airein' (αἴρειν) in John 1:29, 1 John 3:5)

^{2 – &}quot;destroy" ('lyein' (λύειν) in 1 John 3:8)

^{3 – &}quot;cleanse" ('katharizein' (καθαρίζειν) in 1 John 1:7)

8- If we should say, "We have no sin¹⁴," we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9- If we should confess our sins¹⁵, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us of the sins¹⁶ and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness¹⁷.

4 – "clean" ('katharos' (καθαρός) in John 13:10-11)

There should be no question as to John's confidence in the blood of Jesus to completely remove sin and its contamination. Its application to the life of man produces the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5). Having received the purgation, and having assurance in the promise of God, you should have no more consciousness of sin, and no need for another offering (Romans 6:10, Hebrews 7:27, 9:13-14, 23-28, 10:1-2, 10-14, 1 Peter 3:18). A person may say, "How do I receive this washing?" It is easy – all you do is call upon the name of the Lord Jesus! The Spirit of the Lord Who brings conviction of sin will lead you to repentance, and the blood of Jesus will wash away your sins.

¹⁴ The present tense condition of those who have not been born again and washed with the waters of regeneration (Titus 3:5). The most important aspect of the next three verses is to underscore the need for Christ Jesus and the provision that has been given to cleanse us from our sins. If we are brought into the family of God and have the fellowship of walking in His life and light, then we have the cleansing blood that has washed us from our sins. Before we come to Christ Jesus, we are all sinners yoked by sin and death and are in need of forgiveness and cleansing. The next verse highlights that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins. Also, the preceding verse revealed that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Although the initial state is one of sinfulness, the result of God's great salvation is one of purity and holiness.

Many people today as well as in the time of John would say that they do not need the blood of Jesus to cleanse them from sin. In fact, there have been many different cultures that regarded their immorality as virtue instead of sin. There are also those who trust in their own good deeds and religious beliefs, like the Jews, who would argue that they do not need Jesus to set them free because they have Abraham and the Law for their righteousness (John 5:39-40, 8:33). Therefore, Jesus said because they claim to understand the ways of redemption, and yet they refuse to see their sin and need for Him, their sin remains (John 8:24, 9:41). However, it is so easy to be set free from sin – that is what Christ Jesus came to do! Through Him we receive the abundant life. All we must do is call on His name, and He will wash us and cleanse us.

Everyone who has the truth abiding in them would admit that sin is the evidence that all are in need of redemption. Therefore, those who have received God's testimony recognize their sin and reach out to Him to be cleansed from their sin. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, has come to prosecute and convince all of sin. Those who have listened to the Spirit of God have felt His conviction and reproof, because He has come to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). John continues to develop this idea, so that by the third chapter he has convinced us all that anyone who continues in sin is shown to be of the devil. As he already said, "if we walk in darkness, we have no fellowship with God." For now, a contrast is being made between those who only say they know God and those who in fact do know Him. In verses 6, 8, and 10, there is the "if we say" clause:

6 – If we say we have communion with Him, and we walk in darkness (sin), we lie and do not the truth.

8 – If we should say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

10 – If we say we have not sinned, we make Him (God) a liar.

However, those who indeed know Him are qualified in verses 7 and 9, and 1 John 2:1 as those who have been cleansed from their sin, and empowered to live free from sin (John 8:36). God is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteous, thus making us righteous. The redemption that in in Christ Jesus has both cleansed and sanctified us. We are now those cleansed, regenerated, and called saints (Titus 3:5, 1 Corinthians 1:2). This is not to say that we cannot sin, but as John will state, "If we sin, He will forgive us if we repent."

¹⁵ The present tense condition of those washed in the blood and made a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-18, 1 Peter 2:24). The problem with those addressed in verses 8 and 10 is that they were unwilling to recognize their sin, and therefore were unwilling to confess it. Some like the Gnostics believed that they had advanced beyond the state of sinfulness. There were also those that believed that their bodies sinned, but that their spirits remained sinless. The secessionists believed that since they came to know Christ Jesus, there is no more need to ever repent, because they were in a state of grace where sin no longer existed. Unless a person acknowledges his sin and repents, he cannot be cleansed. In the priestly manual, the book

^{5 – &}quot;propitiation," "purgation" ('hilasmos' (ίλασμός) in 1 John 2:2, 4:10)

^{6 – &}quot;forgive" ('aphiemi' (ἀφίημι) in John 20:23, 1 John 1:9, 2:12)

of Leviticus, a person had to be aware of his sin and confess it while presenting his sin offering to atone for his sin. The concept of confessing sin over the sin offering is well-established in the hand-leaning rite. The High Priest or the offerer would lay his hands upon the sin offering and confess their sins. This act of confession then placed the sins of the people of Israel upon the offering. In the example of Yom Kippur, the goat would bear all of the iniquities and be sent into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:21-22). Jesus took our sins in his own body on the cross and carried them away into death, thus paying the full price for sin (1 Peter 2:24). However, after an individual has been crucified with Christ and his sins blotted out, if that one sins, they are commanded to confess their sins so that Jesus may cleanse him once again. In fact, according to the type in the Old Testament, it was not only the sinner who became contaminated by his sin, but the altar and in some instances even the Holy of Holies itself (Leviticus 15:31, Numbers 19:13, Psalm 79:1, Ezekiel 9:3, 10:18, Daniel 8:13-14, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, Acts 21:28, 1 Corinthians 3:17, Hebrews 9:23-24). Jesus, Who ever lives to make intercession for the saints, is in the presence of the Father now to intercede for us (Romans 8:34).

It is the blood that cleanses from all sin (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:14, 22, Revelation 1:5). It only took one offering to take care of the sins of man for all eternity, and that was the offering that Jesus as the Lamb of God made at the cross 2,000 years ago (Genesis 22:8, Isaiah 53:7, John 1:29, 36, Acts 8:32, Romans 6:10, Hebrews 7:27, 9:13-14, 23-28, 10:1-2, 10-14, 1 Peter 1:19, 3:18, Revelation 5:6-13, 7:10, 14, 12:11, 13:8). Even though this is the only scripture in the New Testament that echoes back to the Old Testament hand-leaning rite, we have other scriptures that relate the death of Jesus to the ritual that took place on Yom Kippur. Hebrews chapter 9 compares the sacrifice of Jesus to that day. Jesus is also referred to as the 'kapporet' (תְּשַׁבֶּלְ "Mercy Seat" or "propitiation"), which is where the blood was applied on Yom Kippur (Romans 3:25). Thus, we may understand that our sins today were laid upon Jesus, even as they were laid upon the goat that was sent into the wilderness. And Jesus, Who stands before the Father as a Lamb that was slain, takes His blood and applies it to our sin so that it is cleansed, and all unrighteousness is removed.

¹⁶ The notion that we must continue to believe that we have sin once we have been washed in the blood is not supported in scripture. The idea that we would have faith that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin – yet also that to be right with God we must continue to believe it is still there – makes no sense at all. Then what is worse are those who confess that we will continue on in sin because its rule and domination still exists over our lives. Little has changed since the days of Paul with respect to this issue, as so-called "believers" in his day were saying: "Let us continue to sin so that grace may be abundant" (Romans 6:1-2). Paul's response was roughly, "That's nuts!" The King James translated it far more eloquently (albeit at the expense of accuracy) saying, "God forbid."

One of the great ironies is the use of 1 John 1:8 & 10 to support both the notion that God expects us to sin every day, and the conclusion that if we are not sinning then we are not of God. Of the entire New Testament, John's first epistle is by far the most forceful in proclaiming that sin should not exist in the life of anyone who has been born of God. John writes his epistle to the church because of the deceivers who were telling the people that they could never be free from sin (1 John 2:26). He starts off the epistle saying that anyone who walks in darkness has no communion with God (1 John 1:6). He makes it obvious that darkness is the realm that belongs to Satan, just as the realm of light belongs to God (1 John 2:9). In other words, darkness is that place of sin and death. We are rather to walk in the light just like Jesus walks in the light – a place where we need not stumble (Psalm 119:165, 2 Peter 1:10, 1 John 1:7, 2:10-11, Jude 1:24). We have been given the faith and the grace to confess our sins, and as a result, He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Again, "unrighteousness" is a synonym for sin, and once a person is cleansed from unrighteousness, sin is no longer present. There are those who go on to argue that this scripture implies the continuous activity of sin, and the continuous need to confess so that they can be cleansed. Yet John says in the next verse that he was writing to them so that they should never sin (1 John 2:1). Then he further emphasizes the "never" by saying, "If we sin," not "When we sin." Therefore, those who have deduced such a foreign doctrine are in grave danger and jeopardy of their own souls, and of those before whom they cast a stumbling block.

John continues on, making an even greater argument against sin and its power. He says that Jesus was manifested to take away our sin, and that anyone who sins has not seen Him nor known Him (1 John 3:6). He goes on to say that those who sin are of the devil (1 John 3:8). This is true, primarily because one must participate with a demon spirit to sin. John even says it with stronger words saying, "Everyone who is born of God does not sin," and even says, "He cannot sin" (1 John 3:9). We have Christ Jesus dwelling in us, and have overcome the wicked one, with all of his sin and lust (2 Corinthians 13:5, Colossians 1:27, 1 John 4:4, 5:4-5). This important point and reoccurring theme throughout John's first epistle is brought to a

10- If we say, "We have not sinned¹⁸," we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

Chapter 2

1- My little children, I write these things to you so that you do not sin¹⁹. But if anyone sins, we have a Paraclete²⁰ at the Father's side, Jesus Christ the righteous.

conclusion at the end of the epistle when he says, "We know that everyone who is begotten of God does not sin, but the one begotten of God keeps himself, and the evil one cannot touch him" (1 John 5:18). Those Jews who would have refused to acknowledge that they had sin, and refused to acknowledge that they were in need of a savior – because they believed that the Law was all that they needed – were not of God, and had not been born of God, nor cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Luke 18:11, John 8:24, 39, 9:41 1 John 1:8, 10).

We are called to keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus, and if we say that we know Him, yet do not keep His commandments, John says that we are a liar (John 14:15, 15:10, 1 John 2:4). What many today call "legalism," John called proof of salvation (1 John 2:5, 5:3). Legalism is trusting in the Law of Moses for salvation. It is not legalism to be an obedient child of God who walks in holiness and godliness. Those who have been born of God and have matured like young men in God have conquered the evil one (1 John 2:13). The Word of God abides in them, and they abide in Christ Jesus, and Satan and his sin have no power over them (John 15:1-6, Romans 6:1-13, 1 John 2:14). Those who have the love of the Father in them have overcome the world with its lust of the flesh, its lust of the eye, and its pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit through the conduct of our lives that we are born of God. Therefore, if we walk in righteousness then we are the children of God, but if not, we are the children of the Devil (John 8:40-41, 44, 1 John 3:7-10). The anointing that we have received from Him teaches us that we are to abide in Christ Jesus, and walk in righteousness even as He is righteous (1 John 2:27, 29, 3:7, 4:17). We are to be pure even as He is pure (1 John 3:3). We are those who keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:22). As many as are led by the Holy Spirit – they are the sons of God, and the Holy Spirit will not lead you into sin (Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:16).

¹⁷ God cannot treat sin as though it does not exist unless it has actually been destroyed. The eternal and unchanging purification agent of the blood of Jesus makes it as effective to destroy sin today as the first day that the offering was made 2,000 years ago. When the blood of Jesus is applied by faith, it removes both the power of sin and the contamination that the sin imparted to the individual.

18 The past tense condition of those who have not been born again and washed in the blood of Jesus. The statements of verse 8 and verse 10 are for the most part repetitive statements. The only real difference is one expressing the present tense condition of the unredeemed and the other the past tense. First the present tense of verse 8 – "We do not have sin" (hamartian echein/ ἀμαρτίαν ἔχειν) and then the past tense of verse 10 "We have not sinned" (harmartein/ αμαρτειν). The two conditions expressed are those who are in sin and refuse to admit it and confess their sins, so that they may be cleansed, and those who refuse to ever admit that they had sinned at any time.

The First Epistle of John is the strongest epistle in the New Testament that condemns all sin in the life of those who have been born again. From the arguments set forth contrasting those who are in darkness to those who walk in the light, to the strong statements of 1 John 2:29, 3:6-9, and 5:18 which demand that we walk in righteousness and give no place to sin. To make any kind of a defense that somehow a sinful condition is the common condition of those born of God is definitely not supported by this first epistle of John.

¹⁹ The Word of God is written so that we might have power over sin, because the Word abides in us (verse 14). The psalmist said, "Your Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against You." We can be certain that John is not saying, "believe that you are sinners and have sin so you will not sin," which of course makes no sense at all! He is rather saying that we are in God, Who is light, and that we have no fellowship with darkness. Furthermore, if we say that we have fellowship with Him, but continue on in sin, we are liars because we have been equipped with the ability through the power of the new birth to dwell in Him and walk as He walks. Jesus placed the same absolute demand on the paralytic man that was healed, when He said "sin no more" (John 5:14). Jesus also gave the same command to the woman caught in the act of adultery saying, "sin no more" (John 8:11). Similarly, Paul writes in Romans, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God Forbid!" We are now dead to sin (Romans 6:1-2).

²⁰ The word "paraclete" means more than simply an intercessor, advocate, or spokesman. It is best to understand "paraclete" by every dimension of the help that both Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit supply.

- 2- And He is the purgating sacrifice²¹ for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.
- 3- And by this we know that we know Him: because we keep His commands²².
- 4- The one who says, "I know Him," but does not keep His commandments²³, is a liar and the truth is not in him.

The word "paraclete" is first used to describe the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John. However, Jesus said that he would send "another "paraclete,"" (John 14:16-17) thus implying that He was also a "paraclete." Although "paraclete" means more than just intercessor, Jesus indeed stands before the Father as both an intercessor and advocate (Romans 8:34, 1 John 2:1). Some of the great Old Testament intercessors were Abraham, who interceded for Sodom, and Moses, who interceded for Israel.

²¹ Though some traditional translations render 'hilasmos' (ἰλασμός) as "propitiation," this involves a wrong interpretation of the term in question. Propitiation is essentially a process by which one does a favor to a person in order to make him or her favorably disposed, but in the New Testament, God is never the object of propitiation, since He is already on the side of mankind. 'Hilasmos' (ίλασμός) and 'hilasterion' (ίλαστήριον) denote means of forgiveness, not propitiation (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989). 'Hilasmos' occurs 2 times in the New Testament, and both occurrences are in 1 John – 1 John 2:2 and 4:10. The first occurrence in the Septuagint is in Leviticus 25:9, where it is translated from the Hebrew word 'kippurim,' (הַבֶּפֶלִים) which refers to "Yom Kippur" or the "Day of Purgation." An example of a similar use of 'hilasmos' is found in Psalms 130:4, "There is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared." Another example is found in Daniel 9:9, "To the Lord our God belongs mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him." An argument can be made that this Greek word could be translated as "wiping away" because of its association with the Mercy Seat and Yom Kippur (The Day of Purgation). Our sins have been forgiven because they have been erased and washed away by the blood of Jesus. Jesus is the sacrifice for sins, Who through His blood purified all who will come to Him (Matthew 26:28, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 1:3, 1 Peter 1:22, 2 Peter 1:9).

The Hebrew verb 'kipper' (ξξιλασκεσθαι) in the Septuagint. The Hebrew word 'kipper' (τξιλασκεσθαι) in the Septuagint. The Hebrew word 'kipper' (τξιλασκεσθαι) is found 44 times in Leviticus. It is translated every time in the Septuagint by 'exilaskesthai,' (εξιλασκεσθαι) which does not occur a single time in the New Testament. Purgation/Atonement is an Old Testament word and concept that was transitory between the promise given to Abraham and the New Covenant. The Old Testament cultic ritual of 'kipper' (τξς) was powerless to remove sin. This is best understood by the description given in Hebrews 10:4, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin. The purgation / atonement was only a provision for the purification of the Holy Place where God dwelt. The Akkadian equivalent is 'kippuru,' which means "to rub" or "to rub off."

In Genesis 3:21, God made clothing for Adam and Eve so that they could cover themselves. He made their clothing from skins or hides of animals. The Hebrew noun 'or' (אוֹר) is used 46 times in Leviticus. In each case it is used to describe the hides of the sacrificial animals used for purgation/atonement. In effect, when God made clothing from the animal hides for Adam and Eve, He was making a temporary covering for their sin and shame. Finally, it should be noted that purgation/atonement does not result in the removal of sin. The Hebrew word used in Leviticus for forgiveness with respect to atonement is 'salach' (תֹיְסֶ) (Leviticus 4:22). The word 'salach' does not really mean "forgive" in the sense that the transgression was removed. When God granted 'salach' to Israel at the request of Moses in Numbers 14:19-20, He did not forgive Israel of their sin, for every one of them died for their sins in the wilderness (Numbers 14:29-35, Hebrews 3:17). Rather, God reconciled Himself not to abandon them. At best, it could be understood as a postponement of judgment.

²² John uses several key words and phrases that are shown to be equivalent in these passages: the truth, the Word, and the commandments of Christ Jesus, which are equivalent terms in 1 John 2:3-6. The consecration of God's people, who are committed to Him and keep the commandments of Jesus Christ, are those who abide in Christ Jesus and walk with God – which also mean the same thing.

²³One of the first messages preached by Jesus was one that tried the heart and the works of those that would say that they know Him. Jesus said that only those who did the will of the Father and ceased from iniquity knew God. Warning that those who continued in their own way would hear the Father say "depart from me you workers of iniquity, I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23).

5- But whoever keeps <u>His word</u>, <u>truly in him is the love²⁴ of God perfected</u>²⁵. This is how we know that we are in Him.

Jesus spoke a number of different times about the commandment that He received of the Father to lay down His life (John 10:18, 12:49-50, 14:31, 15:10). Jesus also gave this same commandment and others to His disciples. These commandments were directed at both their love for God and their love one for another (John 13:34, 14:15, 21, 15:10, 12, 1 John 2:7-8, 3:23, 4:21, 2 John 1:5-6). The only legitimate response to God's love was underscored by Him as obedience (John 14:15, 23, 15:10). Furthermore, the love that Jesus described was not only a consecration to doing the will of the Father, but to walking in a love that fulfilled all of the Law and the prophets (Romans 13:8, 10). When we understand that God's commandments to love one another is to love as He loved us, we should also recognize that He is describing divine love that we will need divine power to fulfill. Such a command to walk in divine love is only possible by being made a new creation and then yielding to the leadership and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The key to walking in all the ways of God is to be ruled by divine love. It is also the means by which we dwell in God and in fact step into all of His fullness (Ephesians 3:19, 1 John 4:16). The only way to be ruled by divine love is to be committed to it and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us. If we are determined to obey God, then the Holy Spirit will supply what we need so that we can do it from the heart and fulfill God's command. Walking in the love of God should be the focus and consecration of our hearts, for in it we fulfill the whole Law, and obviously fulfilling the whole Law is important to God (Romans 8:4, 13:10). To walk in love is to walk in the light, which is the glory of God being revealed in His people (Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Peter 2:9, 2 Peter 1:3-4).

The commandments of Jesus are not just a set of rules, but are rather insights to a whole new way of life that is possible only through the power of the new creation. The Word of God that created the universe will speak into those who will receive and bring forth those things that God demands. The Holy Spirit that is given to us will then work to establish us in all that God has spoken (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). The New Testament believer is called to obey God's commandments, which is set forth as the proof of knowing God. There is a higher order of commandments that goes far beyond the ten commandments of the Old Testament. Through the divine nature we are empowered to walk in all the ways of God, and fulfill all that is revealed in His Word (Romans 8:4, 2 Peter 1:3-4). There are those who have wrongly assumed that obeying God's commandments is somehow equivalent to legalism. They would classify this essential commitment as the "works of the law," but nothing could be more erroneous. When we obey the Word of God, we are obeying God's commandments. One may correctly view 'logos' (λόγος / word) as being interchangeable with 'entole' (εντολή / commandment), which is the case in both the Septuagint and New Testament (John 8:51, 8:55, 14:23, 24, 15:20, 1 John 2:5). Keeping all the words of the Lord Jesus is the same as keeping all of the commandments of Jesus (John 14:15, 21, 15:10). The technical name for the ten commandments is "the decalogue," which means "the ten words" (Exodus 20:1, Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 4:13, Deuteronomy 10:4). In Deuteronomy for example, the whole of the Law refers to "all the words of this Law," translated by the Septuagint as "all these commandments." Also, the opening statement of this verse serves to further equate "commandment" with "word": "But whoever keeps His words..." We are commanded by God to keep all the words of God, which are His commandments. These commandments are not a grievous thing to do, but are the ways of life and communion with God, for how can two walk together unless they agree (Amos 3:3)?

²⁴The word 'agape' (ἀγάπη / love) is defined by the love that God has for us. The usage of 'agape' in classical Greek is rare. When it is found, it is neither dramatic nor colorful. It is usually translated as "to like," "prefer," or "be content." However, when it appears in the New Testament, it defines the kind of love that the Father has for the Son and the kind of love that the Christian should have because they are regenerated and given the Holy Spirit (John 13:34, 14:15, 21, 31, 15:10, 12, 17, 17:23, Titus 3:5). This kind of love does not have a human origin, but is purely divine – flowing both into us and out of us by the Holy Spirit. Raymond Brown writes: "Agape is not a love originating in the human heart and reaching out to possess noble goods needed for perfection, it is spontaneous, unmerited, creative love flowing from God to the Christian, and from the Christian to a fellow Christian" (The Epistles of John, pages 254-255). Jeremiah writes that love comes through a circumcised heart (Jeremiah 4:4, 31:33). Proverbs say that God loves us as a Father loves his son (Proverbs 3:12). Although, the Hebrew word for love is 'ahav' ($\ddot{α}$) and is translated in the Septuagint exclusively by 'agapan,' ($\ddot{α}$) another Hebrew word that expresses the New Testament meaning of 'agape' is found in the Hebrew word 'chesed' ($\ddot{α}$) in Exodus 34:6. The Hebrew word 'chesed' can mean both "lovingkindness" and "covenant love," or "loyal unfailing love." When God

Almighty revealed to Moses who He was, He said I am "full of covenant love and truth." The reading would be similar to that found in John 1:14, but instead of "full of grace and truth" it would be "full of covenant love and truth" (Exodus 34:6). I believe that the biggest problem that many of God's people face

today is they do not know how to experience the presence of God, which is fundamental to the love of God flowing into them. The burden is upon the pastors and leaders to teach people how to yield to the Holy Spirit so that they may enjoy the wonderful and all-consuming divine presence of God.

²⁵ The love of God is perfected in the sense that the believer has come to a place of complete surrender to the Holy Spirit and has yielded without reservation to Him. God's love does not need to be perfected for it is already perfect. However, the Christian becoming totally obedient to the love of God is the key to knowing the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:17-19). The perfect love of the Father has been given to us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit and walk in love we find ourselves always doing those things, that please the Father. Keeping His Word and walking in love results in maturing in love, and as a result we say that His love is perfected in us.

The Greek word for "perfected" is the past tense of 'teleio,' (τέλειοw / "complete," "perfect"). The concept of being perfect in the New Testament is first mentioned in Matthew 5:48: "Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Also 1 Corinthians 2:6, 14:20, Ephesians 4:13, and Colossians 1:28 say similar things. In the book of Hebrews, "perfection" or "being made complete" was said not to be possible by the Law, but now has been supplied through Jesus Christ, the One Who perfects (Hebrews 7:11, 19, 9:9, 10:1, 14, 12:2, 23-24). The idea of walking in love and being perfect are closely related in 1 John. In fact, one may also understand walking in the light as He is in the light as being equivalent to both walking in love and perfect obedience to the Word, thus walking in righteousness absent of sin and darkness. ²⁶ The gospel message of "being in Him," is one of the most important in the New Testament and is the chief theme of John 15. The two phrases "to be in" ('einai en'/ είναι ἐν) and "to abide in" ('menein en' / μένειν έν) are for the most part interchangeable, as in John 14:10. The importance of being "in Him" is highlighted by scriptures such as "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17, and also John 15:4, 5, 7, 10, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 1:4, Philippians 3:9, Colossians 2:6, 7, 10, 1 John 2:27, 28, 3:5, 6, 24, 4:16, 5:20). Similarly we know that we are crucified with Christ, yet we still live – but not us, it's Christ Who lives (Galatians 2:20). Also we know that if One died for all, then all were dead that we should no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). We have lost our lives that we might find them in Him.

The ability to abide in Him, which is the same as saying "to live the life of Jesus" or to "behave just like Jesus," comes to us by the anointing that we have received from Him. In fact, "abiding in Him" and having "the anointing" are inseparably linked (1 John 2:27). The promise that God gave to anyone who would believe was that we would be born of the Spirit, and subsequently Jesus would baptize us with the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, Acts 1:8, 8:15-16). He promised us the same Spirit and the same anointing that He was baptized with (Luke 4:18). The idea of abiding in Him is communicated in a unique way in John 15 to help us understand how the supply of His divine life flows into our lives. We learn that we can depend on Jesus for everything that we need, and that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:4-5). The life of God supplied to us by the Holy Spirit flows as the sap of the vine, and through our intimate union with Christ Jesus, the fruit of His life is manifested in us. It is astounding to consider the interdependency that exists in a vine and a branch. The life of Jesus is revealed through us to the world around us as we abide in Him. In fact, when Jesus said, "Abide in Me and I in you," He was saying, Live My life and I will live in you. As we abide in Him, the glory of His divine life and love flows into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5, Ephesians 3:19, 1 Thessalonians 3:12). The miracle of salvation has supplied us with an inseparable union with the Lord Jesus (John 15:1-6, 17:22-23, 2 Peter 3:18, 1 John 3:23).

²⁷ Christ Jesus has given all men everywhere the invitation to come and abide in Him (John 15:1-5). There is no salvation outside of abiding in Christ Jesus (John 6:56, 14:17, 15:4,6, 1 John 2:27-28, 4:13). If we have responded to His call and are abiding in Christ Jesus, then we will live like He lives. We will walk in the light just like He walks in the light, for if we abide in Him, then we are even as He is in this world today (1 John 1:7, 4:17). If we have been born of God, we don't need anyone to teach us this, because the anointing that we have received teaches us that we must abide in Him – and furthermore we delight to dwell in Him (1 John 2:27).

