

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON THE

EPISTLES OF JOHN & JUDE

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**GOSPEL
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs and Henry Simmons. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, Ray Hawk and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people. "Outlined" does not imply skimpy—these are full-length books.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers.

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.

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Introduction to I John

A. The author of this epistle was John the Apostle.

1. That John is the author is attested by many ancient authorities, who were in a position to know who wrote this book. The following writers attribute the authorship to John:
 - a. Polycarp and Papias—they were pupils of John.
 - b. Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Origen, and Cyprian identify John as the author.
 - c. The Muratorian Fragment, the Peshito, and Itala Versions list John as the author.
2. Close similarities between 1 John and the Gospel of John show that they were written by the same author.
 - a. Of about 295 different words in 1 John, only 69 are not in the Gospel of John (Woods).
 - b. About 35 passages in the two books are parallel. Compare these examples:

Gospel of John	First John
John 5:31-39: “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”	1 John 5:7-12: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”
John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”	1 John 1:1-3: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”	1 John 4:9: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”
John 20:31: “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”	1 John 5:13: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

3. "It has been said that it would be more feasible to assign any two of Shakespeare's plays to different authors" than the gospel account and 1 John (Woods).
4. "These three Epistles [1, 2, 3 John], like the Gospel ascribed to the same author, are written without a name, but the first paragraph of the First Epistle clearly implies that it was written by an Apostle, while identity of style and diction indicates that all three came from the same writer, and from the writer of the Gospel. They were all three written late in the life of their author, and at a period in the history of the church which implies a long life on his part" (McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity*, p.123).
5. John was an inspired man.
 - a. He and the other apostles were give the promise of Holy Spirit baptism.
 - 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
 - 3) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - b. Men marveled at his knowledge, for they knew that had received no formal schooling: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).
 - c. He was perfect in teaching, although he was not perfect in life: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev. 22:8-9).

B. Information about John the Apostle.

1. John was prosperous and influential in business.
 - a. He had hired servants and business partners:
 - 1) Mark 1:20: "And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him."
 - 2) Luke 5:10-11: "And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."
 - b. He owned property: "Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (John 19:27).
 - c. He was acquainted with the high priest: "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest" (John 18:15).
 2. John was a man of great faith.
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- a. He left all to follow Lord:
 - 1) Luke 5:11: “And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.”
 - 2) Matthew 4:21-22: “And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”
 - 3) John 1:34-37: “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”
 - b. No less faith is required today:
 - 1) Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
 - 2) Luke 14:25-33: “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”
3. John was a leader among leaders.
- a. As an apostle, he had enormous responsibilities for all subsequent time!
 - b. He was part of the inner circle of the band of apostles; he was given special opportunities which only those three received (Peter, James and John).
 - 1) Matthew 17:1-5: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - 2) Luke 8:51-56: “And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.”
 - 3) Matthew 26:37-39: “And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”
4. John had boldness, and was sometimes rash in the early days.
- a. He forbade a good work:
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- 1) Luke 9:49-50: “And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.” [This was being done in the Lord’s name].
 - 2) Luke 9:38-40: “And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.”
- b. He wanted to call down fire on certain enemies:
- 1) Luke 9:51-56: “And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”
 - 2) Romans 12:17-19: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”
- c. In old age, John was a mellow man.
- 1) His writings were done mostly in his later years. The word “love” appears more than fifty times in his three epistles. His was not mushy sentimentalism, but genuine love.
 - 2) Tradition claims that he was carried to meetings where he, while leaning on a cane and with quavering voice, would say, “Little children, love one another!” (Woods). Tradition also claims his knees were calloused from kneeling so much in prayer.
 - 3) In old age, generally we are physically weak, but stronger than ever spiritually!
5. John was a man of energy and ambition.
- a. His secular work shows his industry—a business requires patience, skill and determination; he likely faced disappointments and challenges in his fishing enterprise.
 - b. He requested prominence in Christ’s kingdom, the nature of which neither he nor the other apostles comprehended at the time.
 - 1) Matthew 20:20-24: “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.”
 - 2) Acts 1:6: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”
 - 3) Compare: “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).
6. John was a man who had special experiences.
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- a. He was honored by Christ for what he was (not who). Compare: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).
 - b. John saw Janus’ daughter raised and was a witness to the Lord’s transfiguration:
 - 1) Mark 5:37-43: “And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.”
 - 2) Matthew 17:1-5: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - c. John heard the Lord foretell Jerusalem’s destruction: “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately” (Mark 13:3, notice also the verses which follow).
 - d. John was privy to Christ’s agony in Gethsemane: “And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words” (Mark 14:33-39).
 - e. John was present at the Lord’s trial and was quick to reach his tomb on the resurrection morning.
 - 1) John 18:15: “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.”
 - 2) John 20:4-6: “So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.”
 - f. John out-lived the other apostles, was exiled on Patmos, and saw the visions of Revelation.
 - 1) John 21:18-24: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come,
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what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”

- 2) Revelation 1:1-9: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
 - 3) Secular records report that John died at an advanced age, and that the other apostles preceded him in death.
7. John was a man who had a good personality.
- a. Some people are hard to love, but he was the disciple Jesus loved (a statement that is given five times):
 - 1) John 13:23: “Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.”
 - 2) John 19:26: “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!”
 - 3) John 20:2: “Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.”
 - 4) John 21:7: “Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.”
 - 5) John 21:20: “Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?”
 - 6) We are also told that Jesus loved Lazarus:
 - a) John 11:3: “Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”
 - b) John 11:36: “Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!”
 - b. The gospel helps us to develop a lovable disposition:
 - 1) Ephesians 4:32: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”
 - 2) 1 John 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”
 - 3) Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even
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so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

- 4) John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
- 5) 1 Corinthians 13:1-7: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

8. John was a dependable man.

- a. Our Lord committed his mother Mary to John’s: “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (John 19:25-27).
- b. John was chosen for this responsibility above her other children.
- c. Salome (John’s mother) was sister to Mary (Jesus’ mother); some allege they were cousins (Turner).

9. He was a pillar in the church:

- a. Galatians 2:9: “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”
- b. Compare: “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10).

C. The date and place of writing, and the people who were initially addressed.

1. Since there are no addressees identified in the letter, it may rightly be regarded a general epistle.
2. It was written for Christians of the first century, but the principles he discussed are universally applicable.
3. The fact that the auditors were warned against idols indicates the ones addressed initially were of Gentile origin: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen” (1 John 5:21). [The Jews had been cured from idolatry by their harsh experiences in Old Testament times].
4. The place of writing would probably be Ephesus where historians place him in his latter years.
5. The date of writing appears to have been about 90 A.D.
 - a. The apostle probably went to Ephesus following the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - b. This epistle would have been written prior to the persecution under Domitian (94 A.D).

D. Some purposes served by the letter.

1. That their (KJV) or his (ASV) joy might be full:
 - a. 1 John 1:4: “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (KJV).
 - b. 1 John 1:4: “And these things we write, that our joy may be made full” (ASV).
 2. To keep Christians from sin: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).
 3. To give Christians assurance of their salvation:
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- a. 1 John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."
 - b. 1 John 2:12: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."
 - c. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
4. To warn them of deadly error:
- a. 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - b. 1 John 2:18-26: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you."
5. John showed them that a life of purity and separation is required:
- a. 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - b. 1 John 3:3-9: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

E. The Gnostic error was ravaging the church at the time John wrote.

1. Gnosticism derived its name from the Greek word *gnosis* ("knowledge").
 - a. Gnostics claimed to have superior knowledge regarding the nature of Christ, Jesus, and man.
 - b. Their "superior" knowledge led them to live lives of indulgence.
 2. There were two brands of gnosticism.
 - a. *Docetic Gnostics* denied the actual humanity of Christ; they regarded all flesh as inherently sinful, thus decreed it would have been impossible for Christ, who was sinless, to abide in a sinful body of flesh. They argued that the body of Jesus was not real, but an illusion, and that he only appeared to suffer on the cross.
 - b. *Cerinthian Gnostics* attempted to distinguish between Christ and Jesus; they claimed that Jesus was the offspring of Joseph and Mary, and that Christ descended upon Jesus at his baptism and left him
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on the cross.

3. Gnosticism of either kind is evil for at least two reasons.
 - a. It denies the Incarnation of Christ, a truth that is basic to Christianity:
 - 1) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 2) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 3) John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
 - 4) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 5) John 20:24-31: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - 6) 1 John 1:1-5: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."
 - b. Gnosticism assumes that flesh is inherently evil, which contradicts the basic Bible truth that everyone enters the world free of the guilt of sin:
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - 2) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
 - 3) Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
 - 4) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
 4. This latter idea led them into lives of sinful indulgence.
 - a. They reasoned that the body is always evil, that the spirit was independent of the body, and thus undefiled by the body regardless of what the body did.
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- b. They argued that when one was regenerated he was pure in the spirit, and it did not matter what the body did (it was always evil anyway); the spirit remained pure.
- c. “They lived lives of unrestrained indulgence, on the ground that a Jewel might lie in a dunghill and be just as much of a gem as in the most costly case! They believed that it was inevitable that their bodies should sin, and they argued that a thorough understanding of these matters left them free to indulge in any course of action which they preferred” (Woods, p.205). [Would a gnostic want to feed milk to his infant which had been poured into a mudhole? Would the milk remain pure?].
- d. It was this “superior knowledge” that caused them to be called “Gnostics.”

F. Was Christ the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament?

1. The Old Testament term is translated as “the LORD” in the King James Version, but is rendered as “Jehovah” in the American Standard Version. “Is the designation “Jehovah” applied to more than one divine person? The answer is yes. The name ‘Jehovah’ (*Yahweh*) is derived from a root form, *havah*, which means ‘to be,’ or ‘being.’ It suggests that deity is absolutely self-existent (Stone, 15). It thus is a fitting appellation for each of the persons within the holy trinity, since each of these is characterized by uninitiated existence. We are not surprised, therefore, to see references to more than one person who is designated as ‘Jehovah’—sometimes in the same passage. Isaiah declared: ‘Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts . . .’ (44:6)” [Wayne Jackson, *A Brief Study of the Angel of Jehovah*, Christian Courier Website].
2. He may have been one of the three men (or angelic beings) who appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18.
 - a. Three men or angels visited Abraham; one of them is referred to as *the Lord*. “And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant” (18:3).
 - b. Note the language used, especially the personal pronouns of Genesis 18:16-22: “And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.”
 - c. Abraham is pictured as being before Jehovah: “And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” (18:22-23).
 - d. Jehovah revealed himself at the offering of Isaac (Gen. 22:11-18).
 - 1) He is called there the angel of Jehovah: “And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time” (Gen. 22:11-15).
 - 2) Jehovah [the *Lord*] made promises in verses 16-18 which no angel could make. “And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall

- possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Gen. 22:16-18).
3. Jehovah appeared to Jacob.
 - a. “And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grised: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred” (Gen. 31:11-13). He referred to himself as the God of Bethel (vs. 13).
 - b. In the episode of chapter twenty-eight, Jehovah stood above the ladder in the vision Jacob saw at Bethel: “And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; Jacob’s ladder; angel of the Lord above it” (Gen. 28:13).
 4. Jehovah appeared to Moses:
 - a. “Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Ex. 3:1-6).
 - b. He is called the “Angel of Jehovah” in verse two.
 - c. We are told that the Lord [Jehovah] appeared to him, and that God called to him from the burning bush (vs. 4).
 - 1) This same Being was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (vs. 6).
 - 2) He demanded reverence from Moses (vs. 5). Compare: “And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God” (Rev. 22:8-9).
 5. Evidence from Isaiah.
 - a. Isaiah 6:1-5: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Jesus said this referred to himself: “These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him” (John 12:41).
 - b. Isaiah mentioned the forerunner of Jesus: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 40:3-5). The work of John fulfilled this
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prophecy.

- 1) Luke 3:3-5: “And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.”
 - 2) Luke 1:17: “And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”
- c. John the Baptizer was to prepare the way for Jehovah.

G. Outline of 1 John.

1. Chapter One.
 - a. Introduction—1:1-4.
 - b. Conditions for Fellowship with God—1:5-7.
 - c. Sin and Forgiveness for Christians—1:8-10.
 2. Chapter Two.
 - a. Our Advocate with the Father—2:1-2.
 - b. Tests of a Christian—2:3-6.
 - c. New and Old Commandments—2:7-11.
 - d. Instructions to Children, Young Men, and Fathers—2:12-14.
 - e. Love Not the World—2:15-17.
 - f. Warnings Against Antichrists—2:18-29.
 3. Chapter Three.
 - a. We are Children of God—3:1-2.
 - b. Origin and Characteristics of Sinful Conduct—3:3-12.
 - c. Love and Hatred Contrasted—3:13-24.
 4. Chapter Four.
 - a. The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error in Contrast—4:1-6.
 - b. God is Love—4:7-11.
 - c. God’s Love Perfected in Us—4:12-14.
 - d. Love’s Influence in Our Lives—4:15-21.
 5. Chapter Five.
 - a. Tests of Faith and Love—5:1-12.
 - b. Another Purpose of the Epistle—5:13-15.
 - c. The Sin unto Death—5:16-17.
 - d. Divine Assurances—5:18-21.
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1 John 1

A. 1 John 1:1-4: Introduction.

1. Verse 1: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.”
 - a. There is a close resemblance between this passage and John 1:1,14: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 - b. Notice the phrase “that which”—neuter gender—was from the beginning. This statement is in reference to Christ, together with the attributes which he possesses as the Word. “Instead of a personal pronoun in the masculine gender which we would ordinarily expect in this instance, the sentence begins with a neuter relative, *that which*. The reference is thus not to Christ contemplated as a person only, but to the attributes and characteristics which he, as the Word, possesses. It was ‘concerning the Word of life’ which John purposed to write, hence the neuter to express a collective or comprehensive whole” (Woods, p.210).
 - c. The period of time indicated by the phrase *in the beginning* is parallel to the similar statement in John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Christ’s eternal nature is emphasized in both references. Compare:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:1-11: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”
 - 2) Exodus 16:4: “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.”
 - 3) Genesis 1:1, 26-27: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth....And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Christ was present with the Father, and was included in the pronoun *us*. The Holy Spirit was also present (cf. 1:2—*the Spirit moved on the face of the waters*).
 - 4) Genesis 3:22: “And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.”
 - 5) Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the

- deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”
- 6) John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
 - 7) Matthew 3:15-17: “And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
 - 8) Colossians 1:15-17: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”
 - 9) Hebrews 1:2: “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”
- d. The apostle was an eyewitness of Christ, empowered to recall and relate without any error the information necessary to preach the gospel.
- 1) John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
 - 2) Acts 1:5: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”
 - 3) Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
 - 4) Acts 2:1-4: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
 - 5) John 15:26-27: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”
 - 6) John 16:13: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”
- e. John and the other apostles had been eyewitnesses of Christ—they knew his reality; they had heard him, seen him, beheld him, and handled him.
- 1) “Each of the verbs *heard*, *seen*, *beheld*, and *handled*, in rising gradation, sharpens the concept and vivifies the thought intended by the writer. The lowest in the scale which he presents is hearing. There is no personal contact in hearing; it may be done from a distance, without design or purpose, indeed, unwillingly. Seeing is likewise involuntary, though the eyes may be averted from that which we do not desire *to* see. The word ‘beheld,’ however, indicates conscious and willful participation; it denotes more than mere seeing (*etheasametha*), from which it is translated, suggests a steady and penetrating gaze designed to hold the object in view until all its characteristics are noted. Also inherent in the meaning of the word is the idea of contemplating
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- with pleasure, looking with delight, finding satisfaction in the object thus contemplated. The verb *handled* suggests the most tangible, intimate, and definite evidence which John offered. In it there was physical contact. Thus three senses—hearing, seeing, and touching—were utilized by the apostle to obtain evidence of the reality of the Word of life about which he testifies here” (Woods, p.211).
- 2) The Gnostics held a perverted view of Christ— some denied his humanity and others rejected his deity; they perceived the Lord as being some kind of apparition—he only appeared to be real. John’s affirmation here gives first-hand evidence that the Lord was real, as to his humanity and his divinity.
- f. The apostle speaks of Christ as being “the Word of life.” Having described the physical reality of Jesus [heard, seen, beheld, handled], we may know that John does not mean that Christ is a mere speech or message. Christ is the medium through which the Father communicates his message to mankind.
- 1) John 17:5-8: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”
 - 2) Hebrews 1:1-4: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - 4) Christ became the avenue by which God revealed his eternal plan to men; Christ revealed it to the apostles; the apostles laid hands on certain ones who were also enabled to receive the inspired word; that word was committed to written form. But the emphasis of the statement *Word of life*, is on our Lord, who is the medium through which the revelation of the gospel was communicated.
- g. Christ had a pre-fleshly state.
- 1) He was in the beginning with the Father: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2).
 - 2) He was active in the creation process:
 - a) Hebrews 1:1-2: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”
 - b) Colossians 1:16-17: “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”
 - 3) He came down from heaven:
 - a) John 1:14: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 - b) John 6:51: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread,
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- he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”
- c) John 6:57: “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”
 - 4) He had glory with the Father before the world began: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).
 - 5) He existed before Abraham, and that Old Testament worthy had been gone from the earth nearly two thousand years when our Lord was in his ministry: “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).
 - 6) He was sent on his earthly ministry by the Father: “Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me” (John 7:28-29).
- h. The Godhead worked together.
- 1) In the Creation.
 - a) Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” [The Hebrew word *God* a plural term—it includes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit].
 - b) Genesis 1:26: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”
 - c) John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
 - 2) In the New Testament:
 - a) John 16:13-15: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”
 - b) Hebrews 1:1-4: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”
 - 3) In the Old Testament:
 - a) Nehemiah 9:20: “Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.”
 - b) Nehemiah 9:30: “Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.”
- i. The Lord was not a mere influence, but is a living, tangible personality whose voice John heard, whose body he had seen, and whom he had touched with his own hands. When Christ was raised from the dead, he urged Thomas to examine carefully the wounds which had been inflicted on him in the crucifixion ordeal: “But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus
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came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:24-31).

2. Verse 2: “(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us).
 - a. He who is the source of the gospel was manifest (to make visible, to make known what was formerly concealed). He was manifested (in the incarnation; John had seen it; he was competent to testify of it; this he did in declaring *the life*, [*the eternal life*, ASV]. John states that this One had been with the Father and was manifested to us.
 - b. This verse is a parenthetical statement; it is a parallel thought to the first verse. The life [i.e., the Word of life] was manifested—it was revealed in such a way that it could be heard, seen, closely examined, and handled. We [the apostles] have seen it and could bear direct testimony to the reality of this great one.
 - c. John affirms that the Life was with the Father—in eternity; he further affirms that this Life was made manifest to these chosen eyewitnesses. The Lord directly selected the official eyewitness who were enabled to bear infallible testimony to his resurrection, thus to prove his genuine identity.
 - 1) The qualifications of a witness include three basic matters:
 - a) Honest. A man will be a false witness for three reasons: out of fear, through greed, or because of ambition. These witnesses had no reason to fear if they said nothing about the Lord's resurrection (if he had not been raised); and there was no means of obtaining material wealth or advantage by saying he arose (in fact, they lost out materially by preaching the resurrection); and there was no earthly ambition to be gratified by proclaiming his resurrection.
 - b) Competent. The competency of a witness is determined by his mental capacity to observe and remember facts, and repeat the details correctly. Several of the apostles were seamen, Matthew was a tax collector, Paul was a scholar. There is every reason to believe them all to be competent, and no reason to think otherwise.
 - c) Sufficient in number. The number of individuals who saw the risen Savior is more than enough to establish the truth of their testimony.
 - 2) The honesty, the competency, and the number of witnesses meet every requirement of a fair and honest court. Their testimony may be safely trusted. “And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:39-42).
 - 3) He qualified them to be infallible witnesses of the Lord's resurrection.
 - a) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

- b) Acts 4:33: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."
- 4) We hear a great deal from our Biblically-ignorant contemporaries in the sectarian world, and unfortunately also from some unlearned brethren, about "witnessing." The idea is that when they talk to someone about the gospel they are doing what the apostles did, but what they do in fact is talk about what they suppose the Lord has done for them. Christians are not commanded to tell the world what Christ has done for them, but they are told to preach the gospel to the whole world (Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20). There is no such thing as a "substitute witness." Only one who has personally observed a crime can give testimony ("give witness to") regarding that act; his wife, children, brother, mother, or best friend cannot stand in for him in court and give **his** testimony!
- a) John 15:26-27: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you, from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
- b) No one on earth today has seen Christ; no one can give direct testimony of his resurrection from the dead; the only witnesses the Lord authorized were his hand-picked apostles, who were empowered to give inspired, infallible testimony. Their testimony was all that was needed, for their generation and for all of remaining history. Their testimony has been forevermore preserved in the inspired writings of the New Testament!
3. Verse 3: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."
- a. John resumes the thought introduced in verse one, and states the purpose for which Christ was manifested: "that ye also may have fellowship with us."
- 1) Fellowship is joint participation and partnership. Only in the unity of faith can there be partnership [fellowship; communion] in religion.
- a) Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"
- b) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
- c) 1 Corinthians 1:10-13: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
- 2) It is possible to have fellowship only when there is a common bond—that of the faith of the gospel: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:20-23).
- b. Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son.
- 1) Ephesians 2:14-16: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity
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- thereby.”
- 2) When we are in fellowship with each other (as faithful Christians), there is fellowship with God and the Son.
 - a) “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9).
 - b) “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).
 - c. When fellowship is severed from the saints here, the individual’s fellowship with God is likewise severed: “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:6-7).
 - d. We cannot be right with God unless we are right with our brethren.
 - 1) Matthew 6:14-15: “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
 - 2) Matthew 5:23-24: “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”
 - e. “Where there is communion among the saints, established through the acceptance of the truth, it leads on to fellowship with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1:9.) Here, indeed, is the only way to church unity; a common faith based on unity of teaching and practice. When such obtains, there is unity among the believers, and the bond of fellowship thus established is extended to include both the Father and the Son. We thus learn that the society of the saints is not limited to the earth: it extends into heaven and consists of an intimate bond of sympathy with deity itself. On the other hand, when there is an alienation of fellowship here, there is an inevitable severance of such in heaven. Brethren cannot allow themselves to become alienated from each other here without suffering similar alienation from the Lord himself” (Woods, p.213).
4. Verse 4: “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (KJV). “And these things we write, that our joy may be made full” (ASV).
- a. Compare: “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11).
 - b. It was John’s purpose in writing these thoughts to produce joy—in the hearts of the other saints, and in his own great heart.
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Some More Parallels Between the Gospel of John and the Book of First John

The Gospel of John	The Epistle of First John
John 17:20: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.”	1 John 1:3: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
John 17:21: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”	1 John 1:3: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
John 17:13: “And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”	1 John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

B. 1 John 1:5-7: Conditions for Fellowship with God.

1. Verse 5: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
 - a. We have heard the message which the Word has delivered. That message in essence is that God is light and in him there is no darkness whatsoever.
 - b. The statement is not saying that God is a light, but is light. He is the source of light, and dwells in light, and gives light for our benefit.
 - 1) Genesis 1:3: “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:16: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”
 - 3) James 1:17: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:9: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
 - c. Light is used in the Scriptures as the enlightened, proper, and pure way to live; it is used symbolically as purity, knowledge, truth, and goodness.
 - 1) Some references from the accounts of the gospel.
 - a) Matthew 5:14-16: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
 - b) Luke 1:79: “To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
 - c) Luke 2:32: “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”
 - d) Luke 11:34-36: “The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole

body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.”

- e) Luke 16:8: “And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”
 - f) John 1:4-9: “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not....The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”
 - g) John 3:19-21: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”
 - h) John 8:12: “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”
 - i) John 9:5: “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
 - j) John 11:9-10: “Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”
 - k) John 12:35: “Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”
 - l) John 12:46: “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”
- 2) Some references from Acts and the epistles:
- a) Acts 13:47: “For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.”
 - b) Acts 26:18: “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”
 - c) Acts 26:23: “That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”
 - d) Romans 2:19: “And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness.”
 - e) Romans 13:12: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”
 - f) 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6: “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them....For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
 - g) 2 Corinthians 6:14: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”
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- h) 2 Corinthians 11:14: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”
 - i) Ephesians 5:8: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”
 - j) Ephesians 5:13-14: “But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”
 - k) Colossians 1:12: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”
 - l) 1 Thessalonians 5:5: “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”
 - m) 1 Timothy 6:16: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”
 - n) 2 Timothy 1:10: “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”
 - o) 1 Peter 2:9: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
 - p) 2 Peter 1:19: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”
 - q) 1 John 1:7: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
 - r) 1 John 2:8-10: “Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.”
- d. Darkness is used in the Scriptures as a symbol for sin, religious error, impurity, and ignorance.
- 1) A few references from the Old Testament:
 - a) Samuel 22:29: “For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness.”
 - b) Psalms 18:28: “For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.”
 - c) Psalms 82:5: “They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.”
 - d) Psalms 112:4: “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.”
 - e) Psalms 143:3: “For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.”
 - f) Proverbs 2:13: “Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness.”
 - g) Isaiah 5:20: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”
 - h) Isaiah 9:2: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land,”
 - i) Isaiah 42:7: “To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”
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- j) Isaiah 50:10: “Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.”
- 2) A few references from the New Testament:
- a) Matthew 4:16: “The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”
- b) Matthew 6:23: “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”
- c) John 3:19: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
- d) John 8:12: “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”
- e) John 12:46: “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”
- f) Acts 26:18: “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”
- g) 2 Corinthians 4:6: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
- h) Ephesians 5:8: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”
- i) Colossians 1:13: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”
- j) 1 Thessalonians 5:5: “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”
- e. God has no darkness connected to him at all; he is entirely free from every kind and degree of sin; he is completely separated from any kind or degree of false doctrine; he possesses every particle of knowledge that he wishes to have—there is no ignorance about him; he is entirely enlightened, pure, infinitely wise, and perfectly good. No one would feel at ease in the presence of the Almighty, due to his awesome greatness and infinite purity.
- 1) Isaiah 6:1-5: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”
- 2) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”
- 3) Psalms 89:7: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”
2. Verse 6: “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”
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- a. This verse states a conclusion drawn from the preceding truth: since God is light and there is no darkness at all in him, we lie if we claim fellowship with him while we walk in darkness. It is impossible for one to be in fellowship with God if he is living in sin or practicing religious error.
 - b. To walk in darkness is to live an unholy, sinful life; to be disobedient to the will of God. To walk in the light is to live a life of obedience and holiness. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).
 - c. The Gnostics who claimed their superior knowledge allowed them to live in sinful pleasures were lying; they were not doing the truth.
 - d. Theory and practice in religion must both be true and harmonious in order for there to be any profit to our souls.
 - 1) 1 John 2:9-11: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."
 - 2) Colossians 2:6-7: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."
 - 3) One must both believe and practice the truth. Compare: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach" (Acts 1:1).
3. Verse 7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
- a. The word *walk* in the Greek is present active subjunctive, thus means, "we are to keep on walking in the light." In order for the blessings identified to apply, there must be a continuing walk.
 - b. The light in which we are to walk is that in which the Father resides. He dwells in light and we are to walk in the light. The light in which we walk is that which is provided by God's word.
 - 1) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 3) John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
 - c. The word of the gospel gives illumination; it shows us the way to Christ, the way to serve God acceptably, the way to worship God properly, the way to live, and the way to heaven (cf. Ps. 119:105; 1 John 1:5-10). If Satan, acting through his agents (2 Cor. 11:13-15), can convince us that the Bible is not accurate, or that it is not the final authority in religious affairs, or that it may be correctly followed by merely keeping the spirit of its teachings, he will have very effectively blinded our minds to the truth. Those teachers who affirm that there are many ways to heaven, or who maintain that absolute truth is unattainable, or that sincerity alone is sufficient, blind the minds of many.
 - 1) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 2) 1 John 1:5-10: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we

say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

- 3) Matthew 15:13-14: “But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”
- d. The gospel gives off a glorious light.
- 1) It furnishes illumination for the soul: it shows the way to salvation, how to serve and worship God acceptably, and guides us to heaven.
 - a) John 6:68: “Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.”
 - b) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - c) 2 Timothy 1:9-10: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”
 - d) 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”
 - e) James 1:21-25: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”
 - 2) It offers great blessings for the soul:
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Blessings of the Gospel

BLESSING	REFERENCE
Citizenship in the Kingdom	Col. 1:13
Redemption by Blood of Christ	Col. 1:14
Forgiveness of Sin	Eph. 1:7; Acts 2:38; 22:16
Spiritual Life	Eph. 2:1-5; Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17
Access to God	Eph. 2:13
Reconciliation with God	Eph. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:17-21
Sanctification	1 Cor. 1:2
Become a New Person	2 Cor. 5:17
Liberty	Gal. 2:4
Hope	1 Pet. 1:3-5
Salvation	2 Tim. 2:10

- e. If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with each other; but this is so only if we continually walk in the light. Fellowship with each other involves mutual assistance in all difficulties of life (Gal.6:2,9-10), and the sharing of life's sorrows and joys (1 Cor 12:26-27).
- 1) Galatians 6:2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
 - 2) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 12:26-27: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."
- f. If we continue to walk in the light, we have continuing fellowship with God and the Son. Fellowship with the Divine Beings involve many items:
- 1) Knowledge of the inspired word.
 - 2) Faith in and obedience to the inspired word.
 - 3) Regular prayer to the Almighty through the Son.
 - 4) Continuing study of God's word.
 - 5) Regular, sincere and scriptural worship.
 - 6) Cultivating and using the Christian graces and attributes.
 - 7) Sincerely doing the best we can in serving God, helping our fellowman, and exhibiting a loving, concern for others.
 - 8) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
- g. The blood of Christ continues to cleanse us as we walk in the light. The cleansing agent is his blood. *Cleanseth* is present tense thus it continues to cleanse us of guilt as we continue to walk in the light.