In this modern age, a simple key stroke on a computer can call all of the scriptures defining what it means to abide in Christ, but still men choose to define the life that is acceptable to God in their own way. Many have been deceived to believe that they can live their lives according to their own insights. There is a

- 7- Brethren, this is not a new commandment that I write to you, but an old commandment, which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the Word²⁸ that you have heard from the beginning.
- 8- Again a new commandment²⁹ I write to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passed and the **true light now shines**.
- 9- He that says he is in the light and hates his brother **is still in the darkness**, even now. 10- He that loves his brother **abides in the light**³⁰, and there is no occasion of stumbling³¹ in him.

way that seems right to man, but when it is not what the Holy Spirit directs, then it leads to destruction (Deuteronomy 12:8, Proverbs 14:12, 16:25). We can all be certain as to the direction of the Holy Spirit, because Jesus modeled the consecrated life for us. Worldliness is not a part of His life. Living for one's own self-interest has nothing to do with the life of Christ. The life of Christ is living only to do the will of the Father, as it is revealed in His Word. Any kind of compromise with sin is not a part of the life of Christ.

The life of Christ is filled with the goodness and purity of Heaven, and God demands that we conform in every way to the image of Christ Jesus (Romans 8:29, 12:1-2). He has given us the opportunity to repent, to be converted, and to learn to walk just as He walks. We are living in perilous times (2 Timothy 3:1). Everywhere men live very differently from that life shown to us by Christ Jesus, and yet they believe that they abide in Him. In these perilous times, the voice of Christ Jesus that cries out against a rebellious and crooked generation is regarded as the voice of mad and angry men. Yet the foundation of God stands sure – God has not changed, and He will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7, 2 Timothy 2:19). In His abundant mercy. He has provided the salvation that we need to live life according to godliness, and we must take heed that we be found in Christ (Galatians 2:17, 2 Peter 1:3). If we live in Christ Jesus, then we keep His Word, we walk as He walks, the Holy Spirit teaches us and leads us, we do not continue in sin, we keep His commandments, we have His Spirit, we dwell in God, He dwells in us, and the fruits of His life are manifested in our lives (John 14:23, 1 John 2:5-6, 27-28, 3:6, 24, 4:13, 15-16, 5:20). The way Jesus walked received Father's full approval, witnessed definitively when God said, "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17, 17:5). The whole life and walk of Jesus was found in one single purpose: to do the will of the Father (John 5:30, 8:28, Hebrews 10:7). Those who follow Jesus and live only to do the will of the Father and walk even as He walks, will hear the Father say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant" simply because they are found to exist in the Son (Matthew 12:50, 1 Peter 4:1-2, 1 John

²⁸ God spoke in times past by the prophets, but in the last days He has spoken to us by His Son Who was the Word made flesh. John introduces Jesus as the Word of life in his first epistle just as he introduced Him as the Word in his Gospel. Jesus is the living Word that is revealed first by the written Word. Jesus came in the volume of the book which was all written about Him (Psalm 40:7-8, Hebrews 10:7). The entirety of the Word of God calls men back to union with God that was lost in the garden. Through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, men are empowered to walk in the love of God and fully express His holiness and righteousness (Titus 3:5).

²⁹ The new commandment is to love with the same divine love that the Father has for the Son (John 13:34, 15:12, 19, 17:26, 1 John 2:15, 4:7-8). Prior to man's nature being changed by the New Covenant, they were required only to love with a human love as they loved themselves (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:19). Now the new covenant calls us to a higher standard and empowers us with divine ability by imparting the nature of God. The divine nature being now reestablished in the heart of man, a new commandment is given: to love with the same love that the Father has – divine love.

The contrast between darkness and light is used to describe the spiritual state of a person. If we do those things that God does, then we have proof that we are in the light where God dwells. This verse helps us to more fully understand what it means to walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7). Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another with the same love that I have loved you" (John 13:34, 15:12, 1 John 3:23). God has called us to walk in His divine love (John 15:17, 17:26, 1 John 2:15, 4:7-8) We know that love is the fulfillment of the law because love works no evil (Romans 13:10). We also know that God's divine love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). All we have to do is to yield our members to God, and the glory of His love will flow out of us as rivers of living water. Father has made it very clear to us that He demands that we walk in His kind of love. If we fail to recognize that this love only flows from the Spirit of God, then we have missed the most important point of the New Testament. Walking in love is the realm where there is no occasion or opportunity to

- 11- But he that hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes³².
- 12- I write to you little children because your sins have been sent away³³, because of His name.
- 13- I write unto you fathers, because you have known Him Who is from the beginning. I write to you young men, because you have conquered³⁴ the evil one³⁵. I have written unto you little children³⁶, because you know the Father.

stumble or fall (2 Peter 1:10). Everyone who has been transformed by the life-giving power of the name of Jesus has been given the life of the Holy Spirit. The very essence and proof of this life in God is expressed by the love of God (John 13:35, 1 John 3:14, 4:7-8). All we have to do is to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God, and allow these glorious realms of the love of God to flow out of our hearts.

31 The Greek word used for stumbling in this verse is 'scandalon' (σκάνδαλον), and although it means "stumbling block," "bait," "snare," "trap," or "blemish," it may also be understood as "offense." Those who walk in the light will not cause others to stumble or create an offense against Christ Jesus. In Leviticus 19:14 we read, "You shall not put a 'scandalon' in the way of the blind." Those who walk in the light as He is in the light, where there is no darkness, have no occasion to stumble, because deception and lies work in the darkness – not in the light where truth is revealed. They will not stumble, because the light shines and they are able to see what has been laid out in front of them. A similar verse is found in the Septuagint in Psalm 118:165 (119:165), "Those who love your law have great peace, there is nothing that can cause them to 'scandalon'." The Word is said by the psalmist to be "a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

³² Mind-blinding spirits hide the gospel from the lost, but that is not their only effect (2 Corinthians 4:4). Sin also blinds the eyes, at least in part, of those who profess to know the Lord. The darkness of sin causes blindness to the eyes, preventing a person from knowing who they are in God or where they are going (1 John 2:11). When we lack the fruits of God's nature, it is evidence that we are blind and have forgotten that we were purged from our former sins (2 Peter 1:9).

The New Testament concept of forgiveness reaches beyond a mere willingness on the part of God to overlook our sins. The forgiveness that God has granted us is that our sins are completely removed! The mercy of God that was revealed in the blood of Jesus has taken away our sins, having lifted them off of us and sent them away. There are a number of Hebrew words that translate the Greek word 'aphiemi' (ἀφίημι), which is used here, and translated by many as forgiveness, but translated as "sent away" in this translation. The most outstanding is the Hebrew word 'nasa' (κψμ) which means to "lift up" or "carry away." Jesus lifted up our sins at Calvary and bore them in His own body so that we may be dead to or cut off from our sins (1 Peter 2:24). In the New Testament, this particular Greek word is most often translated as "let go" or "to leave" (Mark 1:20, 31, 10:28, 12:12, John 4:3, 52, 16:28). Thus, our sins have "left us because of His name." God in His loving kindness is always ready to forgive us by removing our sins at the very moment that we ask Him to do so. He will do this because we have placed our trust in the name of Jesus, in which God has vested all power and authority (Proverbs 18:10, Matthew 28:18, Acts 4:12, Ephesians 1:21, Philippians 2:9-11). However, God requires us to walk in His love and forgive others as well (Matthew 6:12, 14, 18:21-35, Mark 11:25, Luke 17:3).

³⁴Jesus conquered the "world system" where the evil one reigns, who is also called the prince and the power of the air by Paul (Ephesians 2:2). Those who have been born of God have been empowered to conquer the "world system" just as Jesus did, which is a proof of the believer (1 John 2:6, 4:4, 17, 5:4-5, 18). We are commanded by Jesus to conquer and overcome just as He overcame (Revelation 3:21). There are two realms: that of Christ Jesus, which is far above all others, and the realm of the god of this world (Ephesians 1:21-22, 2:2-3). The realm of Christ Jesus is the place of glory and virtue – the other is that of lust and iniquity (Colossians 1:13, 1 John 2:15-17).

The scriptures demand that we refuse the ways of the satanic and walk in the power of the new birth to conquer the evil one, because the greater One, Christ Jesus is in us. The world, its lust, and the spirit of antichrist have no power over the ones who are born again (John 16:33, 1 John 2:14, 4:4, 5:4-5, Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 2:26, 3:5, 12, 21). The overcoming power encapsulated in the Greek verb 'nikao' (νικάω), which means "to conquer," is found many times – making this doctrine absolute. It is found once in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 11:22), once in the Gospel of John (John 16:33), twice in Romans (Romans

- 14- I have written unto you fathers because you have known Him Who is from the beginning. I have written unto you young men³⁷, because you are mighty³⁸, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have conquered³⁹ the evil one.
- 15- Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, <u>the love</u> of the Father⁴⁰ is not in him.

3:4, 12:21), 5 times in the 1st Epistle of John (1 John 2:13, 14, 4:4, 5:4, 5), and 15 times in the book of Revelation (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21, 5:5, 6:2, 11:7, 12:11, 13:7, 15:2, 17:14, 21:7).

35 The "evil one," 'poneros' (πονηρός), is Satan. He is the one who rules in the realm of darkness, a place foreign and alien to those who walk in the light where there is no darkness (Acts 26:18, Colossians 1:13, 1 John 1:5). The evil one is referred to as the prince of this world, who Jesus cast out when He was crucified (John 12:31). He is also called the prince and the power of the air, the god of this world, and referred to as "spiritual wickedness" by Paul (Ephesians 2:2-3, 6:11-12).

 36 John chose to use an alternative word for little children in this instance. He used 'paidion' (παιδίον) here for the first time, whereas in the previous verses he used 'teknion' (τεκνίον). These two words are regarded as synonyms.

³⁷ To be an overcomer – one who has conquered Satan – you must believe the Word of God, live by the Word of God, and allow only the Word of God to describe what you believe. Those who John addresses are strong because the Word of God abides in them, which is also the theme of John 15. We are called to abide in the living Word and to allow His Word to abide in us. We are called and empowered to live His life, and as a result He lives in us (John 15:3). This is the overcoming power that overcomes the world and all that is in it: even our faith, which is the miracle of the new birth, Christ in us (John 3:3-6, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:27, 1 John 5:4). This is the faith of a new creation, born of the Spirit, joined unto the Spirit, and walking, living, and moving in the Holy Spirit! Our faith is all about the saving work of Jesus and living out His life that was given to us abundantly (John 4:14, 7:38, 10:10, 14:20, 23, 17:22). The saving work of Jesus is nothing short of being made a new creation, in which Christ Jesus dwells and His life expressed (John 3:3, Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 3:24, 4:4). God has given us a living faith, one that can be seen and heard! The Word of God that produces faith is the Word that framed the heavens and has also framed a new man. The most important thing to our heavenly Father is a new creature (Galatians 6:15). If we fail to believe in and recognize the miracle of the new creation that was brought forth by the Word and by the Spirit, then we cannot say that we are living in the faith, for this is what the faith is all about.

The spiritual war rages against that glorious and wonderful new thing that God brought forth. The satanic realm refuses to allow those begotten of the Spirit and of the Word to exist. However, through the new birth, Satan has lost all of his claims that he imposed upon a disobedient and fallen man. The focus of his attack is to bring into question that change. He questions the value, the degree, and the reality of the change so that he may attempt to regain his claim. Satan is the sower of the seeds of doubts and questions. With his harassment and interrogation, he attempts to erode the identity and the authority of the new life in Christ Jesus, with the ultimate purpose of extracting a confession that we are still to some degree under his domain. However, the testimony of the Father is: "Behold all things are new." He has given us the identity of sonship that testifies of Christ, which we must hold fast to (Hebrews 10:23).

³⁸ Those who are as young men in the kingdom of God are both strong (ischuros / ίσχυρός) and conquering (nikao / νικάω), because the Word of God abides in them. We were born of the Word and the Word has been written in the tables of our minds and hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3, Hebrews 8:10, 10:16, 1 Peter 1:23). If we abide in Christ Jesus and allow His Word to abide in us, then we will ask what we will and it will come to pass (John 15:6). Their victory and authority is observed over the evil one, the antichrist, and the world, in which the prince and the power of the air now reigns.

³⁹ We are at war against the world (John 16:33, 1 John 5:4), the evil one (1 John 2:13-14), and the antichrists (1 John 4:4). God has given us the ability through Christ Jesus to be untouched by its power (1 John 5:18, Luke 10:19).

⁴⁰ Contrary to popular humanism, there is absolutely nothing that belongs to the "world" that is of God. The world and all that is in it is opposed to God's holiness and purity. The world was designed by the prince and the power of the air, the god of this world that works in the children of disobedience. Its demonic design is to appeal to everything that belongs to the works of the flesh, also referred to as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. It is the actions of all of those who do not walk in the life of Jesus being led by the Spirit of Holiness. The contrast between God and the world couldn't be more clear,

16- Because everything that is in the world: the lust of the flesh⁴¹, the lust of the eyes⁴², and the pride of life⁴³, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

and the proof more certain. If you have a love for the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in you (James 4:4). The love of the Father, which is evidenced by our obedience to Him, is placed within our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and is the foremost proof of the new birth (John 13:35, 14:15, 21, 24, 15:10, Romans 5:5, Galatians 5:22, 1 John 2:5, 5:2). If we have His love in us, then we will love those things He loves, and we will obey Him (John 14:15, 23, 15:10, 1 John 3:10, 5:2-3). If we have received the gift of God, then we will never thirst for the world (John 4:10-14). The spirit of the world and its lust will come masquerading as our own desires, but the wisdom that we have received from God causes us to see it for what it is. Though the fleshly lusts of the world and the spirit of disobedience war against our souls, we have His overcoming power to withstand it – for greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world (Ephesians 2:2-3, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 John 4:4).

God is absolutely separate from the world, and has a burning wrath against all its sin and iniquity (Romans 1:18, Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 3:6). This should not be hard for anyone to understand, especially in view of the fact that the world is controlled by every evil enterprise of Satan (John 16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, 1 John 4:3-5, 5:19). If we are on the Lord's side, then how can we do anything less than hate those things that oppose the purity and the goodness of the Father? How could we ever be in league with all those things that grieve the Father's heart and violate His way of life? We have been given the blessed gift and invitation to come out from among them, and be separate with Him (2 Corinthians 6:17). We are called to separate ourselves from the the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit and perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). The door into His presence has been opened unto us. We have been given the life of Christ. This glorious fellowship with Almighty God in which everything that pertains to life and godliness is ours – so why would we ever go out and return to that place of death that despises the ways of the Lord? (John 15:1-5, 17:21-23, Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 1:13, Hebrews 10:19-21, 12:22, 2 Peter 1:3).

We are not of this world even as He is not of this world. We have been changed and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit to live a godly life (John 15:19, 17:14, 16, Titus 2:12, 3:5, 2 Peter 1:3-4). Our hearts have been united with the heart of the Lord, and our spirits made one with God. We are His sons and daughters, created in Christ Jesus to live in His ways. We have no love for worldly lusts, but rather are at war against them. We have been given the gifts of God's holiness and righteousness, and could not be more opposite from an ungodly world. We are to despise the evil, and have no fellowship with its works of darkness and its spirit of disobedience. Our citizenship is in Heaven, and as strangers and pilgrims we walk in the Spirit and abstain from fleshly lust - following in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, clothed with His majesty and honor.

⁴¹The phrase used in 1 John 2:16, "he epithymia tes sarkos" (ή έπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς / the desire of the flesh) is one of the identifiers of those who are not born of God (the Father). The desire of the flesh is a dimension of the wickedness that belongs to the world. It is opposite of the desire of the Spirit and something that we belonged to prior to salvation (Romans 8:9, Ephesians 2:3). It is opposed to the love of the Father. The love of the Father teaches us to "deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live righteously, godly, and soberly in this present world" (Titus 2:12). The word 'epithymiai' (ἐπιθυμίαι) means "desire" or "wish," and it is used in both a good and bad sense. In Philippians 1:23, Paul says, "My desire… is to be with Christ." On the other hand, it is used in a bad sense in John 8:44, "The Devil is your father and you carry out the desires of your father." John only uses the word 'sarx' (σάρξ / flesh) one time in his first epistle in relationship to the wickedness of the unredeemed man. When he uses the word two other times, he uses it in a good sense, referring to Jesus being manifested in the flesh (1 John 4:2, 3).

There are two approaches to understanding the "desires of the flesh," either in the Greek sense or the Hebrew. The Hebrew concept of the 'sarx' $(\sigma \acute{\alpha} \rho \xi / \text{flesh})$ includes all of man's weaknesses – not just sensual or carnal, but the realm of the purely human without divine help. This is still witnessed in the New Testament where the 'sarx' may be regarded as human knowledge (flesh and blood) distinct from divine revelation (Matthew 16:17, John 8:15, Galatians 1:16). Paul also regards the flesh as the power of sin that is opposed to the Spirit of God, a power that is removed by the circumcision of Christ (Romans 7:5, Colossians 2:11). The Greeks exclusively use 'sarx' to refer to eating, drinking, and illicit sexual relations. They would regard 'sarx' as being sensual and carnal, opposed to anything spiritual or pious. When we find flesh in the Bible, it would be incorrect to jump to a conclusion that every usage of "flesh" refers only to those things that are evil, for Christ Jesus was manifested in the flesh and suffered in the flesh. However, when we focus in on the phrase "desire of the flesh," we find an exclusive application to what is opposite of

17- And the world passes away and its desires⁴⁴, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

the Spirit of God and contrary to the will of the Father. "Put on Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh," "Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh," and "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Romans 13:14, Galatians 5:16-17, 24). In the New Testament, a clear distinction is made between those of the Spirit and those of the flesh. Yet at the same time, we know that Jesus became flesh and lived after the Spirit. Still the fact remains that the distinction between the flesh and the Spirit can be as radical as that of light and darkness, or simply a contrast between human ability and divine ability (Galatians 4:22-29). However, there is one thing that we can be certain of: God makes it essential that all men are born of the Spirit and live after the Spirit (John 3:6, Romans 8:9, 1 Peter 4:1). Now through the Grace of God that has brought to us this radical transformation of nature we are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (Romans 8:9). Therefore, let's yield to the Holy Spirit today and let Him lead us and guide us in every desire of our lives.

⁴² Everything in the world is antithetical to God. The satanic forces of Hell dominate this realm. There is nothing that is in the world that comes from the Father, directly or indirectly. Satan is the father of all sin and iniquity, and it is from him alone that this darkness has issued (John 8:44). The primary means of enticing men and leading them away from God is through that which may be seen, felt, and gained. One of the first things that we may ask is: what is the difference between the "desire of the flesh" and the "desire of the eye"? The "desire of the eye" would be those things that are attractive to view that could lead you away from the will of God and His purposes. For example, Eve saw the forbidden tree in Genesis 3:6 as "pleasurable to the eye and desirable." She did not have this attraction because of an evil nature at work in her, but under the influence of the suggestion of the satanic realm, she yielded herself to that which was not of God. Looking on that which was forbidden was not an evil act in and of itself - rather it became the means by which she was enticed by what God had forbidden. When men look on things that are forbidden by God, they open themselves up to be led away into an evil desire that results in immorality and ungodliness. Therefore, we need to recognize that it is essential for us to make a covenant with our eyes to turn away and not behold that which could lead us into disobedience (Job31:1). It may be said that the "desire of the eye" is that which entices the eye and the "desire of the flesh" is that which entices the body. Yet at the same time, one may argue that these two are in many respects synonymous. However, the eye looks for that which is beautiful and the body for that which is pleasurable. Now, one may say God made that which is beautiful and pleasurable and that is true. However, Satan has taken what God made, and twisted and perverted it. We must recognize that the satanic forces use the material realm of God's creation to set up their offensive against man and the will of God. It is absolutely essential that we learn to choose good and refuse evil. In the Old Testament, God expected His people to discipline themselves and be committed to obeying Him in all things. Even though they were not born from above and were without the change of heart and motive that is now given to us by the divine nature, yet it was their responsibility not to be involved with following after those things that would lead them into sin. "You shall remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them, and you shall not turn back toward the desire of your own heart and your eyes" (Numbers 15:39). Jesus is very clear on how someone should deal with anything that causes a person to sin: cut it off or pluck it out (Mark 9:43-48).

⁴³ The final phrase in this group of three is 'he alazoneia tou biou' (ή ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου). The Greek word 'alazoneia' (ἀλαζονεία) may be translated as "pride," "arrogance," or "boastfulness." It is difficult to define this word from a Biblical context, because it does not appear in any of the canonized book of the Old Testament and only twice in the New Testament. It is translated in the Authorized Version as "pride," but the Greek word used in 1 Timothy 3:6 is 'tuphotheis' (τυφωθείς), "Not a novice lest he be lifted up in pride."

Unfortunately, the English word "pride" is only found 3 times in the New Testament, and it is translated from a different word each time. The Greek word 'bios' (β ios) is found 10 times in the New Testament and means "livelihood," "the means of life," "life," or "duration of life." The Greek word 'bios' would be opposed to 'zoe,' (ζ o $\dot{\eta}$) which is used to identify eternal life – the life that one receives when they are born from above. This phrase can be translated as: pride of life, pride about one's means of livelihood, or pride about one's lifestyle. Be certain that you do not give a false value to the things that you can do and achieve in this natural and temporal life.

⁴⁴ From Matthew 7:21 to 1 John 2:17 we hear the cry of the Spirit of God warning all men that only those who do the will of the Father will remain. The world and its desires are only temporary. The world system that is opposed to the will of God and the Kingdom of God will be utterly destroyed. The god of this world

18- Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard, the antichrist⁴⁵ comes and now there are many antichrists here, whereby we know that it is the last time⁴⁶.

has already been judged, and one day his rule will come to an end and his influence will cease to exist forever (John 12:31, Ephesians 2:2, Colossians 2:15, Revelation 20:14). There is only one thing right now in the world of men that will endure forever and that is the Word of God (Psalm 119:89, Isaiah 40:8, Luke 16:17, 1 Peter 1:23-25). The psalmist said, "the Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul – the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statues of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:7-11).

Doing the will of the Father has many blessings associated with it. Obeying God converts the soul, makes the simple man wise, causes the heart to rejoice, brings enlightenment, and more benefits than can be numbered (Psalm 68:19, 103:2, Philippians 4:19). In reality, doing the will of the Father leads us to the greatest treasure that can be found: life forevermore! The reward of doing His will is not only eternal life, but abundant life. God created life, and He alone knows how it works. Just as there is a consequence for breaking the natural laws that govern the Earth, there is a consequence for breaking the spiritual laws that govern the Earth. If we want to walk in an abundance of blessings, then we will obey the spiritual laws and consequentially we will reap an abundant life that lasts forever. If we sow to the flesh, we shall reap corruption, but if we sow to that which belongs to God and give ourselves to being taught of the Holy Ghost, we will reap life forevermore (Job 4:8, Psalm 1, Proverbs 1:31, 11:18, Hosea 10:12, Romans 8:2, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 6:7-8, Ephesians 5:6).

⁴⁵ The word antichrist (antichristos / ἀντίχριστος) is only found in the first and second epistles of John. However, one may associate this with the false Christ ('pseudochristoi' / ψευδόχριστοι) of Matthew 24:24 and Mark 13:22. Additionally, this concept is further extended by Paul when he warns the church not be drawn away unto another Jesus (allon Iesoun / ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν) (2 Corinthians 11:4). When we relate the false Christ (pseodochristos /ψευδόχριστος) and an antichrist ('antichristos' / ἀντίχριστος) to the concept of those who preach another Jesus, we become more aware of the subtility of the deceptive trap that Satan uses to systematically erode the truth. Thus rather than radical substitution of the truth, men are blindsided by a continual and progressive erosion of the truth.

When John speaks of many antichrists, he is dealing with a spirit that runs contrary to both the person and revelation of Jesus. In like manner, Paul identifies the spirit of antichrist as any teaching different than what he taught about Christ (Galatians 1:8-9). There are many today who want Jesus to be different than what He is revealed to be in the Scriptures, and especially the revelation of who He is in Revelation chapters 1-3. Jesus came not only teaching the Word, but also healing the sick and casting out devils. There are many in the churches that do not want this kind of Jesus displayed in any form in their churches. Neither do they want a Jesus Who demands repentance and complete conformity to the will of God. They would not stand for a Paul who demanded that people be filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues (Acts 19:1-6). They would not stand for the ministry of Paul that would allow hankerchiefs to be taken from his body and laid upon the sick and diseased so that they might be cured (Acts 19:12). There is no room for the signs and the wonders of Jesus and of the apostles in many who believe that they are the true church of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:17-20, John 14:12, Romans 15:19, 29, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, Ephesians 4:13, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, Hebrews 2:4). Today we find little room for godliness, righteousness, holiness, the anointing, or the anointed One. Therefore, we are compelled to say that this is contrary to Christ, which is an antichrist spirit.

We must recognize that it is another Jesus that is being preached when the power of the cross can no longer deliver a man from sin and the power of Satan (1 Corinthians 1:18, Romans 6:13-21, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 3:8). Ultimately the error and the spirit of antichrist will culminate into the revelation of the "iniquitous one," who is also called the "son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). Yet while we wait for him, those who are engaged in the spirit of another Jesus are continually creating doctrines that allow them more and more room to walk in iniquity, and we observe an ever-increasing rejection of righteousness. The spirit of iniquity takes them deeper and deeper into compromises of all sorts until they are discovered to be the workers of iniquity (Matthew 7:23, Luke 13:27). This apostasy and preaching of another gospel and another Jesus are the results of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. The deception caused a departure from the Word of God and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and those who follow such lies become unable to endure sound doctrine. This is the spirit of antichrist, which will continue to overthrow the faith of many.

19- They went out from us, but they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would have remained with us, but that it might be manifested that not everyone is of us⁴⁷.

They are called by the scriptures false teachers, preachers, and apostles who come in the name of the Lord in the last days (1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:8, 4:3, 2 Peter 2:1, Jude 1:4, 18, Revelation 2:2). The final antichrist will proclaim himself to be God, and cause the desolation of the temple spoken of by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 8:13, 11:31, 12:11, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). But those that come before him in the same spirit continue to erode the truth of Christ Jesus, causing a defilement of the people of God with their wicked practices and compromises (Matthew 7:16-20). The true test of the believer is characterized by those who do the will of God which is the foundation of justification by faith (Matthew 7:21, Mark 3:35, Luke 6:47, Romans 5:1, 1 John 2:17). Sin will ultimately harden the heart and sear the conscience to the point that the truth cannot be received (Ephesians 4:19, 1 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 3:13). When mind-blinding spirits are submitted to, and the light that is in a person is darkness, there is little hope of deliverance (Matthew 6:23, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 2 Peter 1:9).

The antichrist spirit has been at work fighting against the anointing and those that are anointed of God since the beginning of man (Genesis 3:1-2). Satan's antichrist spirit has persecuted the anointing no matter where it is found. When Christ Jesus was born, the attack of Herod against every boy under three years of age was Satan's ruthless attack to destroy the anointed One (Matthew 2:16). After the resurrection of Jesus, the church went through one of its greatest struggles with the saints of God being persecuted, hunted, and killed. The powers of darkness have not let up. That same attack goes on against the doctrines of God and all of those anointed with the Holy Spirit. The sad thing is that these attacks are found within the ranks of those who claim to be the church and to know Christ Jesus. We must not be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). We must recognize that we are at war, and in this struggle against the forces of Hell. We must be strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord so that we can be strong for the fight (Ephesians 6:10-12). Satan would like nothing more than to erase any witness of Jesus Christ from the Earth, which is supplied by the Holy Spirit. When the power of the Holy Spirit is being revealed, nothing can be of greater provocation to the kingdom of Satan.

The primary focus of the antichrist spirit is to eliminate all things that belong to Christ from the heart and life of men. The attacks of the spirit of antichrist work alongside the mystery of iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Just as the spirit of Hell tempted and even lied against the truth in the past, even so today men find themselves bombarded with lies and compromise that leave them vulnerable to sin and iniquity. When we read of the beast kingdoms of Daniel 7 & 8 and of Revelation 12, 13, and 17, we are allowed to get a glimpse of the satanic assault that is against us now. We must understand that the rage of the antichrist spirit will only continue to get worse as the Day of the Lord approaches until ultimately the man of sin himself will be revealed, who will sum up everything that is antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8-12). The antichrist is referred to as the man of perdition and the one full of iniquity. He is full of evil and terror. He is everything that Satan can reveal of his character in a single man. He rises up in a time when the transgression is full, when sin and iniquity cannot get any worse (Jeremiah 25:30, Daniel 8:23, Joel 3:13, Matthew 24:12, Revelation 14:18). Let us rejoice though, for we now live in the age of the church, and if we are vigilant and sober we will defeat the powers of darkness everywhere they attempt to oppose us, because greater is He that is in us that he that is in the world (1 John 4:4)!

⁴⁷Betrayal and broken fellowship is the hallmark of rejecting Jesus. Judas was of course the model of this broken trust. We can also say that Satan, who is also called the Devil, did a similar thing when he rebelled against God. Everyone always has a legitimate reason as to why they can carry an offense and not walk in love and submission, but with God and His church, it is a manifestation of the heart.

One of the primary themes of the First Epistle of John is the love of the brethren and the fellowship that results from being in Christ. John takes the position early on in this epistle that fellowship with the saints is a proof of redemption and of fellowship with God, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, then we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The fellowship that we have with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equated with the fellowship that we have with those who are begotten of God (1 John 3:17, 4:12, 20, 5:2). If an individual does not have fellowship with God, then he cannot have fellowship with those who are begotten of God. Conversely, if there is no fellowship with the brethren, then it is being manifested that regardless of what a person believes or says, there is no fellowship with God. The First Epistle of John provides the proofs of fellowship to distinguish between those who are of God and those who are deceivers. The chief

characteristic that John gives of those who have been born of God is the love that they have for one another and their commitment to lay down their lives for one another (John 13:35, 1 John 4:7-8, 16).

⁴⁸Every person who has been born of God has received an anointing. The anointing that we have received causes us to both know the truth, and know those who are of the truth, specifically because of the fruits of righteousness that those born of God produce (Matthew 7:17-20, John 15:4-5, Romans 6:22, 2 Corinthians 1:21, Ephesians 5:9, Philippians, 1:11, Hebrews 12:11, James 3:17-18, 1 John 2:27). The Holy Spirit Who came to lead us and guide us also strengthens us to walk in every disposition of God (John 14:26, 16:13, 2 Peter 1:5-10, 1 John 1:7, 2:29, 3:7-8). The truth that the Holy Spirit teaches us and leads us into is the will of the Father described to us by the Word of God. Therefore, we are without excuse. The will of God has been perfectly revealed, and because our lives exist in Christ Jesus, the same anointing teaches us and empowers us to do what God demands. Thus the promises of God are fulfilled, as we are all being taught directly by God (Jeremiah 31:34, John 6:45, Hebrews 8:11)!

John tells us in verse 24 that we are to let what we have heard from the beginning abide in us. That which both they and we have heard from the beginning is the Gospel: the message that we have been set free from everything evil, and born into the kingdom of the dear Son as sons and daughters. God, Who in times past spoke to His people by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed as the heir of all things, and Christ Jesus the Son is still speaking the same things today as He did in the beginning (John 6:63, 17:17, Hebrews 1:1-2). It is the Word of the Scripture, which testifies of Him, and the Word of truth, which He spoke, and the Spirit of truth Who testifies of these things.

Therefore, if we abide in the Word and His Word abides in us, we know everything that Father requires of us. We know what is right and wrong, and who is of the truth and who is not. It is by the Word of God that we test every spirit, and judge between right and wrong teaching (1 Corinthians 14:29, Galatians 1:8-9, 1 John 4:1-6).

To anoint literally means "to pour ointment upon." However, we have been anointed in a special way: we received this anointing from God through the new birth. God, Who has anointed us together with Christ Jesus, has given us a new heart and a new spirit so that we may freely know everything in His heart: what eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has ever been understood in the past by man. (1 Samuel 16:13, Matthew 3:11, 1 Corinthians 2:9-11). The anointing that we have received teaches us to dwell in Christ Jesus and to live His life. Everything in the Old Testament, whether object or person, was consecrated to God by having the anointing oil poured upon it/him. When a priest, king, or prophet was commissioned with a divine ability for service, they were anointed with the holy oil. Today, we have been transformed by the Spirit, and anointed to function as sons of God (John 1:12, 1 John 3:1). Having received the Spirit of truth and the Word of truth, the saints know all those things that pertain to the truth because we are in Christ Jesus and walk in the Spirit of truth.

We may rest safely knowing that we are of the truth. We may be confident that because we are united with Christ, we will not hear the voice of another (John 10:4-5, 27). We live by the Word of God and may be confident that the Holy Spirit will always lead us into all truth, that which was once delivered unto the saints (Matthew 4:4, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, John 10:35, 16:11, Romans 10:8-17, 16:26, 2 Corinthians 2:17, 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2, Jude 1:3).

⁴⁹ The Lord has given us the ability to know what eyes have not seen, ears have not heard and what the heart of man has never understood – all by the revelation of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-10) The Holy Spirit has come to lead us, guide us, teach us, and help us - we just need to learn to listen. The first and most important way in which the Lord speaks to us is by His written Word. It is from the Word that we learn the ways of God and the rules of interacting with Him. It is through the Word of God that everything that is taught must be proven. The Lord established His written Word before the ministry of prophets began, and then it was both by the Word and the accuracy of their prophecies that prophets were to be judged (Deuteronomy 18:22, Isaiah 8:20, Jeremiah 28:9). Peter heard the audible voice of the Lord, but called the Word a more certain revelation (2 Peter 1:17-19). Today the Spirit of the Lord has been poured out upon all flesh so that each person can walk in the unction and inner witness of the Holy Spirit. Now each person can be taught directly by God, and can receive divine insights directly from Him (John 6:45). For "they shall all be taught of the Lord" (Isaiah 54:13, Jeremiah 31:34, Hebrews 8:11). Yet this does not eliminate the place that God has given to those who He has placed in leadership in His church to watch over our souls (Acts 20:28-32, Ephesians 4:11, Hebrews 13:17). Furthermore, God would have every word, including the one each individual receives or gives, established in the mouth of two or three witnesses (1 Corinthians 14:29, 2 Corinthians 13:1).

- 21- I have not written because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, for there is not one lie that is of the truth.
- 22- Who is a liar? The one that denies that Jesus is the Christ: He is an antichrist that denies the Father and the Son⁵⁰.
- 23- All that deny the Son⁵¹ do not have the Father⁵². He who confesses the Son also has the Father.

The Holy Spirit has come to be both with us and in us. Each person has been given the honor of a personal and intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. Yet if a person rejects God's divine order and rebels against the order that He established in His church, it would be evident that they are not listening to the Spirit of truth. We cannot be disobedient and rebellious against what God has established and be in a position to say that we hear from God. We should all walk in great humility that we have been given the kind of relationship with the Holy Spirit that allows us to hear directly from the Lord. There is an inner witness and a divine unction that those whose hearts are right can come to rely on. Those who hear from the Lord are going to be found doing what the Word of truth says. The Spirit of truth will never lead someone to do something outside of the Word of truth. God will never contradict Himself. Furthermore, if you love and honor the anointing, then you are going to love and honor everyone who is anointed of the Lord

The Lord has poured out His Spirit upon all flesh, and the voice of prophecy can be heard coming from all of God's people. The ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit has been given to all of God's people. Yet it is important to understand that this outpouring of God's gifts and the operation of those gifts are defined in the context of His church (Acts 2:1-4, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28, Colossians 1:18). God the Holy Spirit has given to each person the manifestation of the Spirit: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, discerning of spirits, prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. While God in His grace has made each person a vital part of the expressions of all these heavenly gifts, it should also be equally appreciated that the Lord has given special gifts to lead, perfect, and instruct the body of Christ: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. While we may all speak as the oracles of God, it should be recognized that this is even more true of His overseers who speak in His stead. Those who know and hear from God will be both submitted to Him as well as His servants (1 Corinthians 14:6, 1 Peter 4:11).

⁵⁰ It is not only a lie to deny the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the spirit of antichrist. Also, to deny the Father and the Son is the spirit of antichrist. Father gave His only begotten Son, and when we refuse to believe the report that the Father gave of His Son, we make God a liar (1 John 5:10). It is here and in verse 18 that we first discover the word "antichrist" in the Bible. God defines for us the antichrist spirit. There were many antichrists during the days of John, and there are many antichrists now. The person who is antichrist is more perfectly defined in these verses: they are those who are of a lie and do not belong to the truth. To believe in the Father and the Son, we must recognize that they are the only true God, and that there is none beside them.

"Hear oh Israel, Yehoah (YHVH / יְהֹוָה) your God, Yehoah (YHVH / יְהוָה) is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4)! The Word Who was God and was with God became flesh, and we beheld the glory of the only begotten of the Father (John 1:1, 14). The Eternal Word was hidden in the bosom of the Father until the time that He was incarnated into flesh. The psalmist said, "I will declare the decree: Yehoah (YHVH / אוֹן אָר (You are my Son, this day have I begotten you" (Psalm 2:7). David further distinguished the Father from the Son when He said, "Yehoah (YHVH / יְהֹוָה) said to my Adonai (Lord), 'Sit on My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool" (Psalm 110:1, Luke 20:42, Acts 2:34, Hebrews 1:13, 10:13). No one can come to the Father except by His Son (John 14:6). If you refuse the Son, you cannot know the Father. It is impossible to have a relationship with the Father unless one is willing to have a relationship with His Son, Christ Jesus (Matthew 10:32-33, John 5:23, 1 John 5:12, 2 John 1:9). Father redeemed humanity through His Son. It does not matter who you are, whether Jew or Gentile, there is no way to the Father but through the Son (Acts 4:12, John 6:45, 14:6).

During the first covenant, God provided a means to approach Him through the sacrifices prescribed in the Law (Leviticus 1:3, Hebrews 10:1, 8:5, 9:9, 11, 23). All of these sacrifices spoke of the coming Redeemer Who would deliver mankind from the rebellion of Adam and slavery to a fallen nature (Romans 5-6, Ephesians 4:24, Hebrews 10:16, 2 Peter 1:4). Today, all that was declared in the Law has been fulfilled through Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17, Luke 24:44, John 5:39). God's promise is with His Son, and His people are those who call upon the name of Jesus (Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, 4:12, 22:16, Romans 10:13, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Ephesians 2:15).

- 24- What you have heard from the beginning, let it remain in you⁵³. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you shall remain in the Son and in the Father.
- 25- And this is the promise that He has promised us: eternal life.
- 26- I write this to you concerning those who deceive you⁵⁴.
- 27- And the anointing⁵⁵ that you have received from Him abides in you, (and you do not need that anyone teach you, but the anointing teaches⁵⁶ you about everything and is no lie) and just as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him⁵⁷.

⁵² Many would hope to eliminate a distinction between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. From a Jewish perspective, the trinity would be a hard revelation to fully embrace. The heart of the Jewish belief is "Hear oh Israel, Yehoah your Elohim, Yehoah is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). However, this does not eliminate the revelation that God (Elohim / אֵלֹהֶים) was revealed in the plural form and manifested as three distinct individuals even throughout the Old Testament, albeit in a somewhat veiled manner. The plurality of the monotheistic Elohim is first observed in Genesis 1:26, "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our own image, after Our likeness," and again in Genesis 3:22, "Behold the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil." The argument may continue with the distinction made between Yehoah God and the Spirit of God in Genesis chapter 1. Also, three are witnessed with the visitation of those Three Who came to Abraham in the plain of Mamre when Yehoah appeared to Abraham, certainly not a coincidence (Genesis 18:2). And although there are many more examples, let us conclude with the scripture that Jesus quoted to the Pharisees who were being challenged by the concept of Jesus being the Son of Yehoah, as well as having always existed with Him: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit on My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool." This passage is quoted from Psalm 110:1, which literally reads, "Yehoah said to Adonai (my Lord), 'Sit on My right hand..." The question that the Pharisees were unable to answer still remains a puzzle to many today – if David called the Christ his Lord, how then is He his Son? Let us believe the Word of God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word was made flesh" (John 1:1, 14a).

si If we will not let ourselves be corrupted by the many ideas and philosophies that men try to build around the simplicity of the gospel, we will continue to believe the message that was delivered at the beginning (2 Corinthians 11:3) when Christ Jesus first spoke. The simplicity of the gospel revealed that we are in Christ Jesus and He is in us. We are to dwell in Christ Jesus, Who has brought forth a new life – His life in everyone who has believed. The faith is that simple, and we are to live as He lived and walk as He walked. The chief theme of John's message is to "abide in Christ Jesus."

John uses the Greek word 'planao' $(\pi\lambda\alpha\nu\dot{a}\omega)$ to describe that which threatens to corrupt the minds of men and draw them away from the simplicity of the Gospel. It may be translated as "deceive," "seduce," or "cause to wonder." These deceivers believed that they had fellowship with God, even though they walked in darkness – denying Jesus and believing and speaking lies. Denying Jesus goes beyond the recognition of a historical person. Denying Jesus is also observed in denying that He purchased our salvation and brought to pass a real change in our lives. Many say that they believe in Him, but do not believe that He changed their nature and made them a new creation – thus they deny the Lord Who bought them (2 Peter 2:1). The doctrines propagated by Satan to attempt to nullify the miracle of salvation had already begun to affect the church in the days of John.

55 We have received an amazing anointing (chrisma / χρῖσμα) from God. We have received the Holy Spirit to be trained in all the ways of God. We have been anointed with the Holy Ghost to be sons of God (John 1:12, Romans 8:14, Galatians 4:6-7, Philippians 2:15, 1 John 3:1) Because of the indwelling of God, we overcome the wicked one and all of his deceivers (1 John 4:1-4). When God gave us an anointing, He imparted the divine ability to accomplish the task and meet the demands of the office to which we have been called, just as He did when He anointed a priest, prophet, or king (Exodus 28:41, 29:7, Leviticus 8:12, 1 Samuel 10:1,16:13, 26:11, 2 Samuel 2:4, 5:3, 1 Kings 19:16, Psalms 2:2, 133:2, 2 Peter 1:3). Fundamental to the New Testament is the essential need for us to believe that when we were born of God, the very Spirit and nature of Christ was born in us (John 3:5, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 1:27, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 3:24, 4:4, 15) Thus the cry of the Spirit through John: "abide in Christ Jesus!" In that we know that it is the Holy Spirit Who has come to teach us, and that His Spirit is on the inside of us to give us the divine ability to live the life of Christ, then we must also recognize that the anointing also refers to the Holy Spirit as well.

The word "Christ" (Christos / Χριστὸς) comes from the word "anoint" (chrio / χρῖω) from whence "anointing" (chrisma / χρῖσμα) is derived. Thus when we use the word Christ, we are talking about the

Anointed One. In the book of Daniel (Daniel 9:26), it is this word that is used in the Septuagint to translate Messiah (meshiyach / κρῖσμα): "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah (chrisma / χρῖσμα) be cut off, but not for Himself' (Cambridge Paragraph Bible). Today, those who have been transformed by the power of God through the faith that is in Christ Jesus have received the anointing of the Anointed One. We have not received the anointing of a priest or king or prophet, but the anointing of the Son – and it is God Who has anointed us and established us together in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

When the anointing was given to Saul by the Holy Spirit, his heart was changed, and he became another man with new skills and abilities. When we received the anointing of sonship, the Spirit of God came upon us and made us a new creation, giving us a new heart and a new spirit – making us partakers of God's divine nature (Ezekiel 36:26-27, 2 Peter 1:4). He gave us a heart and a spirit that is joined unto His, and made us one heart and one spirit with Him (John 17:21-22, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 12:13). The anointing that we have received from Him has empowered us to be conformed to the image of the Son (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18). It has empowered us to walk even as He walks and to represent Christ Jesus in every way.

we have received the anointing that we might fellowship with God – that we might know God and be taught of Him. The depth of this fellowship is captured in the concept of abiding in Christ, which refers to our oneness with Him (John 14:23, 15:1-5, 17:21-23). In the Old Testament, the anointing is first identified with respect to both worshipping God and consecrating a place of worship to Him (Genesis 31:13, Exodus 30:26, 40:9-11). It is also the ability given to men so that they might minister to God, which is captured in the priestly anointing (Exodus 28:41, 30:30, 40:13, 15). Both of these relationship aspects of the anointing are presented in this verse. The abiding presence of Jesus and the Father are brought to us by the Holy Spirit (John 14:17, 1 John 3:24). By this anointing, we are empowered to participate in the divine life of God. Through this anointing, the Holy Spirit leads us, guides us, and reveals the ways of the Father to us. The anointing is a divine empowerment and supernatural ability that has been given to the believer to know God and live the life of a new creation. The message of the Gospel is that we are to abide in Jesus. It is through this union with Christ Jesus that we are empowered to live the life of Christ Jesus.

One may rightly say that there are two purposes for the anointing: to know God, and also to be empowered with special abilities for the deliverance of others. When David was anointed to be king, he was given the divine ability to be a king – prior to the anointing he was an ordinary man (1 Samuel 10:1, 6). The same is true of all Old Testament prophets, priests, warriors, and special workmen. When the Spirit came upon them, they were empowered with a specific divine ability to carry out their divine commission (Exodus 36:1-2, Joshua 10:12, Judges 14:19).

The anointing provides far greater ability than anyone can have through innate human capabilities. Even as Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost to set the captives free and do the mighty works of God, the same anointing of power has been made available to us as the sons of God (Luke 4:18-19, Acts 1:8, 10:38). However, we must keep in mind that the ability to function in His divine power is secondary to knowing God and being developed in His divine nature. Certainly nothing can compare to the privilege of walking with God and being empowered with the ability to serve Him with perfect obedience, doing His will from the heart (Matthew 7:22-23, 1 John 2:14, 5:4, Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3: 5, 12, 21).

The Holy Spirit's instruction and guidance is all focused on us living our lives in Christ Jesus. Abiding in Christ means we live His life. The terms of the covenant that Jesus made with us is that we abide in Him and He abides in us (John 15:4a). It is essential that we recognize that our whole lives consist by Him, and we accept this great grace that has been given to us to live our lives and have our whole identity in Christ Jesus. We are given a continual supply of His love, His joy, His peace, and His relationship with the Father, but we must learn to obey and yield ourselves to Him! This life is not even possible until we are willing to be who He has called us to be and view our only reason for living as to do the will of the Father. All these spiritual blessings and divine riches are ours, but we must choose to always have them by choosing to live our lives in Christ. We must not live for ourselves, but for Him. Truly if we lose our life we can have His. When we accept and surrender to the life that was purchased for us in Christ Jesus, we will not live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who died and arose again (2 Corinthians 5:15). We are His living epistles, and we carry the responsibility to allow Him to be manifested through us (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Just as in the Old Testament, where only a select and special group of men were anointed to be either a priest, a king, or a prophet, something far greater has been made available now (Exodus 28:41, 40:13, 1 Samuel 9:16, 10:1, 16:13, 1 Kings 1:39, 19:16, Psalm 105:15). Today, anyone who is willing is given the opportunity to be anointed to be a child of God and baptized in the fullness of His glory and presence – an anointing to dwell in Christ Jesus. Just as in the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord came

- 28- And now little children, abide in Him, so that when He shall appear you will have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
- 29- If you know that He is righteous, you also know that everyone that does righteousness is begotten⁵⁸ of Him.

Chapter 3

1- Look at what amazing⁵⁹ love the Father has given to us: that we should be called the children⁶⁰ of God! The world does not know us, because it did not know Him⁶¹.

upon us, but instead of receiving a special ability to be a priest, king, or prophet – we were born of God and empowered to be the sons of God. When we are born of God, we become a new creation, and are called the children of God (John 1:12, 3:3-6). Now this is a special gift belonging only to us now in Christ, for no such authority belonged to those of Old Testament times.

When we are born of God, we are given a special anointing to walk as the sons and daughters of the Most High. The anointing that we have received abides in us, and gives us the insight and understanding to know how to abide in Jesus. Jesus told us that without Him we could do nothing, and therefore it is essential that we know how to abide in Him, so that our whole life consists of those things that belong to God (John 15:5). The anointing that we have received causes us to understand how to be led by the Holy Spirit, Who has come to lead us into all of the truth, and to reveal all that the Lord Jesus has freely given us (John 16:13-15, Romans 8:14).

The prophet Jeremiah also revealed that those of the New Covenant would be taught by God (Jeremiah 31:34, John 6:45, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, Hebrews 8:11). The prophet Ezekiel declared that we would receive a new heart and a new spirit, and that God would put His Spirit within us, so that we would be able to walk in His decrees and keep His judgments (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26-27). Simply believe what God has said and give yourself to walking in the nature of Christ: to love like He loves, to rejoice in His joy, and to walk in His peace. Let His Word abide in you by filling yourself with the things that are written in the Bible. Recognize that His words are the instructions of life. Whatever He says, do it, and the same kind of miracle that turned the water into wine will also be revealed to you so that you can walk in the heavenly realm. There is no greater life than the life of God, so choose to walk with God and to dwell in the life of Christ Jesus, and God's manifest presence will be revealed in you!

⁵⁸ The message of walking in the light as He is in the light is reiterated as righteousness. The test of being begotten of God is doing righteousness on the scale of His righteousness. We are the people of God that are created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24), as well as those who have been given the righteousness of God (Romans 3:22), and who are made the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, as the test of those who truly had fellowship with God was witnessed by walking in the light as He is in the light, so also is it proven by walking in righteousness just as He walked in righteousness. If we know God, we are going to do righteousness, which is repeated again in the following verses – "let no one deceive you; he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John 3:7).

⁵⁹ Look at how much amazing love the Father has given to us! The Lord has lavished His love upon us by not just redeeming us, but bringing us into sonship. The sonship that we have received and function in by the Holy Spirit has made us heirs of God and coinheritors with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:14-17, Galatians 4:6-7).

60 It is one thing when men call themselves the sons of God – it is altogether a different thing to be called a son of God by God Himself. Our relationship with God cannot be better expressed than that which was spoken by Jesus when He said, "But go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God'" (John 20:17). Although the word for "children" (tekna / τέκνα) is used here instead of "sons" (uioi / vioi) as in Galatians 4:6, the same meaning is implied. Although Jesus Christ is the eternal God, He became the only begotten Son of God, and without Him no man or woman can become a child of God. Through Jesus, the Spirit of God comes upon us and changes us, and we become begotten of God, and are made family members to Christ Jesus (Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:12-14). Whether we are male or female, we find our place in God through Christ Jesus the Son of God.

God has made us members of His family. We are not children of God because we were born into the world, but we are children of God because we were born into the Kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit. It is essential to the New Testament doctrine and faith in Christ Jesus that we know that we have been born of God (John 3:5-8, 1 Peter 1:3, 23, 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18). More than anything else, God has

- 2- Beloved, we are now the children of God! And it has not yet been manifested what we shall be⁶², but when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is⁶³.
- 3- And everyone that has this expectation in Him purifies⁶⁴ himself even as He is pure⁶⁵.

purposed that we take on the identity of His Son – and that of His family (2 Corinthians 6:18, Ephesians 3:15). As the children of God, we are not only privileged to be heirs and coinheritors with Jesus Christ, but also empowered to be conformed to His image, Who is the first born among many brethren (John 1:12, Romans 8:17, 29).

⁶¹ One of the primary themes of the First Epistle of John is fellowship. Within the definition of fellowship with God is the absence of fellowship with the world and its darkness. The proof that we know God and are His people is discovered in view of us having no fellowship with the world. Even as Jesus said concerning those who worked iniquity, "Depart from Me, I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23), we are not to know the world – and in turn they do not know us. There is to be no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, which is equivalent to fellowship with the world (Ephesians 5:11). We recognize that all that is in the world is not of the Father (1 John 2:16-17). Everything that is of the world is opposed to God, and friendship with it is an act of hostility against God (James 4:4). Because we are born of God, the world cannot relate to us or have any real connection to us – we are of another Spirit and kind.