- 1) "As we thus walk the blood operates to keep us constantly cleansed from the defilement of sin and the condemnation which attends it. This verse is an exceedingly significant and comprehensive one, in the light of the false doctrines which were in vogue when the Epistle appeared and which it was written to refute. Established beyond reasonable controversy are the following important propositions: (1) the reality of the body and blood of Jesus; (2) the sufferings which he experienced on the tree of the cross; (3) the efficacy of the blood which he shed" (Woods, pp217f).
- 2) This great promise lends no support to the impossibility of apostasy error. Indeed, it refutes it clearly when the condition of the passage is noted—that we continue to walk in the light of the gospel, *i.e.*, remain faithful.
- 3) "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27-29). Our Lord's point is clear—as long as his follower continues to hear the voice of the Shepherd, and does not cease to follow him, that faithful one will not be stolen away by the enemy, will never perish, but will receive eternal life. The promise is great and the condition is clear.

C. Information regarding the blood of Christ.

1. One reason Christ's blood is an important Bible truth is that the life of the flesh is in the blood.
 - a. The Bible plainly asserts this truth and medical science has demonstrated its veracity.
 - 1) Genesis 9:3-4: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."
 - 2) Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
 - b. There are certain unique properties possessed by the blood of a living being.
 - 1) The cells of the body are sustained by means of the blood which carries oxygen to each of them continually. If the blood supply to the brain is cut off the brain cells begin to die immediately. The blood cells are able to carry oxygen because, unlike other cells, they do not contain nuclei. If they had nuclei they would store up the oxygen instead of distributing it.
 - 2) Blood contains three types of cells: red blood cells which distribute oxygen to the rest of the body; white blood cells which fight disease; and platelet blood cells which make the clotting process possible.
 - 3) Blood is the means for supplying food to all parts of the body. It is also the medium by which hormones are carried to the right places in the body.
 - 4) The essential relationship of blood to life itself is seen in the fact that only in a living body can blood be formed. And the very existence of living tissue is directly dependent on blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood!
 2. Another reason is that God's justice demands life for life.
 - a. Life is in the blood: therefore the justice and righteousness of God demand the shedding of blood as the means of satisfying justice. God is a God of love and mercy, but he is also infinite in justice and righteousness: if he should pass over a single unrequited demand of justice, he would at that point cease to be a just God!
 - 1) Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
 - 2) Leviticus 24:17-20: "And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again."
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- 3) Deuteronomy 19:21: "And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."
 - b. When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit he forfeited his right to live: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). He died spiritually at the moment because his sin built a separating wall between himself and his holy God (Isa. 59:1-2). He began to die physically because his sin caused God to remove him from Eden and the tree of life.
 - 1) He would have died immediately, except for the fact that Jesus had already agreed to interpose his life (by shedding his blood) to make atonement for sin. To interpose means to come between for the purpose of preventing the intended effect or result; to make an insertion. Christ had already committed himself, even before the creation, to die in the stead man when man fell into sin. Animal sacrifices were given as a temporary measure.
 - 2) Thus, Christ was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8; cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-20). He put forth his pledge of his own life and blood as a propitiation for fallen man.
 - 3) This required that Jesus leave his majestic state in heaven and take upon himself the form of a man:
 - a) "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).
 - b) "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Ph. 2:8).
 - c. The shedding of the blood of the sinless Son of God was necessary to meet the demands of infinite justice and make it possible for God to "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).
3. How may an alien sinner approach the blood of Christ?
- a. This is a question of paramount importance! Christ died for all (Heb. 2:9) but not all men will be saved (Matt. 7:13-14).
 - 1) The difference between salvation and condemnation is determined by whether or not the individual received the cleansing and pardon the blood offers.
 - 2) We cannot be redeemed by the blood of animals (Heb. 10:4); nor by material wealth (1 Pet. 1:18); only by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19).
 - b. In order to approach the blood of Christ, one must first come into the death of Christ, where his blood was shed.
 - 1) John 19:33-34: "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."
 - 2) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 3) In the wisdom of God, baptism (an immersion in water) is the means and the time where the alien sinner contacts the saving blood of Christ. It was in the Lord's death that blood and water flowed from the pierced body of Jesus.
 - a) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - b) Acts 8:36-39: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch
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said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

- c) Acts 10:47-48: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - d) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- c. In order for a Christian to stay in contact with this blood, he must live a faithful, obedient life: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:5-10).
- 1) A perfect sinless life is not required—such is impossible. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak" (Matt. 26:41).
 - 2) But faithfulness to the fullest extent possible is required.
 - a) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - b) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - c) Luke 9:23: "And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
 - d) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - e) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - f) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
4. Faithfulness to Christ requires many things.
- a. We must worship in accordance with the New Testament—John 4:24 (Lord's Supper, giving, singing, praying, studying).
 - 1) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - 2) Mark 7:7: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
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- 3) Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."
- b. We must be pure in heart and life.
 - 1) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
 - 3) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
- c. We must be zealous in work.
 - 1) Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:12: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."
- d. We must develop the Christian graces: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." (2 Pet. 1:5-7).
- e. We must cultivate the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

D. 1 John 1:8-10: Sin and forgiveness.

1. Verse 8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
 - a. No one can live above sin. John includes himself in the category with all other saints when he makes this inspired statement. No accountable human being is above the possibility of sin. This point is made to refute the Gnostic view and any other doctrine that supposes any can live above sin.
 - b. Any who so claim has deceived himself and the truth is not in him.
 - 1) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - c. The on-going cleansing action of Christ's blood on the ones who continue to walk in the light presupposes the need for such cleansing. Those who think they are above sin do not have God's truth in them; they are false teachers; they have been deluded by religious error. John is here speaking of present sin, the propensity to commit sin which we all have who abide in this physical body.
 - d. "The ever-present problem of sin is adduced by the apostle as the reason why children of God must

have the cleansing power of the blood applied. This clearly refutes the notion that men have lived, or may live in this life, without sin. The truth is not *in* those who so allege. It may be around them or near them, but it is not in them; it does not constitute a part of their character. These to whom John wrote had been forgiven of their past or alien sins; thus reference here is not to any previous state of guilt prior to conversion but to *present sin*, sin at the time he wrote, sins of omission and commission, sins of the flesh and of the disposition, all sin, any sin of which we may be guilty. The recognition and confession of sin is a prerequisite to our approval before God. To refuse such recognition and confession is simply to deceive ourselves and to demonstrate the fact that the truth is not in us” (Woods, p.218).

2. Verse 9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
 - a. The apostle speaks of our confessing our sins. Notice that he uses the plural word sins, which shows that he has in mind definite, specific acts of sin. In the previous verse, he used the singular, indicating sin in general.
 - b. The verb *confess* is present active subjunctive, which means to “keep on confessing out sins.” If we do not give up our practice of confessing our sins, but keep up that good practice, then God is faithful to keep on forgiving us. Our confessions are to be made publicly or privately, depending on the nature of the offense.
 - 1) If the transgression is known only to the individual and God, then the confession does not need to go beyond a private acknowledgment to God.
 - 2) If others know about the offense, or if the offense is done against another saint, then the confession is to be made to those individuals.
 - 3) “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (Jas. 5:16).
 - 4) “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (Acts 8:22-24).
 - 5) The purpose of a penitent saint responding to the invitation at one of our services, and acknowledging wrong-doing is to bring to the attention of the whole church the fact of the transgression. It is a practical method of letting the brethren know about the offense, and thus to request their prayers. It also proclaims the repentance of the individual.
 - c. God is faithful and just to forgive us when we thus repent, confess our sins, and ask for his pardon.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 7:8-10: “For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”
 - 2) 1 John 5:17: “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”
 - 3) Ecclesiastes 7:20: “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”
 - 4) Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
 - 5) Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - 6) Psalms 119:172: “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.”
 - 7) Psalms 143:1: “Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer

me, and in thy righteousness.”

- 8) Psalms 51:1-12: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”
- d. Unrighteousness is synonymous with sins. Notice the terms used for sin in one passage: “Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Ex. 34:7).
3. Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
 - a. This verse designates specific acts of sin, while verse 8 deals with living in a state of sin. If one claims to have lived above sin (while a Christian), he makes the Lord out to be a liar and his word is not in that individual. One who claims to be above sin:
 - 1) Lies (vs. 6).
 - 2) Deceives himself (vs. 8).
 - 3) The truth is not in him (vs. 8).
 - 4) He makes God a liar (vs. 9).
 - 5) And God’s word is not in him (vs. 9).
 - b. “Taught here, in the most emphatic fashion possible, is the constant and recurring need of pardon on the part of all children of God. Not only is such essential to the alien sinner in order that he may be adopted into the fellowship of God; he must continue to seek it and avail himself of its benefits throughout life. As sin is evermore about us, and, alas, all too often in us, we must continually seek new pardons through the means hereinbefore set forth” (Woods, p.220).
 - c. Those who teach the “impossibility of apostasy” heresy claim that when we are “saved” God forgives all sin (past, present and future). This false doctrine is denied by John, as are the errors of the Gnostics of his own day.

1 John 2

A. 1 John 2:1-2: We have an Advocate with the Father.

1. Verse 1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
 - a. John frequently uses the expression *little children* to describe those to who he wrote. It is found also in 1 John 2:12, 28; 3:18; 4:4, 5:21.
 - 1) It was used by the Lord in John 13:33: “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.”
 - 2) The apostle used the term as a complimentary description of the saints. Those who have obeyed the gospel and follow it sincerely according to the truth have acquired the good qualities of little children; they are guiltless in their spiritual condition; they are guileless in their relationship with other; they quickly get over anger; they are teachable and trusting.
 - b. The phrase *these things* is a reference to the various truths the apostle discusses in the epistle. Included in the list are those items in the preceding chapter, which emphasized walking in the light and other related matters, as well as the subjects he addresses in the upcoming verses. The present passage is given to correct any possible misunderstanding someone might get from John’s statement about our having the cleansing power of the Lord’s blood.
 - 1) A misguided soul might get the idea that as long as the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing us from our sins, we might as well enjoy the sinful activities of the world; but the apostle pointedly shows that the purpose of these instructions is to keep Christians from committing sin. And in his remarks about the continual cleansing we receive, the condition of confessing our sins is clearly demanded.
 - 2) But confessing wrong-doing without the presence of genuine repentance will avail nothing.
 - a) Luke 13:5: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
 - b) Acts 8:22: “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”
 - c) Acts 17:30: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”
 - d) 2 Corinthians 7:9-10: “I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (ASV).
 - e) Compare: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:1-4).
 - c. The apostle states that he is writing these things to the brethren that they sin not. He wanted to put this information into written form. We all know how unreliable oral information can become as it is passed from one person to another, or from one society to another, or from one generation to another. But information that is clearly recorded in written form, and accurately copied or translated, remains true and helpful. Without the written word of God, we would have much difficulty. We can read and study—regularly; if our memory grows dim, we can read it again—we do not have to rely on faulty recollection.
 - d. These things John wrote that we sin not—to prevent our going into sin. That you sin not — a negative

purpose clause in the aorist tense (Woods) which warns against even isolated acts of sin. “Fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and with all saints depends on walking in the light, and only those walk in the light who, as far as they are able, abstain from sinful conduct. Thus, those to whom John wrote stood in relation to him as his ‘little children’ in the Lord. He has written to them for the purpose of warning against any participation in sinful acts. But what if some, in spite of such counsel, inadvertently fell into sin? Their case was not hopeless” (Woods, p.222).

- 1) One cannot walk in the light and in darkness at the same time; it is impossible to live for God and Satan at the same time:
 - a) Matthew 6:24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - b) Matthew 12:30: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
 - c) But one is not living in sin when he occasionally falls victim to temptation—through weakness, ignorance, or inattention.
 - 2) The written word is a very great benefit to us.
 - a) Psalms 119:11: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
 - b) Matthew 4:1-11: “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”
 - e. If a child of God commits sin, John reminds us that we have an Advocate who is with the Father. The term *advocate* is a word for lawyer (attorney), who represents another in court. The word *have* is in the present tense, which means we have an ever-present Advocate.
 - 1) Hebrews 7:24-28: “But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.”
 - 2) This Advocate is “with” the Father; he is always present to offer us proper and constant representation. He is never in need of intercession for himself or else he could not influence the Father favorably in our behalf. He himself is a sinless Advocate: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).
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- 3) The word *Advocate* is the same in the Greek as *Comforter*. Christ is presently doing his work in Heaven in our behalf as he acts as mediator between mankind and God. The Holy Spirit did his work on earth as he revealed, confirmed, and recorded the inspired word.
2. Verse 2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”
 - a. Christ is the propitiation for our sins. The apostle again includes himself in the list of those capable of committing sin.
 - b. The word *propitiate* means to appease and render favorable, to conciliate (Woods). In the New Testament, this word is used only here and in 1 John 4:10; it appears in other forms in Luke 18:13, Romans 3:25-26, and Hebrews 2:17.
 - 1) 1 John 4:10: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
 - 2) Luke 18:13: “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”
 - 3) Romans 3:25-26: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”
 - 4) Hebrews 2:17: “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”
 - c. By his death, burial, and resurrection (together with the work of his personal ministry and message of the gospel), our Lord caused God to look with favor toward us, reconciled us to God so we could be at peace with him, and paid the debt (ransomed us) thus loosing us from the guilt and bondage of sin. We obtain these benefits when we obey the gospel.
 - d. “This entire section, 1:5—2:2, is a closely-knit and well-ordered argument, designed to reveal the blessings available to us through Christ. (1) There is no darkness in God, for he is light. (1:5.) (2) If we affirm that we have fellowship with him, yet walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. (1:6.) (3) If we walk in the light, (a) we enjoy such fellowship, and (b) the blood of Jesus Christ constantly cleanses us from any sin which, through weakness of the flesh, or the infirmities of our nature we commit. (1:7.) (4) The truth is in us if we acknowledge our sins. (1:8, 9.) (5) Shall we then disregard all warnings against sin on the ground that the blood of Christ operates to cleanse us? God forbid. (2:1, 2.) The purpose of the entire section is to warn against this very thing. Avoid sin when possible. But if into it you fall, do not despair. Rely on your Advocate who effectively pleads your case in heaven!” (Woods, p.223).
 - e. The blessings indicated are enjoyed by the redeemed and are offered to all accountable men everywhere. God’s blessings are available to all (Rev. 22:17; Mark 16:15-16).
 - 1) Titus 2:11-12: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”
 - 2) Hebrews 2:9-10: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”
 - 3) Acts 10:34-35: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is

accepted with him.”

- f. The purpose of the information John has given thus far is to prevent sin; but if one of God’s children falls into sin, we are not to despair for we have an Advocate who will intercede for us. But we should never take sin lightly. “It is significant that John did not say, “Ye have an Advocate. . .” nor “Ye have *me* for an Advocate,” but “*We* have an Advocate. . .” thus including himself among those in need of the intercession before the throne of grace which Jesus alone can supply. Walking in the light requires: (1) fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ; (2) acceptance of the propitiation provided through the shed blood of the Lord; (3) obedience to the Lord's commandments. This third condition, of walking in the light, John develops in the section to follow” (Woods, *ibid.*).

B. 1 John 2:3-6: Tests of a Christian.

1. Verse 3: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

- a. The word *hereby* introduces the way we know that we know him. “Similar words are used several times in this letter to introduce ‘tests’ by which the validity of one's faith might be tested (1 John 2:5,29; 1 John 3:19,24; 1 John 4:2,6,13, and 1 John 5:2). In the last analysis, it is keeping the commandments of the Lord, walking in the light, doing the truth, obeying the word, etc., which are the final determinator of whether one is saved or lost. Which commandments are meant? All of them. There is no way to limit these to the ethical or moral commandments; those relating to the worship of God are likewise included” (Coffman).

- 1) 1 John 2:5: “But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”
- 2) 1 John 2:29: “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”
- 3) 1 John 3:19: “And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.”
- 4) 1 John 3:24: “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”
- 5) 1 John 4:2: “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.”
- 6) 1 John 4:6: “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”
- 7) 1 John 4:13: “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”
- 8) 1 John 5:2: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.”
- 9) John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

- b. We know that we know him if we keep his commandments. *Keep* is present subjunctive which means “if we keep on keeping his commandments.” We can therefore know whether we are in fellowship with and know God if we continue to be obedient to his will.
- c. To know him is far more than having some information about him. To know God is to be in close fellowship with him as his child. He talks to us through the Bible; we talk to him through our prayers. We regularly communicate with him; we implore him to aid us in our various ventures; we give him sincere thanks as he blesses us day-by-day.
- d. One can claim to know him but be self deceived. Paul described some who “profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit 1:6). We know God and God knows us through our obedience to his will.
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- 1) Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
 - 2) 1 John 2:3-4: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
 - e. Keep which commandments? All of them. Which of God’s commandments may we violate, disobey, or repudiate with impunity? None!
 - 1) James 2:10: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”
 - 2) John 14:15: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”
 - 3) John 7:17: “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself” (ASV).
 - f. Any commandment we choose to disregard or violate shows that we do not know him. One who knows God is willing to do whatever is necessary and sacrifice anything whatsoever in order to obey.
 - 1) Matthew 19:16-22: “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”
 - 2) 1 John 5:2-3: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
 2. Verse 4: “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
 - a. This verse forms a conclusion based on the preceding points. Any one can make a boastful claim to know God; but the only proof of our knowledge of God or our love for God is manifested in our genuine obedience to his will.
 - b. Gnostics boasted of their “superior knowledge” which they thought allowed them to maintain their fellowship with God (to know God) while living as they wished. But John affirms that one who does not keep on keeping God’s commandments does not know God, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Such a person is not one who has simply been guilty of a single falsehood, nor one who is innocently deceived, but is one in whom lying has become an embedded trait of his character [cf. Woods, p.225]. Compare: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).
 - c. What he is saying here described the Gnostics who thought they could engage in sinful activities and still maintain spiritual purity—that the way they lived had nothing to do with their knowing God. John called them liars.
 - d. But the Gnostics did not deny that they were committing acts of sin; they thought that their sins applied only to the body and not to the spirit; they admitted the sin but denied any contaminating
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effect. Their thinking might allege that a precious stone or metal such as gold would not be affected if it would be buried in mud or dirt, that it would retain its precious nature. But before such an item could be usable, it would need to be cleansed from the filth with which it was covered! The argument is also repudiated by plain statements of Scripture:

- 1) Acts 8:21-24: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 4) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - 5) Galatians 5:16: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."
 - 6) Colossians 2:5: "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."
 - 7) Romans 6:6-12: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."
 - 8) James 1:18, 21, 27: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls....Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
- e. The Gnostics have their modern-day counterparts; these modern false teachers deny both the contamination and the fact of sin. "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul...All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger....The way a man lives has
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- nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of his soul” (Sam Morris, as quoted by Woods, p.225). John, in the passage at hand, denies the Morris error.
3. Verse 5: “But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”
- a. What John called “keeping his commandments” in the preceding verse, he calls “keeping his word” here. In one who keeps God’s word, the love of (for) God is perfected.
 - b. The love of God is the individual’s love for God. Compare: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:2-3). John is saying that one, who keeps God’s word, has his love for God perfected.
 - c. Regarding the matter of being *perfected*, consider the following quotes:
 - 1) “‘Perfected’ is perfect passive indicative of *teleioo*, to stand complete. Thus, he who keeps the commandments of God matures his love, for such is the way in which love for God manifests itself. ‘For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.’ (1 John 5:3.) It is idle for one to claim love for God while neglecting or refusing to do his commandments. Such is the acid test of one’s love” (Woods, p.226).
 - 2) “The love of God has been perfected ... Here is another glimpse of that absolute perfection which is the goal of all Christian living, mentioned by Jesus in Matt. 5:48, and referred to by all the New Testament writers. Although unattainable by humans in their own strength, it will nevertheless be achieved in them and for them by means of their being ‘in Christ’ and thereby partaking of the absolute perfection of the Saviour himself (Col. 1:28). Significantly, the necessity of being ‘in him’ is the concluding thought of this verse” (Coffman).
 - d. Hereby—by doing what God commands—we know that we are in him [we are in Christ]. We know we are in him if we keep his word. Those who keep his word love him; those who love him are in him.
 - 1) John 15:4-5: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”
 - 2) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
 - 3) Galatians 3:26-28: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”
4. Verse 6: “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”
- a. One who claims to be in the Lord ought to walk as he walked. In other words, the individual’s life is to be patterned after the life Christ lived while he was on earth. In the New Testament, the word *walk* is frequently used to denote the way one lives.
 - b. The only way to show that one is truly abiding in Christ is to live the kind of life-style that our Savior followed. His life was directed by the will of the Almighty.
 - 1) Matthew 26:39: “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”
 - 2) John 4:34: “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
 - 3) John 5:30: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”
 - 4) John 6:38: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent
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me.”

- 5) John 8:28-29: “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”
 - 6) Philippians 2:8: “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
 - 7) Acts 1:1: “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.”
 - 8) 1 Peter 2:21-25: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”
- c. The apostle Paul followed the footsteps of the Lord, and urged all Christians to do so.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”
 - 2) Ephesians 5:1: “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”
 - 3) Philippians 3:17: “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”
 - 4) Philippians 4:9: “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”
- d. John places each sincere Christian under obligation to imitate the Lord by using the word *ought*. This word is from *opheilo*, which means “to be in debt, denotes the moral obligation here to exhibit the basis of one’s profession” (Woods, p.227). The term is also used in the following passages:
- 1) Acts 17:29: “Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”
 - 2) 1 John 4:11: “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”
- e. To live as Christ lived means to follow his perfect example; to imitate the religious, moral and spiritual activities of his earthly life (1 Pet. 2:21-23; 1 Cor. 11:1). The Pentecostals might claim that this includes the miraculous aspects of his earthly life, but there is no reference here to miraculous matters; other texts show that miracles were to cease when the full revelation of the gospel was given:
- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”
 - 2) Mark 16:20: “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” [Once the message was confirmed by supernatural works, there will never be a need for miraculous signs in the future; once confirmed, always confirmed].
 - 3) Hebrews 2:1-4: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and
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every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

- 4) Ephesians 4:8-16: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."
- f. We are not to imitate Christ's walk on the sea, but his ordinary walk in life (Martin Luther). "But how did Christ walk? The answer is found in the whole of the things recorded concerning him in the sacred volume. These words sum up the life of Christ on earth" (Woods, p.227).