⁶² Father has given us the right to be His children simply by the act of believing on the name of Jesus and then receiving His work of grace into our hearts (John 1:12, Romans 10:9-10). As the sons of God, we have been made heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ Who is the only begotten Son of God (Romans 8:17). Through the miracle of the new birth, we were begotten of God, of the Spirit, of the Word, and of the resurrection (John 3:5, 1 Peter 1:3, 23, 1 John 5:1). Being the sons of God, we are also called the sons of light – because we are born of the truth to reveal the glory of God (Matthew 5:14-16, John 12:36, Ephesians 5:8, Colossians 1:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:5, 1 Peter 2:9). Those who are the sons of God have been given the privilege and ability to be guided by the Spirit in their day-to-day activities (Romans 8:14). It is the Father's desire that every son be trained up by the Holy Spirit so that in every way we are conformed to the image of His only begotten Son, Jesus (Romans 8:29). God expects us as His sons to be consecrated to the holiness and purity of Jesus, our Savior (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). On that day when Christ Jesus appears, we shall also appear with Him in glory, receive our eternal and glorified bodies, and see Him as He is. Although He dwells in light no man can approach unto, nor can any man see, yet as His sons we will be allowed to see Him as He is (1 Timothy 6:16). This event demarcates the time when all things will be made new. The bondage of corruption will be removed from all creation at the time of the resurrection of all the sons of God. It is for this reason that all creation groans, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God that will be revealed at the time of the resurrection (Romans 8:19).

⁶³ Even though John was allowed to look upon Christ Jesus and handle him with his hands, there still remains a far more extraordinary revelation of Him yet in the future. The revelation of Jesus is reserved for that time that we are allowed to see Him in all of His glory. Just as Jesus has given us the glory that He had in His earthly ministry, He will also share with us in the eternal glory that He has with a resurrected body. One day, the corruptible body will put on incorruption, just as Jesus showed us in the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:42-55). As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:49). Our vile corruptible bodies will be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body (Philippians 2:21). This does not mean that we will be equal to Him, for He will always be God, and we His servants. He is the Redeemer, and we are the redeemed.

64 It is of the utmost importance that we recognize how a person is purified. It is only by the blood of Jesus Christ that one is made pure (1 John 1:7, 9, 2:2). The word 'hagnizein' (ἀγνίζειν) is a rare word in the Greek New Testament. It is used in the Old Testament for ritual purification. One example is in Exodus 19:10-11, where God commanded Moses to make the people pure, because the Lord was going to appear before all of the people. The Levites also had to purify themselves before going into the presence of the Lord (Numbers 8:21). The concept of ritual purification is further emphasized by the following word used to describe the ritual purity of Jesus, 'hagnos' (ἀγνος).

The idea being related is that once a person is made pure by the blood of Jesus, then they are to continue in that purity, even as we are to be holy because He made us holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). We are called to live consecrated lives so as not to be contaminated by yielding our members to sin, for He was manifested to take away our sin, and in Him is no sin. As Paul said, "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the spirit and flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). What is important to recognize is that Paul said this in light of us being righteous,

- 4- Everyone who acts sinfully also does iniquity⁶⁶, for sin is iniquity.
- 5- And we know that He was manifested⁶⁷ to take away sins, and in Him is no sin⁶⁸.

not unrighteous, light, not darkness, Christ, not Belial, the temple of God, not the house of idols, and the sons of God who touch not the unclean things (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

 65 The word 'hagnos' (ritually pure / ἀγνος) is never used in the Gospels to describe the purity and holiness of Jesus. A closely related word, yet distinctively different, is 'hagios' (ἄγιος / holy). The first time that 'hagnos' appears in the New Testament is in 2 Corinthians 7:11 to describe the true heart and repentance of those at Corinth. It is used by Paul in the context of that which is pure or chaste (2 Corinthians 7:11, 11:2, Philippians 4:8, 1 Timothy 5:22, Titus 2:5). The way that it is used by both James and Peter also denotes that which is chaste, being of pure thoughts, and clear of any immorality (James 3:17, 1 Peter 3:2). We are called to walk in the same obedience and purity that Jesus walked in (1 Peter 2:21, 1 John 1:7, 2:6). The blood of Jesus purified us from all sin and iniquity, and now we are to remain pure and chaste, free from the contamination of immorality and unholy behavior.

66 The word 'anomia' (ἀνομία) finds its ultimate meaning in the mystery of iniquity, the great falling away of the last days, and the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:7). However, it may be translated as "iniquity," "without law," "lawlessness," or "transgression of the law." It is the opposite of righteousness and holiness in every conceivable way. As doing righteousness and knowing God are joined together, even so are doing iniquity and not knowing God paired together. It is the description of those who are rejected and condemned by God (Matthew 7:23). Sin is revealed to be the acts of iniquity here in 1 John 3:4. It is shown to be synonymous with sin in the Septuagint, "Happy are they whose iniquities (anomia / ἀνομία) were forgiven and whose sins (hamartia / ἀμαρτία) were covered" (Psalm 32:1). In the New Testament, it is also paired with that which causes the offense: "The Son of man shall send out His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause to stumble (scandalon / σκάνδαλον), and them which do iniquity (anomia / ἀνομία) (Matthew 13:41). It is translated by the Hebrew word 'beleaal' or 'belial' (τζέυτ) in Psalm 18:4 (KJV), 18:5 (BHS), 17:5 (LXX), and 2 Samuel 22:5. Although 'belial' means "worthlessness," "ungodly," or "wicked men," it became a technical term for the Devil in both the community of Oumran and in the New Testament - 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 says, "for what fellowship has righteousness with iniquity (anomia / ἀνομία)? And what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial?" We are not the sons of 'belial' that we should walk in iniquity and sin (John 8:44, Ephesians 2:2, 1 John 3:8), We are the sons of God, and are to in every way imitate our Father Who is in Heaven (John 1:12, Ephesians 5:1, 1 John 3: 1-2, 7).

⁶⁷ The incarnate divine Word was revealed to take away sin by His birth, public ministry, crucifixion and resurrection. Adam's failure to obey God resulted in man's downfall and destruction, but through the obedience of Jesus Christ all men can be set free! Through Adam everyone died, but through Jesus all who will believe are made alive. Because of Adam's disobedience all mankind became disobedient, but through the obedience of Christ Jesus all who believe are made obedient. Through Adam's sin all men became sinners, but through the righteousness of Jesus Christ all who will believe are made righteous (Romans 5:12-21, 1 Corinthians 15:22).

68 Christ Jesus is the only place that men can find freedom from the dominion of sin, and power to live in the purity and splendor of God's holiness. Being "in Christ" is an expression of the relationship that we have been given through His salvation. Instead of continuing to live our own life of defeat and failure, we now live a victorious life in Him. John also refers to this place of purity and glory as being "in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7). It is His presence that results in purity and the power to live Holy. Purity and holiness belong to all who are willing to abide in Christ, which is emphasized in the next verse, "Everyone who abides in Him has no sin, everyone that sins has not seen Him nor known Him." The first thing to understand is God's commitment to forgive us, train us, and establish us. There is abundant mercy with God, which was expressed in amazing ways as He dealt with rebellious people in the Old Testament – how much more now in this time of great grace? God has given us the blood of Jesus to cleanse us, and the Holy Spirit to empower us and teach us. He has given us by His own power everything that we need to walk in His glory and purity (2 Peter 1:3). God is devoted to establishing us in all of His love for righteousness and hatred of evil. All we have to do is be committed to learning.

If we will remain in agreement and submission to Christ Jesus, consecrated to His ways and to the Holy Spirit, there will be no sin. Why? Because Christ Jesus will never lead us into the realms of the demonic – He has brought Heaven into our lives and has given us a life far superior to the one that is ruled by the lust of this world. The same is true of being led by the Holy Spirit. We know that all who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God (Romans 8:14). If a person is always in submission to the Holy Spirit, then

6- Everyone who abides in Him does not \sin^{69} . Everyone that sins has neither seen⁷⁰ Him nor known Him.

they will never be led to do anything contrary to the will of God. A similar concept is found in verse 9 below, which includes agreement and submission to the Word of God, resulting in a realm of absolute purity. Being "in Christ" is a message that is delivered many times by the Apostle Paul, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature", (2 Corinthians 5:17). The fact that the benefits of salvation are only received through our willingness to be "in Christ" is communicated in many verses of scripture throughout the New Testament (Romans 3:24, 8:1-2, 39, 12:5, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30, 15:18, 22, 2 Corinthians 1:21, 2:14, 17, Galatians 3:28, 6:15, Ephesians 1:3, 10, 2:6, 10, Colossians 1:28).

If we will walk in the light as He is in the light, we have the blood of Jesus that is our cleansing — we have a fellowship and a communion with Him that is entirely found in the blood of Jesus and the bread of Heaven, which is His body (John 6:58, 1 John 1:7). We have been given the best thing to live by, through the sacrifice of our Savior. If we sin, He is our Intercessor and Advocate Who is faithful and just to cleanse us (1 John 1:9, 2:1). He works with us until the only legitimate response to His love is established in our lives: perfect obedience.

⁶⁹ The one thing that God's people should be more interested in than anything else is the ability to live free from sin. After all, it is sin that started the whole problem in the first place! It was sin that brought about death and destruction (Romans 5:12-19). Jesus Christ, the eternal God, came into the world to destroy sin – and He did not fail (1 John 3:8). He suffered on the cross so that we would be cut off from sin and be empowered to live unto righteousness (1 Peter 2:24). Sin is the spirit of disobedience. It is the foremost enemy of God and man. If we will hearken to the voice of God, then we will count sin as the enemy of our souls, and realize that God has given us everything that we need to defeat spiritual wickedness and every fleshly lust that wars against our souls (1 Peter 2:11).

There is nothing that offends and grieves the heart of our Heavenly Father more than sin. Sin carries with it the absolute penalty of death: as much now as ever before. Therefore, we must learn to effectively deal with sin at every point that we encounter it. There are those who talk of sin's great power, and tell us that we must sin everyday. The power of sin is blown up to be greater than the power of the cross, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. Spiritual wickedness is by inference given greater authority than the strength of the Lord and the power of His might (1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 6:10-11). Theologians and preachers alike will tell us that there is still something about our nature that needs to be fixed before we can consistently say "no" to sin and the demonic influences that inspire it. When they attempt to explain just what needs to be fixed and how it will be fixed, they are found tripping over scriptures and contradicting what Christ Jesus said He finished at Calvary.

The subject of sin is the foremost subject of Scripture. The Bible focuses from cover to cover on how hideous sin is to God, and what He will do to destroy it and redeem men from its power. Sin is so evil to God that He made a Hell to contain it. If we agree with God, then we should feel the same way about it. When we begin in Genesis, in the first few chapters we discover that the wages of sin is death (Genesis 2:17). God made it clear to Adam that disobedience to His will would only result in death. Then when Adam disobeyed, the Earth and all mankind suffered the consequences. Death entered into the world by sin, and the dominion and reign of it came upon all men (Genesis 3:6-23, Romans 5:12-19, Ephesians 2:2). As soon as man disobeyed and opened the door to death through sin, God made an immediate plan for the overthrow of sin. He made plans for the redemption of men by bringing forth Christ Jesus, the Seed of a woman, Who would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15, Matthew 1:18, Galatians 4:4, Revelation 12:9). Then when we come to the last prophet and book of the Old Testament, Malachi, we still hear of God's testimony against sin and His pronouncement of judgment against it: "For behold the day comes that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yes, and all who do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that comes shall burn them up,' says the Lord of hosts, 'so that it shall leave them neither root nor branch'" (Malachi 4:1). God's war on sin will not come to an end until the last enemy, Death, is destroyed (Isaiah 25:8, Hosea 13:14, 1 Corinthians 15:26, Revelation 20:14). God's war against sin and His commitment to its destruction is personified in Christ Jesus. The introduction to the New Covenant begins by announcing the birth of the Redeemer, the Seed of the woman, "that will save His people from their sin" (Matthew 1:21, 2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8). Zacharias, the father of the prophet John, upon hearing of the ministry of his son and the coming of the Messiah, said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people," and, "that He would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear: in holiness and in righteousness before Him all the days of our life" (Luke 1:68, 74-75). Then at the end of the Bible in Revelation 22:11, the final judgment

7- Little children, let no one deceive you: he who does righteousness⁷¹ is righteous, just as He is righteous.

on sin is pronounced: "He that is unrighteous, let him be unrighteous still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still." All those who died in their sins were cast out of God's presence and into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).

It does not matter where we turn in the Scripture, God's judgment against sin and disobedience is the focus. His plan to rid the world of sin and its iniquity, and to create a new Heaven and a new Earth where only righteousness exists, is revealed in every generation of man (2 Peter 3:13). Whether we look at the Gospels or the epistles, the doctrine of God and His judgment against sin and disobedience is found. Peter had a radical testimony regarding the doctrine of holiness and a life purified from all sin. He demanded that everyone who had received the divine nature give all diligence to making their calling and election sure. He demanded that diligent attention be given to faith, virtue, knowledge, self control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and divine love (2 Peter 1:4-11). In His doctrine of holiness, he placed the same demand that God had placed upon the children of Israel in the first covenant, saying, "be holy for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16, 3:11, 14). Peter made it a requirement that God's people be obedient to the Word of God if salvation were to be a reality in their lives (2 Peter 1:19). Yet the testimony of John was even more intense. For John, sin was removed by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and could not exist in those who were born of Him (1 John 1:6, 9, 2:1, 4, 6, 10, 13-14, 17, 29, 3:3, 5-10, 24, 4:4, 5:18).

God, Who worked for us the miracle of salvation, demands that we now become obedient children who walk in the Spirit and live by His Word. Are you willing to risk your eternity to continue in sin, still expecting to be acceptable to God? A man may say, "Well, I believe in the love and mercy of God." Well, that is good! However, as soon as someone teaches or believes that they can continue in sin and then die in the practice of sin and still be called righteous, holy, and acceptable by God – then that is heresy, because there is nothing in the Bible that suggests that will be the case. Instead, God reveals just the opposite: God commands all men everywhere to turn from their sin and live in righteousness and godliness (Acts 17:30). He brought to pass the miracle of salvation through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and now demands righteousness and true holiness in our lives (Ephesians 4:24, Titus 3:5). ⁷⁰ The power to overcome the thirst for sin is only found in knowing God. Jesus gave the woman at the well of Samaria the remedy for her sin. All she needed to do was to receive the gift of God and drink of the Spirit, and she would never thirst for the things of the world again (John 4:10, 14). Jesus gave us an allegory in John 15 to describe how He desires us to live our lives in Him. We are to abide in Him as a branch abides in the vine. This kind of relationship and dependence upon the life and power of God will result in our constant obedience and success. We can be certain that by the time that John was addressing the church with this epistle, there were many who had never physically seen Jesus. Yet there was a fellowship that they had with Jesus that John included them in, "we have seen with our eyes ... we have looked upon" (1 John 1:1b). We know that as far as John was concerned, this was literal, for He had been with Jesus for at least three years and had many opportunities to do all of these things. But now about 60 years later, there would be very few people who would have had an opportunity to literally do this. Therefore, when John uses this word for "seen" or "vision," he is using it in a spiritual sense. John is using this phrase to describe those who really know Jesus (1 John 2:4, 4:8). To believe somehow that God does not expect us to walk in holiness and perfect obedience is nothing more than deception (Ephesians 5:6, 2 Timothy 3:13, 1 John 3:7). If men are going to learn to walk in the perfect obedience to God then they are going to have to learn to walk in the Spirit and abide in Christ (Romans 8:1, 4, Galatians 5:16, 25). $\overline{7}$ 1 The Spirit of God only does righteousness. We have been born of the Spirit to live and walk in the Spirit. The fruits that the Holy Spirit will produce in the lives of those that have been born of God is the righteousness of God. If we are under the direction and rulership of the Spirit, then we will obey Him and let Him move through our lives with His glory and virtue: His righteousness. The Kingdom of God is to be revealed through our lives in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all sin that we might live unto righteousness (1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 1:9). We are made righteous (justified) by faith in Jesus Christ alone (Romans 5:1, 9, Galatians 2:16). This righteousness, by the faith of Jesus Christ, is the righteousness that operates in our life through the Holy Spirit (John 16:10, Romans 14:17, Galatians 2:16). When we received the righteousness of God, we were empowered to live righteously (Romans 3:21-22, 10:3-10, 2 Corinthians 5:21). This is not our own righteousness, one taught by man, or one produced from human effort, but the righteousness of God that comes from the heart by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, because it is the righteousness of God that we are participating with, we are

8- He who does what is sinful is of the Devil, because the Devil sinned from the beginning⁷². The reason that the Son of God was revealed was to destroy the works of the Devil⁷³.

righteous even as He is righteous. Oh thank God for righteousnesss, otherwise we would be unacceptable to God!

There is a power of deception at work right now that has an ever-increasing influence among men. These seducing spirits are at work in the church and will ultimately lead men into the great apostasy (Matthew 24:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 2 Timothy 3:13, Revelation 12:9). One of the things that Satan attempts to do is deceive God's people into thinking that they can continue in sin and still have fellowship with God (1 John 1:6, 2:4). Paul, giving witness to this most important subject, underscores the fact that those who hold onto sin in their life are unrighteous and will not inherit the Kingdom of God: "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived – neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor abusers of themselves with mankind" (1 Corinthians 6:9, Ephesians 5:6). All sin begins with participation with a satanic influence (John 8:44, Ephesians 2:2-3, 1 John 3:8). But the righteousness that God desires comes out of the realms of His holiness, proceeding from the heart, like a wellspring out of a new nature (Romans 6:18, 22, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10, 1 John 1:9, 2:29). There are many today who want to continue in sin – they just want to be forgiven for it! However, Jesus died to set us free from sin and to give us a right and true heart before God that desires to be delivered from every unholy influence. The cry of the Spirit is to awake unto righteousness and sin not (1 Corinthians 15:34).

The line must be drawn in the heart of those who have called upon the name of the Lord Jesus. These things must be understood about sin: to participate with sin is to participate with the works of demon spirits (1 John 3:8). Everything about sin is opposed to the work of Jesus, Who was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:5). Everyone that is born of God has been called to overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:13-14). Satan was and is a rebel against God, and any participation with his influences are acts of that same rebellion (Isaiah 14:9-17, Ezekiel 28:12-14, John 8:44, 49). All who follow his rebellion (sin) are opposing God, and will ultimately suffer his fate: eternal damnation.

Jesus Christ, Who came to redeem men and set us free from the power of Satan, is greater in power and influence if we will simply follow Him. The power of God is greater than Satan's, and the obedience of Christ Jesus is greater than the disobedience of Adam (Romans 5:12-21). If we will put on Christ Jesus, then we will give no opportunity to the lust of the flesh (Romans 13:14). We have been given the authority to be sons of God, and as many as are sons will walk in the Spirit – no power of sin will have authority to snare them (Luke 10:19, John 1:12, Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:16, 2 Peter 1:10). We are to be the ministers of righteousness, held up as the testimony of God's changing power, and shine with the radiant glory of the Lord to all of the world (2 Corinthians 3:1-18). God's mercy is so great that He is dedicated to help us no matter how much we fail. If we sin, He is there to intercede on our behalf (1 John 2:1). If we will confess our sins, He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). God is longsuffering, not willing that anyone perish, but we must be willing to be taught the ways of life and say no to evil.

⁷² The Devil became the very definition of a sinner, and from him all sin originated. He had a free will, and with it he turned against God. He became the father of lies, because he was unwilling to remain in the truth (John 8:44). He is the murderer, and the fountainhead of lust and lawlessness. He was perfect until iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel 28:15). God did not create sin, nor is He the Author of evil. Sin began with Satan. We do not know when Satan was created, but he was there at the head of the heavenly host (Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:14). Of course, all of this was prior to the creation of Adam sometime in the ancient past. When the Devil tried to overthrow God, Jesus said that He was cast down out of Heaven as lightning (Luke 10:18). Satan, the instigator of sin, entered into this world when Adam allowed him in through disobedience (Romans 5:12).

The lost are of their father the Devil, and are in bondage to the prince and the power of the air (John 8:44, Ephesians 2:2-3). They are in bondage, and are slaves to sin (John 8:34, Romans 6:16, 20). This is in stark contrast to those who are born again, made free from sin, and now live in the righteousness of Christ Jesus (Romans 6:18, 1 John 2:6, 3:7). Those who are born of God do righteousness, whereas those who practice sin are of the Devil (1 John 3:7). Christ Jesus came to take away our sin, and in Him is no sin (1 John 3:5). Those who are of Christ Jesus are those who have overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:13-15). Those who are born of God cannot practice sin (1 John 3:9, 5:18).

9- Everyone who has been begotten of God does not continue to sin, because His seed⁷⁴ abides⁷⁵ in him, and he cannot go on sinning, because he is born of God. 10- In this the children of God and the children of the Devil are manifested: everyone who does not do righteousness⁷⁶ is not of God, nor is he who <u>loves not his brother.</u>

⁷⁴ We have not only been washed from our sins when we were born again, but there is also no reason for us to sin any longer. For everyone who does righteousness is born of him (1 John 2:29, 5:18). The Seed of God is called by Peter the incorruptible Seed (Greek: spora / $\sigma\pi$ ορά) of God's Word, through which we were born into this new life in God. The Seed (Greek: sperma / $\sigma\pi$ έρμα) expresses the encounter with God that brings forth this new life when we respond to the Gospel. The Seed represents God's life and nature that has now become a living being. Another very familiar scripture that uses this Greek word is in the parable of the sower who "went forth to sow seed (sperma / $\sigma\pi$ έρμα)" (Matthew 13:24). Understanding the usage of the very potent word 'sperma' both here and in Matthew 13:24 causes us to understand that the Word of God is the life-giving, reproducing power of God at work in us. God's Word is Spirit and life, and faith-producing (John 6:63, Romans 10:17).

God's children will not persist in sin, but will conform to the Father's will! If we remain in submission to the Word of God and the Spirit of God (John 3:5-6), and walk in the divine nature (2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Peter 1:4) that we received when we were born of God, then we cannot sin. Why? – because we are good trees, and cannot bring forth bad fruit (Matthew 7:18). As obedient children, we are walking in obedience to God's will and being taught of the Holy Spirit to live out His life. In this state of surrender and submission to God, we will only do what He has willed and the Holy Spirit directs. It's not possible to sin when you are only doing the things that God demands. Both the Spirit of God and the Word of God lead us only into truth and righteousness. The anointing that we have received from Him teaches us that we are to dwell in Christ Jesus, Who is the living Word (1 John 2:27). However, this does not negate the fact that we can choose to not be submitted to God's Spirit and Word. Yet, because of the unfailing love and mercy of God, if we choose to be disobedient and sin, then we have a means of forgiveness (1 John 1:9, 2:2).

⁷⁵ The Seed, or Word, of God produces a new spirit and heart within the believer (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26, John 3:5, 6). The new spirit and the new heart that we have received are joined unto the Lord Jesus. It is the Spirit and nature of Christ Jesus that is formed in us through the new birth (Romans 8:9-10, 13:14, Galatians 3:27, 4:19, Ephesians 2:10, 3:17, Colossians 1:27, 1 John 3:24, 4:4). It is His nature in us that results in the divine nature residing in us. It is His nature that produces the ability to please God and empowers us with the ability to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust (Ephesians 4:24, 2 Peter 1:4). Paul makes a similar connection between Christ Jesus and the Word, proving that the Word of God is in our heart and in our mouth (Romans 10:8). As those begotten of God and ruled by the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and Christ Jesus, we cannot sin. As John previously said, "the anointing that we have received of Him teaches us to abide in Him," and abiding in Him will only produce righteousness (1 John 2:27). So long as we remain submitted and yielded to His rulership, we will find ourselves enjoying His abundant life of purity, joy, righteousness, and peace. In reality, abiding in the Word and keeping the Word are one and the same. Those who keep His Word have the love of God perfected in them (1 John 2:5) Abiding in the Word, doing righteousness, and loving the brethren are reemphasized in the following two verses. We may understand from both the preceding and following verses that those who are born of God cannot hate their brethren.

⁷⁶ John continues to labor to establish a point that needs to be established today: you are either a child of God or a child of the Devil. If you are not doing righteousness, you are not of God! He began by establishing that those who walk in darkness have no fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7). John moved from there to underscore the point by revealing those who know God and those who don't (1 John 2:3-5). In this, he established the rule that everyone who abides in Christ Jesus walks (behaves) just as Christ Jesus walks (1 John 2:6). John describes that the children of God have overcome the wicked one and his lust because they abide in Christ Jesus and do the will of God (1 John 2:14-17). The anointing that teaches us all things

⁷³ God was manifested in the flesh to die for the sins of man (1 Timothy 3:16, 1 John 3:5, 8). God was made like unto sinful flesh to be tempted in every way that we are tempted to destroy sin's power through death (Isaiah 25:8, Hosea 13:14, Romans 5:12-21, 8:3, 1 Corinthians 15:56, Hebrews 2:14, 4:15). God took on the sins of the whole world and bore them in His own body on the tree, so that now we may be dead to sin and live unto righteousness (John 1:29, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 2:2). By His blood and resurrected life, we are washed and regenerated and raised up as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Titus 3:5, Revelation 1:5)!

- 11- Because this is the message⁷⁷ that you have heard from the beginning: that you should love one another.
- 12- Not as Cain who was of the evil one⁷⁸ and murdered his brother and why did he murder him? because his own works were evil, but his brother's were righteous.
- 13- And brethren, do not be surprised if the world hates you⁷⁹.
- 14- We know that we have passed from death to life because we <u>love the brethren⁸⁰</u>. He that does not love his brother abides in death⁸¹.

has taught us to live out our lives in Christ Jesus (1 John 2:20, 27). As a result, everyone who knows that Christ Jesus is righteous will do righteousness, and this is the proof that we have been born of God (1 John 2:29). This is the point that John has contrasted now multiple times in chapter three as well. First he establishes that we are now the sons of God and are consecrated to His purity. Once again he states in an even stronger way that everyone who does righteousness is of God, and those who do not do righteousness, but sin, are of the Devil (1 John 3:1-10). John makes certain in his epistle that everyone knows that sin is the opposite of righteousness even as darkness is the opposite of light, a lie the opposite of truth, Satan the opposite of God, death the opposite of life, and sinners the opposite of the saints.