C. 1 John 2:7-11: New and Old Commandments.

1. Verse 7: "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning."
 - a. John had already shown his brethren that they were to live as the Savior lived on earth; this life-style was based on love—they loved the Lord and were happy to do his bidding. They had demonstrated their love for God and the Savior when they obeyed the gospel; they had operated by love as they continued to live the Christian life from the time they were baptized into Christ.
 - b. Therefore, he could say here that the matter at hand was not some new doctrine, but one with which they were familiar. They already knew of the requirement of love and had to some extent been practicing love.
 - c. This command of love was essential to their conversion to Christ; the command of love is essential to living the Christian life. They had learned the truth about this matter at *the beginning*—when they obeyed the gospel.
 - d. The old commandment was the "word" which they had heard; *word* sums up the truth that been given to them on the occasion they obeyed the gospel.
 2. Verse 8: "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."
 - a. "The new commandment must almost certainly be identified with Jesus' words when he said, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another' (John 13:34). It is hardly possible that the apostle John could have meant anything else except this. Wherein was it a new commandment? The Old Testament had taught God's people to love each other, and the new element here is the qualifier even as I have loved you! The Old Testament knew nothing of such love as that, for Christ had not yet revealed it" (Coffman).
 - b. God's requirement that his offspring have love for him and each other goes back to the beginning of the human family: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:11-12).
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- c. The command to love was required under the Law of Moses:
- 1) Leviticus 19:18: “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”
 - 2) Deuteronomy 10:19: “Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”
 - 3) Micah 6:8: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”
- d. But Christ called it a “new commandment” in John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
- 1) It is labeled *new*, not because of recent revelation, but new in degree and extent—“as I have loved you.”
 - 2) This measure of love had not been specified before the coming of Christianity. This degree of love is the badge of a faithful Christian—“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).
- e. The darkness of sin and hatred and bitterness and ignorance and superstition had permeated mankind for centuries; as the glorious light of the gospel was spread abroad in the hearts and lives of many men, this darkness was to that extent removed. There has always been religious error and sin in the world; it has surely contaminated the vast majority of our present generation. The only solution to this predicament is the pure gospel of Christ! Islam cannot do it; Judaism cannot do it; Catholicism cannot do it; Protestantism cannot do it; Mormonism cannot do it; no manmade religion can do it; neither can modernism, humanism, atheism, agnosticism, or secularism. But as truth was proclaimed, the darkness receded. But think how terrible the darkness would be today without the glorious light of the gospel!
- 1) John 3:19-21: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”
 - 2) John 8:12: “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”
 - 3) 1 John 1:4-10: “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”
- f. Our nation was founded on gospel principles; many other nations recognize some of these principles; there is a sense of morality in our modern times that far surpasses that of the “dark ages” and of the first century before the spread of the gospel and in much of history. [Unfortunately, it has become very obvious that our society is in the process of returning to the darkness of earlier times. May God help us to prevent this destructive slide!].
- 1) Genesis 6:5: “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every
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imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

- 2) Judges 21:25: “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”
 - 3) Jeremiah 13:23: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”
 - 4) Romans 1:18-32: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”
3. Verse 9: “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.”
 - a. In this verse, the apostle presents a hypothetical case and shows that it is erroneous. It is impossible to be in the light and have hatred for a brother at the same time. One who claims to be in the light while he hates his brother in Christ is still in darkness despite his assertion.
 - b. It is the will of God that his people have love for each others, and even for our enemies. One who alleges that he is walking in the light, but who hates a brother (or someone else) is actually in rebellion to the will of God, and thus is abiding in darkness.
 - 1) Matthew 5:43-48: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”
 - 2) Mark 12:29-31: “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other
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- commandment greater than these.”
- 3) John 15:17: “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”
 - 4) John 13:35: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
- c. There is no room for compromise on this matter—one is either in the light or in the darkness; he is either right or wrong:
- 1) Matthew 12:30: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
 - 2) Matthew 6:23-24: “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
- d. Modernism teaches we cannot really know what is truth and what is error—therefore, forbear. They use the case of Gamaliel and assert that his counsel is God’s counsel. But....
- 1) Ephesians 5:11: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
- e. A writer with a liberal bent penned these words more than thirty years ago:
- 1) “The fact is colored and changed by the personality of the receiver. In this sense, then, truth, as man has it, is always relative. Relative to man’s ability to grasp the infinite...relative to man’s fallibility and prejudices...relative to limited knowledge which plagues every man. If it is not possible for me to grasp infinite truth, it is equally impossible for me to define the limits of my comprehension. In other words, I cannot know what of the truth I have is absolute and what is being altered and colored by my own subjectivity. Hence, the knowledge of truth which I possess is always relative” [Steve Parsons, *Firm Foundation*, June 18, 1974; quoted in *Denton Lectures: Studies in 1,2,3 John*, p.93].
 - 2) Garland Elkins answered this fallacious argument: “If one cannot know what of truth one has is absolute, and what is being altered by one’s own subjectivity, then it follows that one cannot know that there is a body of absolute (objective) truth. And if one cannot know that there is a definite body of absolute (objective) truth, then one cannot know that the Bible is the word of God. And if one cannot know that the Bible is the word of God, then one cannot know that the Bible has any binding force on anyone. And if one cannot know that the Bible teaching has any binding force in the lives of men and women living today, then no one can know that Christianity is any more acceptable to God than Buddhism or even Atheism” [*ibid.*, pp.93f].
 - 3) Why does anyone who does not believe the Bible is God’s inspired and authoritative word waste his time trying to promote Christianity? What makes him think that he is able to pick out some *core doctrine* from the Bible, and declare that *this is truth*, but at the same time repudiate or ignore everything else included in the Bible?
- f. “One is either for God, in which case the principle of his life is *love*, the sphere in which he moves *light*, and the desire of his heart *obedience*; or, he is against him, in which event, though he may hide
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- his hatred, and craftily conceal his worldliness and evil, the fountain from which his moral life emerges is not God, but the world—he is yet in death, he loves nothing but himself, and his proper element is darkness. The word hate (*miseo*) here does not indicate the *degree*, but merely the *fact* of such a disposition. When it exists in any degree, he who manifests it is yet in the darkness. Let him who holds malice in his heart against a brother in Christ recognize his position and see the folly of pretension which his conduct belies. He deceives no one by his allegation” (Woods, p.229).
4. Verse 10: “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.”
 - a. To abide is to remain; the tense here is present indicative active which reveals a continuous action rather than a temporary state. He who loves his brother remains in the light. The force of the tense indicates that he has not only entered into this sphere, but he has settled down in it to make it his home [cf. Woods].
 - b. Love is emphasized in the verse, but it appears to be used in a comprehensive sense to stand for all the other required graces.
 - 1) 1 John 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”
 - 2) 1 John 5:1-3: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
 - c. Matthew 22:34-40 identifies the two great commandments: “But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”
 - 1) We are to love God with the whole being and we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. But the Lord did not mean that if we adopt these two principles this is all that is expected of us.
 - 2) There is no such thing as love without obedience; we express our love for God by our obedience to his will. Love for God and our fellowman cannot be substituted for obedience. “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15:22).
 - 3) “What is meant is that one who truly loves God and his neighbor will be prompted thereby to discharge his full duty to both” (Woods, p.230). Pure religion includes visiting the widows and orphans, but is not limited to that: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas. 1:27).
 - d. There is no occasion of stumbling in him who loves his brother. The stumbling is apparently that of the individual who loves his brother. Those who walk in the light and abide in the truth are protected from the snares they might otherwise fall into. One who loves his brother will not be jealous of his brother, he will not maintain any malice toward him, or do evil against his brother in any way. He will not speak evil of his brother. His deep desire will be to maintain a happy relationship with his brother, avoiding any unnecessary strife.
 - e. Romans 13:8-10: “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is

briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Consider the following thoughts growing out of verse eight:

- 1) The first part of this verse has been made to teach that Christians are not to incur a debt, but this is not the subject of the passage. Paul was willing to take on a debt in the case of Onesimus: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it*: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (Phile. 18-19).
 - 2) Lying in the background of the verse is the instruction regarding the requirement that we pay our taxes. However, the rest of this verse sets the context for this statement. We have a continuing debt to others, which is to love one another; we are not to let that debt go unpaid. The injunction is stated negatively; the positive requirement is that we show love to each other. Paul is an example of this kind of indebtedness: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1:14-15).
 - 3) One who shows love has fulfilled the law in this particular. In other words, the law of God requires that we love each other. The second great commandment is to love our neighbor as we love ourself (Mark 12:31). The first is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mark 12:29-30). We do not fulfill the first only by doing the second; both must be followed.
 - 4) It is hard for us to have love for those who are unlovely and unlovable. Nevertheless, that is our God-given duty! But the Lord never expected us to have a warm, close feeling for everyone; that kind of love cannot be commanded—it occurs naturally.
 - 5) But the kind of love commanded is a disposition of heart that causes us to desire the best for another person, even an enemy. If we love him, we will not retaliate if he should attack us; we do not rejoice when he falls into a difficulty; we will sincerely pray for and desire that all will be well with him. This debt is always due and is never paid in full this side of eternity.
5. Verse 11: “But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”
- a. Three conditions are applied to one who hates his brother:
 - 1) He is in darkness.
 - 2) He walks in darkness.
 - 3) He does not know where he is going.
 - b. His inner condition is darkness; the life he lives is one of darkness; he has lost his sense of direction. Often those in darkness do not even recognize their condition, and many of them are unconcerned. If you try to show them their lost condition, they will either deny it or pass it off as a matter of no importance.
 - c. There is such a thing as spiritual blindness.
 - 1) Psalm 82:5: “They know not, neither do they understand; they walk to and fro in darkness.”
 - 2) Jeremiah 10:23: “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”
 - 3) Proverbs 16:25: “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:5-11: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of
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our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

- 5) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.?”
- d. Paul describes the condition of alien sinners in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; John describes erring Christians in 1 John 2:11. The blindness which describes the one also depicts the other.
- e. John is teaching the importance of Christian love. If one has not cultivated love in his Christian makeup, he will be lacking in the other Christian attributes as well.
- f. “The threefold mention of darkness is an impressive comment upon hatred of a brother. Hatred deadens and destroys the soul itself, blinds the eyes, stops the ears, and hardens the heart and petrifies the central functions of reason and intelligence; and those who indulge in it receive ‘in themselves the recompense of their error’ (Rom. 1:27), becoming in their own persons the just reward of such wickedness. In this verse also appears the close connection between blindness, of which Jesus often spoke and the darkness which is another application of the same metaphor” (Coffman).

D. 1 John 2:12-14: “Instructions to children, young men and fathers.

1. “The verses which immediately follow, 12, 13, 14, involve matters admittedly difficult, and which have long taxed the ingenuity of Bible students, expositors, and commentators. An analysis reveals that there are six clauses, divided into two sets of three each by the different tenses of the verb *grapho*, I write” (Woods, p.232).

I Am Writing Unto You—Children [<i>teknia</i>]	Because You Are Forgiven
I Am Writing Unto You—Fathers	Because You Know The Lord
I Am Writing Unto You—Young Men	Because You Have Overcome
I Have Written Unto You—Children [<i>paidia</i>]	Because You Know The Father
I Have Written Unto You—Fathers	Because You Know The Lord
I Have Written Unto You—Young Men	Because You Are Strong and Have Overcome

2. Brother Woods gives the following comments:

- a. Why did John use the present, "I write" (*grapho*), in the first three clauses, and "I wrote" (*egrapsa*), epistolary aorist, or as it may be rendered in English, "I have written," in the second? "I write" is from the viewpoint of the writer—as the matter occurred to John as he actually wrote. The "I wrote," or, as it may be translated, "I have written," is the viewpoint of the reader. The first reflects the author's position; the second, his readers. "I write" these matters to you; when you read them, your position will be with reference to that which is written.
- b. To what writing does he refer in the first instance? In the second? In both instances the reference is the same: to the Epistle which he was then writing. Efforts to make one refer to the Epistle, the other to the Gospel which he wrote; or, the first to the whole Epistle, and the second to that which preceded what he was then writing, we reject as unsound. A simpler and more satisfactory conclusion is that both words embrace the same composition, the entire first Epistle.

- c. What is the meaning of the word "children" in the first clause of each of the divisions? All of John's readers, so most expositors think. And, that such is the significance of the word in 1 John 2:1 ("My *little children*, these things I write unto you....") seems certain. But that the word has this significance here, we are disposed to doubt. (a) The designations "children," "fathers," and "young men" appear to be a detailed analysis of all his readers. There was, it seems, evident definite design on the part of the writer to particularize those addressed. (b) On the assumption that "children" embrace the whole of those addressed, who are the "fathers" and the "young men?" (c) Why, if the term is used thus comprehensively, did the writer use two different Greek terms— *teknia*, *paidia*—to designate the children? Does not this fact lead to the conclusion that it was the author's purpose to assign a specific, and therefore, a limited meaning, to the terms used? On the whole, it seems more in keeping with all the facts to assign to the word "children" a limited significance, and to conclude that those thus addressed were the ones among John's readers who had but lately obeyed the gospel, and whose sins had accordingly but recently been forgiven. This view is supported by the fact that the reason given why John addressed them particularly is "because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."
- d. Why were two different Greek words, *teknia*, *paidia*, used to designate this particular group? The reason is not immediately apparent. It is obvious, from the context, that both terms describe the same individuals; and this consideration leads to the conclusion that the variation was resorted to, not for the purpose of distinguishing between two groups, but to emphasize the different characteristics of the same group. The answer to our question must, therefore, be sought in the difference of meaning in the terms themselves. *Teknia*, plural of *teknion*, designates the fact of childhood; *paidia*, the infancy of those thus designated. The words, in their literal sense, denote those of tender age; and, as here figuratively used, denote those who are babes in Christ. The first reveals that those thus designated were children; the second, that they were infant children. Not literal babies, of course, but those lately born into the family of God. (John 3:3-5 ; 1 Pet. 2:1,2.)
- e. In what sense are the words "fathers" and "young men" to be taken, as a literal designation, or a figurative one? If literal, then no elderly men, not fathers, were addressed in this connection by John. In such an instance, no women whatsoever were included. It must, therefore, be obvious that the words "children," "fathers," and "young men" were used to describe three different classes of people among John's readers. The *children* were the recent converts; the *young men*, those who had reached maturity and were possessed of great spiritual strength in the Lord; and the *fathers* were those who had been in Christ the longest, and had therefore attained to the greatest spiritual growth. [pp.232-235].
3. Verse 12: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."
- a. The reason they were addressed was because their sins were forgiven; they were forgiven because of his name's sake.
- 1) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
 - 2) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 3) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
- b. The tense of the Greek word (*are forgiven*) points to past action with existing results: "You have been forgiven and consequently stand forgiven of your past alien sins."
4. Verse 13: "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye
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have known the Father.”

- a. The fathers were addressed because they know him. The Greek verb is in the perfect tense and means, “You came to know, and now know.” It describes the rich and full experience which these fathers had with the Lord. The one they had known is Christ: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).
 - b. The young men were addressed because they had overcome the evil one. Satan is not a mere influence but a real personality, a real being.
 - 1) 1 John 3:8: “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”
 - 2) 1 John 3:10: “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”
 - 3) 1 John 5:4: “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”
 - 4) 1 Peter 5:8-10: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”
 - 5) John 8:44: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” [Notice that Christ spoke of the devil as a real person, who had a real history, and who dealt with real people].
 - c. The little children were addressed because they knew the Father. What he calls having sins forgiven (vs. 12), he describes as knowing the Father (vs. 13). Only those who are forgiven know the Father; only those who know the Father have been forgiven.
5. Verse 14: “I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”
- a. He who is from the beginning is Christ, the Word.
 - 1) John 1:1-2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”
 - 2) 1 John 1:1-3: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
 - b. The nature and the characteristics of Christ are deep matters. John indicates that the saints he addressed had come to a knowledgeable understanding of the Lord and his nature. These matters are of special interest to those who are old in years.
 - c. The young men John addressed are described as young, but strong; they had the word of God in them, and had overcome the evil one. The reason for their strength was that the word of God was in them; their overcoming of the evil one resulted from the fact of this indwelling word. Only as the word dwells in us richly (Col. 3:16) do we become strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10), and are we protected from sinning against God (Ps. 119: 11).
 - 1) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and
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admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

- 2) Ephesians 6:10-17: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
 - 3) Psalms 119:11: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
 - 4) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - 5) Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
- d. As spiritually mature Christians advance in years, they often become more and more interested in the deeper subjects of Christianity, and grow more spiritually minded. Sometimes we hear other Christians who are less spiritual speak of such as being too sentimental, that they are losing their hold on reality. This is not the case.

E. 1 John 2:15-17: Love not the world.

1. Verse 15: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”
 - a. The word translated “world” is used in the New Testament in reference to the material universe, the earth, the people who inhabit the earth, and the sinful elements of the society of men. The world we are forbidden to love is not the material universe, not the people of the earth, not the earth or the visible elements of our surroundings. Love used here does not refer to tender affection.
 - 1) Romans 1:20: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”
 - 2) Genesis 1:31: “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”
 - 3) John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - 4) John 1:9: “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”
 - b. The world of this passage is the sphere or world of evil; that order of things which stands opposed to God and godliness. We are forbidden to love this *kosmos* which is opposed to God.
 - c. The love of John 3:16 is that of divine compassion, the redeeming mercy which God has for lost mankind. The love of our text (1 John 2:15) is the emotion of selfish desire, greed, worldly pride—having desire for those sinful elements that pertain to the society of men.
 - d. The prohibition of our text is emphatic—we are not to love the world, neither the things of the world. We are not to love even a specific or particular part of the sinful world. The rich young ruler’s problem was that he loved his riches and would not therefore dedicate himself to serve the Lord with his whole

- heart.
- e. Love for the world and love for God are mutually exclusive.
 - 1) Matthew 6:24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - 2) James 4:4: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:17-18: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
 - 4) Romans 12:1-2: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
 - 5) Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
 2. Verse 16: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”
 - a. The apostle declares that the things of the world which he enumerates here did not derive from the Father of light, but with the sinful world around us in this life. Satan promotes these things, and uses them to the hurt of the offspring of God.
 - b. The things of the world John identifies are divided into three categories: lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
 - 1) These were the three avenues with which Satan tempted Eve: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:6).
 - 2) These were the three avenues through which Satan tempted Christ:
 - a) Matthew 4:1-11: “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”
 - b) Luke 4:1-13: “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him,

saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.”

- c. The lust of the flesh is the evil desire which arises from the flesh and finds expression through the flesh. Flesh is used here of our physical nature, the source of evil appetites; it is not used in reference to the literal skin, muscle, bone, and tissue of our physical bodies. The lusts of the flesh are expressed through the works of the flesh.
- 1) Romans 6:6-15: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”
 - 2) Galatians 5:16-24: “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”
 - 3) Ephesians 2:3: “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”
 - 4) 2 Peter 2:18: “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.”
 - 5) Colossians 2:18: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”
 - 6) There are certain lusts of the flesh which are always sinful [e.g., fornication, drunkenness]; there are certain appetites of the flesh that can be fulfilled only through lawful means [e.g., sexual activity is permitted only in a scriptural marriage]; other appetites of the body are lawful, but are
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to be gratified with moderation [e.g., eating, sleeping].

- d. The lust of the eyes are those desires which are aroused through the appeal of objects by the way they look.
- 1) Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the eyes: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:6).
 - 2) We are forbidden to look with lust toward a member of the opposite sex: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).
 - 3) Paul addressed this matter in Colossians 2:20-23: “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”
- e. The pride of life is a desire for worldly honor, prestige, the exaltation before men; we usually call this *vanity*. Evil actions are often produced because of the desire for worldly honor, glory.
- 1) Matthew 6:1-7: “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”
 - 2) Matthew 6:16-18: “Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”
 - 3) John 12:42-43: “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”
 - 4) 3 John 9-10: “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”
 - 5) Eve desired the forbidden fruit because she perceived that it could make her wise. Why did she want to be wise? Apparently, she thought this would exalt her to a position of equality with God. Satan had lied to her: “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise,
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she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:5-6).

- f. Coffman observes: Lust of the flesh ... lust of the eyes ... vainglory of life ... For ages, students of the New Testament have seen in this triad suggestions of the triple temptation of Eve: the fruit was good to eat ... beautiful to see ... and would make one as God, knowing good and evil; and likewise the triple temptation of Christ: he was hungry ... Satan showed him all the kingdoms of the world ... such an exhibition of Jesus' power as that of leaping from the parapet of the temple unharmed would have been a vainglorious triumph. From such comparisons, the things mentioned by John in this verse have come to be called "the three avenues of temptation."
3. Verse 17: “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”
 - a. The world (the earth) is passing away as well as the lusts found therein. The transient nature of the world is contrasted with the permanence of him who does the will of God. In view of the temporary nature of the world, it is extremely foolish to cling to it at the expense of the eternal soul.
 - b. The world gives the appearance of permanency, but the Bible says it will be burned up, dissolved, and pass away into the nothingness from whence God created it.
 - 1) Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:8-11: “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”
 - 3) Hebrews 3:4: “For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.”
 - 4) Hebrews 11:3: “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”
 - c. Man may build up a vast list of holdings in this life; he may have one or more mansions in pleasant locations; he may have automobiles, boats, aircraft, and all the other items which denote great wealth; he may have a name that is known around the globe; he may exercise great influence on governments and societies; but when the sands of his life have run out, he goes down to the grave just as the lowest pauper does. His immense wealth and worldly influence are all left behind!
 - 1) 1 Timothy 6:6-16: “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 4:15-18: “For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through

the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

F. 1 John 2:18-29: Warnings Against Antichrists.

1. Verse 18: “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”
 - a. This verse is closely connected with the foregoing passage. John cautions them by stating the fact that they were living in the “last time” (hour).
 - b. Three Greek words are used in New Testament to indicate time [the following is gleaned from Woods]:
 - 1) *Chronos*—time with reference to duration or succession.
 - 2) *Kairos*—time with reference to events.
 - 3) *Hora* (used here)—with reference to a fixed date or period. It is used figuratively and describes the last period of time predetermined by the Father.
 - c. The Mosaic system had already ended and the last hour of the world still has not come, so neither of these was meant. Remember that the “last time” was present when John spoke of it—this is the last time. The Christian dispensation, the last of the three great periods or ages which God set up, is meant. “These last days” of Hebrews 1:1-2 is also a reference to the Christian Dispensation, the last age of time. It began with the death of Christ and will end with the return of Christ.
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2-4: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Compare: “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 2) Joel 2:28: “And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:16-17).
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:11: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”
 - 4) 1 Timothy 4:1: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:1: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” The expression “last days” here is also is a reference to the Christian Age. It is clear that this expression does not refer to the period of time near the end of the world, just prior to the second coming of Christ, for

in that case, the Lord's statement in Mark 13:32-33 would be erroneous; there he stated that no one knows when the time of his return would be, which would not be so if these sign were observed. Also, Christ affirmed that there would be no signs presaging his return (Matt. 24:36ff), but that his coming would be as a thief in the night (cf. 1 Thess. 5:1ff).

- 6) Matthew 12:32: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come." Our Lord lived his life on earth during the Mosaic Age; in this passage he spoke of the Mosaic Age ["in this world"] and the Christian Age ["the world to come"].
 - 7) When the Lord returns, the entire universe and time itself will be no more: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:8-13).
 - 8) Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
- d. John reminds his auditors that they had heard of the coming of the antichrist. He is about to give more information about this personage. This personage is depicted as be *anti* with reference to Christ. He stands opposed to Christ. One can stand in opposition to Christ by working directly against him or by taking the place of Christ in the thinking of his disciples.
- 1) The word *antichrist* appears only in the writings of John:
 - a) 1 John 2:18: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."
 - b) 1 John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."
 - c) 1 John 4:3: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
 - d) 2 John 7: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."
 - 2) The characteristics of *antichrist* are listed in these verses:
 - a) He is a liar.
 - b) He is a deceiver.
 - c) He is one who denies that Jesus is the Christ.
 - d) He rejects the truth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.
- e. Richard DeHaan, a leading proponent of the premillennial view, offers some details about this false system in regards to the Antichrist: "The Bible gives him a number of names. In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul referred to him as the man of sin, the son of perdition, and the lawless one. John spoke of him as Antichrist and the beast. He is the king mentioned in Daniel 11:36. So remember, after the church, the body of Christ, has been removed from the earth to meet the Lord in the air, and before the
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- outpouring of God's wrath, Antichrist will be revealed. He will present himself as the enemy of God and of His Son...(2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)" (pp.26f). But there is no evidence that shows the "man of sin" of 2 Thessalonians is identical to antichrist. This person is shown by Paul to have a distinctive religious appearance and claim, and that he would be manifested in connection to the great apostasy Paul predicted. The man of sin is most likely the Roman papacy. [The premillennial view about the kingdom, the church, the return of Christ, and the other peculiar features of their theology is not in harmony with plain Bible teachings].
- f. The Bible's information about the antichrist is found in only four verses. The millennial speculations regarding the antichrist are so extensive it may surprise some to learn that the term is used only five times in the Scriptures; all of these are in four verses in the writings of John
 - 1) 1 John 2:18: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."
 - 2) 1 John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."
 - 3) 1 John 4:3: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
 - 4) 2 John 7: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."
 - g. Premillennial writers shy away from discussing these verses—and for good reason: the information given by John does not fit their theory!
 - 1) The Bible does not picture the *antichrist* as some diabolical dictator of the late 20th century or early 21st century. In fact, John states that "even now are there many antichrists" (1 John 2:18). Instead of one Antichrist, John shows that there were many of them, and they were operating openly during his time.
 - 2) John describes the antichrists as being those who deny that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:22). Further, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist..." (1 John 4:3). He identified the antichrist as those deceivers who "confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 7).
 - 3) John was not seeing a political leader in our time when he spoke of antichrists.
 - h. Wayne Jackson showed that *antichrist* is a general word which John used to describe the spirit of unbelief and rebellion that revealed itself in times past and is in evidence now ("Bible Light," July-August, 1988, p.3):
 - 1) Atheism is antichrist for it denies the existence of the Father and the deity of his Son.
 - a) Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - b) 1 John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."
 - 2) The Docetists, of the late 1st century, were antichrists in that they denied that Jesus actually became flesh. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:2-3).
 - 3) The ancient Gnostics were antichrists (as are their modern counterparts, the Watchtower Witnesses) in repudiating the deity of the Lord Jesus.
 - a) John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was
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God."

- b) John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
- 4) The old Saballian sects, together with the so-called "oneness" groups of today, are antichrist for they refuse to distinguish between "the Father and the Son" (I John 2:22) as separate Persons within the Godhead.
- 5) Those who have usurped the prerogatives of deity by claiming to **be** God, or his **personal representative**, are likewise antichrist. Such characters as "Father Divine," Jim Jones of the Peoples' Temple, and the Roman papacy fall into this category.
- 6) In the final analysis, **any person** who deliberately rejects the authority of the Son of God, thus suggesting, as in the parable of the pounds, "...We will not have this man [Christ] reign over us" (Luke 19:14), is of the spirit of the antichrist.
- i. John says that his auditors could know that it is the last time because the antichrists were appearing. The Bible predicted that during the Last Days (the Christian Age), there would be many false teachers; in this context, they are called *antichrists*. Many false teachers were now appearing, thus the Last Days were present. As already noted, we are still in this period of time known as *The Last Days*.
- 1) Matthew 24:5, 24-27: "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many....For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." [This passage describes events that would transpire in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70. The epistle of 1 John was most likely written in the last part of the first century, but the apostle's point is still supported by this statement from Matthew].
- 2) Matthew 7:15-20 "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
- 3) Acts 20:25-32: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
- 4) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"
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And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

- 5) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 6) 2 Timothy 3:1-8: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."
 - 7) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - 8) 2 Peter 2:1-2: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."
 - 9) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
2. Verse 19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."
- a. In the context, the pronoun *they* refers to the ones who had the characteristics of antichrist which are identified above. John states that the specific ones he has in mind had "gone out from us." These were the antichrists of his time.
 - b. "The antecedent of 'they' is the word 'anti-christ,' of the preceding verse. The preposition *ek*, rendered 'out from,' indicates origin from the center; and these were, therefore, formerly among the disciples, and members of the church. They became apostates from the fold by going out. They were not 'of' the disciples, i.e., they did not possess the same spirit of obedience characteristic of the disciples, for if they had 'they would have continued with' the disciples. In going out, i.e., in apostatizing from the faith, they were 'made manifest' (shown to be), not of the disciples, and for the reason assigned above" (Woods, p.244).
 - c. In going out (apostatizing from the faith) they were made manifest (shown to be) not of the disciples. "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor 11:19). When an individual Christian or a group of Christians fall away from the truth, and are identified as being apostate, the faithful ones who remain are made manifest also—they
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- are clearly demonstrated to be the faithful ones.
- d. Impossibility of apostasy advocates cite this verse as a proof-text. This false teaching asserts that those who fall away were never part of the body of the saved. But these apostates were affirmed to have been once with the disciples and that they went out from them; one cannot go out from a place where he has never been. If they had maintained the same love for Christ the others had, they would not have apostatized.
 - 1) James 5:19-20: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” The brother who has erred from the truth is in need of conversion; if this fallen brother is restored (changed back), his soul has been saved from death and his sins have been hidden (forgiven).
 - 2) Galatians 5:3-4: “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” One cannot fall from grace unless he has been in grace (a beneficiary of grace).
 - 3) Matthew 13:20-21: “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” To be offended in this passage is to fall away.
 - 4) 1 Timothy 1:19-20: “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.” One cannot be delivered to Satan unless he has formerly been delivered from Satan. The people Paul describes had made shipwreck of faith—they had had faith, but had repudiated their faith.
 3. Verse 20: “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (KJV). “And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all the things” (ASV).
 - a. At least some of those John wrote to had received an anointing, obtained it from Christ, and as a result of this anointing, they knew all the things the apostle indicated [of course, this does not mean that they were omniscient].
 - b. The anointing [called *unction* in the King James] is from the Greek term *chrisma*, a word which originally described an oil or ointment applied to the skin; later it came to refer to the anointing itself (see Woods, p.245).
 - c. God prescribed that kings, priests, and prophets be anointed.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 10:10: “And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.”
 - 2) Exodus 29:7: “Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.”
 - 3) Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”
 - d. Jesus was called the anointed one (Acts 4:27), and that with which he was anointed was the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38).
 - 1) Psalms 45:7: “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”
 - 2) Hebrews 1:9: “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”
 - 3) Acts 4:27: “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and

- Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.”
- 4) Acts 10:38: “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”
 - 5) John 3:34: “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” [Our Lord had access to the full power of Heaven during his earthly ministry].
- e. This anointing the disciples had received was not some so-called “ordinary measure” of the Spirit. The context does not agree with this view. The anointing certain ones had been given enabled them to know certain things: “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).
 - f. The apostates and other false teachers were endeavoring to overthrow the faith of the loyal saints (1 John 2:26); the anointing provided these faithful Christians the means of identifying and refuting the false teachers.
 - g. The antichrist (the apostates) were trying to lead the faithful astray by advocating false doctrines (vs. 26); these were known to be false teachers by the brethren because of the anointing they had received from Christ; by this anointing, they had received the ability to discern false spirits (1 Cor 12:10; 1 John 4:1).
 - 1) 1 John 2:26: “These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:10: “To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.”
 - 3) 1 John 4:1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
 - h. This anointing enabled them to know “all things.” John does not mean that they were omniscient, otherwise he would not have needed to write them any instructions at all. He provided the material to them, thus they did not know some things that John knew. “All things” is limited to the things pertaining to the antichrists (things in the immediate context).
 - 1) The anointing supplied them with the information they needed to recognize and to refute the false teachers who had gone out from among them: “These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:26-27).
 - 2) This anointing was a miraculous measure of the Spirit (one of the nine spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10), which enabled them to identify and resist the false teachers who were afflicting the church. In the absence of the full written revelation of the New Testament, this supernatural gift was necessary.
4. Verses 21-22: “I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”
 - a. He did not write because they already possessed knowledge of all the truth; else he would not have needed to write anything at all. The truth they had was about the false teachers which whom they were contending; they knew enough to recognize the errorists as such. The preceding verse shows how they had obtained that information—through the spiritual gifts which had been bestowed upon them by an apostle. It was only through the *laying-on* of an apostle’s hands that those gifts could be given. Only the apostles had this capability.
 - 1) After Philip had preached the gospel to the Samaritans and many of them had become Christians,
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it was necessary that one or more of the apostles to be present before they could receive any of the supernatural gifts; hence, Peter and John were sent down and laid hands on them that some of these gifts might be imparted (Acts 8:12-19). Philip could not impart the spiritual gifts; Simon could not obtain that ability to impart that gift to others (8:18-24).

- 2) Acts 19:6: "And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." The apostle Paul was able to lay hands on the 12 converts at Ephesus and thus impart to them certain of the spiritual gifts.
 - 3) It was necessary for Paul to be personally in Rome in order to impart gifts to certain Christians there. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11). If this could be imparted by any who had a spiritual gift, why did Paul say he had to be there before it could be imparted to them?
 - 4) 2 Timothy 1:6 shows that Timothy received his spiritual gift through the laying on of the apostle Paul's hands. [1 Timothy 4:14 does not teach that the gift was given through the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, but that the prophecy relating to it had been thus given].
- b. The falsehood they opposed was those errors which the false teachers had promoted; these false teachers are denoted as *antichrists* (verse 18). The apostle identified the liar as one who denied that Jesus is the Messiah. False theories regarding the nature and the attributes of Christ were circulating then (especially by the Gnostics heresies). The word *antichrist* is used in verse twenty-two in the same sense as in verse eighteen—one who opposes Christ or one who may try to assume to himself the authority of Christ.
- c. "The Gnostics alleged that Jesus and Christ were two different persons; that Christ merely appeared to have flesh, but in reality did not; and that the one designated as Jesus was without divine origin. The effect of this heresy was, in the case of Christ, to deny his humanity; and in the case of Jesus, to deny his deity.... To deny the humanity and deity of Jesus was to repudiate his Messiahship; and to reject the Messiahship was, in effect, to reject the Father himself. 'He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.' (John 5:23.) The Son reveals the Father (John 1:18; 14:9), and our approach to the Father is through the Son (John 12:6). Thus to reject the Son is to repudiate the only method by which it is possible to reach the Father. This is the reason why an acknowledgment of the Son before men is a prerequisite to acknowledgment by the Father: 'And I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God.' (Luke 12:8. Cf. Matt. 10:32)" (Woods, pp.247f).
- 1) John 5:23: "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."
 - 2) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - 3) John 14:9: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"
 - 4) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 5) Luke 12:8: "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God."
 - 6) Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."
5. Verses 23-24: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the
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Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.”

- a. John could reach this conclusion logically from the foregoing information. To repudiate the Son is to repudiate the Father. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18).
- b. The truths John presented here were initially directed toward the Gnostics, but these same truths also expose the error of modern-day errorists who claim to believe in the Father while rejecting the Sonship of Christ and the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Voltaire shouted out when he saw the beauty of the Alps, “God the Father! I adore thee.” He immediately added that he did not worship the Son, an illustration of the conclusion which the apostle draws that it is impossible to acknowledge the Father without confessing the Son also (see Woods, p.249).
- c. To confess Christ is more than a one-time occurrence. The New Testament teaches the necessity of making the confession of our faith in Christ before God and others who may be present at the time of our conversion.
 - 1) Acts 8:36-38: “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”
 - 2) Romans 10:9-10: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - 3) We confess Christ also by a faithful life of obedience.
 - a) Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
 - b) Matthew 10:32-33: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”
- d. The apostles calls on his readers to hold fast to what they had been taught at the beginning—the truth. The beginning indicated was the point in time when they first learned the gospel. They were exhorted to hold fast to the truth. Why? If they let their hold on the truth lessen, they would most likely be carried away into the error the false teachers were advocating. But why was it dangerous for them to turn from the truth and accept error? Holding on to the truth would cause them to abide in the Son and in the Father; to turn from the truth and accept error obviously would mean that they no longer abode in either the Son or the Father! In other words, holding on to the truth meant salvation; turning to error meant the loss of their souls.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
 - 2) James 5:19-20: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”
 - 3) 2 John 9-11: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any

- unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
- 4) 2 Peter 1:10: “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
 - 6) John 8:51: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”
 - 7) Hebrews 10:26-31: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
 - 8) 2 Peter 2:20-22: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”
- e. “The conditional participle ‘if’ governs the sentence and determines the conclusion. *If*, i.e., on condition ‘that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father.’ Here is another of the many passages in the scripture clearly establishing the conditionality of salvation and emphasizing the necessity of continued faithfulness. See this same truth taught in John 6:56; 15:1ff; 17:23; Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:17” (Woods, p.250).
- 1) John 6:56: “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”
 - 2) John 15:1-6: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”
 - 3) John 17:20-23: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”
 - 4) Ephesians 3:17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.”
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”
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- 6) 1 Corinthians 6:17: "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."
6. Verse 25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."
- a. Eternal life is a promise; its reception depends on our holding fast to that which we have been taught (the truth) from the beginning (vs. 24).
 - b. Eternal life is not a present possession of Christians, but we have it in promise and prospect only.
 - 1) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 2) Romans 8:24-25: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."
 - 3) Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 4) John 17:1-3: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." [Notice that the statement is presented as a promise].
 - c. But what of John 5:24?: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." This passage and others like it must be understood in the light of the clear passages listed above, and therefore as being had only in prospect and promise.
 - 1) Romans 8:24-25: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."
 - 2) Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - d. What about John 10:27-29?: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Salvation depends on the believer continuing to hear the voice of Christ and to follow him; as long as this individual hears and obeys, he will remain in fellowship with Christ; no enemy is able to overwhelm that person and tear him away for the Lord. The conditions of hearing and obeying are inherent and essential in the operation.
7. Verses 26-27: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."
- a. The saints in the first century to whom John initially wrote this epistle were under the beguiling influence of the false teachers, which the apostle describes as the *antichrists*. These proponents of religious error were trying to lead the brethren astray by their unholy efforts. They were doubtless very active in their wicked work. False teachers appeared early in the church of the first century, which
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- occasioned many warnings from inspired messengers and writers.
- 1) Acts 20:29-31: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”
 - 3) 1 John 4:1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
- b. When the apostle stated, “Ye need not that any man teach you,” he has reference to the things of the context. The brethren had been given the ability to discern between false and true teaching. The ones who had no need of teaching were those who had been anointed (who received a miraculous gift which enabled them to discern error). Not every Christian had this or other spiritual gifts.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 12:4-11: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”
 - 2) If every faithful saint in the first century possessed a spiritual gift, then each one of them would have had to be in the presence of an apostle, who would personally lay hands of each individual and bestow the gift. This would have been an impossibility since the number of Christians became very great in just a few years.
- c. It is wrongful interpretation to extend the statement given to include all believers; or to claim that one does not need to be taught the gospel today because he can be given this information supernaturally. The meaning is that those who had received this gift were able to weigh the claims of teachers. There is no support here for the theory that all Christians have or can get the anointing of the Holy Spirit, or that the inspiration of the Spirit extends to believers today. The spiritual gifts were intended only for a limited period of time, and even then only a part of the saints received the gifts. The gift discussed was one necessary for the church of that time until the full message of the gospel was revealed, confirmed, and recorded.
- d. If all the disciples received the anointing [possessed knowledge of all things; did not need to be taught], why did John write to them? The anointing was a miraculous gift of limited duration, and was removed along with all the other such gifts when the New Testament was completed. [See the author’s commentaries on the following passages for a full discussion of those verses].
- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”
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- 2) Ephesians 4:8-13: “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”
 - e. The gift of discernment [1 Cor. 12:8-10] was a miraculous gift; it could be depended on to provide infallible guidance; as long as they followed the direction of the gift they were able to identify error and recognize false teachers; as long as they followed the inspired word, they would continue to abide in Christ. The mere possession of the gift did not automatically guarantee that the possessor would not err; he must follow the directions given by the truth. The miraculous guidance was never intended to take the place of the written word; the gifts were a temporary measure, designed to provide the early saints with the ability to discern truth and error while the full revelation was being delivered, confirmed, and recorded for all time.
 - 1) Jude 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 4:6: “Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other” (ASV).
 8. Verse 28: “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (KJV). “And now, my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (ASV).
 - a. It is necessary for one to abide in Christ; a determined effort is required in order to remain in the Lord. If one does not remain faithful, he will fall away; if one does not put away from himself all sinful practices, words, and attitudes, he will fall away; if one does not worship God in spirit and in truth, he will fall away; if one does not grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, he will fall away; if one does not develop and exercise the Christian graces, he will fall away.
 - b. The coming and the manifestation of Christ are the same. *If he shall be manifested*—this statement shows that John did not know when that coming would be. “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is” (Mark 13:32-33).
 - c. “The word ‘boldness’ (*parresia*), as here used, signifies ‘freedom of speech,’ the right to speak out as one thinks, and was used by the ancient Greeks of their privilege as free citizens. It was the apostle's hope that all those to whom he wrote as well as himself might live in such fashion as to be able to stand unafraid in the presence of the Lord, and to be free to express their confidence in their position. ‘Ashamed,’ from *aischunomai*, ‘to grow pale, to change color from shame,’ is used to indicate the effect which the coming of Christ will produce on those who are unprepared to meet him. Those who are ashamed will, in that day, shrink from the Lord in guilty fashion, fully aware of the fact that they are unprepared to meet him” (Woods, p.254).
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from
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heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

9. Verse 29: “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”
- a. “The interpreters differ as to the reference of Him; some referring it to God, and others to Christ. Against the latter is the fact that people are not said to be born of Christ, but of God: and that ‘to be born of God’ is a characteristic phrase of John, while ‘to be born of Christ’ is a phrase which occurs nowhere. On the other hand, the undoubted reference to Christ in 1 John 2:28, would seem to demand a similar reference here. People are said to abide in Christ as well as in God, and to be born of the Spirit. Westcott's remark is pertinent: ‘When John thinks of God in relation to men, he never thinks of Him apart from Christ (see 1 John 5:20); and again, he never thinks of Christ in His human nature without adding the thought of His divine nature. Thus, a rapid transition is possible from the one aspect of the Lord's divine-human person to the other’” [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - b. Many scholars, including brother Woods, understand the verse to have reference to Christ and to the Father. The argument turns on the thought that Christ is never said to beget anyone, that this action is always attributed to God. It is also argued that Christ is not depicted as being a Father figure, but there is this statement: “And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:13-14).
 - c. “At first glance it would appear that the antecedent of the pronoun ‘he’ of the first clause refers to Christ; but, in view of the fact that ‘of him’ in the last clause must be referred to the Father, the reference must be to the Father here. It is, therefore, God who is ‘righteous’; it is ‘of God’ that every one that ‘doeth righteousness’ is begotten. One is never, in the scriptures, said to be born or begotten of Christ, but always of God. (1 John 3:9, 18; 4:7)” [Woods, pp.254f].
 - 1) 1 John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
 - 2) 1 John 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”
 - 3) 1 John 4:7: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”
 - d. It seems to me that the most natural understanding of the passage is to see it as a reference to Christ, with the means of the begetting left undefined. This view takes into account the antecedent of “he” in verse twenty-eight; it is clear that the pronouns of that verse plainly refer to Christ. Since John refers to the coming of Christ (vs. 28), and immediately declares that we can know the *he* is righteous, the apparent meaning is that *Christ* is righteous. Further, since Christ is righteous, then those who follow him are righteous, also.
 - e. Brother Woods offers the excellent thoughts: “Righteousness is right-doing, moral rectitude in all of the relationships of man, and obedience to the commandments of God. (Psalm 119:172.) Though the doctrine is clearly and positively taught elsewhere (e.g., Matt. 7:21; Mark 16:15, 16; Rev. 22:13, 14), this passage cannot be properly cited in support of the view that doing righteousness, i.e., keeping the commandments, is a condition precedent to salvation from past, or alien, sins. (1) The righteousness here contemplated is that which one does *as a child of God*, and not in order to become one. (2) The logical order of the premises leading to the conclusion of the apostle shows that it was his design to exhibit the fact that ‘doing righteousness’ is *evidence* that one *is* a child of God, and is not offered as
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a condition on which one *becomes* a child. Nor is there any significance in the fact that *gennaō* is rendered 'begotten,' rather than 'born.' Here the word is descriptive of the new birth, but is properly rendered 'begotten,' (a) because it is incongruous and awkward to predicate birth of a masculine personality; and (b) the scriptures, properly translated, never refer to *a birth of God!*" (P.255).

f. Consider these verses:

- 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness."
- 2) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
- 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- 4) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
- 5) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
- 6) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
- 7) Revelation 22:13-14: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

1 JOHN 3

A. 1 John 3:1-2: We Are Children of God.

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

- a. The apostle continues to pursue the thought presented in 2:29: “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” Those who live righteous lives are begotten of God (2:29); John here addresses the remarkable blessings that derive from that spiritual connection with the Heavenly Father.
- b. The word “behold” [*eidete*] calls attention to the love God has bestowed upon us. John refers to the *quality of love* the Father has exhibited toward us. Thus, the profound degree of God’s love is emphasized.
- c. So great and beneficial is this love that it has made it possible for us to be called the *children of God*. If we comprehend the greatness of God, then we can appreciate the awesome nature of being called God’s children! Just think of it—the Creator and Ruler of the universe, is our spiritual Father! We have the benefit of his beneficence; we have direct access to his aid; we have the providence of the Almighty at our disposal! Of course, he helps us through his laws—the laws of nature and the law of the Bible.
- d. The world does not *know* us because it did not *know* our Lord.
 - 1) John 15:18-19: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”
 - 2) John 3:19-21: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. Because it knew him not.”
 - 3) The people of the world did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, thus it will not acknowledge us as the children of God. In the first century, the unbelieving Jews and the pagan world in general repudiated the idea of the divine nature of our Lord and scoffed at the notion that Christians are the exclusive children of the only true and living God. The world has not changed in this regards today, since the religions of men, the worldlings, and the adherents of perverted Christianity follow the example of their forerunners of the first century. Because we are few in number, the Catholics ridicule us; because we hold fast to the word of God, the sectarians heap malicious slander upon us; because we insist on living pure lives in keeping with the Bible, those of the world call us prudes; because we believe the Bible, unbelievers depict us as ignorant hicks.
 - 4) “The word ‘know’ here, as in many other instances in John’s writings, is used to mean much more than merely superficial knowledge. The world knows, of course, that Christians are in it; they are aware of the fact that Christians worship God; but they do not approve of the lives of Christians, nor do they acknowledge the Christian’s God as their Sovereign and King” (Woods, p.257).
- e. “In the NT *ginosko* frequently indicates a relation between the person ‘knowing’ and the object known; in this respect, what is ‘known’ is of value or importance to the one who knows, and hence the establishment of the relationship, e. g., especially of God’s ‘knowledge,’ 1 Cor 8:3, ‘if any man love God, the same is known of Him’; Gal 4:9, ‘to be known of God’; here the ‘knowing’ suggests approval and bears the meaning ‘to be approved’; so in 2 Tim 2:19; cf. John 10:14,27; Gen 18:19; Nah 1:7; the relationship implied may involve remedial chastisement, Amos 3:2. The same idea of appreciation as well as ‘knowledge’ underlies several statements concerning the ‘knowledge’ of God and His truth on the part of believers, e. g., John 8:32; 14:20,31; 17:3; Gal 4:9 (1 st part); 1 John 2:3-13,14; 4:6,8,16; 5:20...” [Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - 1) John 8:32: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

- 2) John 14:20: “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”
 - 3) John 14:31: “But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”
 - 4) John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”
 - 5) Galatians 4:9: “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”
 - 6) 1 John 4:6: “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”
 - 7) 1 John 4:8: “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”
 - 8) 1 John 4:16: “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”
 - 9) 1 John 5:20: “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”
2. Verse 2: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (KJV). “Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is” (ASV).
- a. We are the children of God *now* despite the attitude the world has toward us. The fact that we do not now know what we shall be does not change our present status. Our knowledge about the details of our promised condition in eternity is incomplete; we have been given all the information that we are able to grasp, and all that we need to know. Many of the facts revealed in the Bible about Heaven are negative, showing that our situation there will not be like it is here—it will be vastly improved!
 - 1) Revelation 21:4: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:3-5: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
 - b. When our Lord shall appear [be made manifest—ASV), we shall see him as he is. This, of course, is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. On this grand occasion, our present imperfect knowledge will be replaced with full knowledge—about Christ and our eternal inheritance. We shall then see him as he truly is and shall be like him. “Then it is that we shall see him even as he is, and shall be like him. The meaning is: we are children of God now, as much so as we shall be when the Lord comes; but at the present we are waiting for an inheritance which we do not fully comprehend; when he comes we shall still be children and, in addition, in possession of that for which we now wait. Moreover, we shall then have perfect understanding of matters with reference to our future state which now we do not fully understand” (Woods, pp.257f).
 - c. This truth has a strong motivating effect on those who are sincere in their faith. It is powerful enough to urge us to make even greater progress in developing our Christian character, and prod us to be more and more active in his service. To see him in his real being and to be like him! What a beautiful thought! He does not inhabit the same physical body he possessed as he lived on earth; flesh and blood cannot live in the home of the soul: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the
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- kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50).
- d. Peter, James and John got a preview of our Lord’s spiritual body when they beheld him in the awesome transfiguration scene.
- 1) Matthew 17:1-9: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”
 - 2) Luke 9:29-36: “And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.”
 - 3) Mark 9:2-10: “And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.”
- e. At the Second Coming, the dead will be resurrected and the living will be changed; we shall all have immortal, spiritual bodies from that instant onward. We shall be like him.
- 1) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:51-53: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on
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incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

- 3) Philippians 3:20-21: “For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself” (ASV).
- 4) John 17:24: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”
- f. We are presently the children of God; we shall continue to be the children of God in eternity; but shall have a new body and a new, closer relationship with our Lord. “The wondrous blessing which this promise includes—of being like him—should not be lightly regarded or passed over hurriedly. It is a summary of all the good things which the Father has in reserve for his own. There is a story often told of a group of heathen converts who, when they came to this verse in translating into their language, unable to believe that such could possibly be in store for sinful man, stopped and said, ‘No! It is too much. Let us write that we shall be permitted to kiss his feet’” (Woods, p.258).

B. 1 John 3:3-12: Origin and Characteristics of Sinful Conduct.

1. Verse 3: “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (KJV). “And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (ASV).
 - a. The hope which we have is that of being like him. One who has this hope keeps himself pure even as Christ is pure. This great hope urges us to keep ourselves pure in order that we can be like him (and have the blessings of heaven).
 - b. Macknight offers these comments: “*And every one who hath this hope of seeing Christ, and of being like him, and of living with him, is careful to purify himself from sin, even as he is pure from sin, that he may be fit to live with him for ever*” (1 John 3:3, p.67).
 - c. Purifieth (*hagnizei*, present active indicative) is continuous action—the individual keeps on purifying himself. This is necessary in order to gain the hope identified. “The apostle, as Beza observes, doth not say, *Hath purified himself, but purifieth himself*, to show that it is a good man’s constant study to purify himself, because in this life no one can attain to perfect purity. By this text, therefore, as well as by 1 John 1:8...those fanatics are condemned, who imagine they are able to live without sin” (Macknight).
 - d. The passage does not teach that it is possible for a child of God to live above sin here. We are purified as we walk in the light. The apostle does not suggest that we can live above sin; rather, John shows that we must walk in the light of the gospel; when we stumble into sin, we confess it to God, and resolve to live better in the future. No saint can so live as to be completely free from an act of sin; the occasion for sin might be an omission of duty (cf. Jas. 4:17); it might be through a momentary weakness; it might be due to ignorance; it might be an act of rebellion. We regularly, honestly, thoughtfully, and patiently examine our hearts and lives, in order to identify any faulty motives, any impure thoughts, any corrupt words, and any sinful actions that contaminate our soul—and rid ourselves of these defects.
 - 1) 1 John 1:7-10: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
 - 2) 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

- 3) James 4:17: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
 - 6) Galatians 2:11-14: “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”
2. Verse 4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”
- a. This section of the epistle began in 1 John 2:29: “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”
 - 1) In the first three verses of this chapter, John argues that a Christian who lives a righteous life has been born again: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”
 - 2) From verse four through verse ten, the apostle shows that sin and salvation cannot be reconciled, that one who has been saved from past sin cannot have fellowship with Christ while living in sin. Being born again and following a sinful lifestyle are incompatible.
 - 3) “These connecting links are not to be ignored in the study of the Epistle; they are, indeed, essential to the understanding of the design of the author. Having shown, in the foregoing verses, what the fatherhood of God (and the consequent sonship which relates) *includes*, he then proceeds to show what it *excludes*” (Woods, p.260).
 - b. Sin (*harmartia*) means *to miss the mark*.
 - 1) “It is a general term embracing every form of wrongdoing, all divergence from that which is right. The verbs ‘doeth’ in the first clause are both in the present tense, the force of which, in Greek, is to indicate continuous action. It is the *habitual practice* of sin which is here contemplated. ‘Lawlessness’ (*anomia*) is that state or manner of life wherein one fails to conform to law, whether in positive disobedience thereto, or in failing to come up to its demands. It is action contrary to law, whatever the form in which the action takes place. It embraces sin both positively and negatively; it includes sins of omission as well as sins of commission” (Woods, p.260).
 - 2) “*Every one who committeth sin habitually, committeth also the transgression of law habitually. For sin is the transgression of law, and will be severely punished, whatever the false teachers may pretend*” (Macknight, p.67).
 - c. Whoever practices sin is a lawless person; he is sinful. The apostle penned this in order to expose the error of false teachers. The Gnostics of that time thought their “superior knowledge” enabled them to practice sin without being tainted by guilt. But John points out that any sin is a disobedience of the law of God. One guilty of such falls under the condemnation of God.
 - 1) Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ
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our Lord.”

- 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”
 - 3) John 5:28-29: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”
 - 4) Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
 - 5) Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
 - 6) Romans 2:2-11: “But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.”
 - d. If we would sustain and preserve the hope we possess, we must continue to purify ourselves; a failure to do so is to lapse into a life of sin; and a life of sin is lawlessness.
3. Verse 5: “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”
 - a. John shows that Christians will not live in sin because Christ came into the world to take away sin and that sin cannot abide in him. Saints comprise the spiritual body of Christ, the church; sin is not allowed to be in his body. Therefore, each member is obligated to live a pure life.
 - b. When individuals hear, believe, and obey the gospel in baptism, the Lord adds them to his church; they are translated out of the world and made part of his spiritual kingdom; this process is that of sanctification—we are set apart from the world, placed in Christ, and become people for God’s own use.
 - 1) Acts 2:41, 41: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls....Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

- 3) 1 Corinthians 1:2: “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”
 - 4) Ephesians 2:8-10: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
 - 5) Titus 2:11-14: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
 - 6) 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12: “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.”
- c. Christ came into the world to take away sin:
- 1) Matthew 1:21: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
 - 2) John 1:29: “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”
 - 3) Luke 19:10: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
 - 4) To take away denotes the idea of a burden which is lifted so that it may not crush its bearer. It is used here in a figurative way to signify the picking up and carrying away of sins. Being in the aorist tense the act is a once-for-all process. The point being made is that all sin must be shunned.
- d. In him is no sin—he has always been entirely free from sin.
- 1) John 7:18: “He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.”
 - 2) John 8:46: “Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
 - 4) Hebrews 4:15: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”
 - 5) Hebrews 7:26: “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”
 - 6) 1 Peter 2:21-25: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his
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mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

4. Verse 6: “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him” (KJV). “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him” (ASV). “Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Hoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him” (NJKV).
 - a. John 15:4-6: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”
 - b. The word translated “abide” is from the Greek term *meno*:
 - 1) “A primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy)” [Strong].
 - 2) The word means to settle down and remain as in one’s permanent home. Also included here is the intimate relationship which exists between the Lord and his disciples. The tense means “whosoever keeps on abiding.”
 - c. Whosoever keeps on abiding in him sinneth not.
 - 1) 1 John 2:24: “Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.”
 - 2) 1 John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
 - 3) 1 John 5:18: “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”
 - 4) 3 John 1:11: “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”
 - d. Whoever abides in him sins not; whosoever is begotten of God does not sin; he that does evil has not seen God. He is not saying that one who abides in Christ is incapable of committing a single act of sin; that idea would be in conflict with other statements:
 - 1) 1 John 1:8: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”
 - 2) 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
 - e. The meaning is seen in the tense of the Greek verb: “The word ‘tense’ as applied to the Greek verb is misleading, if it be accorded its literal signification, for it is derived from the French ‘temps’, time, and originally the Greek tense had no reference to time, as such. This characteristic, so prominent in the English verb, is only incidental in the Greek, the tense of the Greek verb having to do with the state of the action, and not necessarily with the time when it occurred. The function is to indicate the state of the action, accordingly as it is conceived of as an indefinite event, (aorist tense), an action in progress, (present tense), or a completed action with existing results, (perfect tense). Other tenses, such as imperfect, etc., are variation of one or the other of these types of action. In the English language the time element is the prominent feature of the verb, and we think of an act as either past, present, or future” (Woods).
 - 1) Greek present tense—an act continuing.

- 2) Greek aorist tense—a single act.
- f. If John had intended to teach that one in Christ could not commit sin, he would have used the aorist tense. But the apostle used the present tense, thus teaches that one who enters Christ, of necessity, will not continue to live in sin.
- 1) Romans 6:1-6: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”
 - 2) Romans 6:16-18: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 7:1: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
- g. Macknight’s literal translation: “*Whosoever abideth in the love and fellowship of Christ, doth not sin habitually. Whosoever sinneth habitually, though he may have seen Christ in the flesh, hath not seen him in his true character, neither hath known his will*” (p.69). He gives the following comments: “Probably some of the heretical teachers condemned by the apostle in this epistle, to make their disciples believe that their opinions were derived from Christ, boasted of their having seen and conversed with him during his ministry on earth, consequently that they knew his doctrine perfectly. But the apostle assured his children, that if these teachers who avowedly continued in sin, had ever seen or conversed with Christ, they had utterly mistaken both his character and his doctrine” (ibid.).
- h. One who has broken sin’s hold in his life and no longer regularly yields to evil impulses, is still not above occasional lapses.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
 - 3) Philippians 3:12: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”
 - 4) 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
 - 5) 1 John 1:7-10: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not
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- sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
- 6) James 5:19-20: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”
 - 7) Galatians 6:1: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
 - 8) We correctly understand, however, that although it is possible for a Christian to fall into sin, that possibility does not mean that he *will* fall.
- i. “Whosoever sinneth has not seen him, neither has he known him.”
- 1) “Sinneth” is in the present tense. Whoever sins [i.e., keeps on sinning] has neither seen nor known the Lord. This is not saying that such a one was never saved in the first place, for many clear declarations of scripture show that even the strongest Christian is still capable of falling into sin (e.g., 1 John 1:7-10; 2:1). One cannot fall back into sin unless he has been delivered from sin.
 - a) Acts 8:22: “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”
 - b) 2 Peter 2:20-22: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”
 - 2) Brother Woods observes: The verbs "seen" (*heoraken*) and "knoweth" (*egnoken*) are Greek perfects. The Greek perfect tense denotes action absolutely past, which lasts on in its effects. It is the function of the Greek perfect to indicate the result which follows the action, the action, meanwhile, dropping out of view. In this respect it differs greatly from the English perfect which keeps the action in view and in which the past idea predominates. When, for example, we say, "I have known," the mind instinctively attributes the time of knowing to the past; in this, the true function of the English perfect is seen. In the Greek perfect, however, the time element is lost sight of, and the force of the tense is to point to an existing state produced by the action which has already terminated. Thus, the significance of "I have known," regarded from the viewpoint of the Greek perfect, is, "I know" (*now*). Thus, in the study of this verse if we keep in mind that the verbs *seen* and *knoweth*, as here used, express *result*, the meaning becomes clear. "Whosoever continues to abide in him does not keep on living a life of sin; whosoever does keep on living such a life, does not see him or know him." Obviously, one who has lapsed into a life of habitual sin, such as characterized him before his conversion, no longer sees (enjoys) God, nor knows (recognizes) God in his life [p.266].
- j. No one sees the Father with physical eyes, so this *seeing* is spiritual insight.
- 1) 1 John 4:12: “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”
 - 2) John 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”
 - 3) John 6:46: “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.”
 - 4) Hebrews 2:8: “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things
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put under him.”