⁷⁷ The message of God's love was delivered to us in its greatest form when Jesus suffered and died for us. Yet God's message to mankind from the very beginning was one of love (Ephesians 1:4). God's primary requests of mankind under the Law was that they love Him, and that they love one another (Deuteronomy 6:5, 7:9, 10:12, 11:1, 13, 22, 19:9, 30:6, 16, 20, Joshua 22:5, 23:11, Judges 5:31, Nehemiah 1:5, Psalm 31:23, 97:10, 145:20). In every law that God gave, the motive was to conform the will and actions of mankind to the ways of love (Romans 13:8, 10, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8). We must understand that the One Who created all things is devoted to love (Jeremiah 31:3, Zephaniah 3:17, John 3:16, 1 John 4:7-8). Everything that He does is governed by love: all His motives, desires, and actions. God wants to teach us to live like this. The law of life is governed by love, and if we are unwilling to conform, then there is nothing but death and destruction, and our end will be as it was with Cain who killed his brother. God's message is unchanging, and it cannot be compromised. God is love, and if we are going to know Him and walk with Him, then we must be willing to be obedient to His love (Matthew 22:40, Romans 13:8,10). God not only created and fashioned us to walk in His love, but He has also supplied us with an unlimited resource of His love by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5, Galatians 5:22). How safe our souls should feel that the God of the universe is so disposed to the nature of His unchanging love (Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17, 1 John 4:7-8)! Our first need is to receive His love, and then we learn to love Him in return (John 15:16, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 2:4, Titus 3:4-5, 1 John 4:10, 17-19).

⁷⁸ Cain was unwilling to do things God's way. He brought to God what he thought would be acceptable to worship with, but God corrected him (Genesis 4:3, 7). However, Cain refused to listen to and obey God. Instead, he was angry with his brother, because his brother was righteous and accepted by God. His envy and jealousy was bigger that his desire to be right with God. Cain chose rather to submit himself to the rebellion and stubbornness of Satan, the evil one. As a result, the natural love of one brother for another was displaced with hate – a hate that would compel Cain to murder his brother. Just like Satan, Cain was not willing to remain in the truth, and he became a murderer and a hater of those who were righteous (John 8:44).

⁷⁹ To believe that we are going to win the favor of the world is just not realistic. The world is governed and controlled by the prince and the power of the air, the god of this world who is at war against the church (Ephesians 2:2-3, 6:10-12). Things will ultimately be so bad that we will be hated by everyone for His name's sake (Matthew 10:22, 24:9). The world hated Jesus (John 7:7). As hard as it is to believe, even though He came in the greatest demonstration of love and gave His life to heal people and set them free – still, He was hated. Just as the world hated Jesus, they are going to hate us, and that should be no surprise to us (John 15:18). Our response must be to lay down our lives and pour out love regardless of what people are doing, or how they respond to the gospel. We are not of the world even as Jesus was not of this world, and if we are going to live the life that He has given us to live, they will hate us just like they hated Him (John 15:19, 17:14).

⁸⁰ The First Epistle of John is a book of proofs that are based upon the actions and deeds of a person – proofs that demonstrate if a person is born of God or not. When we are born of God, we have passed from death to life. Those who do not know God are of the evil one and are spiritually dead – because their spiritual state and the fruits of their actions and deeds demonstrate a life of unrighteousness (Romans 6:16, 1 John 3:7-8).

- 15- Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer⁸², and you know that anyone who is a murderer does not have eternal life abiding in him⁸³.
- 16- By this we have known the love of God⁸⁴: because He laid down His soul⁸⁵ for us, and we are indebted to lay down our soul for the brethren.
- 17- But he who has this world's living and sees his brother in need, and shuts off his compassion⁸⁶ from him, how does the <u>love of God dwell in him</u>?
- 18- Little children, let us not <u>love in</u> word and tongue [only], but [also] in <u>works and</u> truth.
- 19- And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

⁸³ The eternal life that we have abiding in us is the life of Jesus Christ. The eternal life is the fountainhead of all the ways of God issuing forth from our hearts. It is like a wellspring springing up and a river flowing out (John 4:14, 7:38-39).

⁸⁴ Some translations do not include the word "God" because the text(s) that they used omitted it. We included the word "God" because it was also included in Scrivener's Textus Receptus (1894). "God" is not found in the family of the Byzantine text form.

⁸⁵ If Jesus gave His whole being for us, then it is our duty to give our whole being for each other. Such a commitment to the love of God will do away with all of the broken relationships and bickering among the household of God. This is the kind of love that God has called us to, and the one new commandment that Jesus gave: to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34, 15:12). I have watched as so many people have emphasized many different things, forgetting all of the time that they were violating the most important thing and their most important responsibility: to lay down their lives.

The Greek word for "soul" is 'psuche' (ψυχή), which is used here. Of the 105 times that 'psuche' occurs in the New Testament, the KJV translated it as "soul" 58 times and "life" 40 times. It is the only word in the Greek language for "soul," whereas there are at least three words that may be translated as "life." In this translation, we have opted to be consistent with the primary meaning of a word if possible. Therefore, 'psuche' should be translated as "soul." The soul represents the whole life of a person, whether it's the Hebrew 'nephesh' ("psuche") or the Greek 'psuche.' The most important point that is being made is to underscore that the usage of soul is most often used in both the Hebrew and Greek language to speak of one's whole being, and not of a particular dimension of that life.

86 The Greek word 'splanchna' ($\sigma\pi\lambda\dot{\alpha}\gamma\chi\nu\alpha$) translates Hebrew words in the Septuagint such as 'beten' ($\uparrow \bar{\psi} \bar{\chi} / \bar{\psi} / \bar{\psi} \bar{\chi} / \bar{\psi} /$

"In some languages, one can use a term, which literally means 'belly' or 'bowels,' but more often than not, these emotions are associated with some particular organ of the body such as the heart, spleen, liver, etc. Rather than attempting to employ a figurative expression, which may or may not be fully equivalent, it is often preferable to refer to the emotional content by using terms such as "feelings," "intents," "desires," or "compassion," depending upon the context" (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989).

⁸¹ Once again, the book of proofs reveals yet another evidence concerning where our hearts and spiritual lives really are. We are supposed to be abiding in Christ Jesus, but if we do not walk in the life that Christ Jesus modeled for us, then it is evidence that no matter who we think or say we are, we abide in death.
82 With God there is only love or hate, and hate is equivalent to murder. The two times that this word for murder, 'anthropoktonos,' (ἀνθρωποκτόνος) is used in the New Testament, it was used by John – firstly in John 8:44, "You are of your father the Devil, and you do the lust of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth..." and secondly here in 1 John 3:15.

- 20- Because if our heart convicts us, God is greater than our heart and knows everything.
- 21- Beloved, if our heart does not convict us, then we have confidence before God.
- 22- And whatever we ask of Him, we receive, because we keep His commands and do⁸⁷ what is pleasing in His sight.
- 23- And this is His command: that we believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us.
- 24- And he that keeps His commands dwells in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He dwells⁸⁸ in us: by the Spirit that He has given.

⁸⁷ There is no one who shines brighter as an example of a having a heart and conscience that pleased God than Job. Job said, "Far be it from me to say that you are right – till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. My heart does not reproach me for any of my days" (Job 27:5–6). We can walk with God in the most intimate fellowship, and find ourselves surrounded by His glory and kept by His power. We have a cloud by day and a fire by night, a hedge of His glory and power, and the whole armor of God. If we are willing to surrender everything and walk in consecration to the ways of the Lord, He will always be before us and on our right hand that we should not be moved. Enoch walked with God and is a witness of how well man can please the Lord. We too have the opportunity to know God, and as Enoch walked with God, let us walk in the Spirit.

Even though there are those who are vehemently vocal that such a walk with God is not possible, the third chapter of the First Epistle of John places us in a position with God where we are empowered to do everything that pleases Him. This is one of the most radical chapters of the New Testament that calls us to radical purity and righteousness, making statements like, "no one who sins has either seen Him or known Him," and, "everyone who commits sin is of the Devil" (1 John 3:6, 8). Obviously, if we do wrong (anything that is displeasing to the Father), our hearts will convict us. Then we rejoice, that in that conviction we can run to Jesus Christ the righteous, and be cleansed from all of our sin and shame. Most people today have settled into a mindset that condones sin and makes it a part of everyday life. They would say, "We sin more or less every day." However, John had a very different view of what it means to know Jesus than many have today. The Lord has empowered us with His Word and with His Spirit to live His life, the abundant life, the life of Jesus. Paul, speaking of this divine empowerment, said that they who walk in the Spirit would not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Jesus called us to be perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48) Peter said we are to be holy even as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16). He also said that we have been given everything that we need through the power of God to walk in life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). God wants us to accept all that He has done for us in Christ Jesus, and be continually filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). If we are willing to be continually filled, then we will find a continual manifestation of the glory of His presence in our lives, and it is through His glory that we discover union with God (John 17:22). In this union with God, we find an active divine power and grace of God enabling us to walk in the light as He is in the Light. We find ourselves at rest in His love, and empowered to be just as He is in this world (1 John 4:17). We discover that our life is not our own, but it is the possession of Christ Jesus, and in this revelation there is no condemnation (1 Corinthians 6:19, 1 John 1:7, 4:17). It is here, in this place of fellowship and union with God, that we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. We can be certain that asking Father and receiving our request is central to what God desires for our life. Jesus said that He had called us and ordained us to bring forth fruit and that our fruit should remain, "that whatsoever you should ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you" (John 15:16). Yet equally important, we must also remember that we can do nothing without Him. We must recognize that our lives were consecrated by His blood and by the Holy Spirit to dwell in Christ Jesus (John 15:5). If we are willing to accept all that God has done for us and agree with His word, even in the face of the multitude of assailing thoughts and circumstances, we will walk in the faith that overcomes the world (1 John 3:23, 5:4). If we will come to rely upon the Holy Spirit and allow Him to continually fill us, then we will continue to walk in His Word and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. If we fail and sin, all we have to do is immediately turn to Jesus and take His blood for our cleansing. Then we ask the Holy Spirit to fill us and strengthen us to always do those things that please the Father, and

⁸⁸ There is nothing more wonderful and glorious than being made one with God. Unity with the Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in purpose, desires, and affection belongs to the believer (John 14:20, 17:21-23). This amazing oneness is expressed several times in John: "Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13), "Whosoever shall confess that

Chapter 4

- 1- Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world⁸⁹.
- 2- By this we know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come⁹⁰ in the flesh is from God.

Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15), "God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16b). What we can be certain of is that John taught that we have our existence in Christ Jesus, and as a result, Christ Jesus is revealed through our lives – which he repeated many times throughout his writings, but about 11 times in his first epistle (1 John 2:5, 6, 27, 28, 3:6, 24, 4:4, 13, 15, 16, 5:20). This indwelling of Christ Jesus is witnessed by the Spirit that we have received.

The fruits, or proofs, of the Spirit are the witnesses that this union took place when we were born again. Chief among these fruits is the love of God manifested through our lives. The love of Christ Jesus revealed through us is the proof that He dwells in us, and that we dwell in Him (John 13:34-35, 15:9-10, 12, 16:27, Romans 8:9). Jesus Christ is bodily seated today at the right hand of the Father, yet He lives within us, and the Holy Spirit is proof. He does not live within us by an endearing memory and commitment that we have to Him. He lives in us because we are His dwelling place, a tabernacle built for Him when we were born again and made a new creation (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16).

The coming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the subject of chapters 14, 15, and 16 of the Gospel of John. Now, there are two dimensions by which the Holy Spirit has come to us. Firstly, He has come to dwell alongside of us, lead us, guide us, and glorify Jesus. Secondly, the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us, because God has put His Spirit in us (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26-27, John 3:6, 14:16-17, 23). The indwelling of God in us is further emphasized by the promise that Jesus made that both He and the Father would come and dwell with us (John 14:23). So while it may be understood that they dwell in us through the Spirit that has been given to us, still, there remains an interaction and dwelling that goes beyond just having their corporeal presence communicated by the indwelling Spirit of God (John 14:21, 23). Many may wonder how is this possible, yet through the new birth, the mystery of the fellowship has brought to pass this unspeakable gift – our lives have been integrated together with the everlasting God, Christ Jesus living in us!

⁸⁹ After establishing that keeping the commandments of the Lord is the testimony of oneness with the Lord and the indwelling Holy Spirit, John warns us to try the spirits. There are those who bear false witness of who God is and what He has willed. Their testimonies do not agree with the Word of God, and they must be identified and refused. The false prophet is someone who supposedly carries a Word from God, but the word is false and so is the spirit by which they are speaking.

These false witnesses appear to be sincere, but they are wolves dressed in sheep's clothing. They may even be able to do miracles, signs, and wonders, but if their words do not line up with Scripture, we know that they are false. Moses warned of such false prophets and said, "If one appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder that he has spoken takes place, and he says, 'Come let us follow other gods (gods you have not known), and let us worship them,' you must not listen to the words of the prophet or dreamer" (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). We should also be able to recognize the similarities between these false prophets and those that Jesus spoke of when He referred to the ones who had worked signs and wonders in His name, but practiced iniquity (Matthew 7:23). There are those who believe that Satan and those who serve him cannot do miracles, but they can. The man of sin who is also called the Antichrist will deceive the nations by the power, signs, and lying wonders that he will do (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

Today, false prophets may not necessarily lead people to worship other gods, but rather they preach and teach things that lead men away from God by accepting sin and iniquity as being justifiable. Yet when we consider such a practice, we must also recognize that sin is an act of participating with the demonic, which is service to the god of this world (1 John 3:8). The plumb-line between truth and lie, light and darkness, and God and Satan, is found in living in righteousness and holiness and refusing evil. The witness that we are of God is that Christ Jesus is in us, and we do what is pleasing in His sight (1 John 2:5-6, 27-28, 3:6, 24, 4:4, 13, 15-16, 5:20).

- 3- And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that antichrist⁹¹ that you heard would come and now is already in the world
- 4- You are from God little children, and have conquered them, because greater is He that is in you⁹² than he that is in the world.

⁹⁰ The doctrinal test that distinguishes between those who are true and those who are not is the confession that God, Christ Jesus, has come in the flesh. Similarly, Paul said that no one can say that Jesus Christ is Lord (referring to the fact that He is God) except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). The confession that Jesus Christ is our Lord is participating with the Holy Spirit in the new birth experience, for with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:9-10). This is more than a historic fact, but a confession of His current status. Christ Jesus not only came into the flesh historically, on the day that God was incarnated into a human and earthly body, but He has also come to dwell in us so that we can say, "Greater is He that is in [us] than He that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). By the Holy Spirit we confess that Christ is in us (Colossians 1:27). This confession is not a mere superficial acknowledgment or mental affirmation, but a witness of the Spirit that we have been born of God through Him. The Greek word used here is 'eleluthota' (ἐληλυθότα), which is the perfect active participle of 'erchomai,' (ἔρχομαι) and may be translated in several ways, but by far the best and most agreed upon way is, "come," with respect to "come in the flesh," which once again refers to His current status. The act of incarnation, although of supreme importance, is not the only point of this passage. Jesus Christ is alive, living in us, and dwelling among us – for He died, was buried, rose again, ascended to the Father, and has come to make His abode with us (John 14:23).

Confessing that Christ Jesus has come in the flesh is agreeing with God. God became flesh, and is purely divine and human. Furthermore, He delights to remain so for all eternity. God became flesh so that that He might die for us, and through Him, we who were dead are made alive (Ephesians 2:1, Colossians 2:13, 1 John 5:12). Although it is essential that we recognize that God, Who is called the Word, was made flesh 2,000 years ago, we must also recognize that we are in Him and He is in us. Now, because we have been born of God and made one with Him, the greater One lives on the inside of us, and by Him we have overcome the world (1John 4:2, 4). This indwelling presence of Jesus is witnessed by the love of God and by the operation of the Holy Spirit in our lives – the proof that we were begotten of God. Keep in mind that the theme of this epistle is fellowship with God, and the exposure of those who say they have fellowship, but really walk in darkness and are deceivers. Therefore, a proof must be established to effectively demonstrate who is of the Spirit of truth. Those who are of the truth overcome the world and walk in the love of God because of the indwelling presence of Jesus.

⁹¹ The false prophets, which can be anyone who speaks on behalf of God but does not speak the truth concerning who Jesus is and what He has done, are also equated with antichrist. The word "antichrist" is found four times in the Bible, and is a word that is only used by John in his epistles (1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3, 2 John 1:7). The antichrist spirit denies that Jesus is the Messiah, the Redeemer, or the Anointed One of God. The antichrist spirit denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22-23). The spirit of antichrist, which will be fully manifested in the person the Antichrist, is already at work. The deception would make Jesus less than He is, and His work of redemption less than it is. It would deny that God became human to take on the sins of the world. It would also deny that He raised a resurrected human body, which continues to join the divine with the human. It would also deny that He now dwells with us and in us as the family of God redeemed by His blood. In fact, if one denies that Jesus has come in the flesh, they make void the entire New Testament. The antichrist spirit would not only deny the Lord Jesus as being the only true and living God manifested in the flesh, but also would deny any work of the Holy Spirit that would reveal Him. The antichrist is in fact the one opposed to the anointing of God, and specifically the anointing that teaches us that we dwell in Him (1 John 2:27). The one called the Antichrist, who is the man of sin and the son of destruction, will come and declare himself God, but while that is yet future, the spirit of antichrist paves the way (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

⁹² Jesus Christ, the One Who conquered the Devil and all of the power of sin, lives on the inside of every believer (Luke 10:19, John 12:31, 2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8). Jesus Christ, Who is the truth, the way, and the life, is the greater One that "is in you." Jesus Christ came in the flesh when He was born into the world, and also when He was born into the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit. When we were born of the Spirit, and became a new creation through the miracle of salvation, Christ was formed in us and came to dwell in us through this miraculous union (John 17:23, 1 Corinthians 2:12, Galatians 1:6,

- 5- They are of the world for this reason, they speak from the world and the world hears them.
- 6- You are of God he that 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 error⁹³.
- 7- Beloved, let us love one another, because he that loves is from God, and everyone that loves ⁹⁴ is begotten of God and knows God.

Colossians 1:27, 1 John 3:24). That Christ Jesus dwells in us is in fact an essential doctrine of the New Covenant (John 14:20, 15:4, 17:23, 26, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:27).

The life and power of Jesus Christ in us enables us to overcome the spirit of antichrist, the spirit of the world, and the spirit of deception. We may be confident today that all of the power of iniquity that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life – is not more powerful than Christ Jesus Who lives within us. We are guaranteed by God Himself that He will arise in us and subdue all of our enemies. He will go before us and fight all our battles. As we stand yielded to Him, God will destroy all of the opposing forces that come against us, and we will find that we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus (Exodus 17:11, Luke 10:19, Romans 8:37). It is in believing what He has done for us that we are empowered to be strong in the strength of the Lord and the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10).

93 John now includes all of the doctrines that were delivered to the church by the Lord Jesus Christ, and of those who were specifically anointed to deliver His Word to the church. When a person refuses to hear the Word of God, then the spirit of error is manifested in them. With this statement, John allows us to more fully understand the false prophet and the antichrist spirit. The spirit of error is opposed to the Spirit of truth, which is another title for the Holy Spirit (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13).

Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice (they hear His words), and the voice of another they will not listen to. Jesus said, "Those who are of God hear God's words" (John 8.47). If we have been born of God, then we will hear everything that is written in the New Testament and believe it. Anyone who opposes the things that God has said – including everything about the Holy Spirit, the gifts, and living free from \sin – has the spirit of error.

The spirit of error manifests in several ways, from those who walk in darkness and say they know God, to those who refuse to obey God's commandments and yet say they are born again, to those who refuse to believe that He has made us righteous to live in righteousness. These are all important points among a host of others that John has made in his first epistle. Those who make excuses for sin and not only continue in sin, but promote the same in others, are said to be of the spirit of error. Once again, every point that John has developed in this epistle is now underscored with the strongest words possible. John informs the reader that if they refuse to hear what He has said, it is because they are not of God. He has labored to provide the proofs and evidence for those who are of God and those who are not of God so that men will not be deceived.

⁹⁴ The most important expression and evidence of the new birth is the love of God. This kind of love is perfectly defined by the life of Jesus, Who loved us so much that He laid down His life that we might live. God's love, by definition, is a holy love, one that is giving and unselfish, and was revealed to all mankind when God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. This holy love fulfills all of the law and purpose of God for man, in that it works no wrong-doing (Romans 13:10, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8). This is a protective love that would do everything to rescue a soul from sin, and do whatever necessary to keep them from sin and its dreadful fate.

God's love cannot be manifested through man until that person has been begotten of God. When we are born of God, the Holy Spirit fills us with the love of God, and that love flows as long as we are yielded to Him. If we will dwell in love, we will dwell in God. If we are willing to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, then we will be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:18-19). If we do not love one another as Christ loves the church, then we are refusing to walk in the Spirit, and are in breach of our relationship with God (John 15:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 John 4:2, 8).

The love of God is not expressed to a selective group of people, but to the whole world (John 3:16, Titus 3:4, 1 Peter 2:17, 1 John 4:10). The love of God causes the sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and send rains for the righteous and the unrighteous (Matthew 5:45, Luke 6:35). From the wellspring of love comes mercy and forgiveness. It is God's nature to bless those who are offenders and persecutors, and those of us who have been born of Him are called to do the same (Luke 6:28, Romans 12:14). All of God's children are marked with the expression of God's divine love and holy nature. Unfortunately, there is probably not a more neglected subject among His people. Above all other things, the expression of this unfailing love must be manifested among us if the world is to know that we have been begotten of Him

- 8- He that does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- 9- This is how the love of God was revealed in us⁹⁵: because the only begotten⁹⁶ Son of God was sent into the world that we may live through Him.
- 10- In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the means of forgiveness⁹⁷ for our sins.

(John 13:35, 1 John 2:5, 10, 3:11, 4:21). Above all other things, it is our responsibility to show this love one for another – among ourselves first, and also to the whole world. If we fail to walk in love one for another, then we have failed at the most fundamental and essential attribute of our calling (John 13:34, 15:12, 17, Romans 12:10, 13:8, Galatians 5:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 3:11, 23, 4:11-12, 2 John 1:5).

Love describes the chief characteristic of God – it is central to everything that God has willed for men, and its constant expression through our lives is the fulfillment of His will. The subject of love is central to the Bible, the Gospel, the character of God, and the character of those who are led by the Holy Spirit. God, Who is holy, and Who is love, has set us apart from the world, separating us unto His Love. We should be totally separated to the purpose of God's love being revealed through us in every dimension of our lives. All fear, suspicion, division, envy, strife, and every aspect of discord are the enemies of love, and must be treated as the enemies of God (Proverbs 6:16-19, Romans 16:17, James 3:16). Do not be ignorant of Satan's devices: he does not attack us head-on, but works to divide and separate us, and then destroys each person individually.

95 The proof of being alive in Christ Jesus is His love manifested through us. The phrase 'en hemin' (ἐν ἡμῖν / in us) occurs two more times in this chapter: "His love in us is perfected" (4:12), and "the love that God has in us" (4:16). Certainly, this could be translated as "to us," and that is true, but a more appropriate phrase would have been 'eis hemin' (εἰς ἡμῖν) if that was the intended meaning. The love of God is manifested by both the incarnation and the indwelling of Jesus, which is facilitated by the translation "in us." After all, this is in keeping with "the Spirit that is in us," "the greater One that is in us," and "God Who dwells in us," which is the theme of this chapter.

 96 The word translated as "only begotten" (monogenes / μονογενής) is found nine times in the New Testament (Luke 7:12, 8:42, 9:38, John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, Hebrews 11:17, 1 John 4:9). However, only John applies it specifically to Jesus. It means the one and only Son of God. This is how God was made flesh, and it was only by the body and blood of God being made flesh that salvation could be supplied to anyone who wanted to escape from the spiritual prison of sin and death. Although the Bible speaks of many sons of God in both the Old and New Testaments, there is only One Who was the only begotten of God and was at the same time eternally with God and was God. Through His birth, we are now also able to be begotten of God.

97 The Greek word 'hilasmos' (ἱλασμός) is roughly equivalent to the Hebrew word 'kippur,' (ΤΞΞ) translated as "atonement" in most English translations of the Bible. The Greek word 'hilasmos' is translated as "propitiation" or "expiation" by many of the English translations, but this is not entirely accurate. The Greeks used the word 'hilasmos' to refer to the means by which men would appease the gods, and from thus the word "propitiation" is derived. However, this verse of scripture in which we find this word reveals that God was already favorably disposed towards us before He gave His Son for our sins, for He loved us (John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:4-5). Therefore, the whole Greek notion of propitiation or expiation simply does not work. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus has nothing to do with the offerings or actions of men, much less their attempts to gain God's favor. Redemption does not have anything to do with the offerings of men, rather it is all about God offering up the sacrifice of Jesus for us. The secular world does not know of such a concept, for the message of salvation reaches far beyond the imagination and ideologies of man. We must use great caution in attempting to narrowly confine these Greek words to the meanings given in the secular and profane world.

Once again, although 'hilasmos' is common to Greek literature, it is important to be on guard with respect to the meanings that may be derived from a purely secular application. Equally, we must also recognize that a perfect equivalent of the Hebrew word may not have been available in the Greek vocabulary. For this reason, we must look deeper into the context. Keep in mind that even in the secular usage of 'hilasmos,' it could also mean "cleansing" or "forgiveness." Thus when we choose to translate a word, we must make sure that the vocabulary is consistent with the meaning that is implied by the context. We can be certain that John was saying, with regards to Jesus being our 'hilasmos,' that through Him:

- 1 Our sins would be destroyed (1 John 3:5).
- 2 The works of the Devil in our lives would be destroyed (1 John 3:8).