5. Verse 7: “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.”
 - a. John here issues a warning—do not let man lead you astray. This is especially in reference to the Gnostics and their erroneous views about sin. The result of their false teachings was to lead Christians into a life of unrestricted sinful conduct; this was all done under the banner of religion. Catholicism, sectarianism, Pentecostalism, Adventism, or the myriads of other religious false doctrine, are all promoted as tenets of God!
 - b. The apostle undermines such sinful efforts by affirming that one who is righteous is one who does righteousness. This is the only kind of man who is righteous. It is a strong declaration that character and conduct cannot be separated. It is of little importance that one may claim to be righteous; it is a matter of little significance how much one may claim to have love for the Lord; the immutable test is—does he do righteousness? If he does righteousness, he is a righteous person; if he does not do righteousness, his claims are false.
 - 1) Psalms 119:172: “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.”
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”
 - 3) Matthew 3:13-15: “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.”
 - 4) Luke 1:6: “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”
 - 5) Psalms 1:1-6: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”
 - c. In this passage, doing righteousness is an evidence that we are saved; the same is true with 1 John 2:29: “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” Other passages teach that salvation does indeed depend on our working righteousness (Acts 10:34-35).
 - 1) This passage is not teaching that specific point. We work righteousness when we obey the gospel plan of salvation; as we do our Christian duty, we also work righteousness. The righteousness an alien obeys brings him into the realm of salvation; the righteousness a Christian does keeps him in the realm of salvation.
 - 2) “Good works of piety do not make a good pious man, but a good pious man does good pious works... fruits grow from the tree and not the tree from the fruits” (Luther).
 - d. *Doeth* is a present active participle—it means *to keep on doing*. “As occasional lapses into sin through weakness, inadvertence, or ignorance do not demonstrate that one has never been saved, so isolated and infrequent acts of righteousness (outward conformity to some of God’s laws) do not justify the conclusion that such a one is a righteous man” (Woods, p.268). To be righteous, one must practice

- righteousness.
- e. The phrase, *even as he is righteous*, is a reference to our Lord. That does not mean that we must reach the level of absolute perfection in life in order to be classified as *righteous*. It means that he is the perfect pattern; it is our duty to become as much like him as possible.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:21-25: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”
6. Verse 8: “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”
- a. The devil has followed a pattern of sin from the beginning; he is the source and instigator of sin among the human family.
 - 1) John 8:44: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”
 - 2) Those who imitate his lifestyle, and thus live in rebellion against the Father, is “of the devil.” Some followers of Satan openly acknowledge their status; others ardently deny their condition. The truth of the matter can only be determined by using the Bible as the standard..
 - b. Satan was the first sinner, the preeminent rebel against God. Regarding his origin we can only surmise for the Bible does not reveal the details. But it is clear from certain statements in the Scriptures that there was a rebellion against the Father by some angelic beings, evidently under the leadership of the one known to us as Satan.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:4: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”
 - 2) Jude 6: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”
 - c. In effect, Satan murdered Adam and Eve.
 - 1) Genesis 2:15-17: “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
 - 2) Genesis 3:1-6: “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”
 - 3) Genesis 3:9-19: “And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.
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And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

- 4) The devil is the father of those who practice sin (John 8:44). Therefore, John can say that those who persist in sin partake of the character of Satan. We must notice that an occasional lapse into sin does not make us a regular follower of the devil; and an occasional act of goodness does not make a rank sinner a follower of God.
 - d. The apostle is not saying that it is possible for a Christian to live above sin. John has already shown that no man can live entirely above an occasional act of sin (cf. 1 John 1:7-10; 2:1). Some of the greatest and best of God’s people in the Scriptures are known to have suffered momentary weaknesses. Neither Abraham nor David was sinlessly perfect; the apostle Peter stumbled into sin (cf. Gal. 2:11-14). Paul had to maintain a firm hold on his fleshly appetites lest he lose his soul (1 Cor. 9:27).
 - e. “It must not be overlooked in the consideration of this passage that the evil contemplated is that which flows uninterruptedly from an evil heart, and is deliberate, willful, and persistent. The steady stream of pollution unmistakably reveals that the source is equally corrupt. It follows, therefore, that the type of sin under contemplation here is that which is habitual. Those who live as the devil lives must be regarded as belonging to the devil; in exhibiting the traits and characteristics of the devil, they evidence the fact that they are his children” (Woods, p.269).
 - f. The Bible elsewhere, and the apostle John in this passage, describes the Devil as a real person. He does indeed exist, he has existed from the beginning, he is the spiritual father of all who sin as he does, and false teachers are his agents.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:3: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:8-9: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 2:11: “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
 - g. The purpose for which Christ came into the world was to destroy the works of Satan. The works of the devil include his plans, purposes, and schemes by which souls are led away from righteousness and salvation. The Greek term for destroy means "to loose, dissolve, sever, break, demolish" (Vine).
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- 1) Our Lord came to break Satan's power over us, to weaken him, to deprive him of strength. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).
 - 2) Satan's works include pain, sorrow, misery, and death, which he inflicts upon humanity. Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10).
 - 3) The eventual victory over death will be realized in the resurrection: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor 15:50-55).
 - 4) Sorrow, pain, tears, and all other earthly ailments and discomforts will be terminated in heaven: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).
- h. The devil had the power to afflict certain individuals during the first century by sending one or more of his demons to torment them in various ways. Christ and his apostles exercised miraculous power to cast out these demons. With the cessation of the miracles of the first century, this power has been taken away from the devil. This was made possible by the successful mission of Christ, including his death and resurrection from the dead.
- 1) Matthew 17:14-17: "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me."
 - 2) Mark 9:20-27: "And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose."
 - 3) Luke 9:37-42: "And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O
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faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.”

- 4) However, Satan only has power over us today to the extent we allow him to have it.
 - a) "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7).
 - b) "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet. 5:9).
 - i. Not only did Christ destroy the power Satan had in afflicting humanity by the use of his demons, but by his resurrection from the dead, he gave assurance that we also will be raised up from the grave. The “gates of Hades” (cf. Matt. 16:18) could not retain the spirit of our Lord, who burst asunder its bars, and was resurrected to life just as he had promised.
 - 1) Matthew 16:21: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:20-23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
 - j. “Satan’s weapon, death, was therefore wrested from him and used as the instrument of Satan’s own destruction; and just as David took Goliath’s own sword and cut off the giant’s own head with it....How can it be said that Christ has brought the devil to naught? Satan was brought to naught in that his sole purpose regarding mankind was absolutely frustrated and eternally defeated....Christ became a man, paid the penalty due Adam’s transgression, and opened up the way of renewal for the lost fellowship with God....Satan’s failure was total and complete. He was not able to destroy mankind, but on the other hand found himself used as a means of testing and developing men...” (Coffman).
 - k. Doubtless the devil thought that if he could bring about the death of Christ, the plans of God would go awry, especially since to die on a cross, to the Jewish people, carried with it an inherent curse. But in his infinite wisdom, God was able to use the devil’s own tool (death) against him.
7. Verse 9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) “Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God” (ASV).
 - 2) “Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God” (NKJV).
 - 3) “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God” (ESV).
 - b. The reference is to faithful children of God. One who walks in the light of the gospel will not live a life of sin; the two items [living by the gospel and living in sin] are incompatible with each other. They cannot be done at the same time.
 - 1) Matthew 6:24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - 2) Matthew 12:30: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
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- 3) 2 Corinthians 4:14-18: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."
- c. Brother Woods offers these comments: Whosoever is begotten of God "doeth no sin." "Doeth no sin" is translated from the phrase, *hamartian ou poiei*, present active indicative of *poio*, does not keep on doing sin (as a life habit.) The reference here is to persistent, continuous, willful sin, such as that contemplated in 3:6, and the remarks there (which see) apply with equal force here.
- d. The reason assigned by the apostle as to why a Christian will not live a life of sin is *because God's seed remains in a child of God*. God's seed is his word:
- 1) Luke 8:11: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - 3) James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
 - 4) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 6) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - 7) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
- e. If a sincere child of God studies the Bible, applies its truths to his life, and endeavors to do right, he will not live in sin. As noted several times already, a Christian will stumble occasionally and commit some act of sin, but sin is not characteristic of his life. In our daily prayers, we regularly ask for God's pardon, for obligations left undone (cf. Jas. 4:17), misuse of the tongue (Jas. 3:1ff), or some positive act of disobedience.
- 1) The rule of our life is to follow Christ as perfectly as we can.
 - a) John 10:27-29: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
- f. When John states that we "cannot sin," he does not mean that it impossible for us to commit sin. He has already announced that any responsible saint can commit sin (1 John 1:8-10).
- 1) "Doeth no sin" is more precisely expressed as "worketh no sin." Those who try to make this verse teach the impossibility of a child of God committing any sin put John in conflict with himself:
 - a) 1 John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."
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- b) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- c) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
- 2) Brother Woods' comments:
- a) "And he cannot sin" is translated from the phrase "*kai ou dunatai hamartanein.*" *Hamartarein* is a present active infinitive, the force of which is, "he cannot continue to live a life of sin" (as before). But why cannot he continue to live such a life? The seed, which is the word of God, and which is in him, forbids it. How did David recognize and apply the principle taught here? "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:11.)
- b) How did Jesus resist the seductions of Satan? By relying on the same power. Suppose one is tempted to steal. Such a one remembers that the Word says, "Thou shalt not steal." So long as this injunction remains in the heart and governs the life, one *cannot* steal. "It is written" is as effective in resisting the blandishments of Satan today as it was when the Lord utilized it on the mount of temptation.
- c) Why, then, cannot one thus begotten persist in sin? (1) The seed (the word of God), which forbids it, is in him, controls his life, and directs his energies. (2) A life of sin is inconsistent with the spiritual parentage of the one thus begotten. But does this mean that it is never possible for one possessed of this nature to sin? No. All, through weakness, error, ignorance, and inadvertence, occasionally sin; but children of God do not work sin as a life principle, for its author—Satan—they have repudiated and his nature abandoned. When, in such instances, sin occurs, it is a momentary lapse; it is due to an imperfect holding of the word in the heart; it is recognized as contrary to the higher impulses of the person thus sinning, and it is confessed and put aside with shame. (p.272).
- 3) Romans 6:1-6: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."
- 4) Even the most mature saint cannot live a sinless life; it is always within the domain of possibility for him to fall into sin; if he persists in sin, he falls from the grace of God and will be lost. It is not possible to have God's favor while living a life of sin. To avoid falling into sin, we must fill our minds with a knowledge of God's word—and sincerely believe and practice its precepts.
- g. The expression "born of God" [or, begotten of God] is a reference to the New Birth. The New Birth is a figurative depiction of obeying the gospel. What the Lord said in John 3:5 as a figure of speech, he said in literal language in Mark 16:16.
- 1) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
- 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
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- 3) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 8. Verses 10-11: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."
 - a. The foregoing passage identifies who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil. It is by the way one lives that his spiritual condition is made manifest. We show by the way we live who our spiritual parent is. Children of God abstain from lives of sin, while children of the devil are characterized by such.
 - 1) 1 John 2:29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."
 - 2) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 3) John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."
 - 4) A life lived in sin verifies that one is a child of Satan; a life of righteousness verifies that one is a child of God. One who does not live a life of righteousness does not have God as his Father.
 - b. Further, one who does not live a life of righteousness does not love his brother. By refusing to love another one in God's family, one excludes himself from that family. His sinful life shows that he does not regard God as his father; that same lifestyle demonstrates that he has no regard for the members of God's spiritual family.
 - c. One of the cardinal principles of Christianity is love of brethren [and even for enemies].
 - 1) Matthew 5:43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
 - 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 3) John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
 - 4) 1 John 2:9: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."
 - 5) 1 John 4:8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."
 9. Verse 12: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."
 - a. Cain's example is offered as an object lesson of what not to do: "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and
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she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch" (Gen. 4:1-17).

- b. Cain was in the devil's family and slew his brother. "The word translated 'slew' here (*sphazo*) means, literally, to butcher, to slit the throat with a knife; and from this it may be inferred that this was the manner in which Cain took the life of Abel. If the word is to be taken in its literal import, this conclusion follows, though it is, of course, possible that it is used figuratively to kill, and thus without any indication of the method by which the murder took place" (Woods, p.275).
 - c. Why did he kill Abel? Because his own works were evil and Abel's were righteous.
 - 1) Genesis 4:3-4: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:4: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."
 - 3) Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - d. Genesis does not specifically say that God gave information and commands about the type of offering, but from New Testament references we can know he did so (Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17).
 - 1) In order for Abel to make his offering *by faith*, he had to offer what God had revealed, since faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17).
 - 2) Cain's works (in offering what he did) were evil, because he offered according to his own counsel. Abel's were righteous (cf. Ps 119: 172) because they were according to God's will.
 - 3) Cain was filled with envy because his sacrifice was rejected and Abel's was accepted; thus he rose up and slew Abel (Gen. 4:5-8).
 - e. This Old Testament example shows how far one is apt to go who is under the influence of envy, hatred and bitterness (being subject to Satan's will). Cain murdered his brother; therefore he hated Abel; hatred is characteristic of children of Satan; therefore Cain was a child of the devil. In every case of ill-will and hard feelings between brethren today is the absence of love.
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C. 1 John 3:13-24: Love and Hate Contrasted.

1. Verse 13: “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”
 - a. We ought not be surprised to learn that the world hates us. Hatred of the righteous by the unrighteous goes all the way back to Cain and Abel. Subsequent history reveals this to be the common attitude of many of the devil’s offspring. “Alcibiades, a debauchee, said to Socrates, ‘I hate you; because every time I meet you, you show me what I am’” (Coffman, p.426).
 - b. “These things I command you, that ye may love one another. If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:17-19).
 - c. This present verse is the only time in 1 John where the apostle uses the term “brethren.”
2. Verse 14: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”
 - a. Love of brethren is one of the key differences between children of God and children of the devil (cf verse 10). The obligation of Christians to love one another lies at the heart of Christianity. Hatred, malice, and animosity is commonly observed among those of the world, but Christians are to rise above the base emotions. “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20).
 - b. If a Christian who is otherwise faithful to his Lord has cultivated and practices love toward others, this condition is strong evidence that he has left behind the old sinful ways of the world. Instead of being anxious because the world hates us, we are to rejoice because we are spiritually alive.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:1, 5: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins....Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”
 - 2) Colossians 2:13: “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”
 - 3) 1 John 5:12: “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”
 - c. Loving the brethren is not a condition for becoming a Christian; it is a strong characteristic of a faithful saint. If we love the brethren, this is evidence we have passed from death to life. “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35). This assurance is given to those who have obeyed the gospel, for without gospel obedience there is no salvation from alien sins.
 - 1) Learn the truth (John 8:31-32; Rom. 10:17).
 - 2) Believe in Christ (John 8:24).
 - 3) Repent of his sins (Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10).
 - 4) Confess his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10).
 - 5) Be baptized (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4).
 - d. One could be baptized, but still fail to meet this great requirement. We could assemble on the first day of the week, but still not love the brethren. But if we love the brethren, we (faithful Christians) know we have passed from death to life.
 - e. If one does not cultivate and practice love for the brethren, that person’s condition is grievous; John says he dwells in the state of death—he is separated from the Father. The presence of this kind of love shows that one is in fellowship with God—he is spiritually alive and well.
 - f. The following profound dissertation regarding life and death is taken from material written by

Alexander Campbell, appearing in *Firm Foundation*, November, 2007:

- 1) “But who can define life? It is neither a person nor a thing, yet it may be affirmed of both. We have a living man and a living tree. Logicians, however, say we cannot have a dead man, nor yet a dead tree; because when life is extinct, of the man we have but a corpse, and of the tree but wood. This is just as good sense as good logic; for in a corpse there is not a man, nor in wood a tree: they are but remainders of both; the tree or the man is not where life is not. Life, then, we may venture to say, is a connection with God through the system called nature, and death is a disservance from that system. Union with nature, or *union with God, is life, separation from nature or from God is death....*
 - 2) “A man lives while he inhales the atmosphere, or while the air is in his lungs. This is the connecting link between him and external nature. He dies when that connection is broken up: this is, however, but animal life. A tree lives while its leaves or bark absorb from the atmosphere so many of its elements as are in harmony with its nature. This is vegetable life. A spirit lives while in connection with the Spirit of God: its death consists in the withdrawal of that Spirit. But as the Spirit of God produces all sorts of life—animal, vegetable and spiritual—it must communicate of itself various gifts and powers, adapted to any one of these living organizations....
 - 3) “There is no life but in God. He alone ‘hath life in himself.’ Now the withdrawal of any specific influence eventuates in a death analogous to the influence withheld. Hence, we have three sorts of life, and of course, as many sorts of death. We have vegetable, animal and spiritual life and death.
 - 4) “But a spirit may live in one sense and be dead in another; or, in other words, a spirit may have connection or communion with God in one sense, and not in another. Thus, a tree has connection with God, but not as an animal has; and an animal has connection with God, but not as a spirit has; and a spirit has connection with God, but not as an animal has; and spirits have connection with God in a two-fold sense—merely as beings, and then as holy or moral beings. Hence, the connection of a spirit with the natural perfections of God gives men intellectual life, such as that possessed by Satan and evil spirits; and connection with the moral attributes of God gives moral or spiritual life, such as that which good angels and good men possess....
 - 5) “In Scripture style, a man is living in one sense and dead in another, or dead in one sense and living in another, at the same time. Of men in the flesh, yet living, John said, ‘He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.’ Here, then, is the case fairly made out—viz. a dead living man, and a living dead man; alive in one sense and dead in another, at one and the same moment.”
- g. Consider these passages:
- 1) Genesis 2:16-17: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
 - 2) John 5:24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”
 - 3) Luke 9:60: “Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.”
 - 4) Romans 8:6: “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”
 - 5) 1 Timothy 5:6: “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”
 - 6) Romans 6:21: “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.”
 - 7) James 2:26: “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
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3. Verse 15: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."
- a. One who does not love his brother in Christ is one who hates his brother in Christ. John uses the two expressions as parallels: if one (1) does not love his brother then (2) he hates his brother. Hatred fills the vacuum left when love is missing. Love is the willing of good toward the object of our affection: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Paul's description of love is expressed in the negative; the positive description is, *love works good to the brother*. If one is unwilling to do good toward his brother, he is indifferent toward that brother; indeed, he may have an active ill-will toward him. If a problem develops between the two, the unloving one may take some evil action against the other, in word or in deed. The protection against hating our brother is to love him.
 - b. John affirms that he who hates his brother is a murderer. He has not committed the act of murder; he is not guilty of murder; God will not condemn him for murder in the Judgment. One who has hatred toward another has the very attitude of one who commits murder. The ultimate consequence of hatred is murder. One might avoid committing murder only because of the fear of being caught by the police; the murderous mentality is present, but it is overcome by fear. The best restraint is genuine love for the other person, even if that individual is an evil enemy. An external deterrent is good, as far as it goes; but the inner restraint of love is far better. "Murder is simply hate expressed in an overt act; and when it does not issue in this fashion, it is due to other causes than those which reside in the heart of the hater. If hate does not result in murder, the reason is to be sought, not in the hate, but in the lack of opportunity or means, or courage, of the hater" (Woods, p.279).
 - c. Love is commanded and hate is prohibited by the Lord.
 - 1) Matthew 5:21-22: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." [Angry, ill-advised words violate the spirit of the command against murder since such words commonly lie behind actual cases of murder].
 - 2) Matthew 5:43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
 - 3) 1 John 3:12: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."
 - 4) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 5) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - d. No murderer has eternal life abiding in him. One cannot love and hate another at the same time; if we love the other, we do not hate him; if we love him, as noted earlier, that is an indication that we are
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- not under the condemnation of death [but have the promise of eternal life]; on the other hand, if we have hatred in our heart, we do not have the promise of eternal life, but are living under the threat of eternal condemnation. One who maintains hate in his heart for his brother (even if it does not result in murder), does not possess eternal life in any sense; nor can he, as long as hatred abides in him.
- e. The apostle has some strong points in the passage:
 - 1) One who is not of God does not love his brother (verse 10).
 - 2) One who does not love abides in death—he is still under the condemnation of sin (verse 14).
 - 3) One who hates his brother has no hope of eternal life—he is presently separated from God (verse 15).
 4. Verse 16: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”
 - a. He introduces the upcoming thought by employing the word *hereby*—by the point to be made John shows that we possess certain knowledge.
 - b. We perceive [*know*, ASV] the love of God as we examine the death of Christ, that he laid down his life for us [in our behalf]. Love is demonstrated by his sacrifice. Love is selfless; it operates for the good of the one toward whom it is directed.
 - 1) John 3:16-17: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
 - 2) John 15:13: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”
 - 3) John 10:11: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
 - 4) John 10:17-18: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”
 - c. In the sacrificial death of Christ, the love of the Father is demonstrated, as well as the love of the Son. Christ exhibited love for the Father by gladly accepting his earthly mission; the Father set forth his love by designing the eternal plan which led the Son to the cross. Those who are lost, who accept the gift, are the great beneficiaries of this gift. “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28).
 - d. In view of what Christ and God have done for us, we (the children of God) ought (are morally obligated) to lay down our lives (die) for the brethren (our brothers and sisters in Christ). The meaning is, Christ's death was the greatest possible proof of love; if, therefore, we imitate him as we ought, the same evidence of love which prompted him to die for others will be seen in us. “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:12, 13.) This, of course, does not mean that there is the same efficacy in the death of one Christian for another as there was in the death of Christ for the world....The subject is love; the comparison which is drawn is designed to demonstrate what love is; and the example of Christ's sacrifice is offered for our emulation. Under what circumstances it is the duty of one child of God to die for another is not stated; but in any instance, we may assume, when more good would be accomplished for him by dying than by living. In any case, where a brother's welfare depends on such a sacrifice, love prompts it, without regard to the cost that might result. The contextual force of the apostle's teaching is clear: Cain is an example of hate; Christ, of love. Cain killed his brother Abel because of selfishness; Christ died for all men because of his unselfishness. If we are to avoid the hate which motivated Cain, we must adopt the love which influenced Christ. The
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willingness to give what one has, even his life, for the sake of others, is of the essence of true love. (Woods, pp.281f).

5. Verse 17: “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”
 - a. Here is another plain, bold statement. The love of God does not abide in the heart of a Christian who will not help a brother in Christ who is in real need. It is assumed, of course, that the Christian has the means to help the needy saint.
 - b. Christ demonstrated the greatest degree of sacrificial love when he laid down his life for us; we would be showing the greatest degree of love we could exhibit if we should lay down our life for some other saint. If we are willing to give our life for another, it ought to be a much easier sacrifice to provide a needy brother with food, clothing, money, care, or shelter. If we have the things necessary to sustain our brother's life or welfare, and refuse to have enough compassion to help him out in the time of need, the love of God does not abide in us.
 - c. Our duty to brethren less fortunate than we is obvious. Christ gave us the perfect pattern (Matt. 20:28); the apostle Paul provided clear instructions (Gal. 6:10); the straightforward demands of James makes it abundantly lucid (1:27; 2:14-16). Our religion is pure and undefiled only when there is a willingness to aid those in need (cf. Matt. 25:31-46).
 - 1) Matthew 20:28: “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
 - 2) Galatians 6:10: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
 - 3) James 1:27: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
 - 4) James 2:14-16: “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”
 6. Verses 18-19: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.”
 - a. The apostle summarizes in these two verses what he has presented in detail in the preceding passage. Our love is not merely to be expressed in word, but in deed and in truth. Words of love are easy for most of us; and for some, words that express love are insincere. Our Lord forbade such: “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward” (Matt. 6:5).
 - b. First, he describes his heartfelt closeness to his brethren—*my little children*. He is not demeaning them; he is not exalting himself above them; he is describing his tender love for them. No earthly father could love his own children more than the apostle John loved those he was here instructing. Although he did not know us personally, his feelings toward us would be the same degree of warmth.
 - c. John does not forbid us to express our love in words; he is telling us to communicate our love to others also in more practical ways. To speak or write of our love for someone is fine, but it is more meaningful if it is expressed overtly and truthfully.
 - d. By so-doing, we can know that we are of the truth, and in the same process, assure our hearts in the sight of the Lord. But we can do neither if our love is expressed in word only.
 - e. To be “of the truth” is to be in fellowship with God; the basis by which we have fellowship with him
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- is the truth—the gospel.
- 1) John 8:32: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
 - 2) John 17:17: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
 - 3) John 18:37: “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”
 - 4) James 1:18: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”
 - 5) James 1:21: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - 6) 1 Peter 1:22-23: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”
 - 7) 1 John 1:6-7: “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
- f. The knowledge that we are in the right relationship with God has a soothing effect on our souls. We live with a measure of confidence that is unattainable by any other means. There are many who live with a feeling of well-being, but whose confidence is based on religious error or worldly success. The inner assurance of a faithful Christian is based on the unshakable truth of God’s word.
- 1) 1 John 2:3-4: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
 - 2) Hebrews 13:5-6: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
7. Verses 20-21: “For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.”
- a. It is possible for us to retain doubts when we consider our own spiritual blemishes and frailties. John reminds us that God, being greater than our hearts, knows fully the sincerity with which we operate; he is aware that we are doing the very best that we can! Our obligation is to know, believe, and live as perfectly as we can in harmony with his word.
 - 1) 1 John 1:7-10: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
 - 2) James 5:16: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
 - 3) “Let us then not be disturbed by the promptings of conscience, but conform, as far as possible, to the standard of right, with the assurance that he will approve our course at the last day” (Woods, p.284).
 - b. If we also have the full approval of our own heart, we thus experience greater confidence of the future, and in our standing with God. The apostle describes faithful and sincere members of the Lord’s church; they honestly and truthfully follow, to the best of their ability, the full requirements of God. In such a case, the saint has the approval of his own conscience and knows that he has the approval
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of the Almighty. No greater confidence could be had!