- 11- Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love⁹⁸ one another.
- 12- No one has ever seen⁹⁹ God. If we love one another, God abides¹⁰⁰ in us and His love is perfected in us.
- 3 We would receive cleansing from all of our sins (1 John 1:7, 9).
- 4 Christ Jesus would dwell in us, even as God dwelt in the Holies of Holies after it was purified (1 John 3:24, 4:4, 12, 15).
- 5 We would be born of God (1 John 3:9, 4:7).
- 6 It would result in eternal life that we now possess, thus referring to the quality of life that we received by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:2, 2:25, 3:15, 5:11, 13, 20).
- 7 Because of this, we have boldness before the judgment seat of God (1 John 2:28, 4:17).
- 8 If Christians do sin, they must look again to Jesus, Who is the Intercessor that provides the 'hilasmos' (the "forgiving," "cleansing," or "purifying") work of grace, because God so deeply loves us.

98 The kind of love that Father demands that we have for one another is the same love that was extended to us when Jesus died for our sins on the cross. True love is God's love, and His love has been given to us by the Holy Spirit. We have been given the privilege of not only being beneficiaries of His love, but we are also empowered to reveal His love. There is no greater command! There is no greater proof of salvation (John 13:34-35, 15:12, Colossians 3:14, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 Peter 4:8, 1 John 3:11, 23, Jude 1:21)! The most important thing to God is that we walk in His love. There is no justifiable reason to ever stop loving the people of God, even to the point of laying our lives down for them. God has called us to be those who obey Him and follow Him by walking in the same kind of love that He Himself has (Ephesians 5:1-2).
99 There are several important points that we must consider in understanding what John is saying with regards to no one having seen God, which is also repeated in John 1:18. Certainly, Paul made a similar point when he said, "God dwells in light, which no man has seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy 6:16). Yet at the same time, we must ask, "Who was it that Abraham saw in Genesis 18?" (See also, Genesis 12:7, 17:1). Who did Moses see in Exodus 34? We know that Moses saw Him, but did not see His face – for no man can see His face and live (Exodus 33:11). He is the One that Jacob wrestled with and said, "I beheld the face of God," Who Isaiah also looked upon (Genesis 32:30, Isaiah 6:1).

The same word 'tetheatai' ($\tau\epsilon\theta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\tau\alpha\iota$) was used in 1 John 1:1, "...which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon," in reference to Jesus Christ, the eternal life. We have looked upon Christ Jesus, Who is full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Jesus Christ came in the fullness of the deity (theotes / $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$) of God (Colossians 2:9). The only begotten Son is God, and was with God, Who also became like us to redeem us from the curse of sin and death. Only the Son Christ Jesus can reveal the Father, otherwise He remains unknown (Matthew 11:27, Luke 10:22, John 1:18).

Jesus said that no one has seen the Father except He Himself (John 6:46). We know that Christ Jesus is God, and that many looked upon Him as a man, and as the resurrected Savior Who was clothed with the glory that He had as the eternal God (John 17:5). We know that when we shall see Him, we shall see Him as He is, for we shall be like Him (1 John 3:1-2). Jesus also said that anyone who had seen Him had also seen the Father (John 14:9).

John makes the point that the Son alone reveals the invisible God, Who is also called the Father in the New Testament and YHVH in the Old Testament. There is no way to know Him or look upon Him except by the Son, Christ Jesus. Certainly no one has ever rested their eyes upon the Father's face or fully comprehended the eternal God, but He is fully revealed and made known through Christ Jesus. Through this unspeakable gift, the One before Whom the seraphim must veil their faces dwells in us, and we dwell in Him if we will walk in His love (Isaiah 6:2).

100 God is in you! God has made it all very easy for us to yield to Him and receive all the things that He has desired to supply to us, for He has come to dwell with us and in us (Isaiah 57:15, John 17:21-23). Now that we know that God is with us and in us, then we must begin to interact with Him in such a way. In this realm of truth, we can begin to see Him with the eyes of faith. He is there always before us and on our right hand that we should not be moved (Psalm 16:8, Acts 2:25). As we begin to acknowledge the presence of God and live in the reality that He is our constant companion, a whole new dimension of fellowship and faith will open up before us. We must all admit that it is quite odd that many of God's people are accepting of the idea that angels are with them, but they fail to realize that God almighty is their constant companion. We must lay aside the notion that God is far away, and the uncertainty as to whether or not He will respond to us and help us. We are of the Spirit, and so the Spirit of God dwells in us (Romans 8:9). We are the temple of God, and God walks in us (John 14:23, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:16, 1 John 3:24). We must embrace the truth that God is with us and give ourselves to being constantly mindful of this reality.

13- By this we know that we dwell in Him and He dwells in us: because of the Spirit¹⁰¹ that He has given us.

14- And we have looked upon and bear witness that the Father sent the Son as the Savior¹⁰² of the world.

He has come to supply all that we have need of and perfect everything that concerns us if we will only believe that He is in us (Psalm 138:8, Colossians 1:27, 1 John 4:4).

What spirit are you of? It is revealed by what you do! The proof that Jesus dwells in us and we dwell in Him is observed through the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Matthew 12:28, John 7:38-39, 14:23, 15:1, 16:12-15, Hebrews 2:4, 1 John 3:24). God worked the miracle that allows us to have the blessed and glorious presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to walk with God, and when we yield to Him in all our actions, the life of Jesus is revealed through us. He brings to us all that Jesus has, which is all that belongs to the Father (John 16:12-15). Christ Jesus in us is the new man, the new creation, the divine nature – the life we received when we were born again (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Ephesians 4:24, 2 Peter 1:4). To do anything less than allow Jesus Christ to live (by cooperating with the Holy Ghost) is to miss out on this amazing and abundant life of faith. The faith of Jesus Christ is to live by the faith that is in Him – a faith that proclaims that He dwells in us and we dwell in Him. To settle out for things less than the manifest presence of God and the revelation of Jesus in our life is to be trapped in a prison of doubt and unbelief.

Our union with Christ Jesus is revealed through every fruit of the Spirit and gift of the Holy Ghost. If we are going to have the kind of love that Jesus revealed, then we must learn to allow the Holy Spirit to have full control over our actions. When we are hated, persecuted, or mistreated, and refuse any act of retaliation or disobedience, we discover that obedience results in a yielded life that allows the river of God's love to flow through us by the Holy Spirit. Every time the Holy Spirit acts, Jesus is revealed. When we acknowledge God the Holy Ghost and yield ourselves in obedience to His ways, then all that the Father gave to Jesus flows from Him through us as an expression of our union with the Lord. By His love, we have the proof that we are His disciples, and by His acts of power, the proof that we are His witnesses (John 13:34-35, Acts 1:8). Authority over all the power of Satan and the world is proof that the greater One, Christ Jesus, abides in us – and that we abide in Him (1 John 4:4, 5:4). As His witnesses, we yield to the same Holy Spirit and cast out devils, lay hands on the sick, and do the works of Jesus – proofs that Christ the Miracle-Worker lives in us.

The more we depend upon Jesus to minister the things of the Spirit, the more we become aware of His presence in us! If we live our own life and pursue our own interests, then the reality of this great grace and this unspeakable gift will rarely be realized, if at all. Fundamental to the faith is that Christ is in us, and that He is also our confidence that the glory of God will be revealed through our lives (John 17:22, Romans 8:17-18, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Colossians 1:27). Christ Jesus is God's inheritance in us, and we must be willing in every way to be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). What an honor it is to be empowered to live the life of Jesus (Ephesians 1:18)! His life so fills us that we no longer live, but it is Christ Who lives instead (Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:20). Christ Jesus speaks through us, acts through us, and reveals that we are the sons of God – all we need to do is dwell in Him and give ourselves to doing those things that He has required of us. As we do, His glorious life and anointing are revealed.

102 Once again, John draws our attention to his authority as one who was an eyewitness to all of these things that Jesus did and taught (1 John 1:1-4). God was made flesh as the only begotten Son for one reason: to be the Savior of the world. This phrase, "Savior of the world," is only found here and in John 4:42. Those Samaritans who heard the testimony of the woman and then went to see and hear Jesus for themselves said, "...it is no longer because of what you have said that we believe, for *we ourselves hear, and we have seen* that this is truly the Savior." The discovery that He is not the Savior of the Jews only, but of the whole world, was first witnessed by those disdained by the Jews – who themselves had become eyewitnesses. Many in the days of John refused to believe that the sacrifice made upon the cross was necessary for salvation, but John stands on the highest authority as an eyewitness and proclaims who Jesus is: the One Who cleanses from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

John also moves from speaking of God sending his Son, to making the intimate connection that He is referring to God as the Father (1 John 4:9-10). Although no one has seen God the Father in all of His radiant glory, John said that we have seen God the Son, full of grace and truth (John 1:14, 34, 1 John 1:1-4). He is the One sent from the Father to be the Savior, and as Peter said that day in the company of John, "there is salvation in no other name" (Acts 4:10-12). God has exalted Jesus as the Prince and Savior, that through Him He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31).

15- Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in Him and he dwells in God¹⁰³.

16- And we know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God dwells in him¹⁰⁴.

17- In this the love is perfected¹⁰⁵ within us: that we may have confidence in the day of judgment¹⁰⁶, because as He is, so are we in this world¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ John makes the confessing of Jesus being the Son of God and the Savior of the world equivalent to dwelling in love – for both result in the believer dwelling in God and God dwelling in the believer. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son – a love that is realized when we obey Him and are born again (John 3:3-6, 14:21). We are now commanded to remain in the love and allow that love to be perfected in us.

¹⁰⁵ The most yielded state of the heart is being at rest, knowing that you are loved. God wants us to know His love. In this state of confidence and faith, we will receive everything that Jesus wants to transmit into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15, Romans 5:5). When Father wanted to convince Abraham of the things that He promised, He swore an oath to Him. Today, He has even done something greater for us. In order to convince us of His love and commitment to us, He sent His only begotten Son to die for us at Calvary. We must respond to His love and accept the fact that He loves us and cares for us so intensely that He spared not His own Son for our sakes (Romans 8:32).

Love is the key to walking in the fullness of the expression of God. We can know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, and thereby be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:18-19). Living in and expressing this love of God that has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit is the witness that God dwells in us and we dwell in Him (Romans 5:5).

¹⁰⁶ If you want any dimension of the things of the Spirit to grow and mature in your life, then you must continually give yourself to doing them. If we give ourselves to continually dwelling in the love of God, and thereby allow the most glorious thing in the world to be expressed through our lives, then our love will grow and mature and be perfected. So is it also with every dimension of the attributes and nature of God. If we will give all attendance and diligence to the Holy Spirit, Who has come to teach us to walk in the majesty of God's ways, then we will add unto our faith, purity, and to purity, knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brother-kindness, and to brother-kindness, love. By doing this, we will find ourselves moving into the full display of the divine nature that we received when we were born again and made a new creation (2 Peter 1:3-10).

What greater confidence could the child of God have on the day of judgment than to be fully developed in His love – both receiving it and expressing it. Knowing that we belong to God and that God belongs to us removes all concerns, for He is our life and joy. The abiding union with God, and the absolute assurance of God's love for us, brings great confidence and boldness to our hearts. Knowing that we are His purchased possession – and His dwelling place – removes all condemnation and fear. Being thrilled to walk with Him each day, and being empowered to live out the abundant life, establishes an ever-increasing relationship with the deepest bond of lasting love. We are able, both now and on that day, to draw near with a true heart – in full assurance of faith, having all boldness (Hebrews 10:19)! Being on God's side and rejoicing in the abundant life that He has provided, and being so honored to live the life of Jesus, makes all the difference. To think for a moment that it's some terrible yoke to live the life of Jesus and be even as He is in this world, is to miss the joy and freedom of the relationship altogether (Proverbs 13:15, Matthew 11:28-30, 1 John 4:17, 5:3).

¹⁰⁷ Through the new birth, we were given the life of Jesus. We are now to dwell in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7). We are to walk as He walks (1 John 2:6). We are to be pure even as He is pure (1 John

¹⁰³ Once again, John makes one of the most repeated statements in his writings, "God dwells (or lives) in you, and you dwell (or live) in God." The mutual indwelling of God and His children is repeated four times in this first epistle (1 John 3:24, 4:13, 15, 16). John has labored to provide the proofs of what it means to be born of God and to have God dwelling in our lives. He now connects this to a true confession and acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God. To confess that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world, and that Jesus is the Son of God, is also to confess that God lives in you and that you live in God. Even as it was in the days of John, so it is today where many want to confess only part of the truth and remain in the error of the spirit of the world. God has given us great assurance through the ministry of John, and John demands proofs. We can be confident that if we have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ that we are empowered to fully live His life, which is also to be part of our confession (1 John 2:5-6, 24, 27-28, 3:6, 24, 4:12-13, 15-16, 5:20).

- 18- There is no fear in love perfect love casts out all fear, because fear has torment. Now he who fears is not perfected in love¹⁰⁸.
- 19- As for us, we love Him because He first loved us.
- 20- If anyone says that he loves God and he hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who has no love for his brother whom he has seen cannot love God Who he has never seen¹⁰⁹.
- 21- And this is the commandment¹¹⁰ that we have from Him: that he who loves God also loves his brother.

3:3). Because we are in Him and He is in us, we are as He is in this present life that we now live. We are not of this world, even as He is not of this world (John 8:23, 14:17, 15:19, 17:14, 16). We have been begotten of God the Father to be a part of the family of God and live the life of the Son.

¹⁰⁸ Fear is the father of all doubt and unbelief. Fear is the realm of distrust and darkness, which causes men to draw back and run and hide. Fear first existed between God and man when Adam ran and hid from the presence of the Lord because he was afraid – his disobedience made him a prisoner of fear. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we who were once far away are brought near by His blood. The Lord has granted us peace and freedom from all condemnation, and has invited us into His love. We are now delivered from the bondage of fear and given the Spirit of sonship, whereby we say that God is our Father (Romans 8:15). Love refuses to allow fear in, but this love is found only in the perfect union and relationship that has been granted to us in Christ Jesus. There is a safety and security in God that goes far beyond that which a trusting child has in its loving father. This love of God that we are called to live in, and to know and believe, is a love that cannot fail. If we will dwell in the love that God has for us, the perfect union that He has given – we will not know fear. The Lord tells us more than 360 times "not to fear," because if we will walk with Him there are no limits to what He will do for us.

Dwelling confidently in God's love for us gives us a bold faith. The love-trust that we should have in God is where faith grows – a faith that is supplied by the Holy Spirit, which works by love (Galatians 5:6). When Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, heard that his daughter was dead, Jesus said, "Fear not, only believe" (Luke 8:50). Faith and doubt cannot exist at the same time, just as love and fear cannot exist at the same time. The condemnation of wrong-doing and sin grips a person with a fear of separation from this love. But if we will walk after the Spirit, our heart will not condemn us. If we will stay in this peace and union that has been supplied through Christ Jesus, then we will have confidence before God, and whatever we ask, He will do it. To this end and for this cause, we must build up ourselves in our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, and thereby keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 1:20-21).

There is also a holy fear: the fear of the Lord that belongs to the realm of the Spirit (Isaiah 11:2-3). It is the awesome reverence for God and His eternal ways. It is a disdain for evil and iniquity (Proverbs 8:13). In the love of God, this kind of holy fear will only increase, whereas the fear that belongs to the realms of darkness will be completely removed.

¹⁰⁹ There is only one true love: the love of Jesus. You cannot have love for God without having the same love for His people. If we love the Father, then we will also love His children. One of the epidemics of the modern church is broken relationships. God's people in many respects have forgotten how to keep covenant. They say they love God, but they do not show it through their relationship with those who were redeemed with the same love and mercy. They want God to love them and keep covenant with them, but are unwilling to do so with their brothers and sisters. There is always a rational and "legitimate" reason supplied, but in reality it comes down to being unwilling to forgive men of their trespasses.

There are those who would say, "I do not hate that person – I just don't like them." However, with God there is only love or hate, light or darkness, truth or lie, holiness or evil. God has showed us the kind of love that He demands that we have for one another: the love that He has for us – the love that was displayed when Jesus died for our sins and transgressions. God's command is that we also lay down our lives for the children of God (1 John 3:16).

¹¹⁰ This same commandment is given in five other places by John: John 13:34, 15:12, 17, 1 John 3:23, 2 John 1:5. If we refuse to submit ourselves to God's commands, then we do not really know Him. The Lord has forgiven us of our trespasses, but to receive what He has given, we must also forgive. He has poured His love into our hearts that we might receive His love and love Him in return – but for that love to be real, we must display it to those around us.

Chapter 5

- 1- Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God, and everyone who loves Him Who begat also loves those begotten of Him¹¹¹.
- 2- By this we know that we love the children of God: whenever we love God and obey His commandments¹¹².
- 3- For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.
- 4- Because everyone who is begotten of God conquers¹¹³ the world and this is the conquering power¹¹⁴ that conquered the world¹¹⁵: your faith.

111 John has laid out the proofs that identify those who are born of God. He says very clearly that those who believe that Jesus is the Christ are born of God, and we can't help but to understand this as "those who really believe." Why? Because of all of the things that really believing results in! Those who are born of God are those who do righteousness (1 John 2:29). Those who are born of God do not practice sin (1 John 3:9). Everyone who loves like God loves is born of God (1 John 4:7-8). Those who overcome the world are born of God (1 John 5:4). Those who are born of God, Satan cannot touch (1 John 5:18). It is clear therefore, by all of these proofs that John described and emphasized, what it really means to believe that Jesus is the Christ. In fact, we can say that John has defined more fully what it means to believe – making belief a lifestyle of godly characteristics and behaviors, not a religious ideology.

Those who have been born of God were given the authority to be the sons of God (John 1:12). We were not born of flesh and blood when we were born again, but by the will of God, through the Holy Spirit (John 1:13, 3:1-36). We were given the ability to overcome the world! We walk and live by the Spirit of God. Our manner of living is patterned after the life of God, our Father Who begat us. As the children of our Heavenly Father, the fruits of the Spirit will be manifested in our lives, and most importantly, the love of God for the children of God. True love for God will result in our obedience, which is the only legitimate response to His love (John 14:15, 21, 24, 1 John 2:4).

¹¹² The reverse of the argument is also true. The only way that we are ever going to truly love the children of God is if we really love God. The proof that we love God and have His love in us is that we keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21, 24, 1 John 2:4, 3:14, 17).

113 The world and all of its lust war against us, opposing the commandments of God. It is God's Word, His will and ways expressed in His commands, that empowers us with the insight and authority to conquer everything that the spirit of the world would throw at us. The Greek word 'nikao' (νικάω) means 'to conquer,' and is a word that describes those who are born of God (Romans 8:37). It is used in Luke 11:22 to describe how the strong man is conquered, and then again in John 16:33 to describe how Jesus conquered the world. All who are born of God also conquer the world, just as Jesus conquered the world (John 20:21, Revelation 3:21, 21:7). It is used of the antichrist who will go forth conquering and to conquer, but as for us, we have been given the power to overthrow and overcome all the power of the Devil, and nothing within the demonic realm can hurt us (Luke 10:19). The One, Who conquered the world, Christ Jesus, lives on the inside of us, and therefore we have conquered every lying power of darkness and the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3-4, reference also: 2:13-14, 3:24, 4:13, 15-16).

John has mentioned eight specific attributes of those who are begotten of God (1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4). The highlighted point is that everyone who is born of God is identified as one who conquers and overcomes every dimension of sin and iniquity that the spirit of the world attempts to entice them with. We have been given power over everything that is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). There is no form of sin or power of Satan that has dominion over us, because we have been born of God (Romans 6:1-23, 1 John 5:18). It is our assignment to destroy every work of darkness wherever we find it (Matthew 10:1, Mark 3:15, Luke 10:19, John 17:21-23). The sovereign God has given to us His strength and His power, so that we may have His ability to overthrow every power of darkness. We have power over every unclean spirit and every god-defying thing in this world that would attempt to lead us astray or prevent us from doing what pleases the Father (2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Ephesians 6:10, 2 Peter 1:3, 1 John 2:14).

The conquering power that we have is our faith. It is the faith of Jesus Christ. It is the faith that has made all things new and brought forth the new creation. It is found in our willingness to agree with God and believe what He has said regarding who we are and what He has made us to be: overcomers. The faith that God lives in us and that we live in Him is the means by which we overcome. It is the faith that we have

5- Who is conquering¹¹⁶ the world if not the one believing that Jesus is the Son of God? 6- This is the One Who came through water and blood: Jesus the Christ. Not with the water¹¹⁷ only, but with the water and with¹¹⁸ the blood – and the Spirit is the witness¹¹⁹ because the Spirit is the truth.

received His power and authority, and that nothing is impossible for anyone who will believe. This is the faith that comes to us by the Word of God, and operates in our life by the Spirit of God. If we will believe what God has said and act upon it, then the faith of God is activated, and the power of God becomes effective in our lives (Mark 11:22, Romans 10:17, Galatians 3:5, Philemon 1:6, James 2:26). All we need to do is to trust in the Lord, in Whom is everlasting strength, and every power opposed to God will fall like stubble before our feet (Exodus 15:7, Isaiah 26:4, 41:2). We have been given the keys (and the authority) of the Kingdom of God, and as soldiers in His army, we are commissioned to destroy and conquer everything opposed to His kingdom (Matthew 12:28-29, 16:19, Mark 16:17, Luke 10:19, John 1:12, Ephesians 6:10, 2 Timothy 2:4). We are to allow Jesus to be revealed in our lives, and give ourselves to His ministry – He Who was manifested to destroy the works of darkness.

¹¹⁴ The Greek noun 'nike' (νίκη) is normally translated as "victory." However, because it is derived from the verb 'nikao' (νικάω / to conquer), it may be translated as "conquest," or understood to be the power that gains victory, or demonstrates conquering power. It means "to have superiority," and can be used as "to win" or "to defeat." In the context of this verse, the power of faith has conquered the world, therefore the concept of the conquering power of faith is most suited for this contextual usage of 'nike.' This is a present victory for all who have been born of the Spirit and live in Chris Jesus, because He abolished death and destroyed the power of Satan (2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:14). The Greek noun 'nike' only occurs this one time in the New Testament.

115 Jesus conquered the world when He overthrew Satan's tyrannical reign at Calvary (John 16:33).
116 If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, then we are vested with the power to overthrow Satan at every point of attack. When we were born of God and filled with His Spirit, we were given the authority to stand against all of the powers of darkness and defeat them in His name. Christ Jesus is above all principalities and powers – and having been indwelt by Him, brought into union with Him, and being seated together with Him in His heavenly authority – we live in the overcoming power that He won for us (Ephesians 2:6, 4:10-12). The verb that is used here for "the overcomer" is the present participle of 'nikan,' (νικάν) and is found at the end of every address to the seven churches in Revelation (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21). We can all rest assured that we will be held responsible before God to live in the overcoming victory won for us by Christ Jesus.

¹¹⁷ Of the three witnesses that are in the earth: the water, the blood, and the Spirit, the water is the one most associated with the Word of God. Although all three of these are very clearly identified as the agents by which we are both consecrated and begotten of God, the water is revealed to be that which flows out of the believer as rivers. These rivers of living water that pour out of the believer are the expressions of divine empowerment, which enable us to be the witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 7:38-39, Acts 1:8).

In the Gospel of John, water is identified with the Spirit as being essential to being begotten of God (John 3:5). It is again identified with eternal life springing out of those who drink of this spiritual water (John 4:11). In John 7:37-39, water is once again applied to the gift of eternal life and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, from a purely traditional Jewish perspective, the drawing of the water on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles symbolized the appearing of the Holy Spirit. Probably the easiest argument to make for the meaning of the "water" in the Gospel of John is that it represents the activity of the Holy Spirit flowing through the life of the believer. When Jesus ministered, He only spoke the words that the Father gave Him to speak, and therefore these words could be viewed as the rivers of living water flowing out of his belly, much the same as the 120 on the Day of Pentecost. In fact, the argument can be made that every expression and attribute of God witnessed in the life of God's people is an expression of this living water. The water that Jesus desired to give to the woman at the well was simply received through the testimony of His words. The results of the wellspring on the inside of this woman were that: "many of the Samaritans out of that city believed on Him because of the woman testifying..." (John 4:39).

The water in a more general sense can be understood as the life of God. The water pouring forth from the temple during the 1,000 year reign of Christ is the life-giving presence and power of Christ Jesus that brings life and healing wherever the water flows (Ezekiel 47:9). The water of life is also pictured coming from the throne of God that will dwell upon the Earth after the creation of the new heavens and the new Earth (Revelation 22:1-2).

7- Because there are Three Who bear witness in Heaven¹²⁰: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One¹²¹.