- 1) Romans 8:14-16: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” [The Holy Spirit testifies to us through the inspired word].
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
 - c. What the apostle has to say in this context applies only to genuine Christians who conscientiously follow the gospel; his statements have no bearing on sinful, wicked men who have not obeyed the gospel.
8. Verse 22: “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”
- a. The apostle assures the faithful saints that God is always ready to hear their prayers. The two conditions he lists are (1) we keep his commandments and (2) do that which pleases him. Greek scholars tell us that the verbs are in the present tense, meaning that we keep on meeting these two requirements.
 - b. Implied but not expressly stated is the fact that all the conditions of acceptable prayer are met, including the following:
 - 1) Our prayers are to be directed to the Father.
 - 2) We approach him through the mediatorship of the Son.
 - 3) We pray in faith.
 - 4) Our requests are in accord with his will.
 - c. A child of God never outgrows the need to study the Bible. As our knowledge of God’s word grows, our faith increases, and we are enabled to operate with greater awareness and wisdom.
9. Verses 23-24: “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”
- a. The commandment [singular in the verse] incorporates all of our Christian obligations. We are told that we must believe on the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and that we are to love one another.
 - b. It is a command of God that we believe on his Son.
 - 1) Compare: “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29).
 - 2) Faith-only advocates claim that if obeying some command is required in order to be saved from our alien sins, then salvation is of works, not of grace. Thus, they argue that we are saved at the point we believe in Christ. However, this passage says that believing on him is a command of God. What proves too much, proves nothing. Let them answer their own argument about the relationship of grace and works (of obedience) on this passage and they will have answered their own objection to baptism.
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- c. It is impossible to separate faith and practice; faith that saves (that benefits the soul) must express itself in action.
- 1) James 2:20-26: “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
 - 2) Galatians 5:6: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”
 - 3) We are saved by faith when faith is perfected by obedience.
- d. It is a command of God that we love one another.
- 1) John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
 - 2) John 15:12: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”
 - 3) John 15:17: “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”
 - 4) Mark 12:29-31: “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”
 - 5) John 14:21: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”
 - 6) John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”
- e. If we abide in the Father and the Son; we have fellowship with them; we live in full and willing compliance with the inspired word; we do always those things which are pleasing to Heaven’s will. In so-doing, we live in the spiritual realm. Deity abides in the heart of a real Christian through faith; as the word abides in our hearts, then God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit abide there; their indwelling is indirect or representative.
- 1) Ephesians 5:19: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
 - 3) Ephesians 3:17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.”
 - 4) 1 John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
 - 5) Colossians 1:27: “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
 - 6) The passage speaks of the fact of the Spirit’s indwelling; John does not specify the manner of
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entrance or the mode of the indwelling.

- f. “It should be observed that it is not the *manner of entrance* nor the *mode* of the Spirit's dwelling which is here referred to, but the *fact* of it. The Spirit assures of approval by motivating its possessor to do those things which enable the Father and the Son to abide in us. If it be asked *how* the Spirit does this, the answer is, Through the word of God, the only motivating force in immediate contact with the individual. Neither here nor elsewhere do the scriptures teach a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, either before or after conversion. It is as erroneous to assume an immediate impact of the Spirit on the Christian's heart as it is to argue similarly with reference to such impact on the sinner's heart. The fact of the Spirit's indwelling is often affirmed in the sacred writings. The manner or mode of such is an entirely different question. The two are not always distinguished; and the result is, a prepossession for some theory thereon creeps easily into our exegesis and colors our explanation, if we are not careful. The fact that the scriptures assert that the Spirit dwells in the Christian does not justify the conclusion that this indwelling is personal, immediate, and apart from the Word of God. Christ is in us (Col. 1:25); from this we do not infer that in some mysterious, incomprehensible way he has, in his own person, taken up an abode in us. Why should we fall into similar error with reference to the third *person* of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit?” (Woods, p.286).

1 JOHN 4

A. 1 John 4:1-6: The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error Contrasted.

1. Verse 1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
 - a. John tenderly addresses them as “beloved” and warns them of false teachers. Error of every kind appears to have been present in Asia Minor, especially in Ephesus: “And many that believed came,
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- and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver” (Acts 19:18-19).
- b. The “spirits” of the verse are later identified in the verse as “false prophets.” The apostle of love has much to say about teachers of error; to warn someone of religious error is not being unloving, but exhibits genuine concern for the souls of those who might be deceived.
 - 1) 1 John 2:18: “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”
 - 2) 1 John 2:22: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”
 - 3) 1 John 2:26: “These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.”
 - 4) 1 John 4:5: “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.”
 - c. They were told to try [to prove, to test] the spirits—the false teachers. “Prove the spirits *dokimazete* (NT:1381) *ta* (NT:3588) *pneumata* (NT:4151). Put them to the acid test of truth as the metallurgist does his metals. If it stands the test like a coin, it is acceptable *dokimos* (NT:1384), 2 Cor 10:18, otherwise it is rejected *adokimos* (NT:96), 1 Cor 9:27; 2 Cor 13:5-7” [Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament].
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 10:18: “For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 13:5-7: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.”
 - d. They could do the testing by comparing what the errorists said with what an inspired man had written or spoken. Some in the church of the first century were endowed with certain spiritual gifts, one of which was the trying or *discerning of spirits*: “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:8-10).
 - 1) This gift enabled the individual to discern whether a teacher spoke the truth or spoke error; the result was infallible. Today, we have the full inspiration of God’s word to use as the standard. We must know the Bible well and use it correctly to arrive at truth and expose error.
 - 2) John has already referred to this gift in 1 John 2:20, 27: “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things....But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”
 - e. The apostle did not ask the brethren to call for some *big-shot dignitary* to make the test; they were able to take care of that work themselves [using the word that had already been revealed or by the gift one or more of them had to discern teachers. There were no so-called “dignitaries” then; these officials were not on the scene until the great apostasy was well under way (cf. 2 The. 2:1-12). This is a strong evidence against the claims of the apostate church that only their *priests* can interpret the scriptures; it is also a blow to the foolishness of papal infallibility. When miracles ended during the latter part of the first century, there has been no one who has had any of the miraculous gifts that our brethren were
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given back then; and there has been no need for these gifts.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:10-15: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."
- f. Many false prophets had gone out into the world by the time John penned his epistle. These false prophets are called "antichrists" in 1 John 2:18. Our Lord and his apostles gave many warnings about false teachers.
- 1) Matthew 24:11: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."
 - 2) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 3:1-8: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no
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man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

- 6) 2 John 1:9-11: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
 - 7) Ephesians 5:11: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”
 - 8) 1 Timothy 6:20-21: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.”
- g. The danger of a false teacher lies in his sweet disposition, pleasant words, and the mixture of enough truth with error to make his message seem plausible. Many teachers of error are very likable; they may even shower their victims with good deeds and kind compliments. This makes them all the more dangerous. We must be able to look past the pious facade he may manifest, and examine his words and message by the infallible standard of the truth.
- h. Further, it is possible that a false teacher may be entirely sincere in his belief. In that case, our duty is to teach him the word of God more perfectly. If he is truly sincere and is honest with the truth, he will cease to teach and practice error; or he will cease to be sincere and honest!
- i. These warnings and injunctions are still applicable today for the number is legion which affect to speak for God.
- 1) 2 Corinthians 11:3: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”
 - 3) Luke 6:26: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”
 - 4) Acts 13:6: “And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus.”
 - 5) Revelation 16:13: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.”
- j. Those teachers whose doctrines do not measure up to the inspired counsel of God are to be exposed and opposed. It is not a mark of hatred when we thus repudiate error—it is our God-given obligation. Each member, preacher, elder, deacon and teacher is to love the truth and oppose error. Even to
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fellowship those who teach error is strickly forbidden.

- 1) 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
 - 3) Romans 6:21: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:20-21: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 5:20: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."
- k. Coffman provides this information (p.435): One of the features of this whole epistle is the presentation of a number of tests regarding the genuineness of Christian life. These have been organized by some and classified as the tests of: (1) obedience; (2) love; and (3) faith. However, they are not separate tests, but each partakes of the nature of the others. Note the following:

The Test	What Is Proved
Every one that doeth righteousness (2:29)	Is begotten of him (2:29)
By the Spirit which he gave us (3:24)	We know that he abideth in us (3:24)
Every one that loveth (4:7)	Is begotten of God and knoweth God (4:7)
If we love another (4:12)	God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us (4:12)
Because he has given us of his Spirit (4:13)	We know that we abide in him and he in us (4:13)
Confessing Jesus as the Son of God (4:15)	God abides in him and he in God (4:15)
Believing that Jesus is the Christ (5:1)	That one is begotten of God (5:1)
If we keep his commandments (5:3)	We love God (5:3)

2. Verse 2: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."
 - a. The test by which certain false teachers then prevalent might be discerned and identified is here indicated: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." Conversely, any man who denied that Jesus had come in the flesh was not of God. Numerous false doctrines regarding the nature of Christ were then being propagated. Some of these questioned his *deity*; others, his humanity....The apostle thus provided a test by which false and true teachers might be distinguished in the matters *then* confronting the church: those who confessed that Jesus had come in the flesh were of God. (a) Those who acknowledged such, confessed the deity of Jesus by admitting that he was the Christ, and thus the Messiah of the Old Testament prophets; (b) in confessing that he had come in the flesh they repudiated the doctrine of the Docetic Gnostics who denied this. These men denied the humanity of Jesus by alleging that he only appeared to have a body of flesh but, in reality, did not. Thus, in acknowledging both the humanity and the deity of Jesus one vindicated his claim to the Spirit's direction. Paul similarly said, 'Wherefore I make known unto you, that no man speaking

in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.’ (1 Cor. 12:3)” [Woods, pp.288f].

- b. Matthew 16:13-20: “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.”
- 1) The test was virtually infallible in exposing the Gnostic heresies of the time. The Gnostic would repudiate his basic belief about Jesus if he confessed that our Lord truly came in the flesh.
 - 2) Peter, who was usually the spokesman for the twelve, gave answer to the question [Matt. 16:13] with boldness and accuracy. His response was not on the same basis as those reported from the multitudes: he did not say he **thought** Jesus was the Christ, but “Thou art!” Did he fully comprehend the implications of this confession? It is clear from his statements in the latter part of this chapter that he did not properly grasp the nature of the Lord’s coming kingdom, and from the upcoming transfiguration episode it appears that he did not grasp how all-encompassing was the authority of Jesus. But he was fully convinced that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - 3) Peter affirmed that Jesus is the Christ. The term “Christ” means “the anointed one.” Prophets, priests, and kings received an anointing when they were installed into office. Christ is all of these at once, thus is the Anointed One of God. “Messiah” is the Hebrew term for the Greek “Christos” (Christ).
 - 4) Peter affirmed that Jesus is the Son of the Living God. “The term ‘Son of God’ truly denotes the deity of Christ. It implies a unity of being and nature with the Father which none other has ever possessed. When the Hebrews writer argued for the superiority of Christ, he based one of his arguments on the fact that Christ was/is superior to the angels. He sustained this fact by the following: ‘Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, **Thou are my Son**, and this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son?...But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever’ (Heb. 1:4,5,8a)” (*Spiritual Sword*, July, 1987, p.29). The name (Son of God) identifies Jesus with the Father. He is equal with God in all respects save that of authority (John 13:16; 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:24-28).
 - 5) The term “Living God” speaks volumes regarding the unlimited, timeless, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent nature of the Almighty Father. He has ever been and will always be; he had no beginning and will have no end (cf. Exodus 3:14).
 - 6) This is the Good Confession. It is more than the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Messiah of the Hebrews. It also affirms that Jesus sustains to the Father the relationship of Son. This confession forms the solid ground upon which Christianity is based.
 - 7) “His answer contains two propositions: first, that Jesus was the Christ; second, that Jesus was the Son of the living God. The former identified him as the long-expected deliverer of whom the prophets had written; and the latter declared him, what the Jews had not expected their Messiah to be, the Son of God. This was an intelligent confession of the whole truth concerning the personality of Jesus” (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.144).
 - 8) The Lord states that Peter enjoyed a state of blessing because of the confession he had made.
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“Fortunate (blessed) indeed are those individuals who have, with the confidence and conviction of Peter, acknowledged this great truth. (Phil. 2:5-11)” (ALC, 1984, p.46). “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” The term “flesh and blood” refers to mankind (cf. Gal. 1:16; Eph. 6:12; Heb. 2:14). Peter did not learn the great truth of his confession from human sources, but from God.

- 9) But how had the Father shown this to Peter? Jesus did not specifically say how. “The great truth that Jesus is God’s Son is not taught by human wisdom but in that wisdom which is from above. To the contrary, human wisdom is ever active and diligent to blur and erase that truth from men’s minds and hearts” (ALC, 1984, p.247). God had revealed it through the words and works of Jesus, as well as by his own voice from heaven in Matthew 3:17: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.” The proposition of his Divine Sonship is declared by what Jesus did in his public ministry: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31). Peter and the other apostles, having been with the Lord for perhaps three years, witnessing his works and hearing his words, could properly draw the conclusion expressed in Peter’s confession.
 - c. “The true teaching of this verse was paraphrased by Stott: ‘Far from coming upon Jesus at the baptism and leaving him before the cross, the Christ actually *came in the flesh* and never laid it aside’ [John Stott]. This echoes the great confession by Peter in Matthew 16:13ff; and, properly understood, the great confession of the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth the Christ the Son of God includes the whole of Christianity. In this great fact, the entire Christian religion is unified and bound together. This is why the Lord Jesus Christ made this the dogmatic foundation of the church” (Coffman, p.438).
3. Verse 3: “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”
 - a. This is a negative statement, addressing the same point which is stated in positive terms in verse two. John also affirms that those who will not confess the humanity of Christ imbibe the spirit of antichrist. The apostle earlier had issued strong warnings regarding the antichrist who would appear. His words show that these errorists were already present. Despite their claims to the contrary, false teachers are the enemies of Christ.
 - 1) Philippians 3:17-19: “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things).”
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.”
 - 3) Those who openly confess to be enemies of Christ are easily identified; those most difficult to recognize are those who pose as his friends: they wear a cloke of piety but at the same time teach and practice error, and thus undermine the true work of Christ. They teach much that is true, but enough error to make them extremely dangerous.

- b. There are those who are honestly in error; when they learn better, they will change. Compare: “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:24-28).
 - c. An honest false teacher, when he learns better, will do better, or he will no longer be honest.
4. Verse 4: “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”
- a. John draws a sharp contrast between the faithful saints and the unholy false teachers. On one side were the true saints; on the other were the errorists. There is ever to be this marked distinction. Compare: “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:16-18).
 - b. The perfect tense of the verb *overcome* shows that the brethren had already identified their opponents in the church as false teachers. The false teachings and the false teachers had been exposed, because *he that is in you is greater than he that is in the world*. An allusion is here made to the spiritual gift the saints had, by which they could discern the false prophets and repudiate their false doctrines. This is a statement of praise for the brethren and a tribute of honor to the awesome power of Heaven. The spiritual gift of discerning the spirits would identify a teacher as false or true; and the nature of their message would be determined by the word of God.
 - c. Once more, the apostle addressed the saints as “little children.” They were the spiritual offspring of God, thus they were *of God*. John, being an inspired apostle, was their chief instructor; he operated by the authority of Christ; he was empowered as an apostle to reveal the heavenly message of the gospel, and to confirm it with supernatural power.
 - d. God is greater than Satan, the god of this world; the truth of God is greater than any error of man. We must never be willing to compromise the truth with error; we must never be willing to share the honor that belongs to God with Satan or his agents. We ought always keep in mind the awesome power of God and his word, and not be intimidated by the workers of error.
 - 1) 1 John 5:19: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one” (ASV).
 - 2) 1 John 2:15-17: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”
 - 3) James 4:4: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
 - 4) Ephesians 2:2-3: “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”
5. Verse 5: “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.”
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- a. The false teachers were of the world (and thus of Satan); the world was the original source of their doctrine. Our Lord used similar words in describing the false teachers among the Jews during his earthly ministry:
 - 1) John 8:39-45: “They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.”
 - 2) John 15:19: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” [This statement was made to the apostles].
 - b. Those of a kindred spirit are responsive to each other. The church (Christians) is comprised of the called-out ones— called out of the world by the gospel; since we have chosen to leave the world, those who remain in the world are not (generally) as likely to love us as before.
 - c. “The word ‘world’ in these passages is a term used to denote unregenerate human nature and all that is in harmony with it—that sphere which is dominated by the devil and which willingly submits to his domination” (Woods, p.291).
 - d. The teaching of error has almost always been successful, but this should not be a cause of too much dismay. The apostle revealed that the popular and successful preaching of the Gnostics (and other false teachers) is due to the fact that this is what the world wants. The major counterfeit religions of our day (professing to follow Christ) include some popular, desirable, and easy tenets and practices.
 - 1) The so-called Jehovah Witnesses and Adventists teach a utopia on earth and no divine retribution for sin.
 - 2) Baptists teach ease of salvation and impossibility of apostasy.
 - 3) Catholics teach salvation after death, and live as you please here.
 - 4) Calvinists teach there is no personal responsibility: God predetermined all.
 - 5) Methodists, Episcopalians, *et al* teach ease of salvation and offer a social-club religion, while you live as you please.
 - 6) Pentecostal and Holiness religions teach supernatural power is used in salvation and for daily use, with no personal obedience in the salvation process but to pray.
 - e. The masses of people had rather believe pleasing falsehoods rather than unpleasant truths. In our time of another great apostasy, many members of the Lord’s church have manifested this same disposition. What is the solution? Keep being faithful to the Lord regardless of what the majority in the world or in the church might do; and keep teaching and preaching the unadulterated word, being ready to defend it against all assaults.
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:1-4: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out
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of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

- 3) Jude 1:3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
- f. Many in the church today do not love or want the whole truth. The majority in sectarianism do not love or want the whole truth. Those who are afflicted with worldliness do not want or love the whole truth. We are in the distinct minority who preach and practice the pure gospel of Christ. This we have been doing all along. We are prepared to teach the word to the whole world—when and if the world reaches a point when it realizes that it needs the word of God. We are not having great numerical success at present in many places in our nation, but our regular preaching and teaching of the truth has trained us to do the job with great numerical success when mankind finally perceives its need for the truth. The Catholics are not prepared to do so; neither are the sects. And neither are our weak, compromising brethren.
6. Verse 6: “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”
 - a. Including himself with other saints who are faithful to the Lord, John affirms that *we* are of God. This is intended to put those described in stark contrast with the false teachers discussed in the context. Those who are inclined to listen with an open mind and an honest heart will hear our message.
 - 1) This fits the situation of the work of an apostle or someone else who teaches the truth; those who have already obeyed the gospel will listen and learn; those who are being taught the gospel will also listen and learn.
 - 2) John 8:47: “He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”
 - 3) Acts 13:44-46: “And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”
 - 4) Luke 10:16: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”
 - b. “‘Knoweth,’ in this verse, is translated from a present active participle, and designates ‘one who keeps on knowing God,’ i.e., an individual ever increasing in the knowledge of the one and only true God. Such a one, in knowing God, recognizes God's truth when it is preached, and hears it gladly; whereas, one who is not of God hears it not. This, indeed, is one reason why some consider some sermons as uninteresting and dull, as others regard the same efforts as highly interesting and inspirational. The gospel was, to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks, foolishness (literally, *silliness*); and to all who are not of God today, the gospel is a boresome, tiring thing. The reflection in all such instances is not on the message, or on him who presents it, but on the person exhibiting such a disposition. Of such, Jesus said, ‘Ye hear them not because ye are not of God.’ One may determine his spiritual level by measuring the degree of interest which he feels in the preaching of the gospel of God. How could such a one find the prospect of heaven inviting, when he experiences so little interest in the work of the Lord here? John knew what it was to be chilled and discouraged by the indifference and disdain of worldly hearers, even as every gospel preacher does today” (Woods, pp.292f).

- c. Everyone who will carefully, sincerely, and honestly examine the Bible will conclude that it is not foolishness, or find it a stumblingblock, but will recognize it to be the inspired word of God, worthy of full and constant belief, and will be most willing to hear and heed all of its precepts, commands, and warnings; he will make it his constant daily guide, and will take great delight in its proclamation.
- d. The word *spirit* as it is used in this context is clearly a reference to the attitude that individuals develop. By the attitude people demonstrate toward the presentation of the gospel truths, they reveal whether they are characterized by the spirit of truth or by the spirit of error. Spirit of truth is a disposition favorable toward truth; spirit of error is an attitude friendly toward error.

B. 1 John 4:7-11: God is Love.

1. Verses 7-8: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”
 - a. John and other Bible writers often gave admonitions concerning love and discussed its nature; this reveals the importance of this theme. Christ often spoke of it:
 - 1) Mark 12:29-31: “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”
 - 2) John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
 - 3) John 15:9-23: “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.”
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 13:1-7: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,

endureth all things.”

- b. Love is the foundation of acceptable obedience.
 - 1) 1 John 5:2-3: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
 - 2) John 14:15: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”
 - 3) John 14:21: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”
 - 4) John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”
 - 5) John 15:14: “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”
- c. God requires those who maintain his approval to manifest love; it is one of the key ingredients of his holy nature.
 - 1) 1 John 4:20: “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”
 - 2) 1 John 4:7-8: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”
 - 3) John 3:16-17: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
- d. A man may have been baptized into Christ, but he still can become a wicked man; if he hates his fellowman or is indifferent to his plight, the absence of love makes him to be evil. One may attend all the services of the church, and give liberally of his means, but still be wicked—for the same reason as just stated. One who partakes of the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner, brings condemnation upon himself: “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Cor. 11:29). Compare: “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now” (1 John 2:9).
- e. “Love for others is so peculiarly Christian in its origin that where it exists there is evidence of the new birth. Only one who has received the spiritual life which comes through the birth from above exhibits such a disposition. Love, in this passage, is a sign and proof of the new birth, and not a condition precedent to it. The writer is here showing how the claim to the new birth may be tested. Does genuine love fill the heart of the one affirming it, and does such a one really know God? If the answer is *Yes*, the birth from above may be assumed; if *No*, whatever the claim, it is weighed in the balance and found wanting. *Love is the one characteristic of the Christian religion which it is impossible to counterfeit!*” (Woods, p.294).
- f. One who does not continue to love does not know God; he has failed to perceive the nature of God and the nature of Christianity. If he does not know God, God does not know him in the sense of accepting him in his present weak condition; to know God is to be obedient to God’s will and to live in fellowship with him. Coffman offer these comments on verse eight:
 - 1) This profoundly beautiful and encouraging statement about the Father must rank, along with others, as one of the grandest in all Scripture. Wesley said, "Love is God's reigning attribute that sheds an amiable glory upon all of his other perfections." Barclay called this, "probably the single greatest statement about God in the whole Bible ... It is amazing how many doors that single statement unlocks and how many questions it answers."
 - 2) However, Wilder cautioned that, "God's nature is not exhausted by the quality of love." "God is light (1 John 1:5), and spirit (John 4:24), and (considering the oneness of the Father with the Son) he

is life, and truth (John 14:6). Moreover, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

- 3) It is a failure to recognize that no single word is capable of describing the ineffable God which leads to a gross perversion of this marvelous text in the popular mind. Some hail this verse, as if it said, "Love is God; and here is a God we can all handle; bring on the love!" Many who read these precious words of John do not seem to be aware of the holy and self-sacrificing love about which John wrote. God's love for mankind and his glorious attribute of love do not in any manner alter or negate the revelation that "the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18), nor the revelation concerning God that he "will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). Furthermore, there is no conflict between John and Paul on this point. John's description of the final judgment in Rev. 6:15-17 is as soul-shaking a view of the wrath of God in judgment as any in the whole Bible. The proper view of God's love must be big enough to understand that his final judgment and overthrow of wickedness will be, in itself, a mark of eternal love.
- 4) And yet such thoughts should not detract from the unique glory of this text. No one in the whole world ever knew that God is love until it was revealed from heaven and written in the New Testament. "It is here, and nowhere else; it is not found in all the literature of mankind."
 - g. One who claims to have been born anew, but does not have or practice Christian love, exposes the truth that he does not know God; he was not genuinely converted. Compare: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John 3:6). God is love; one who has God as his spiritual Father will have love as one of his main operating characteristics.
 - h. God is love, but that is not intended to be the full definition of God's nature; he also is light, spirit, wise, good, powerful, knowing, faithful, true, righteous, and holy. These attributes are used of our Heavenly Father in various places in the Scriptures.
2. Verses 9-10: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
 - a. John affirms that God loves mankind, that his love has been manifested in sending Christ into the world and providing life to us through the Son.
 - b. Creed books say that God was angry with man and let Christ die to appease his wrath. Rather, God sent Christ to die because God loved us and desired our salvation.
 - 1) Romans 5:6-9: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 3) Titus 3:3-5: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - c. "Of vital significance here is the phrase (also occurring in John 3:16), 'his only begotten Son' (*ton huion autou ton monogene*), literally, 'His Son, the only-begotten.' *Monogene*, the word translated 'only begotten,' signifies the-only-one-of-its-kind, and was so used to distinguish Jesus from all other sons of God. All who are members of God's family are sons of God, and often so styled in the sacred writings; Jesus, alone, is the only begotten Son. He is a Son in a sense characteristic of no other being

in the universe; and to assign to him a position inferior to this, as modernists do, is infidelity. Attention is directed to the unique position of Christ to sharpen and enhance our concept of the vastness of God's love—it being so great that he was willing to send such a Son into the world that we might ‘live through him.’ The life thus provided is spiritual life; and it is through him, because in him only is life. "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son hath not the life." (1 John 5:12)" [Woods, p.296].

- d. It was not because of mankind's love for God that he sent his Son into the world. Mankind generally has been either ignorant of or indifferent toward the God of Heaven. There would have been no Savior if his coming had depended on man's love for the Almighty. God loved his offspring enough that, from eternity, his plan was for the Redeemer to be sent.
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 2) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
- e. Christ came to be the *propitiation* for our sins. This word is only used twice in the New Testament (here and 1 John 2:2); it denotes an atoning sacrifice.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
 - 2) Hebrews 2:8-9: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:18: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."
 - 4) 1 John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
 - 6) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 7) Romans 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
- f. Since God loved us to the degree that he sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins, we ought to have love for each other.

C. 1 John 4:12-14: God's Love Perfected in us.

1. Verse 12: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."
 - a. No man has seen God at any time. Since each of the three members of the Godhead is referred to as "God" [deity], then no man has seen either of them in their divine nature; human eyes cannot see a

spirit being. The word "Godhead" literally means "Godhood." The suffix "hood" means "state, quality, condition" (Webster's New World Dictionary). *Motherhood* is a term which describes the state, quality, or condition pertaining to being a mother. *Childhood* is a term describing the state, quality, or condition which pertains to being a child. So with *parenthood*, *priesthood*, and *brotherhood*. "Godhood" describes the quality, state, or condition pertaining to being God, having divinity.

- 1) The Father has this Godhood: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20).
 - 2) Christ has this Godhood: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).
 - 3) The Holy Spirit has this Godhood: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-5). Notice that the Holy Spirit is called "God."
 - 4) The divine nature cannot be seen with physical eyes.
 - a) John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - b) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - c) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - d) Exodus 33:20: "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."
 - e) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - b. There is but one divine nature; therefore, there is but one God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:18). The three divine personalities are of but one essence, one nature; and this one nature is God (*theos*). There are three persons in one Godhead (John 1:1-3; Matt. 3:15-17).
 - 1) Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."
 - 2) Isaiah 45:18: "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."
 - 3) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 4) Matthew 3:15-17: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
 - 5) Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."
 - c. The apostle shows that if we love one another, then God dwells in us and his love is made perfect in
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- us. These advantages may not seem to be important to a worldly-minded individual, but to the mature saint they are highly meaningful.
- 1) God dwells in us, but not in a personal or literal way. He indwells us in the same way that Christ dwells in us—by faith: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17). Faith comes through learning God’s word, therefore as we hear, understand, believe, and follow the word of God, the Father and the Son [as well as the Holy Spirit] are said to abide in us.
 - 2) Our faithful obedience establishes a spiritual fellowship with the Godhead. We cannot see God with our human eyesight, but with our knowledge that we are in full compliance with his will, we rightly perceive that God dwells in us. The specific item of compliance identified by John is that we love one another.
- d. The apostle also affirms that God’s love is perfected in us—based on our compliance with God’s will. Again, the specific item of compliance identified by John is that we love one another. To be perfected means to be brought to a mature status. As we abide by the instructions, commands, and precepts of God’s word, we come into closer harmony with his will; specifically, our love for others increases in scope and depth. Love for each other is an indication of our love for God:
- 1) John 4:20-21: “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”
 - 2) Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "Perfect" appears often in the New Testament, including the following passages:
 - a) Matthew 19:21: "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be **perfect**, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me."
 - b) Hebrews 5:14: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are **of full age**, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - c) Ephesians 4:13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."
 - d) Colossians 1:28: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man **perfect** in Christ Jesus."
 - e) Colossians 4:12: "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand **perfect** and complete in all the will of God."
 - f) James 1:4: "But let patience have *her* **perfect** work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - g) 1 John 4:12: “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is **perfected** in us.”
 - 3) The point in Matthew 5:43-48 is for Christians to be perfect in their love: that is, love all saints and all sinners; be whole, complete, and perfect in love by loving everyone even as does the Father. We can never have the degree of love possessed by God for saints and sinners, but we can be perfect in love by including all within the limits of our love. "The meaning that Jesus gives...is that his disciples are to let their love be universal, unconfined by partialities, and with respect to its objects as large as God's; not that their love...can be supposed in other respects to be in proportion to the divine love" (Boles, Commentary on Matthew, p.153). This is also the point in 1 John 4:12.
2. Verse 13: “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”
- a. As an evidence that we dwell in God and that God dwells in us John points to the Holy Spirit. Because God has given us of his Spirit, we can know that we abide in God and God abides in us. The apostle
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states a fact without specifying how the Spirit has been given. In fact, the exact statement is that God has given us **of** his Spirit—he has given us something that pertains to the Spirit. “John does not say, ‘He has given us his Spirit,’ but ‘of his Spirit’ *ek tou Pneumato au tou*” [Pulpit Commentary]. A similar use of the Greek term *ek* is found in John 1:16: “And **of** his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Compare: “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled **with** [*ek*] the odour of the ointment” (John 12:3).

- b. What was it *of the Spirit* that was given? If John meant the so-called “ordinary gift” which does not do anything to us or for us, no evidence of the nature which the apostle affirms could be thus provided. Look at these possibilities:
 - 1) That John may be referring to the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the first of which is love: “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). When a Christian follows the word which the Spirit gave by inspiration, that saint will cultivate and exercise the attribute of love. We know about the requirement to have love, and are given motivations to love, by the same inspired message.
 - 2) That John may be referring to the spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit provided some of the saints of the first century. As noted earlier in this study, nine spiritual gifts are identified in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. When those saints who possessed one or more of those miraculous gifts exercised those gifts, confirmation of the truth they had accepted and were following would be provided. They could thereby know that “we abide in him and he in us.”
 - 3) That John may be referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit which he and the other apostles had received. [The apostles were enabled to confer the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 on certain saints—cf. Romans 1:11]. In the next verse, John speaks directly of testimony which he and the other apostles were empowered to give regarding the resurrected Christ. More will be discussed about this under the comments on verse fourteen.
 3. Verse 14: “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”
 - a. Acts 10:39-42: “And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.”
 - 1) The apostles had been selected and empowered to be infallible witnesses of Christ (John 15:26-27; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8). The apostles had been with the Lord from the beginning of his ministry, and had seen the things he did in Jerusalem and throughout the land of the Jews. But his enemies crucified him. Cornelius had heard these things, but the apostles had seen them!
 - a) John 15:26-27: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”
 - b) Luke 24:46-49: “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”
 - c) Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
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- d) Mark 16:15-20: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
- 2) God raised him up from the dead on the third day, and showed him openly to the chosen witnesses (the apostles) and other reliable people (1 Cor. 15:1-8). It was not necessary or expedient to show him alive to the Jewish people in general, or to their religious and civil leaders in particular. The general population would have included many who would be unreliable as witnesses due to mental weaknesses or religious prejudice; the leaders had already rejected Christ, and so would have sought to explain away his resurrection even though they had seen him.
 - 3) Thus, God knew that his cause would be better served to show the risen Lord to certain, reliable witnesses, men who were willing to suffer terribly in behalf of their testimony. That their witness was true is seen by their willingness to suffer in its support.
 - 4) These men had eaten with the Lord; they knew him personally. Although most of the population knew of him, not everyone knew him sufficiently to recognize him. The soldiers sent to arrest him had to have someone to point him out (Matt. 26:47-50).
- b. “Though no one had seen the divine nature, John and the other apostles had beheld (*tetheametha*, perfect middle or *theaomai*, to behold with adoring wonder), the Lord in the flesh (1 John 1:1-3), and were thus qualified to bear testimony to the fact that the Father had indeed sent the Son into the world. The perfect tense designates an act that is past the results of which continue to exist; John had, during the public ministry of the Lord, minutely scrutinized him, obtained clear and distinct impressions regarding him and these remained to convince him forevermore of the identity of Jesus as Lord. Such was, in part, the mission of the apostles; and to equip them for this, the Holy Spirit was given them” (Woods, pp.299f).
- c. The specific purpose, according to John’s statement here, for which Christ was sent into the world was that he might become the Savior of the world. The word “world” here has reference to the same people the word described in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Calvinism asserts that our Lord died only for certain hand-picked individuals, but this is clearly at odds with the Scriptures.
- 1) Our Lord came into the world to seek and save those who were lost (Luke 19:10).
 - 2) Paul affirmed this to have been the Lord’s mission in 1 Timothy 1:15: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”
 - 3) 1 John 2:2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”
 - 4) Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”
 - 5) While it is true that only those who obey the gospel and remain faithful are delivered from the guilt of their past sins and have hope of Heaven, yet it is also true that salvation and Heaven are offered to every accountable person; not everyone will make the right choice; indeed, the majority will decide otherwise (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).
- d. How is the Spirit given to us? The word of truth is the instrument by which the Holy Spirit exercises
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his influence on both saint and sinner. As one receives the truth into his heart and allows it to influence his life he is, to that extent, motivated and influenced by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed the word of God; he uses that same word as the medium by which to influence; his influence is limited to that medium. He prompts us to love one another through the instructions he gave in the Bible [cf. Woods].

e. Additional information:

- 1) Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The children of God are those who are led by the Spirit; and only those who are led by the Spirit are children of God.
 - a) In the context of this verse, Paul is discussing the living of the Christian life. We are led to live the Christian life by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit enables me to live the Christian life. But the only information I have about how to live the Christian life is found in the New Testament. The New Testament instructs me how to live the Christian life. I am being led by the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life when I live according to his instructions given in the New Testament.
 - b) Since the only way we can know how to live the Christian life is to live in obedience to the instructions found in the New Testament, and since the Spirit is said to direct us in living the Christian life, then the way the Spirit directs us in this is by his teachings in the New Testament. If one wants to be led by the Holy Spirit, he will follow what the Holy Spirit has said in the revealed, written word of God.
- 2) Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16 are parallel passages which speak on the subject, using virtually the same words except for one phrase; they were written by the same apostle, at the same time, and on the same subject.
 - a) "Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - b) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - c) Notice the comparison of the two passages as depicted in the following table:

Ephesians 5:18-19	Colossians 3:16
Be filled with the Spirit	Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly
Speaking to yourselves	Teaching, admonishing one another
Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs	Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs
Singing	Singing
Making melody in your heart	With grace in your hearts
To the Lord	To the Lord

- 3) "Be filled with the Spirit" is not a promise but a command. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit; it is not something done for us but what we are told to do.
 - 4) How do we obey this command? By taking into our hearts the truths he teaches in the New Testament. To be filled with the Spirit and to let Christ's word dwell in us are two different statements which are identical in meaning; we fill our hearts with the Spirit when we fill our hearts with the gospel.
- f. We have noted above that God, Christ and the Holy Spirit indwell faithful Christians.
- 1) 1 John 4:15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."
 - 2) Colossians 1:27: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
 - 5) Since Christ dwells in us by faith, it follows that the other members of the Godhead likewise indwell us in the same way and at the same time. Faith comes through learning God's word (Rom. 10:17); as we learn and follow the word, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit abide in us. We speak of a father living on in his son, and a teacher living on in his student. We mean that the father and the teacher have a continuing influence, just as the Godhead have a continuing influence on faithful saints.

D. 1 John 4:15-21: Love's Influence in Our Lives.

1. Verse 15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."
 - a. It is obvious that the audible confession we made regarding Jesus being the Son of God is not the whole process by which God dwells in us and we in him. We are not saved from our alien sins by any one item alone. The confession is the specific item John names here, but it is used as a metonymy, where one item is used to represent other things on a list. [See the chart at the end of this chapter].
 - 1) Demons believed, knew and confessed their conviction that Jesus is the Christ, but they were not saved:
 - a) James 2:19: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."
 - b) Mark 1:24: "Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."
 - 2) Certain believers in Christ did not confess him: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43).
 - 3) Requirements for salvation includes obedience to the gospel of Christ:
 - a) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - b) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that

- obey him.”
- c) Romans 10:16: “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?”
 - d) Revelation 22:14: “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”
- b. John’s statement here has special application to the gnostic error that plagued the Lord’s church at the time of the epistle. There were two brands of gnosticism. *Docetic Gnostics* denied the actual humanity of Christ; they regarded all flesh as inherently sinful, thus decreed it would have been impossible for Christ, who was sinless, to abide in a sinful body of flesh. They argued that the body of Jesus was not real, but an illusion, and that he only appeared to suffer on the cross. *Cerinthian Gnostics* attempted to distinguish between Christ and Jesus; they claimed that Jesus was the offspring of Joseph and Mary, and that Christ descended upon Jesus at his baptism and left him on the cross. Gnosticism of either kind is evil for at least two reasons.
- 1) It denies the Incarnation of Christ, a truth that is basic to Christianity:
 - a) John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - b) John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
 - c) John 1:14: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 - d) Luke 24:39: “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”
 - e) John 20:24-31: “But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
 - f) 1 John 1:1-5: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
 - 2) Gnosticism assumes that flesh is inherently evil, which contradicts the basic Bible truth that everyone enters the world free from the guilt of sin:
 - a) Ezekiel 18:20: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the
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- father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”
- b) Ezekiel 28:15: “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”
 - c) Matthew 18:3: “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”
 - d) Matthew 19:14: “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”
- c. The confession indicated by John was a repudiation of each of these false views. Those who made this confession were acknowledging his humanity, his deity, and his reality. Those who thus confessed declared thereby they did not hold the gnostic views but believed him to be the divine Son of God.
 - d. If one sincerely and honestly makes the good confession, he will live up to the requirements of the confession. One who truly believes that Jesus is the Christ will unquestionably do all that the Lord says.
 - 1) Luke 6:46: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”
 - 2) John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”
 - e. The aorist tense [*confess*] reveals that the confession is a one-time-only requirement. Our oral confession states our firm belief that Jesus is the Son of God and, at the same time, is our commitment to serve him from that point forward.
 - 1) Acts 8:36-37: “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
 - 2) Romans 10:9-10: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - f. As we have already pointed out, God abides in us as we imbibe his word, letting his will permeate our minds and motivate our words and actions; we abide in him as we practice the precepts of his word.
2. Verse 16: “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”
 - a. Compare: “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:25-26).
 - b. The New Testament states definitely and conclusively that God loves his offspring. His is love is revealed in the gospel and was demonstrated in the sacrifice of his Son. We are taught in the gospel how to obtain the benefits of his love. Christians are obligated to remain in God’s love: “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 1:21). God loves all of his offspring (mankind), but the faithful in Christ have the full benefits of God’s love—salvation, providential assistance, hope, etc. To retain these benefits, each Christian must be loyal in word and deed.
 - c. We were told in verse eight that God is love; the apostle repeats this great truth in this verse. “This verse combines the ideas advanced in verses 8 and 15. The meaning is, One who abides in love abides in God, and God in him, because God is love” (Woods, p.303).
 - d. “And we have come to know and believe. Both perfects are virtually presents, expressing the present continuance of a condition begun in the past: ‘We know and continue to believe.’ Experience and faith are intimately connected; and sometimes the one precedes, sometimes the other (John 6:69)” [Pulpit
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Commentary].

- e. John 6:69: “And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” Our faith is based on the surest foundation—the inerrant word of God (Rom. 10:17).
 - f. Luke 1:1-4: “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”
3. Verse 17: “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”
- a. The faithful in Christ have their love made perfect. Our love cannot be in the same degree of perfection that God’s love has. God loves his enemies and his friends; we can love our enemies and our friends. In this sense it is mature, well-rounded, and complete (Matt. 5:43-48).
 - b. The faithful in Christ can also have boldness [assurance; confidence] to face the Judgment without terror. Every accountable person will have to give direct and personal account of himself in the last day; the standard with which we will be measured is the will of God. Those who lived their lives under the Patriarchal Age will be judged by the law God had in effect then; those who lived under the Law of Moses, will be judged by that law; those who live in this side of the cross will be judged by the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”
 - 3) Romans 14:10-12: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
 - 4) Hebrews 9:27: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”
 - 5) John 12:48: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”
 - 6) Revelation 20:12-15: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”
 - c. Love expresses itself in service—to God and to others.
 - 1) Mark 12:28-31: “And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”
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- 2) James 2:1-6: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?"
 - 3) James 2:14-16: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"
 - 4) Matthew 25:31-46: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
- d. The New Testament is our book of instructions; the example of our Lord is the pattern. As we follow him to the best of our ability, then our love for God, for our fellowman, and for other Christians will be perfected.
- 1) John 15:8: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."
 - 2) John 17:21: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
 - 3) John 17:23: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."
 - 4) John 17:26: "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."
 - 5) 1 John 3:3: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - 6) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
 - 7) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his
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mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

4. Verse 18: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”
 - a. “Confidence excludes fear; and since those who love have confidence, they have no fear. ‘Fear,’ as here contemplated, is not that which the Psalmist declares is ‘the beginning of wisdom’ (Psalm 111:10), a reverential, godly fear, which shrinks from any action which would displease God, the fear which an obedient child has for a loving father, *en phoboi* (1 Pet. 1:17); but *terror, dread, slavish fear*, such as is characteristic of a slave in the presence of a cruel and heartless master” (Woods, pp.304f).
 - b. There is a kind of fear that we are taught to have—a deep respect, a sense of reverential awe.
 - 1) Psalms 89:7: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”
 - 2) Hebrews 12:28-29: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”
 - 3) Psalms 19:9: “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 7:1: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
 - 5) Ephesians 5:21: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”
 - 6) Philippians 2:12: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
 - 7) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”
 - 8) Luke 12:4-5: “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”
 - c. We are to have an abiding respect and reverence for the Almighty; we are not to live in terror and dread of his punishment, unless we are in disobedience! Mature love will be manifested in constant obedience from the heart to his word; we will have a willing of good toward others; we will follow the will of God because we love him and want to do that which is pleasing to him.
 - d. To be consumed by fear is to live in terror and dread; that condition is a punishment of itself. A student who has violated a serious school regulation will be filled with fear on account of the punishment that is sure to come; that condition of terror is almost as great a punishment as the penalty. An old adage reminds us that a coward dies a thousand deaths, but a brave man only one.
 - e. While we do not look forward with happy anticipation to standing before the Judge in the last day to give account of ourselves, we do not live in terror of that grand occasion. If we are faithful in all things, there is nothing about which we should be in fright. A perfected love will cast out fear.
 - f. The following quote is from the Pulpit Commentary:
 - 1) Love implies attraction, fear repulsion; therefore fear exists not in love. Love here means the principle of love in general; it must not be limited to God's love to us, or our love to God, or our love of the brethren. Love and fear coexist only where love is not yet perfect. Perfect love will

absolutely exclude fear as surely as perfect union excludes all separation. It is self-interested love that fears; pure and unselfish love has no fear. Yet nothing but perfect love must be allowed to cast out fear. Otherwise this text might be made an excuse for taking the most unwarrantable liberties with Almighty God. To cease to fear without attaining to perfect love is to be irreverent and presumptuous. Hence the apostle is once more pointing out an ideal to which Christians must aspire, but to which no one attains in this life....

- 2) It is the day of judgment and fear in reference to that day that is under consideration; and fear of punishment is in itself punishment by anticipation....The dread of punishment may deter men from sin; but it cannot lead them to righteousness. For that we need either the sense of duty or the feeling of love. [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
5. Verse 19: "We love him, because he first loved us."
- a. Our love for him results from his original love for us. He *first* loved us. This statement repudiates the idea that Jesus came into the world to appease the wrath of the Almighty. The statement of the creeds to this effect is in direct contrast to the Scriptures and is an assault against the nature of God.
 - 1) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 2) Romans 5:6-9: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 3) 1 John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."
 - b. "Inherent in this epic declaration is the fact that Christ was not crucified in order to persuade God to love people, but because God already loved mankind, the divine love preceding the entire program of redemption, and even more, existing in the heart of God even before the world was. One great purpose of the cross was that of persuading people to receive the salvation God was so willing to give.It should be considered by all that the very fact of God's loving sinful and fallen humanity provides a powerful incentive for all perceptive souls to do likewise. Why did God love fallen and sinful men? Even their being sinful did not change the fact that they had been designed and created in the image of the Father; and through God's provident mercy, all of the moral and eternal consequences of their sins were potentially removable, through the means God revealed. Moreover, the disaster which had fallen upon humanity in the events of the Fall, had actually been brought upon them by the seduction and skillful cunning of their inveterate enemy, Satan. God pitied those human creatures who were so heartlessly betrayed and ruined by the sadistic moral rape of their innocence in Eden; and pity is never very far from love. And should not similar considerations today lead every Christian in the direction of loving all people, every man, who like himself is a victim of sin, and yet is potentially an heir of eternal glory as a beneficiary of the blood of Christ?....The great redemptive purpose of God in Christ is that of making his children like himself, and, therefore, not to love is to negate our own redemption" (Coffman, pp.451f).
 - c. John 12:31-33: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."
6. Verse 20: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"
- a. John, commonly known as the apostle of love, says some mighty pointed things! That does not make him less loving. We would be showing love for someone who was about to step on a deadly snake if

we were to shove his out of the way; to allow someone to believe a lie or take some action that would harm him without issuing a warning is not a show of love.

- 1) John strongly states that one who claims to love God but who hates his brother is a liar; this deceived brother needs to have his foolish notion exposed—for his own good. The nature of love is such that one cannot love God and have an active ill-will or malice in his heart toward a brother.
 - 2) “What is this love of which the apostle has been speaking? Is it the love of God or of our fellow-men? Both; love of our brethren is organically bound up with love of God. To love God and hate one's brother is impossible. Sight, though not necessary to affection, aids it; and it is therefore easier to love men than God. If a man fails in the easier, will he succeed in the harder? Moreover, to hate one's brother is to hate God....there is no neutral term between ‘love’ and ‘hate’” (Pulpit Commentary).
 - 3) Matthew 10:40: “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”
 - 4) Mark 9:37: “Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.”
 - 5) Luke 10:16: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”
 - 6) John 12:48-50: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”
- b. It is easier to love someone present than someone we have never seen. Two young people may be in love with each other, but if they are separated for a period of time, that love may fade, and new love for someone else can develop. “Out of sight, out of mind.” We have not seen God with our human eyes; we can see our brother who is nearby; if we do not love our brother who is near, how much less likely it is that we will love God who is not physically present.
- c. The Greek term for *love* is highly significant:
- 1) Thayer: To love, to be full of good-will and exhibit the same: Luke 7:47; 1 John 4:7-8; with the accusative of the person, to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of; used often in the First Epistle of John of the love of Christians toward one another.” [Biblesoft].
 - 2) Vine:
 - a) *Agapao* NT:25 and the corresponding noun *agape* (B, No. 1 below) present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cf, however, Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5.
 - b) *Agape* and *agapao* are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1 Thess 3:12; 1 Cor 16:14; 2 Peter 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.
 - c) Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cf. Deut 7:7,8.
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- d) Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 2:4; 3:19; 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Gal 5:22.
- e) Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15,21,23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6. Selfwill, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.
- f) Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8,9,10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal 6:10. See further 1 Cor 13 and Col 3:12-14." [Biblesoft].
- d. Love for our fellowman is the willing of good toward them; it is not based on an emotional attraction toward its object, but is the conscious desire to do good, not evil, toward him.
- 1) Romans 15:2: "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."
 - 2) Romans 13:8-10: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." In the last verse, love is defined negatively; if we reverse this negative definition we can clearly see what its positive meaning is: Love does not work ill toward its neighbor; love works good toward its neighbor.
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."
 - 4) Colossians 3:12-14: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."
 - 5) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 6) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 7) Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
- e. If genuine love for God exists, there will also be a corresponding love for man. If we love God, we will do what he says, and one of the requirements he has is for us to love others (1 John 5:3; Mark 12:29-31). If one does not love God, he will not love others as he loves himself. If he does not love his brother, it is proof that he does not love God.
- 1) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his
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- commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
- 2) Mark 12:29-31: “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”
- f. One cannot be in good standing with God while harboring malice toward brother: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. 5:21-24).
7. Verse 21: “And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”
 - a. “In support of the argument of the verse which precedes this, an argument supported by analogy, by common sense, by the inspiration of the writer himself, there is added here the testimony of Christ” (Woods, p.307).
 - 1) Matthew 22:35-40: “Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”
 - 2) John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
 - 3) John 15:13: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”
 - b. “Though it may be difficult to love men *as men*, we are to love them because they are in the image of God, and to love this image as it is reflected in them, though often obscured by sin and impaired by depravity. And, we are to love them, not only because of our kinship to them, but also because of our relationship to God who is our common Father and federal head” (Woods, *ibid.*).
 - c. We can well imagine the marvelous change would be brought about in any community or society if the injunctions given in the Bible pertaining to loving our neighbor as we love ourselves were carried out by the majority! Crime would be lessened; marriages and homes would be vastly improved; wars would certainly diminish; police forces and prisons could be reduced; peace and harmony would be greatly enhanced. God knows what is best for the individual and for the entire society of mankind.
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Things To Which Our Salvation Is Attributed

God	Romans 8:33
Christ	Matthew 1:21
Holy Spirit	1 Corinthians 6:11
The Word of God	James 1:21
Preaching	1 Corinthians 1:21
Hearing the Word	Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6
Faith	Romans 5:1; Mark 16:16
Repentance	Acts 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 7:10
Confession	Romans 10:10
Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Love	1 John 4:7; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
Blood of Christ	Matthew 26:18; Revelation 1:5; 1 John 1:7
Name of Christ	Acts 4:10-12
Grace of God	Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-14; 3:5
Hope	Romans 8:24-25
Works of Obedience	James 2:14-26
Enduring to the End	Matthew 10:22
Life of Christ	Romans 5:10
The Gospel of Christ	Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
Obedience	Hebrews 5:8-9; Romans 6:16-18; Matthew 7:21
Keeping God's Commandments	1 John 3:24; Revelation 22:14
Doing Righteousness	Acts 10:34-35; 1 John 2:29
We Save Ourselves	Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12

1 JOHN 5

A. 1 John 5:1-12: Tests of Faith and Love.

1. Verse 1: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”
 - a. The first clause of this verse is often isolated from the context and made to teach salvation by faith only, a proposition never intended by John—indeed, one which is not taught in the Bible. The apostle gave straightforward instructions about our duty to love one another. He taught that one who loves God must, as a necessary consequence, is to love his brother also.
 - b. In this passage, John identifies who our brother is—anyone who is begotten of God. He who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God; one begotten of God is a son of God; those who love God (who does the begetting) must love those others who have been begotten of God, for we are brethren. How do we know we love them? Because we love God and do his commandments.
 - c. Whosoever believeth—one who continues to believe. That this is a faith which includes obedience is manifest from many other passages.
 - 1) James 2:20-26: “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead” (ASV).
 - 2) Galatians 3:26-27: “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (ASV).

What and Who We Are	Children of God
How We Became Children	By The Faith (the gospel)
Where We Are	In Christ
We Entered Christ By Means Of	Baptism
The Result of Being In Christ	We Have Put On Christ

- 3) Galatians 5:6: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” Faith that works by love is required of an alien sinner who wants to be saved; faith that works by love is required of a saint who wants to please his Lord and go to Heaven.
- d. John is not discussing a condition of salvation for an alien sinner; he was writing to Christians, not to people out of Christ. It is clear from the context, that the apostle was giving a test for a Christian to learn whether he was truly a Christian. “Some denied that Jesus *was Christ*, thus repudiating his deity; others said that Christ was *not Jesus*, hence denying his humanity. Still others maintained that his fleshly body was merely an apparition, thus denying his reality. To confess that Jesus is the Christ is to acknowledge his deity, his humanity and his reality. It was therefore just such a test as would reveal