The only other application of water is in baptism. Water baptism was a symbolic act of repentance and turning the heart back to God (Matthew 3:11). Yet, John the Baptist once again compared even this water baptism to the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5, 2:4). Paul also takes up the message of water baptism and associates it symbolically with being baptized into the life and identity of Christ (Romans 6:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12). Also, as we have already pointed out, water is symbolized as the Word of God (Deuteronomy 32:2, Isaiah 55:10-11, Ephesians 5:26). The Word of God is declared to be the active agent of God by which men are saved and matured in Christ (Acts 20:32, Romans 10:8, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Titus 1:3, Hebrews 4:2, 12, 6:4, James 1:21, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 2:14). Therefore, we conclude that the water symbolizes the Word and the life of God, which comes forth by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

118 There are two Greek words employed here for which many translations make no distinction: 'dia' (διά) and 'en.' (ἐν) The Greek word 'dia' is translated as "through" or "on account of," whereas 'en' may be translated as "in," "by," or "with." The choice for translating 'en' as "with" is based on the Septuagint reading of Leviticus 16:3, which reads that Aaron "came with (êv / en) a calf." The context is the same here in 1 John 5:6, as Jesus is both High Priest and Sacrifice. If one keeps in mind that both the water and the blood are sacraments of redemption, then it make the reading somewhat easier to understand. 119 When Jesus came to be baptized with water by John, He did so to fulfill all righteousness and also that the Holy Spirit could bear witness of Him. John the Baptist was told that the One Whom he saw the Spirit descend upon and remain on would be the Christ that would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire, which took place as soon as Jesus was baptized. Baptizing new converts in water was practiced by the Pharisees as an initiation event as well. But for John, it was a ministry that was given to him by God to prepare the way for Christ Jesus. Therefore, John baptized with water for the remission of sins to prepare the people for the One Who would take away their sins with His own blood. In exactly what manner the Holy Spirit bore witness of Jesus when He offered His blood is uncertain. However, there is no doubt that there were signs and wonders that day, for it was dark from noon until 3:00pm (Matthew 27:45). We also know that Jesus had told the Pharisees that when they crucified Him, then they would know that He was the Christ (John 8:28). Finally, Jesus said that when He was lifted up He would draw all men unto Himself (John 12:32). ¹²⁰ Metzger argues that the majority of manuscripts omit "in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are One." He claims that these words have no right to be in the New Testament, because they do not exist in any known manuscripts except four: manuscripts 61, 88, 629, and 635. If this was added and not representative of the truth, then the whole New Testament that bears witness to these things was altered.

This scripture was quoted in the fourth century in the Latin treatise titled "Liber Apologeticus." This scripture was also quoted by the Latin Fathers in North Africa in the fifth century. What is most peculiar is that once again the verse that is in question is one associated with the distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (see footnote for 1 John 2:23). Those that have done a critical analysis of the Greek New Testament realize that the argument of what the original New Testament text contained is either over scriptures that make a clear argument for the distinction of God manifested as three unique Individuals, or the miraculous ministry of Jesus or His followers. It is apparent that we have to deal with more factors than just what the Greek manuscripts contain - it is also important to consider where they came from. There is no doubt that doctrinal issues are at the heart of these variant readings. Therefore, one cannot just deal with each individual variant – they must all be considered as a combined pool of variants. Justifiable parameters must be set in the analysis so as not to skew the results in favor of a doctrinal bias held by any one school of early Christian theology. The diversity of manuscript type is probably more important than the age of the manuscript. This translation uses the families of manuscripts embodied in the Byzantine text Or the Textus Receptus, while considering the variants proposed by the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament and the textual commentary of the Greek New Testament by Bruce Metzger. It is important to remember that the Byzantine Text has been regarded as the authoritative text, and also the most widely circulated since the days of the Byzantine Empire. It is essential that we demand more than weak and obviously doctrinally biased opinions presented by variant manuscripts before we depart from any reading of the "Manuscript Standard," which has lasted for at least 1,600 years.

¹²¹ Because there are Three Who bear witness in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One. John has already made it clear that the one who denies the Father and the Son is a liar and antichrist (1 John 2:22). Previously, John revealed that the Word was God, and was with God, and that

- 8- And there are Three that bear witness in the Earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood and these Three are in One¹²².
- 9- If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater, for this is God's testimony: that He testified concerning His Son¹²³.

He was made flesh (John 1:1). Christ Jesus, Who is God the Word, sent the Person the Holy Spirit from the Father to take His place among us as our Teacher and Leader. These Three: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, give witness in Heaven to all these things concerning redemption.

So many are confused about the existence of the Father, the Word (Christ Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. Although there are many references to the reality that they are three distinct and separate individuals, still there are those who remain confused. Some believe that it contradicts the revelation in the Old Testament encapsulated in the "Shema" (or שֶׁמֶע in Hebrew). Moses said by the Spirit of YHVH, "Hear oh Israel, YHVH your God, YHVH is One." (Deuteronomy 6:4). YHVH is an individual, but that does not deny the revelation brought to us by John.

When the Pharisees were struggling with Jesus, He asked them one question that brought their arguments to an end: "If David called Him (the Messiah) 'Lord,' how then is He His Son?" (Mark 12:37). He quoted the scripture that says, "YHVH said to my Adoni, 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool" (Psalm 110:1). Jesus referred to YHVH as His Father about 61 times in the Gospels. This is most certainly the New Covenant revelation, and is as much a part of the Gospel as anything else. There is no reason to reject that the Father (YHVH / קֹהְוֹה), the Word (Christ Jesus), and the Holy Spirit are God. All three gave witness to the redemption that God had provided for men to be saved.

Jesus commissioned His disciples to baptize those that believe in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to which all gave witness (Matthew 28:19). Jesus also made reference to His Father sending the Holy Spirit to be the One to take His place among the disciples on Earth numerous times – a message that all of the apostles gave witness to (Luke 24:49, John 14:16, 26, Acts 1:8). Paul gave witness to these Three, Who are One God, in all of his addresses to the church – who also said in the most perfect way, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (2 Corinthians 13:14, see also Acts 13:33, Romans 1:7, 15:6, 1 Corinthians 1:3, 8:6, 2 Corinthians 1:2, 3, 11:31, Galatians 1:13, Ephesians 1:2, 3, 17, 5:20, 6:23, Philippians 1:2, 2:11, Colossians 1:2, 1, 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 3, 3:11, 13, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2, 2:16, 1 Timothy 1:2, 2 Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, Philemon 1:3, Hebrews 1:1-2, 5, 5:5). Peter also bore witness to these Three (Acts 2:33-34, 36, 38, 3:13, 5:30, 1 Peter 1:2-3, 2 Peter 1:17) Stephen gave his witness when he was being stoned to death (Acts 7:55-56). So it is also with all the New Testament writers (James 1:1, Jude 1:1). If someone says these things are not true and they deny the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, then they must explain these and many more verses of scripture in which God declares from His own mouth that they are most certainly true.

¹²² The Spirit gave witness to Jesus, both by the prophets and through the mighty signs and wonders that He did through Christ Jesus. Baptism in the Spirit was the sign that John the Baptist was given so that he would able to recognize the Messiah: "And I knew Him not, but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, 'Upon Whom you shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33). Christ Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness and the resurrection (Romans 1:4).

The water and the blood testify of Jesus being born of a woman. The blood gives testimony that God became flesh, Whose human frame was subjected to the same things that all other men must endure. The blood and water of His earthly tabernacle flowed out from the wound in His side at His death. The testimony of the water and the blood spans the time of His earthly ministry – from the baptism in the Jordan to His crucifixion at Calvary. He is the Savior Who provides the water of salvation and the blood of cleansing.

¹²³ We have the testimony of God that we have been born of the Spirit (John 3:6, Romans 8:16), of the water (Deuteronomy 32:2, Isaiah 55:10-11, John 3:5, Ephesians 5:26, 1 Peter 1:23), and of the blood (Exodus 12:13, John 6:53, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Revelation 1:5). It is by these three witnesses that we are consecrated, and it is by these Three that we are begotten of God. The primary theme of this epistle is the proofs and witnesses of those who are begotten of God and those who are of the Devil. The message here is that the power and authority of the witness is first in Heaven, for the Father knows those who are His, as do the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. And furthermore, we have this testimony in ourselves: we have been begotten of God, because we have received the Word, the Spirit, and the blood as the agents by which we were begotten of God.

10- He that believes on the Son of God has this witness in himself. He that does not believe God makes Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God had witnessed concerning His Son¹²⁴.

11- And this is the witness that God has given us: eternal life¹²⁵ – and this life is in His Son.

12- He who has the Son has the life¹²⁶, and he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

¹²⁴ We have this witness within us because we have the Spirit of the Son (Galatians 4:6). The Holy Spirit bears witness with our Spirit, and we know that what God has said concerning His Son is true, and that we are in Him and He is in us (Romans 8:14-16). Our spirits have been made one with the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of our lives are found to be in perfect agreement with what the Father has said about our salvation (1 Corinthians 6:17).

If our testimony does not agree with the salvation that God has described in His Son, then we make God a liar. If we continue to walk in darkness and believe that it is right and okay with God, we make God a liar (1 John 1:6). If we are unwilling to walk in the truth and obey God's commandments, we make God a liar (1 John 2:4-6). If we say we cannot walk in His life and righteousness, once again we make God a liar (1 John 2:29, 3:7, 10). Those that agree with God overcome the world and do those things that are pleasing in God's sight (1 John 3:22, 4:4).

¹²⁵ God has given us His life – eternal life – and the Father, Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit testify to this. The proofs of this new life in Christ Jesus are evidenced by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, manifesting the life and ministry of Jesus in us. The most important dimension of eternal life is the quality of life that we have received. The life of Christ Jesus, which is the life of God, is abundant and eternal life. God's life is filled with the rivers of His character and nature: His joy unspeakable and full of glory, His peace that passes understanding, and His love that goes beyond all knowledge (Ephesians 3:19, Philippians 4:7, 1 Peter 1:8).

Confidence and faith in His work of grace is vital to our salvation. The only way that we can come near to God is by the blood of Jesus, with a true heart, in full assurance of the faith (Hebrews 10:22). It's not possible for us to please Him without this faith in what He has done for us and pledged to do for us (Hebrews 11:6). It is essential that we trust with absolute certainty that the blood of Jesus has removed every sin and has brought forth the life of God in us. We must believe that we have been begotten of God, and be willing to be led by the Spirit. We must resign ourselves only to believe what the Word of God has said. The lies that would attempt to cast doubt on God's love for us, and the eternal life that has been given to us, must be cast down as the enemies of God.

God so desires us to be convinced of this unspeakable gift that He has given us the greatest witnesses possible: the witnesses of the blood, the Spirit and the water. He wants us to be certain of the eternal life that has come to us through the testimony of the blood of Jesus, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the water of His Word. The certainty that eternal life has come to us through the blood is witnessed to us by the Spirit and the Word (Matthew 26:27, John 6:54, Hebrews 9:12). That we have been begotten of the Spirit has been forever settled by the testimony that God has given to us of His Son (John 3:5-8, Galatians 4:29, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23). All of the witnesses of God – the blood, the Spirit, and the water – are one, and they proclaim the message of God to everyone who will hear and believe. This message is that God has given to us His life, and that we now live in Him.

¹²⁶ God desires that we all have life and have it to its fullness! Adam's sin led mankind into death, and as a result, the "life" that we have known has been separate from the life of God and His ways (Matthew 8:22, Luke 15:24, 32, Romans 5:12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 2 Corinthians 5:14, Ephesians 2:1, 5, 5:14, Colossians 2:13, 1 Timothy 5:6). John made it very clear when he said, "He that has the Son (Christ Jesus) has life, and he that does not have the Son does not have life" (1 John 5:12, compare with: John 3:36, 5:24, 1 John 3:14). To have the Son is to personally possess Him. It echoes the same message that has been presented throughout this epistle: that we now have Christ Jesus dwelling in us.

The abundant life that has been given to those who have allowed the Spirit of God to transform their lives is an eternal life. It is not just a quantity of time, but a quality of life. It is the life that God has, and it is expressed through our lives by the Spirit of God that has been given to us. This life of God is a wellspring leaping up on the inside, inspiring love, joy, and peace. It is a river flowing from our hearts, producing the unlimited supply of the goodness of God's nature and power. Sin threatens the abundant life that has been given to us, because sin produces death. If sin is allowed to violate this life that has been

13- I wrote these things to you who believe on the name of the Son of God – that you may know that you have eternal life¹²⁷, and that you may believe in the name of the Son of God.

14- And this is the confidence that we have towards Him: if we ask¹²⁸ anything according to His will, He hears us.

15- And if we know that He hears us¹²⁹, and then if we ask, we know that we possess whatever we requested when we asked it of Him.

given to us, God has made a provision that will restore us. All we have to do is call on the name of the Lord, and the life that is in the blood of Jesus removes the sin and death.

Jesus has abolished death for all who will receive the gift of life (2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:14). He has brought life and imortality to the forefront for all to see and understand. God, Who has imparted His life into us by the Spirit, also teaches us and strengthens us to do all the ways of life by the same Spirit (Galatians 3:21). If we will be willing to obey the simple request that God has asked of us in His Word, then we will grow and develop into all of the heavenly things that the Lord has for us. If we will walk in obedience to the Word and the Spirit, we will discover an ever-increasing revelation of the fullness of God – His love, His peace, His joy, and the pleasures of every good and perfect gift that He has created for us (Psalm 16:11, Romans 8:32, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 1:17-19, James 1:17).

127 If we will believe the testimony that God has given to us of His Son, then we will know that we have eternal life. He has given us His Word so that our joy may be full, and so that we may know all that He has

eternal life. He has given us His Word so that our joy may be full, and so that we may know all that He has freely given to us. All of the promises of God are certain – they are absolutes! We can confidently trust in Him, and boldly proclaim what He has said about us.

The things that John has written in this epistle established the proofs of what God has done for us when we received eternal life – the life of the only begotten Son. There is no need to wonder – rather surrender to God and to His ways, and let God perfect everything that concerns you (Psalm 138:8). Everyone who has received Christ Jesus has been given the authority to be a son of God (John 1:12). By believing what God has said, and believing in Christ Jesus – the Truth, the Way, and the Life (John 14:6) – we have life through His name (John 20:31).

128 As surely as you know that you have been born of God and received eternal life through believing on the name of Jesus Christ, we may also be just as certain that whatever we ask the Father in His name, we will receive it (Mark 11:24, John 14:13, 15:16, 16:23, 26, 1 John 3:22). The certainty of God's promise concerning the answer to our request is placed on the same level as knowing that we have received eternal life (1 John 5:13-14). Having received eternal life, we are given divine sonship, and are heirs and co-inheritors with Christ Jesus to do the works of the Father (Romans 8:15-17, Galatians 4:6-7). The confidence that we have that God hears our prayers and will do whatever we ask is found in the knowledge that we have His eternal life and the intimacy of sonship relationship (John 15:7, 16). Without the confidence of who we are in Christ, and the boldness that comes from knowing and believing the love that the Father has for us, we will not have this kind of confidence in Him: that whatever we ask, He will do. In this wonderful relationship, we will not ask for things to consume them in our own lust, but will ask those things modeled by Christ Jesus for the purposes of the kingdom (John 5:30, James 4:3, 1 John 5:14).

Jesus modeled a very simple method for receiving whatever we need from the Father – He simply said, "Ask." There are two Greek words used for "ask" in verses 14-16, 'aitein,' (αἰτεῖν) and 'erotan' (ερωταν). John does not use the more common word for prayer, 'proseuchomai' (προσεύχομαι) in any of his writings. John's direction to us from the Holy Spirit is to simply ask the Father in faith, in the name of Jesus (John 14:13, 26, 15:16, 16:23, 26). There is really no difference in these two Greek words, but one may make an argument that 'aitein' could be understood to mean, "ask for oneself." However, both of these words are used in John 16:24 and 26 with no perceptible difference. It is God's desire that we represent Him on the Earth. Therefore, He has made it very easy for us to receive those things that we need. Just come to the Father in simple childlike faith, and ask Him for whatever you need. You may rest assured that it is the will of the Father to supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19). It is also His will to prosper you and bless you, and even to give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 20:4, 21:2, 37:4, Isaiah 58:14, 3 John 1:2). God wants you to believe for the impossible, and to be in expectation that He will perform a miracle for you at your request (Matthew 17:20, Mark 9:23, Luke 1:37, 18:27). ¹²⁹ Moving out of the stronghold of living a life based upon a temporal existence that relies only on the five senses brings us into a new revelation of life. The Spirit of wisdom and revelation will cause us to see the unseen and know with perfect confidence that we stand before the Father and that He hears our prayers.

16- If anyone sees his brother sin a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life¹³⁰ for the sin that is not unto death. There is a sin unto death¹³¹ – I do not say that anyone should ask concerning that.

The Lord is determined to show forth His life and power through us, but we must be willing to behold Him and stand together in those things that He has commanded (John 14:11-12, 23, 17:21-23).

When Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, John reports that He lifted His eyes toward Heaven and said, "I thank You Father that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me" (John 11:41-42). Our heavenly Father wants us to have this same confidence in the relationship that He has freely invited us into – He made us His partners when we became part of His family, and we must stop wondering. Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son, has brought us into sonship so that we might function not as children, but as heirs (Galatians 4:1-7). The confidence and faith that Christ Jesus expressed in the Father should also be developed in us if we will hearken to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14-17). We must recognize that we are called to live the life of Jesus and to walk in His ministry. The joy and wonder of this kind of relationship with the Father will result in us receiving a supernatural confidence to know that He hears us – and if we know that He hears us, then what we have asked, He will do! We will not wonder if Father will answer. Rather, we will know that He has already supplied, and what we have asked is already ours.

There is nothing that could be more simple and clear concerning Father's will: ask and you will receive. God has made Himself known as the One Who is faithful, Who keeps His promises. He has revealed Himself as the God Who hears. The notion that somehow God has given us a hope of the mere possibility of answered prayer is foreign to His message. Rather, He has given us a great confidence that whatever we ask He will do.

Doubt and unbelief, which arise out of fear and lack of confidence toward God, will not receive what God has promised. God demands that we come to know Him in such a way that we are not double-minded, but certain. We must believe that we have received what we have asked of Him (Mark 11:24). When condemnation exists in our lives, we cannot have confidence toward God (1 John 3:21). Any sharing of our affections and desires with worldly and earthly interest will compromise our certainty (Mark 4:19, John 15:16).

The Lord will bless us and provide for us even beyond all that we can think or ask – therefore, how much more shall He supply all that we have need of according to His riches in glory (Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:19)? We live in a far more perfect economy in God than those under the first covenant – one that is far more glorious, with even greater promises. To believe less than what God has promised is to limit God and restrain all the blessings that our exceedingly great Reward has supplied. As Elijah opened and closed the windows of Heaven, even so our response to God and the faith that He has given will do the same. Let us all demand what God has commanded (Luke 11:8).

¹³⁰ One of the applications of prayer must be understood as the means to intercede for those who have sinned that they might be released from the snare of the Devil. Through prayer, we lay hold on the one who sins as though we were raising such a one from the dead. This would include every sin from which the Lord Jesus has provided forgiveness through His blood (1 John 1:9, 2:1-2). When someone who has sin comes desiring deliverance and restoration, we are to pray, and God will forgive them, and we must also forgive! We who are spiritual must restore those who have been overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1).

Jesus told the disciples that whosoever's sins they retained would be retained, and whosoever's sins they remitted would be remitted (John 20:23). This may also be viewed as giving life or withholding it. This may be regarded as an intercessory role on the part of the disciple for the one who sinned. James tells us that if someone is sick, they are to call for the elders, who by anointing with oil and praying the prayer of faith, would impart healing as well as forgiveness of sins if they had sinned (James 5:14-15). He also indicates an intercessory role on the part of the believer in turning a person from their sins – when one converts the sinner from the error of his way, saving his soul from death (James 5:20).

Paul exercised a unique authority in the retaining of sins when he gave those who had sinned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Corinthians 5:5). Yet at the same time, there is a sin that goes beyond grace: when one has tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good Word of God and the power of the world to come, and then rejects the truth that Jesus Christ is the Savior Who gives the life of the new creation to those who believe (Hebrews 6:5-6). It is this rejection of the truth and the work of the Holy Spirit that may also be regarded as blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29). This is the act of sin that shakes the fist in the face of God with defiance, knowing that what they are doing is wrong, but refusing to agree with God and recognize its evil, instead justifying it

- 17- All unrighteousness is \sin^{132} , and there is a sin not unto death.
- 18- We know that everyone that is begotten of God sins not, but the one begotten of God keeps himself and the evil one cannot touch him¹³³.
- 19- We know that we are of God and the whole world is controlled by the evil one¹³⁴.

(Hebrews 10:26-29). Esau is given as another example of one who hardened his heart against the Lord and could find no means of repentance (Hebrews 12:16-17).

¹³¹ In both situations, sin results in death. In one case, you can pray and give life to the one who has sin, and in the other case you cannot give them life. The fact that sin results in death is a well-established fact in both the Old and the New Testament. Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." In James 1:13-15, the progression of sin and the wages of death are described. When a person is tempted, they are drawn away of their own strong desire, then when the sin is conceived, it brings forth death. The sin unto death that should not be prayed for is probably associated with the antichrist spirit of those who departed from the company of the saints, denying both the Father and the Son (1 John 2:18-19). Paul also warns the Hebrews that if they fall away and depart from the faith, they too would not be able to be restored to a position of grace (Hebrews 6:4-7). In effect, those involved in turning back to either the Law or to idolatry were denying the reality of any true experience with God, and thus they both reject the work of the Holy Spirit and the experience of the new birth. As to how this may relate to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit for which there is not forgiveness is not clear. However, it is possible that those of the antichrist spirit made the same error that the Pharisees had made, and attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to the Devil. There are several examples of those who died because of their sins. Ananias and Sapphira died because they lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). Believers died because they did not discern the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:5-11, 11:29-30). All of Israel except Caleb and Joshua died because of their refusal to obey God.

 132 The wages of sin is death. All unrighteousness is sin and has a spiritual consequence: death. John has now equated both iniquity ('anomia' / ἀνομία) and all unrighteousness to sin (1 John 3:4). However, John distinguishes sin in general from a unique sin that appears to be unforgiveable – one that should not be prayed for. The only sin that we know that is unforgiveable is that of blasphemy of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 3:29, Luke 12:10). In a more specific way, Paul also addresses those who turn from salvation in Christ Jesus and deny Him. These are those who had received the heavenly gift, were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted of the good word of God and the power of the world to come (Hebrews 6:4-6). These are those who "went out from among us" (1 John 2:19).

¹³³ John identifies every act of sin as participation and agreement with the Devil. The first time that John indicated that sin was participation with the Devil was in chapter three, "He that commits sin is of the Devil" (1 John 3:8). John puts forth all sin as the antithesis of righteousness, even as darkness is the antithesis of light, lie of truth, death of life, and Satan the antithesis of God. Those who are born of God will not continue to practice sin – if they do, John categorically places them in allegiance with the demonic.

As those begotten of God, we have been given a place of authority such that Satan cannot touch us. Even as Jesus had said to John and the others that were with him, "You will tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all of the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you" (Luke 10:19). Christ Jesus has given us an authority in Himself that is far above all principalities and powers (Ephesians 1:21-22, 2:6). Although fleshly lust is at war against us in a struggle against spiritual wickedness, we are given the strength of the Lord and the power of His might to walk even as He walks and overcome even as He overcame (Ephesians 6:10-12, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 John 2:13-14, Revelation 3:21).

134 The world is not only under the control of Satan, who is the God of this world – it is also temporal (2 Corinthians 4:4). The world is passing away, and all the lust that is in it (1 John 2:17). It will soon be no more, but the Word of God will last forever. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of the Lord will endure forever (Matthew 24:35). God's Word divides light from darkness, and good from evil. The blood of Jesus has delivered us out of its house of bondage, and the Holy Spirit has led us into the realms of God to be separated from the influences of the world. We must understand how to remain separate from the world, and remain unstained by its influence (James 1:27). We must recognize that we are not of this world any more than Jesus was of this world (John 17:16). The world has been crucified to us, and we to it (Galatians 6:14). Through the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, we have escaped the corruption of its lust and its damnation (2 Peter 1:4). To find comfort and enjoyment in what is inspired by the enemy of our souls, and of God, is terribly wrong. We must recognize that any form of friendship with the world is an act of hostility against God (James 4:4). We must heed the words of those who knew the will of the Father and

20- We know that the Son of God has come and given us an understanding: that we might know Him¹³⁵ Who is truth. And we are in Him¹³⁶ Who is true in His Son, Jesus Christ – this is the true God and eternal life¹³⁷.

the dangers of any association with the world, and not allow ourselves to conform to anything that that is in the world (Romans 12:2).

Never before has the world been more at our doorsteps, and in many cases integrated into our lives, than through the current media invasion. It has become increasingly difficult for God's people to discern its unholy influence and to have no fellowship with it. The world, and all that is in it, has been brought into our lives, and is accepted as common and normal. Video games, television programing, internet, and social media have overwhelmed the lives of most everyone. We must be all the more careful that we do not allow the things of this world to contaminate our souls and draw us away from the life that is in Christ Jesus. It is more essential than at any other time that we practice the utmost care to make sure that we do not cross the line into those things that belong to the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life – into our everyday affairs (1 John 2:16). The world, its lusts, and all those who follow in its ways will pass away. The world is surely a dangerous and uncertain place. The world is a defiled and demonic realm – don't treat it as harmless and normal. What is your attitude toward the world and all that is in it? Is the spirit of the world comfortable and acceptable to you? (Ephesians 2:2-3).

¹³⁵ We have been given insight and understanding so that we can know the living God. We must consider and understand that everything in a secular world is opposite of Him. Everything that we have learned to navigate and function by in the realm of our thinking and reasoning steers us away from cooperation with God. The nature that we were born with could not connect with or receive anything from the Lord (1 Corinthians 2:4, James 1:6-8). The spirit of disobedience which once ruled our lives has blinded the hearts and minds of even the most brilliant of men, leaving them unable to know and understand God (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2-3).

The prophet Jeremiah put everything in this life in its proper prospective when he said, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glories glory in this: that he understands and knows Me" (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we have received the ability to understand and know God. He has given us the ability to walk in the light even as He is in the light, and to know everything about God by the anointing that we have received from Him (John 16:13-15, 1 John 2:20). All this is because we are now in Him, and He is in us (John 14:23, 15:1-5, 17:21-23, 1 John 2:5-6, 24, 28, 3:6, 24, 4:13, 15-16). In understanding and knowing God, we understand and know His love, His authority, and all things that pertain to His life and godliness.

The truth of the gospel is all about living in Christ Jesus, and Christ Jesus living in us. We have been allowed to know and serve the living God, not an idea or religion. Men would attempt to reduce the great miracle of salvation to a set of religious practices in which they continue to live their own lives the way that they choose. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. The gospel is the proclamation that God is with us and in us through the miracle of the NEW BIRTH! This is eternal life: that we might know the only true God and His Son, Jesus Christ (John 17:3). Our response to the call of God must be our willingness to come and dwell in Him. Let the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life, take full control of your life. He will open the eyes of your understanding so that you can see the exceeding riches of His glory: Christ in you (Ephesians 1:19, Colossians 1:27).

136 Eternal life is far more than something you inherit after you die – eternal life is the life of God. The life of God, in both quality and quantity, is an endless life. This life, which has no end or limits to that which is good, can only be found in Christ Jesus. It was Christ Jesus Who died and rose again to impart this abundant life into us, and it is only in Him that this life can be realized. The life of God comes into us when we are born of the Spirit, and it becomes in us a fountainhead of every divine attribute of the Most High (John 4:16-24, 7:38-39, 1 John 3:24). Before we are born of the Spirit, we are dead while we live, and spiritually alienated from the life of God that is only found in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:14, Ephesians 2:1, 5, 4:18, Colossians 2:13). Now through Christ Jesus, the life of God, that ageless and glorious life that is filled with every pleasant and good thing, becomes our very own (Luke 1:53, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:11, Colossians 3:1, 2 Peter 1:3).

We have been raised up together with Jesus into the glory of His life, and we now live in Him and by Him (John 1:16, 17:21-23, Romans 6:4-5, Ephesians 1:19-20, Colossians 2:12, 3:1). The life that is in Christ Jesus is a more than just a quantity of time, it is a quality of life. The quality of life that is in the Son is a life that is so full of joy that it is joy unspeakable and glorious. The life that we have been given in the

21- Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Son is a wellspring of life that springs up on the inside of us with all of the love and passion of God filling us with what makes eternity like moments of time. Now His love, His peace, and His mercy will fill you and become your very own – all you must do is yield to Him through obedience. He has filled us with every glorious divine passion and emotion of the Almighty. He desires to overwhelm our souls, filling us to overflowing with His love. The untainted, pure, and life-giving flow of His own goodness that flows from His very own being now dwells in us by Christ Jesus, and flows out like rivers of His life. All we must do is yield to Him. Believe that He is in you and you are in Him. Call out and He will answer. Let His rivers of life flow out of you today as you acknowledge Him in all your ways.

¹³⁷ We have received revelation from God to know Jesus Christ, Who is the true God. John once again underscores the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 1:1, 14). He is also eternal life (John 17:3, 1 John 1:2, 2:25, 5:11-1). By being born of God, we have been brought into union with Jesus, the Son of God, and therefore we are referred to as being in Him.

The Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, brings us into contact with reality. Reality is what is true, and what is true lasts forever. Jesus Christ is the truth. Everything that He said is true. It is the truth that sets us free from bondage to sin, sickness, and disease. When you know the truth that God has given you power to live free from sin, then you can live that way. When you know that it is not the will of God for you to be sick, then you can rise up in the truth of God's Word and command the sickness to go in Jesus's name! At the moment that we embrace the truth, we receive that which has been freely given to us by God. The revelation of truth gives us the answers to everything that would cause questions and confusion in our lives. Deception and every evil thing works in the realms of darkness, where nothing is known or visible, but Jesus Christ, the light of life, causes the light of truth to shine into our hearts, so that every form of deception and darkness is dispelled.

We have turned from that which is false and lifeless to serve the true and the living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). But we must remember that this is not just a touchy-feely concept or philosophical opinion, but is clearly and definitely defined for us by the Word of God. It is the Word of God that instructs us in the right thinking. The lies and deception of darkness still wage a war against the truth, and unfortunately too many of God's people listen to these lies. What a terrible tragedy it is to know the truth, the reality of God, and to yet be taken prisoner by lies and deception. The Holy Spirit has come to lead us and guide us into all truth, and to strengthen us to walk in the truth, Christ Jesus. Let us allow Him to lead on.

The Second Epistle of John

- 1- The Presbyter¹³⁸, to the elect lady and to her children¹³⁹, whom I love in truth¹⁴⁰, and not I only, but also all those who have known the truth,
- 2- because the truth abides in us and will be with us forever¹⁴¹.
- 3- Shall be with us grace, peace and mercy from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father¹⁴², in truth and love.
- 4- I greatly rejoiced that I found your children walking in truth, just as we received a commandment from the Father.

138 John never clamored in any of his writings to be known as an apostle or by any extravagant titles. He referred to Himself as 'ho presbyteros' (ὁ πρεσβύτερος / the Presbyter). The only other title that we know that he referred to himself as was the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20). Before A.D. 70, "elder" had become the title for the officials of the synagogue. Presbyteros is found 66 times in the New Testament. It first occurs in Matthew 15:2, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" Peter also referred to himself a 'presbyteros' (πρεσβύτερος) (1 Peter 5:1). Paul also ordained 'presbyteros' in every church (Acts 14:23).

139 This is a unique address by John. This is a term of endearment and respect given to a woman. To conclude that this is how he would address the church is unsubstantiated by Scripture. It is advisable therefore for us to take this as a personal address to a chosen woman of God and her children, who John had oversight of. John also refers to her sister and nephews greeting her (2 John 1:13). This woman may be considered as a handmaiden of the Lord with a special influence among the saints where she lived. However, there are those who believe that this terminology was used by John during a time of intense persecution to protect the recipients (Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953–2001). Exposition of James and the Epistles of John (Vol. 14, p. 374).).

140 Being in truth ('en aletheia' / ἐν ἀλήθεια) is an attribute of one having the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is the result of being in Christ Jesus, Who personifies the truth (John 14:6). Being in Christ Jesus, we walk in the Spirit of truth, Who is the Holy Spirit – Who is both with us and in us (John 14:17, 15:26, Ephesians 5:9, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 5:6). The only way that we can be in the truth is to live by the Word of truth and yield to the Spirit of truth (John 8:31, 16:13, 17:17). The truth is the realm of God: the place where Satan refused to dwell. Because we have known the truth, Christ Jesus, the truth, has set us free from slavery to the Satanic lie (John 8:44). As the children of God who have been begotten of the Father, we live by the Word of truth and walk in the Spirit of truth, worshiping God in Spirit and truth.

¹⁴¹ The Truth Who is in us, and will abide with us forever, is the Holy Spirit. In Him is no deception or false information. We are in the truth because we are in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the One Who is full of truth, and the only One Who can give truth to men (John 1:14, 17, 14:6). It is this truth that sets men free from the bondage of sin and deception (John 8:32). It is the truth that enables men to be true worshipers – for men may only worship God in truth (John 4:23-24). The Holy Spirit, Who we have received from God, is the Spirit of truth – and the world, which lies in darkness and deception, cannot receive Him (John 14:17). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us into all truth (John 16:13). All we must do is be willing to simply yield ourselves to the Spirit of God and be obedient children, not fashioning ourselves after the world, and we will be led into all the fullness of the truth of God's Word and way.

The anointing that we have received, which is the divine empowerment to walk as the sons of God, teaches us all things, and is truth (John 1:12, 1 John 2:27). Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify His disciples with the truth, and also made it known that this was why He set Himself apart to die for us (John 17:17, 19). "Walking in the truth" is synonymous with "walking in the Spirit" (Romans 8:1, 4, Galatians 5:16, 25), "walking in the light" (John 8:12, Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:7), "walking in love" (Ephesians 5:2), and "living by the Word" (John 8:32, 17:17, 1 John 2:14). When we walk in truth, we are sure to walk in the Spirit, in the light, and in love, bearing the fruits of the written Word. All we need to do is find ourselves in love with Jesus today. If we will allow the anointing that we have received to both inspire us and guide us, we will find ourselves believing and doing only the truth.

¹⁴² John continually emphasized the incarnation of God the Word as the only begotten Son of the Father, driving home the importance of the distinction between the two (John 1:1-2, 14, 18, 3:35, 5:19, 20-23, 26, 6:27, 40, 42, 8:28, 10:36, 14:13, 17:1, 1 John 1:3, 2:22-24, 4:14, 2 John 1:3, 9). Many today think that they understand these things better than John did.

5- And now I ask you, dear lady, not as though I were writing a new commandment¹⁴³ to you, but the one we have had from the beginning: let us love one another.
6- And this is the love¹⁴⁴: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard it from the beginning, so that you may walk in it.
7- Because many deceivers¹⁴⁵ have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh¹⁴⁶ – this is the deceiver and the antichrist¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴³ The apostolic authority of John the 'Presbyteros' (Elder) was used to emphasize the command of God to the church. Nearly every time John talked about the love that those in the church were to have for one another, he used the word "commandment." (John 13:34, 15:12, 1 John 2:7-10, 3:11, 23, 4:7, 11-12, 21, 2 John 1:6). Certainly, the commandment to love one another takes a supreme position, because love fulfills all of the law, and works no wrong-doing to anyone (Romans 13:8, 10). The love that we are to walk in is the same love of God that He has loved us with. This is the strongest testimony of the new birth and divine nature – for without this miracle change of nature, it would be impossible to have such love. This love can only be displayed as we walk in the Spirit and yield ourselves to His rulership and divine expression through our lives (John 15:12). God's love must regulate all of our conduct.

¹⁴⁴ God has called us to a relationship of love. Our obedience to Him must be one of familial devotion, not of legal obligation. If we love Him, we will obey Him, and our obedience is a testimony of our love (John 15:10, 14). If we are truly walking in truth, we will also walk in love. It is a mistake to become such an ardent defender of the truth that those that we are speaking to do not receive the compassion and love by which it must be delivered (Ephesians 4:15).

¹⁴⁵ The true test of being born of the Spirit, and thus a disciple of Jesus Christ, is walking in love (John 13:34-35, 15:12, 1 John 3:23, 4:21). If a person has the confession that God was manifested in the flesh, which is the same as saying that Jesus came in the flesh, then they are of God. At the same time, that confession must have worked within their life the change that the new creation produces. The foremost characteristic of that change is walking in love. If a person does not walk in the nature of God, then their confession is made void, and they are found to be a deceiver and an antichrist. Antichrist is the antithesis of the anointing, which is the ability given to us by the Spirit to walk in the ways of Christ. This contrast is exemplified in 1 John 2:18-27. Without the Holy Spirit's anointing, we cannot walk in love – thus is the deceiver exposed.

¹⁴⁶ This is very similar to the confession of 1 John 4:2, "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." The confession of 1 John 4:2 is a perfect participle of 'erchesthai' (ἔρχεσθαι / "is come"). Though this verse contains the present participle of 'erchesthai,' "coming" is translated in the present tense. In both cases, the incarnation of Jesus, while important, does not appear to be the main point – but rather, the present activity of the life of Jesus Christ in us, operating through the anointing of the Holy Ghost. When Polycarp quoted this verse, he said, "Many deceivers went out into the world, not confessing Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. This is...antichrist." While it is true that some scholars regard this as a future 'parousia' (π αρουσία) of Christ Jesus, it is certainly linked to the "paraclete," Who presently comes to the believer, bringing with Him the indwelling Christ (John 14:16-17, 23, 1 John 3:24). We can conclude from many verses in the writings of John that Christ's dwelling in us and our dwelling in Him was foremost in the message of salvation that was given to Him by Jesus.

The coming of Jesus Christ still abides with us, because when we were born of God, we received the life of Christ Jesus, and can say that Christ is in us (Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:27). The same anointing from the life of the Spirit remains in His brethren. Paul refers to believers as those who "are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23), who are personal possessions of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 1:14, 1 John 5:12), and who are kept by the power of God (Philippians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:5).

147 The spirit of the antichrist and the spirit of deceit work in conjunction with one another. In 1 John 2:26, 3:7, and 4:6, the spirit of antichrist was revealed in those who refused to remain in the church that the apostle John belonged to. John reveals that all who broke off fellowship with them were in fact children of the Devil (1 John 2:19, 3:8). One is either led by the Spirit of truth and has the anointing, or is led by deception and has the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:6). The "going out" from fellowship with the church in 1 John 2:19 is comparable to the "going out" of Judas after the Devil had entered into him (John 13:27, 30). The ultimate deception does not usually take place in a person's life all at once. Rather, one deception leads to another until not only has a person left the assembly of God's people, but they also deny that Jesus Christ ever came into their lives or into the world.

- 8- You yourselves should watch out that you do not lose what you have worked¹⁴⁸ for rather receive your full wages.
- 9- Everyone who transgresses¹⁴⁹ and does not remain in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. Those who abide in this doctrine of Christ¹⁵⁰ also have the Father and the Son. 10- If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house¹⁵¹, and do not say to him, "Be well¹⁵²."

¹⁴⁸ There is little doubt that these deceivers, or false prophets, looked and acted like those who had fellowship with God, and would even be able to deceive the elect lady. Therefore, John tells them to watch out for these deceivers, lest they end up losing everything because of the deceiver's snare. The idea of losing those things that they had worked for in God is offensive to some. However, there are many verses of Scripture throughout the New Testament to substantiate this position. John 6:27 uses both of these Greek words: "work ('ergazesthai' / ἐργάζεσθαι) not for the food that perishes ("subject to loss," 'apollynai'/ ἀπόλλυναι), but for the food that abides unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give you...". Also in Hebrews 11:6, "God is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." These scriptures do not subtract from the free gift of salvation or from the message of Romans 4:4-5, which makes a distinction between the wages due to the one who works and the free gift. Instead, it serves to reinforce the demand to be obedient and faithful to God after having received the free gift, "Everyone's work shall be revealed: for the day shall declare it, because it will be revealed by fire, for the fire shall prove everyone's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work remains, which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward" (1 Corinthians 3:13-14). ¹⁴⁹Those who "transgress" ('parabainein' / παραβαίνειν) are the same as those who 'went out' in 1 John 2:19 and 1 John 2:26. They were once in fellowship with God, and they became ensuared by the antichrist spirit. Other traditions use the word 'proagein,' (προάγειν) which means "to lead forth." We may scripturally understand that these transgressors were attempting to lead all that they could away from the fellowship with the brethren, who were the only ones who had the doctrine of Christ (1 John 1:3, 4:6). These were men like those Paul referred to in 2 Corinthians 11:4, "who preach another Jesus." ¹⁵⁰ The doctrine of Christ carries dual meanings, for it refers to those things that He taught while on the Earth and that which is transmitted by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 16:14-15). In other words, the doctrine of Christ is the entirety of the New Testament. Clearly, John teaches that being in God is evidenced by the fruits of our lives, even as he did in his first epistle. If we remain in the doctrine of Christ, we will walk in His love. The New Testament is the declaration of the new life in Christ, and the evidence that will be observed in those who are born again.

It is plain to see the contrast that exists between the Christ and the antichrist. The anointing supplies the essential power to do and know everything that God has willed for our lives (John 14:26, 1 John 2:27). The anointing supplied by the Holy Spirit testifies to the life of Christ, and provides the fruits of a changed life (John 3:5, 2 Corinthians 1:21, 1 John 3:6). Without the anointing that comes from the indwelling of the paraclete (Holy Spirit), it would be impossible to love with the divine love that the doctrine of Christ has commanded (John 13:34, 15:12, Romans 5:5, Galatians 5:22, 1 John 2:10, 3:11, 4:7-11).

151 The early church practiced separation from those who did not teach the doctrine of Christ. If we show acceptance, or any similitude of fellowship, with those who teach false-doctrines, then we have empowered them to influence others. We are to fellowship with those that walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7). We all have to recognize that those we fellowship with will have an impact on our lives. Yet, probably one of the biggest concerns was to help those in the church to have a defense against following all the ideas and doctrines of men that were floating around. It was important to both John and Paul to not allow things that were contrary to the doctrine and nature of Christ to be identified with His church. This would help to prevent a misrepresentation of the gospel, or an acceptance of things that would lead people away, or even the creation of a stumbling block before one of the little ones in the church who might be led away, thinking that the wrong person was a trustworthy representative of Christ.

Paul also told the Thessalonians not to fellowship with certain brethren over far less grievous offenses, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). Also, concerning certain sins that were practiced, Paul said, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). If a person did not love Jesus, then Paul said to the Corinthians to let him be accursed: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha" (1 Corinthians 16:22). Finally, Paul said to Titus, "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject,

- 11- For whoever says to him, "Be well," shares with his evil works.
- 12- I have much to write to you, but I do not want to with paper and ink rather I hope to come to you and talk face to face, that your joy may be full.
- 13- The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10-11). If a man is called a brother, and is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, we are commanded not to eat with such a person (1 Corinthians 5:9, 11). It is one thing to reach out to people who do not know the Lord, but it is altogether a different thing to be identified with such people. Although God loves the world so much that He sent Jesus to die for them, He is not a friend to the world. Friendship with the world is an act of hostility against God (James 4:4).

¹⁵² The Greek word used here is 'chairo,' (χαίρω) which literally means "rejoice, be glad." This word could also be translated as "grace," or "hail, joy to you" as a greeting, and would have meant, "enjoy a state of happiness or well-being." It was an early church greeting that was associated with recognizing a fellow Christian as a brother or sister in Christ. To suggest that a person who was walking in this kind of error was a brother incurred a severe penalty. This was probably looked on as casting a stumbling block before one of the little ones in the church who might be led away thinking that such a person was a trustworthy Christian.

The Third Epistle of John

- 1- The Presbyter, to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.
- 2- Beloved, all things considered¹⁵³, I pray¹⁵⁴ that you prosper¹⁵⁵ and be in health, even as your soul¹⁵⁶ prospers¹⁵⁷.
- 3- I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of your truth, even as you walk in truth 158.
- 4- I could not have greater joy than this: to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- 5- Beloved, do faithfully¹⁵⁹ whatever work¹⁶⁰ you do for the brethren and the strangers,

154 The verb 'euchomai' (εὕχομαι), in secular letters was used to wish for the welfare of the recipient. The verb may also be translated as 'to pray' – however, the more common biblical Greek word for prayer is 'proseuchomai' (προσεύχομαι). Also, with less frequency, the synonyms 'proseuche' (προσευχή), 'deesis' (δέησις), and 'enteuxis' (ἔντευξις), are all translated as "to pray."

155 The Greek word used here is 'euodousthai' ('euodow,' εὐοδοῦσθαι / εὐοδόω), which is also used in 1 Corinthians 16:2. This Greek word may be translated as "prosper" or "succeed." Its Hebrew equivalent, 'tzalach (τζης),' also means "to prosper," "to succeed," or "to be profitable" – for example, Genesis 39:2-3, 23, Joshua 1:8, 2 Chronicles 26:5, 31:21, Psalm 1:3, 118:25. The Greek word 'euodousthai' is found many times in the Septuagint, and some of the passages that convey a similar meaning to that found here in the Third Epistle of John are Genesis 24:21, 40, 42, 56, Deuteronomy 28:29, Joshua 1:8, Isaiah 54:17, Jeremiah 12:1, Daniel 11:27.

156 Although "soul" refers to the whole of a living being or life of a man in both the Old Testament usage of 'nephesh' (ψφή) and the New Testament 'psyche' (ψνχή), it can also be regarded as describing the inward or spiritual life, distinct from the body. Some of the scriptures that testify to this in the New Testament are John 10:11, 15, 17, 12:25, 13:37, 38, 15:13, 1 John 3:16, and also Deuteronomy 4:29, 10:12, Joshua 23:14, Mark 10:45, Acts 20:24, Revelation 12:11. Even more to this point, at times the Septuagint translated 'psyche' using the Hebrew word for spirit: 'ruach' (פֿרָתּ) (Genesis 41:8, Exodus 35:21). In the Old Testament, Adam is not said to have a soul, rather he *is* a soul, which is the same as saying "a living being" (Genesis 2:7). Other Old Testament scriptures also express the soul as the life or whole existence of a person (Genesis 14:21, 35:18, 36:6, Numbers 5:6, 31:28, Judges 5:18, 9:2, 1 Samuel 16:18, Ezekiel 32:10, etc.).

157 God's desire to prosper His people is not only one of the first things revealed to us in the book of Genesis, it is a much-repeated theme throughout the Bible. This connection of spiritual prosperity to both material prosperity and physical health is also well-supported in Scripture. God's desire for His people to prosper as a result of spiritual prosperity is observed in Abraham's life. When Abram obeyed God and left all that he had to follow God, he had a modest amount of possessions at most. By the time Abram's faithfulness and commitment to God had brought the spiritual growth of Genesis 13, God had made Abraham very rich in gold, silver, and cattle. Some of the verses that clearly show the connection between obedience (spiritual wealth) and prosperity are Exodus 15:26, Leviticus 26:1-46, Deuteronomy 7:12-16, 8:15-18, 11:13-15, 28:1-14, Joshua 1:8, Matthew 6:33, Mark 10:29-30, 2 Corinthians 8, 9.

Gaius had been giving himself to the task of financially helping the traveling ministries at his own expense, and John desired that there be a divine financial blessing for him from God. This same desire was shared by Paul for those at Macedonia (2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Philippians 4:19). The spiritual prosperity of Gaius was evidenced by his care for the ministry.

¹⁵⁸ Gaius and those with him were in the truth and walked in truth. John has already laid out a perfect description of truth, both in his Gospel and in his first epistle, and Gaius passed the test (John 1:14, 17, 51, 3:3, 21, 4:23-24, 7:18, 8:32, 14:6, 17, 16:13, 17:17, 1 John 1:6, 2:4, 8, 21, 27, 3:18-19, 4:6).

¹⁵⁹ Gaius and those associated with him were working to support ministers that came to their town. John urges him to do it faithfully because of the great importance and need to care for traveling ministries.

¹⁵³ The phrase 'peri panton' (περὶ πάντων) must be translated as "concerning all things" or "considering all things." There is little evidence that this phrase should be translated "above all things." It is found 16 times in the New Testament, all of which would translate well as "concerning all things" (Luke 3:19, 7:18, 24:14, John 13:18, Acts 1:1, 22:10, 24:8, 26:2, Romans 1:8, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 4:6, 1 John 2:27, 3 John 1:2, Jude 1:15). Its usage in this verse fits very nicely with the common phrase in the English-speaking world, "all things considered."

- 6- who testify on your behalf of your love for the church, in which you do well, sending them out in a manner worthy of God.
- 7- It was for His name's sake that they went forth, taking nothing from the Gentiles.
- 8- Therefore, we owe it to take such care of them that we may become coworkers 161 with the truth.
- 9- I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes¹⁶², who loves to be number one among them¹⁶³, does not recognize¹⁶⁴ us.
- 10- Therefore, if I come, I will remember his works that he does: talking nonsense of us with evil words 165 – and not satisfied with this, he does not recognize the brethren, and those who would, he forbids, and casts them out of the church.
- 11- Beloved, do not imitate what is evil¹⁶⁶, but what is good. He that does good is from God – he that does evil things has not seen 167 God.

It might be said that the one who is faithful is the one who operates in faith. Faithfulness goes beyond mere human commitment – it is rather a description of the continual operation of faith working in those who have it.

160 The Greek word is 'ergazomai' (ἐργάζομαι), and it means "work" or "labor." It is translated 22 out of 39 times as "work" by the translators of the Authorized Version.

161 There are those who are anointed to go and preach, and they do it generously. There are also those who are empowered to make wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18), and they should generously give and support those who go, that they may both please the Lord and be coworkers together in the harvest. A similar commitment is noted of the Macedonians and those at Philippi, who helped Paul (2 Corinthians 8, 9, Philippians 4:14-19).

¹⁶² Diotrephes is in stark contrast to Gaius and those of the church who walked in truth and expressed their love and care for John and the other brethren who were ministering the gospel. Diotrephes may have been very orthodox in his beliefs, but he lacked the most important fruit of the Spirit, love, for the brethren. ¹⁶³ This "liking to be first" description of Diotrephes is yet more evidence of his spirit. The call of the Lord Jesus is that all who lead should be servants of all, not lord and master. Peter, giving instructions to the elders, told them, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). Certainly the arrogance of man knows no end, exemplified by Diotrephes's behavior toward the Apostle John.

164 The Greek verb 'epidechomai' (ἐπιδέχομαι / "recognize") is a compound word derived from 'dechomai' (δέχομαι), which means "to receive." It is only found twice in the New Testament: here and in the following verse. It is used to express the fact that Diotrephes did not recognize the authority of John and the

¹⁶⁵ Probably the most terrible attitude of all is the one of strife that brings men to a place where they sow discord among the brethren. The offenses and sins due to speaking against others indeed lead to the most frequented pit in Hell. I suppose that more people are sick, depressed, and poor because of their slander against another brother or sister than from anything else. These evil words belong to the evil one, and should be enough evidence for anyone that Diotrephes, or anyone like him, is not of God. "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31, see also Psalm 12:3, 15:3, 34:12-15, 50:19, Proverbs 6:16-19, 21:23, 1 Peter 3:9-11, 2:1-3, 21-23). ¹⁶⁶ The more common word for "evil" or "wicked" is 'ponerois,' used in the previous verse. The adjective 'kakos' (κακὸς) – which may be translated as "evil" – is used in this verse, but it seems more appropriate to

draw out a similar distinction as was done in the Greek by using a different word. Therefore, 'kakos' may be translated as "bad" or "harmful."

¹⁶⁷ Suddenly we are faced with the stark contrast between those who have not seen God and those who have seen God. Such a statement causes us to rethink what is meant by "no man has seen God." Those who behave as Diotrephes have not seen God. It is Christ Jesus Who has revealed the Father, and those who know God, like Gaius, walk in the truth and have thus seen God. John said it in much the same way when he said, "everyone that sins has not seen Him nor known Him" (1 John 3:6). Seeing God and knowing God are in many ways equivalent concepts. John establishes a relationship between "walking in truth," "knowing God," and "seeing God." Those who have been born again and walk in obedience are those who know God (John 8:55, 14:17, 1 John 2:3, 4).

- 12- Demetrius is borne witness by everyone, and by the truth itself, and we also bear witness, and you know that our witness is true.
- 13- I had many things to write to you, but I will not write with ink and pen.
- 14- Rather, I hope to see you at once, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends 168 greet you. Greet the friends by name.

¹⁶⁸ The Greek noun 'philos' (φίλος) is used here, and may be viewed as an alternative word for the noun 'agapetos' (ἀγαπητός), which designates the Christian believers who are the recipients of God's love, and thus rendered as "beloved." However, in order to be true to the choice of a different word from that used in verse 11, the decision was made to translate 'philos' as "friends." The associated verbs to these nouns are 'agapen' (ἀγάπην), and 'philein' (φιλεῖν) which may be used interchangeably for "love."