- the true believers and expose the heretics which then plagued the church with their false teaching. Those who truly believed this proposition were begotten of God” (Woods, p.309).
- e. The two phrases *whosoever believeth* and *whosoever loveth* are parallel; one who believes that Jesus is the Christ will also be one who loves the one who begets. If we believe in Christ we will love the Father. “The reasoning of the apostle here is in the logical form of a *sorites*, an abridged series of syllogisms in a group of propositions arranged in such fashion that the predicate of the first becomes the subject of the second, the conclusion uniting the subject of the first proposition with the predicate of the last. The order follows:
 - 1) To believe that Jesus is the Christ is evidence that one is begotten of God.
 - 2) To be begotten of God necessitates loving God.
 - 3) To love God requires one to love God's children.
 - 4) Those who love God's children have been begotten of God.
 - 5) Therefore, to believe that Jesus is the Christ requires one to love God's children, and evidences the fact that one is begotten of God” (Woods, *ibid.*).
2. Verse 2: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.”
 - a. This statement answers this question: How can we know that we love God’s children? Hereby—by this test: when we love God and keep his commandments. The previous passage gave faith as evidence of sonship; here love for God and obedience to his commandments are the test of sonship; therefore, love of God and obedience are embraced in the faith of verse one.
 - b. The apostle taught us in chapter four and verse twenty that our love for brethren is evidence of our love for God; here our love for God which we show by our obedience is proof of our love for the brethren.
 - c. One of the commandments God gives us is to love the brethren; if we obey his will, we will cultivate and exercise love for the other saints.
 - 1) John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
 - 2) John 14:21: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”
 - 3) John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”
 - 4) John 15:14: “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”
 3. Verse 3: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
 - a. We show our love for God by keeping his commandments. The tense of the verb *keep* [present active subjunctive] means to “keep on keeping.” It is not enough that one is obedient on one occasion; he must remain obedient. This is the real test of our love for God.
 - b. John assures us that God’s commandments are not grievous [hard or heavy to be borne]. Grievous: “*Barus* NT:926 denotes ‘heavy, burdensome’; it is always used metaphorically in the NT, and is translated ‘heavy’ in Matt 23:4, of Pharisaical ordinances; in the comparative degree weightier,’ 23:23, of details of the law of God; ‘grievous,’ metaphorically of wolves, in Acts 20:29; of charges, 25:7; negatively of God's commandments, 1 John 5:3 (causing a burden on him who fulfills them); in 2 Cor 10:10, ‘weighty,’ of Paul's letters” [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
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- 1) Matthew 23:4: “For they bind **heavy** burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”
 - 2) Matthew 23:23: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the **weightier** matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”
 - 3) Acts 20:29: “For I know this, that after my departing shall **grievous** wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”
 - 4) Acts 25:7: “And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and **grievous** complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.”
 - 5) 1 John 5:3: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are **not grievous**.”
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 10:10: “For his letters, say they, are **weighty** and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.”
- c. Our love for God makes obedience easier. A loving mother is quite willing and happy to sit up with her sick child throughout the night, or for many days. One who loves God will gladly keep on obeying him despite any setbacks or troubles he may encounter because of his loyalty.
- 1) Acts 2:41: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”
 - 2) Matthew 5:10-12: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”
 - 3) Acts 5:41: “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”
 - 4) Romans 8:18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”
- d. Getting to heaven is not impossible; but neither is the way without difficulty.
- 1) 2 Peter 1:5-11: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:12: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
 - 3) Acts 14:22: “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”
4. Verses 4-5: “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”
- a. John shows us here that God’s commandments are not grievous because our obedient faith gives us final victory over the world. We do not consider our duty to God to be burdensome despite the persecutions, opposition, hatred, or sacrifices that may be required in order to be faithful; faithfulness
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- will result in victory. Those who overcome the harrassments of the world will obtain a victory well worth the effort: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom 8:18).
- b. Faith is presented here as the means of our overcoming the world. “It is faith which enables men to resist temptation, to avoid the entanglements of the world, to reject false teachers and the doctrines of men. It was faith which guarded the ancient worthies, enabled them to triumph over the seductions of Satan, and filled them with determination to serve the great Jehovah whatever the difficulties, obstacles, impediments in their way” (Woods, p.311).
- c. A long list of faithful men and women from ancient days is presented in Hebrews eleven, with a brief report of how their faith obeyed and was rewarded. Consider a few of the cases:
- 1) Hebrews 11:4: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”
 - 2) Hebrews 11:5: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”
 - 3) Hebrews 11:7: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”
 - 4) Hebrews 11:8: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”
 - 5) Hebrews 11:24-25: “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”
 - 6) Hebrews 11:30: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.”
- d. The Greek term “overcome” is in the present tense, and indicates a continuing struggle with a continuing victory. The apostle attributes this victory to the fact that God’s seed [his word] remains in us and is active.
- 1) Luke 8:11: “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”
 - 2) 1 John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
 - 3) Psalms 119:11: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
 - 4) 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
- e. “It may be asked, What is involved in the proposition which one must believe in order to overcome the world? The answer is: ‘Jesus is the Son of God.’ Here, again, attention is fixed on both the humanity (Jesus) and the deity (the Son of God) of the Lord. The two natures, the human and the divine, were united in one personality. Those who accept this proposition (with all that it implies) overcome the world, by escaping its guilt, its pollution, its power, and in large measure, its presence” (Woods, p.312).
- f. The expression “born of God” [or, begotten of God] is a reference to the New Birth. The New Birth is a figurative depiction of obeying the gospel. What the Lord said in John 3:5 as a figure of speech, he said in literal language in Mark 16:16.
- 1) John 3:5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
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- 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:22-23: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”
- g. Notice that John used the word “whatsoever” is born of God; we would likely have used the word “whosoever.” He is identifying the part of us that is born of God—it is our soul or spirit. Our Lord used a similar statement in John 3:3-8: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”
- 1) Notice verse eight: The part of the individual that undergoes the new birth is the inner part. As we cannot see the wind, so we cannot see the soul; that is what receives the new birth.
 - 2) This passage is often cited to support the sectarian doctrine that the new birth is as mysterious and as unseen as the wind is, and therefore that the new birth is incomprehensible. The text does not draw a comparison between the wind and the new birth, but between the wind *and the one born anew*. “So is every one that is born of the Spirit.”
5. Verse 6: “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”
- a. Christ is the one whose coming is meant; his coming was his entrance into the world [since this is the only literal coming our Lord has made to earth so far]. He came into the world by means of the Virgin Birth, but John does not address that subject directly. Notice that his coming is in the past tense.
 - b. The apostle declares that Christ came not by water only; he came by water and blood. On the surface this seems to be a very dark and difficult statement. The purpose of mentioning the water and blood was to establish them as witnesses: “And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (verse 8). They bear testimony about the nature and identity of Christ.
 - c. The reference to **water** is almost certainly an allusion to our Lord’s baptism: “And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:15-17). The Father gave an audible and public acknowledgement that Jesus is his Son. This is strong testimony about the nature and identity of Christ. This event took place at the very beginning of his public ministry.
 - d. The reference to **blood** is undoubtedly speaking of our Lord’s crucifixion. When the Savior died, the Roman soldier pierced his side with a spear: “But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe” (John 19:34-35). Notice the statement here about blood and water. John’s account of this event bears strong testimony about the nature and identity of the one crucified. This event took place at the very end of his public ministry.
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- e. The Spirit also bears witness. He is the third witness of the Lord's identity (the water, the blood, and the Spirit]. He bears witness to the deity of Jesus; his witness is reliable because the Spirit is truth.
- 1) Matthew 3:16-17: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
 - 2) John 1:29-34: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."
 - 3) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
 - 4) 1 John 5:7-8: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."
6. Verse 7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (KJV). "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth" (ASV). [The American Standard omits all of verse seven (as given in the King James) and the first part of verse eight; it takes the last part of verse six and makes that the reading of verse seven].
- a. This passage has been highly disputed.
 - 1) Barnes gives this information about the problem: The portion of the passage, in 1 John 5:7-8, whose genuineness is disputed, is included in brackets in the following quotation, as it stands in the common editions of the New Testament: "For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth,] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." If the disputed passage, therefore, be omitted as spurious, the whole passage will read, "For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." The reasons which seem to me to prove that the passage included in brackets is spurious, and should not be regarded as a part of the inspired writings, are briefly the following:
 - a) It is missing in all the earlier Greek manuscripts, for it is found in NO Greek manuscript written before the 16th century. Indeed, it is found in only two Greek manuscripts of any age—one the Codex Montfortianus, or Britannicus, written in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the other the Codex Ravianus, which is a mere transcript of the text, taken partly from the third edition of Stephen's New Testament, and partly from the Complutensian Polyglott. But it is incredible that a genuine passage of the New Testament should be missing in ALL the early Greek manuscripts.
 - b) It is missing in the earliest versions, and, indeed, in a large part of the versions of the New Testament which have been made in all former times. It is wanting in both the Syriac versions—one of which was made probably in the first century; in the Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, Ethiopic, and Arabic.
 - c) It is never quoted by the Greek fathers in their controversies on the doctrine of the Trinity—a passage which would be so much in point, and which could not have failed to be quoted if it
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were genuine; and it is not referred to by the Latin fathers until the time of Vigilius, at the end of the 5th century. If the passage were believed to be genuine—nay, if it were known at all to be in existence, and to have any probability in its favor—it is incredible that in all the controversies which occurred in regard to the divine nature, and in all the efforts to define the doctrine of the Trinity, this passage should never have been referred to. But it never was; for it must be plain to anyone who examines the subject with an unbiassed mind, that the passages which are relied on to prove that it was quoted by Athanasius, Cyprian, Augustin, etc., (Wetstein, II., p. 725) are not taken from this place, and are not such as they would have made if they had been acquainted with this passage, and had designed to quote it.

- d) The argument against the passage from the external proof is confirmed by internal evidence, which makes it morally certain that it cannot be genuine. (a) The connection does not demand it. It does not contribute to advance what the apostle is saying, but breaks the thread of his argument entirely. He is speaking of certain things which bear "witness" to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah; certain things which were well known to those to whom he was writing—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. How does it contribute to strengthen the force of this to say that in heaven there are "three that bear witness"—three not before referred to, and having no connection with the matter under consideration? (b) The "language" is not such as John would use. He does, indeed, elsewhere use the term "Logos," or "Word"—ho (NT:3588) Logos (NT:3056), (John 1:1,14; 1 John 1:1), but it is never in this form, "The Father, and the Word;" that is, the terms "Father" and "Word" are never used by him, or by any of the other sacred writers, as correlative. The word "Son"—ho (NT:3588) Huios (NT:5207)—is the term which is correlative to the "Father" in every other place as used by John, as well as by the other sacred writers. See 1 John 1:3; 2:22-24; 4:14; 2 John 3,9; and the Gospel of John, "passim." Besides, the correlative of the term "Logos," or "Word," with John, is not "Father," but "God." See John 1:1. Compare Rev 19:13. (c) Without this passage, the sense of the argument is clear and appropriate. There are three, says John, which bear witness that Jesus is the Messiah. These are referred to in 1 John 5:6; and in immediate connection with this, in the argument, (1 John 5:8), it is affirmed that their testimony goes to one point, and is harmonious. To say that there are OTHER witnesses elsewhere, to say that they are one, contributes nothing to illustrate the nature of the testimony of these three—the water, and the blood, and the Spirit; and the internal sense of the passage, therefore, furnishes as little evidence of its genuineness as the external proof.
- e) It is easy to imagine how the passage found a place in the New Testament. It was at first written, perhaps, in the margin of some Latin manuscript, as expressing the belief of the writer of what was true in heaven, as well as on earth, and with no more intention to deceive than we have when we make a marginal note in a book. Some transcriber copied it into the body of the text, perhaps with a sincere belief that it was a genuine passage, omitted by accident; and then it became too important a passage in the argument for the Trinity, ever to be displaced but by the most clear critical evidence. It was rendered into Greek, and inserted in one Greek manuscript of the 16th century, while it was missing in all the earlier manuscripts.
- f) The passage is now omitted in the best editions of the Greek Testament, and regarded as spurious by the ablest critics. See Griesbach and Hahn. On the whole, therefore, the evidence seems to me to be clear that this passage is not a genuine portion of the inspired writings, and should not be appealed to in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity.... The removal of this text does nothing to weaken the evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity, or to modify that doctrine. As it was never used to shape the early belief of the Christian world on the subject, so its rejection, and its removal from the New Testament, will do nothing to modify that doctrine. The doctrine was embraced, and held, and successfully defended without it, and it can and will be so still

[Barnes' Notes, Biblesoft].

- 2) Woods gives this about the problem: The Greek text, from which present-day translations are made, is determined by ancient manuscripts, versions and early writings of the so-called "Church Fathers," some of which extend almost to the apostolic age. With reference to the major portion of the sacred writings—perhaps ninety-nine per cent or more—there never has been the slightest doubt as to their apostolic origin; the readings thereof are supported by overwhelming evidence from all of the original and reliable sources. In a few instances, however, spurious readings have crept in, readings which lack such universal support as that regarded essential to eliminate all doubt as to their genuineness and reliability. In proportion as such a reading is found to be missing from ancient documents on which the text is founded, doubt arises as to its authenticity; and when it is discovered to be wanting from a respectable number of such sources it is regarded as spurious—that is, an inserted passage, without inspiration or divine authority. With reference to that portion omitted from the American Standard Version, the most conservative scholars have, on weighing the evidence which obtains regarding it, unhesitatingly rejected it. The grounds on which this conclusion is reached are as follows:
 - a) The verse does not appear in *any* of the Uncial Greek Manuscript, these being the one most important source in determining the text.
 - b) It appears, for the *first* time, in a Cursive Manuscript, translated in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.
 - c) It is omitted in *all* of the ancient Versions, including the Vulgate by Jerome, though interpolated in modern editions of this work.
 - d) The so-called Greek Fathers do not have it, even when producing texts in support of the doctrine of the "Trinity," unaccountable on the supposition that it was then a part of the sacred text.
 - e) Many of the "Latin Fathers" omit it.
 - f) It first appears in the Latin writers at the end of the fifth century.
 - g) Historically, the words appear to have been originally included in an exegesis by Cyprian, and to have made their way, via a copyist, into the margin of the text, and then, later into the text itself.
 - h) In view, therefore, of the overwhelming manuscript evidence against the insertion of the verse, it is properly omitted from the American Standard Version, and all New Testament Greek texts today. It would never have found its way into the "Received Text" (basis for the older translations), had not Erasmus promised to insert it if it could be found in *any* Greek manuscript; and discovering that it was in the late Codex Britannicus, in keeping with his commitment, put it in the Complutensian edition of 1514.... (pp.324-326).
 - b. Taking the reading of the King James on verse seven, the facts stated are clear.
 - 1) There are three who bear witness to the identity of Christ in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. God says he is his son; Christ says he is God's Son; the Holy Spirit says Christ is God's Son.
 - 2) These three are in perfect agreement in their testimony.
 - c. The qualifications of witnesses includes three basic matters:
 - 1) Honesty.
 - 2) Competent.
 - 3) Sufficient in number.
7. Verse 8: "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these
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three agree in one.”

- a. Three witnesses of the Lord on the earth: the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit. These three agree. Their testimony harmonizes. The Spirit is mentioned first in view of the fact that he is the only living witness of the three, and the testimony of the water and blood depend on the revelation of the Spirit [cf. Woods].
 - b. The testimony of these witnesses is constant; the Spirit’s revelation in the New Testament speaks to all generations; the act of baptism for more than 1900 years has pictured the central fact of redemption (the death, burial and resurrection of Christ); and the blood is that which makes redemption possible.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:1-4: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”
 - 2) Matthew 26:28: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.
 - 4) Hebrews 9:22: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:18-19: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”
 - c. As we eat the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week, we commemorate the sacrificial death of the Savior, in which he shed his precious blood.
8. Verses 9-10: “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”
- a. Commonly, we accept the word of men regarding matters of this world. We should be ready to take God’s word on a matter regarding spiritual things. The Father has given his testimony about the divine sonship of Christ, a truth which ought to be quickly received.
 - 1) Matthew 3:17: “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
 - 2) Matthew 17:5: “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - 3) Romans 1:4: “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:16-21: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the
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- scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
- b. One of the witnesses of Christ and Christianity is the Holy Spirit. He bears his testimony through the inspired word which each Christian has in his mind (Eph 5:18-19; Col 3:16). The word is the instrument the Spirit uses to produce faith in us (Rom.10:17). The faith we obtain generates confidence within us, a confident assurance which sustains us in our troubles and struggles.
 - 1) Ephesians 5:18-19: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
 - 3) Romans 10:17: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - 4) Hebrews 13:5-6: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
 - 5) Philippians 4:6-7: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
 - c. What if one should deny the identity and nature of Christ? That would be to repudiate God’s testimony, and in effect to call him a liar, since he has repeatedly affirmed that Christ is his Son. “Thus, to deny the deity of Jesus is not only unbelief; it is a studied insult to the veracity of God! Inasmuch as the Christian religion is founded on the truth of the proposition that Jesus is the Christ, to reject this is to repudiate all that God has said. Such a one has rejected prophecy, miracle, the character and life of the Lord, the resurrection, the marvelous spread of Christianity, and every other proof that may be adduced in support of the cause for which Jesus died” (Woods, p.316).
9. Verses 11-12: “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.
- a. God has born record that he has given his people life in his Son. If one is in the Son, then that person has eternal life; one who is not in the Son does not have eternal life. God gave testimony; the testimony which he gave is with reference to eternal life; this eternal life is in his Son.
 - 1) John 10:10: “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”
 - 2) John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - 3) John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”
 - 4) Colossians 3:3-4: “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”
 - b. This passage states the fact of our possession of eternal life; the sense in which we have it is not specified here. That we have it, not in actual possession, but in hope and in promise, is stated clearly elsewhere:
 - 1) Mark 10:29-30: “And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal
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life.”

- 2) 1 John 2:25: “And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”
 - 3) Titus 1:2: “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”
 - 4) Titus 3:7: “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”
 - 5) Romans 8:24-25: “For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (ASV).
- c. “Those passages which apparently assert the possession of eternal life here, e.g., John 5:24; 6:47; 17:3, etc., are to be understood as referring to it *in prospect*, and not in reality. The believer has eternal life in prospect and promise, but not in realization. He possesses life, as he possesses the Christ, who is the life, i.e., the source, the origin, the preserver of life. The believer, however, may cease to believe; he may forsake him who has the life. ‘Having damnation because they have cast off their first faith.’ (1 Tim. 5:12 AV.) ‘But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, *and overthrow the faith of some.*’ (2 Tim. 2:16, 17)” [Woods, p.317].
- 1) John 5:24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”
 - 2) John 6:47: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”
 - 3) John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”
 - 4) 1 Timothy 5:12: “Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.” [Obviously, if these had already received eternal life, they could not have come under condemnation; eternal life is in prospect—it has been promised to the faithful and the faithful live in hope of receiving it in Heaven].
 - 5) 2 Timothy 2:16-17: “But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;”

B. 1 John 5:13-15: Another Purpose of the Epistle.

1. Verse 13: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”
 - a. As stated here, the purpose John wrote was to the end they might know they have eternal life; this is a blessing that pertains to those who maintain faith on the name of the Son of God. The statement of this verse is similar to John 20:30-31: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
 - b. A Christian has eternal life here on earth, not in actual possession, but in hope and in promise (Tit 1:2; Mark 10:29-30; Rom 8:24-25; 1 John 2:25). If we possessed eternal life here in this life it would be impossible for us to die spiritually.
 - 1) Titus 1:2: “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”
 - 2) Mark 10:30: “But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”
 - 3) Romans 8:24-25: “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man

seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

- 4) 1 John 2:25: “And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”
- c. The “name” of the Son of God is a reference to all the attributes that comprise the person and being of Christ. Compare:
 - 1) Acts 4:11-12: “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 - 2) Philippians 2:10-11: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - 3) James 2:6-7: “But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?”
2. Verse 14: “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”
 - a. In verse thirteen we are told about the blessing of eternal life that has been vouchsafed to the faithful; this passage joins verses thirteen and fourteen together with *and*, a coordinating conjunction. With our knowledge of the hope of eternal life which has been promised to us, we have a high degree of confidence about the future.
 - 1) Philippians 4:6-7: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
 - 2) 1 John 3:21: “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.”
 - 3) Matthew 6:25-34: “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”
 - b. John’s statement identifies a focal point of our confidence—we may pray for our heart’s desires and be confident that these will be provided. The condition stated in the verse is that our requests are to be made in harmony with God’s will. His will is recorded in the inspired word. If we ask for something that God does not permit, our prayers will not be answered.
 - 1) Suppose that we make a request which can only be provided by a miraculous act; the Bible shows that the age of miracles is past (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-16); to ask for a miracle is not according to God’s will.
 - 2) Suppose that we ask God to save some lost soul despite the rebellion of that person; God has ordained that he will save those who humbly obey the gospel; it is not in harmony with God’s will

for us to pray that someone be saved in his sins.

- 3) When our Lord prayed that the “cup” relating to his crucifixion be removed, he did not ask God to do something that would violate his will: “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39).
- c. God does not grant everything we ask to receive; in some cases, to receive that item or benefit might be harmful to us or someone else. If we ask to gratify some fleshly appetite, God will not grant our petition.
 - 1) James 4:2-3: “Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”
 - 2) Matthew 7:7-11: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”
3. Verse 15: “And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”
 - a. The apostle affirms here the certainty that God hears the prayers of his faithful saints; and God is able to grant the petitions for which we pray. This awareness gives us an added degree of confidence and encourages us to submit our requests to our Father.
 - b. Paul prayed three times that a certain affliction he had might be removed: “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor 12:7-10).
 - c. Prayer will not cause God to set aside his positive law.
 - 1) God will not answer a man if he is living in sin (Pr. 28:9; Ps. 66:18; Jn. 9:31).
 - a) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*:"
 - b) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - c) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 - d) Numbers 12-14: Miriam incurred God's displeasure and was punished with leprosy. She prayed for cleansing; Aaron and Moses prayed for her to be cleansed; God would not hearken to their prayers. Why? God had already given a law for the cleansing of leprosy; Miriam had to abide by that law to be cleansed; God would not answer prayers which asked him to set aside his law.
 - 2) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." The Lord prayed for his enemies to be forgiven; they were not forgiven in direct response to his prayer, but according to God's word 53 days later. Salvation is only by the gospel of Christ.
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to

- every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- b) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - c) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - d) When those enemies obeyed the gospel they were forgiven: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain....Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost....Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:23, 36-38, 41).
- 3) The Eunuch was saved by his gospel obedience, not through prayer: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39).
- 4) Cornelius was saved by obedience, not by his prayers:
- a) Acts 10:44-48: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - b) Acts 11:13-18: "And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."
- 5) Saul of Tarsus had prayed for three days, but his salvation was obtained through his obedience to the gospel.
- a) Acts 9:9-11: "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth."
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- b) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- 6) Only when Christians walk in the light by obedience are their prayers heard.
 - a) 1 John 1:6-7: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - b) 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
- 7) If one goes beyond God's law, his prayers are not heard.
 - a) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - b) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
- 8) We are not to ask God to forgive a wayward saint who will not change. "If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16).

C. 1 John 5:16-17: The Sin unto Death.

1. Verse 16: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."
 - a. Verse fifteen gives the faithful saint strong assurance regarding his prayers which are offered according to the will of God. In verse sixteen, the apostle counsels us to pray in behalf of a brother who has sinned a sin which is not unto death. In such a case, the offending brother can receive pardon, and have his spiritual life restored.
 - b. John does not state the conditions which are involved. Other passages show that repentance and confession of sin are required of the wayward Christian before his guilt is removed.
 - 1) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - 2) James 5:16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - 3) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - c. But there is such a thing as a "sin unto death." The apostle shows that we are not to pray for this kind of sin. We are not to think that God will give spiritual life to those who sin unto death. John gives no assurance that prayer for a brother who is guilty of "sin unto death" will be pardoned.
 - d. The sin against the Holy Spirit is sometimes misconstrued to be the same as the sin unto death. The chief difference is in the guilty parties. In the case of the sin against the Holy Spirit, the offenders were the unbelieving and rebellious Pharisees; in the present case, the offender is a wayward member of the Lord's church. The former situation is rejecting the gospel; the latter situation pertains to a Christian who has sinned.
 - 1) Matthew 12:31-32: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven

unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

- 2) 1 John 5:16: “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.”
- e. ASV: “If any man see his brother SINNING a sin not unto death, lie shall ask....“ The reference is not to seeing a man in the very act of some sin. The Lord will not forgive anyone who does not repent: it does not matter how many prayers are offered in behalf of a sinner engaged in the act of sin, no forgiveness is offered until he repents (Luke 13:3; Acts 8:22; 17:30; 2 Pet 3:9). There is no offer of pardon to a willfully rebellious individual. The sinning brother is one who commits sin of which we are aware; we know his guilt; we do not have to rely on a second-hand or obscure report.
 - 1) Luke 13:5: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
 - 2) Acts 17:30-31: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
- f. “An analysis of the passage reveals, (1) a child of God can sin; (2) there is a sin not ‘unto death’; (3) we are instructed to pray for those thus sinning, with the assurance that our prayers will be heard and answered; (4) there is a sin ‘unto death’; (5) for those guilty of such it is useless and futile to pray. What is the sin thus contemplated? (a) It is obvious that no single sin, contemplated as an overt act, was in the apostle’s mind. Correctly rendered, the passage does not designate *the* sin, or even *a* sin, but mere sin, sin in essence, sin abstractly considered. (b) The sin was such that a brother could discern it, i.e., identify it: ‘If any man *see* . . .’ (c) The death referred to was not bodily death, the loss of physical life; but spiritual death, separation from God and all that is good. (d) It was such a sin as only children of God could be guilty of. Any interpretation that is correct must take account of each of these considerations, and embrace them. (1) The sin contemplated here is not such as is usually classified as capital, i.e., such sins as idolatry, murder, adultery, blasphemy, etc. (2) The effects of it were visible and obvious—such as could be seen. (3) It was possible for one who prays to distinguish between the sin unto death, and the sin not unto death” (Woods, p.321).
- g. The Bible does not teach that one sin carries more guilt than some other sin; every sin is a transgression against God; each sin separates the offender from the holy God. It is true that some sins have greater consequences than other sins; one who commits murder cannot restore the life of the dead victim; one who robs another can return what was stolen. Some sins affect more people than only the victim; a father who is murdered will not be able to take care of his family as before, thus others suffer from the crime. We had rather have someone to curse us than to shoot us!
- h. What is this sin unto death? He is not speaking of some specific sin for all manner of sins may be forgiven: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:9-11).
 - 1) This sin is such that it can be identified. The death contemplated is not physical death for this we

- all face; spiritual death is meant.
- 2) It is a sin of which a child of God could be guilty. It was possible for one to distinguish the difference between the sin unto death and the sin not unto death.
- i. The apostle John addresses sin and pardon in his epistle.
 - 1) Each Christian can commit sin: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:8-10).
 - 2) Sin originated with Satan: “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).
 - 3) We can live a life that is above sin [although we will invariable stumble into an occasional instance of sin] if we fill our minds and hearts with God’s word:
 - a) 1 John 3:9: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
 - b) 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
 - c) Psalms 119:11: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
 - 4) If we commit an act of sin, John reminds us that we have an advocate in Heaven: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2).
 - 5) If we confess our sins, our Lord is willing to pardon us: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
 - j. With these thoughts and facts in mind, we may be able to identify what the sin unto death is:
 - 1) The Lord will forgive every sin that we sincerely confess (1 John 1:9).
 - 2) There is a sin which the Lord will not pardon (1 John 5:16).
 - 3) Therefore, the sin unto death which the Lord will not forgive, is a sin which a brother will not confess.
 - k. “If, however, my brother exhibits stubborn impenitence and persistent rebellion, following the commission of his sin, it is useless to petition the Father in his behalf. The sin unto death is thus a disposition of heart, a perverseness of attitude and an unwillingness of mind to acknowledge one's sin and from it turn away. Such a disposition effectively closes the door of heaven in one's face” (Woods, p.322).
 - l. Similar injunctions are given in the Old Testament regarding sins which God’s people would not repudiate.
 - 1) Jeremiah 7:16: “Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.”
 - 2) Jeremiah 11:14: “Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.”
 - 3) Jeremiah 14:7-11: “O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee. O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave
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- us not. Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.”
- 4) Jeremiah 15:1: “Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.”
 - 5) 2 Kings 24:3-4: “Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.”
 - 6) Exodus 32:33-34: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.”
 - 7) 1 Samuel 7:1-9: “And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.”
 - 8) Hosea 4:17: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”
 - 9) Hebrews 10:25-31: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
2. Verse 17: “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”
 - a. Sin is unrighteousness; God's commandments are righteousness (Ps 119:172). John defines sin here in a negative way. To neglect or refuse to keep God's commandments is sin.
 - b. The apostle gives a positive definition of sin in 1 John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”
 - c. Sin can be committed by doing that which is wrong or by neglecting to do that which is right; there
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is a sin of commission and a sin of omission. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

- d. Regarding the sin of omission: If one knows his duty, but refuses or neglects to do it, he increases his guilt.
 - 1) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - 2) James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."
 - 3) Romans 14:23: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin." This passage establishes "the fact that (a) a knowledge of what is right creates the obligation to discharge the duty involved in it; and (b) doubt regarding the propriety of an act necessitates abstinence from it. One sins in doing that which is of doubtful propriety; one sins in knowing an act is obligatory, yet does not perform it" (Woods, p.253).
 - 4) A common mistake observable in our society, with regards to spiritual values, is the assumption that individuals are good simply because they do not do evil. Just because a man is not a bank-robber does not make him a good father or a faithful Christian. No good father or faithful Christian will rob banks, but there must be positive goodness, which results from doing what is good.
 - 5) There are many evil things which the one-talent man [Matt. 25:14-30] did not do: he was not a murderer; he did not steal; he was not guilty of taking the Lord's name in vain—the Record does not accuse him of any of these. But he is described as wicked.
 - 6) The barren fig tree illustrates the sin of omission: "And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away" (Matt. 21:19). The fig tree of that land first put on its fruit before putting forth leaves; when one saw a fig tree with leaves, the natural presumption was that it also had figs. Our Lord pronounced a curse upon this particular tree because it had leaves but no fruit. He used this as an object lesson for his disciples who think they can be pleasing by only putting on an outward appearance of righteousness. The heart must be converted and dedicated to the Lord; this inner condition will be demonstrated in outward obedience.
 - 7) The Lord's depiction of the Great Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) furnishes information about the sin of omission: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?* Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil

and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

- 8) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
- 9) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

D. 1 John 5:18-21: Divine Assurances.

1. Verse 18: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."
 - a. John places a great deal of emphasis on knowledge. The next three verses begin with "we know." He speaks of subjects about which we may be fully persuaded in their rightness; we may put our complete trust in these matters with solid confidence.
 - b. This verse has much in common with other passages in the epistle:
 - 1) 1 John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."
 - 2) 1 John 3:6: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."
 - 3) 1 John 3:8: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."
 - c. One who has been begotten of God (has God as his spiritual Father; has obeyed the gospel) does not live a life of sin; although he may occasionally stumble and commit isolated acts of sin, but he does not live in sin; and the devil does not have control over him.
 - d. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Since Christians all have the same Parent, they are brothers and sisters; they ought to have common love as is true among members of the same physical family. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).
 - 1) In the context of First Peter 1:22-23, being born again and purifying the soul by obeying the truth are parallel statements: one is born again when he obeys the gospel. Peter gives an exceedingly plain definition of the new birth.
 - a) John 3:3-5: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [The Lord here used a figure of speech to describe the salvation process].
 - b) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." [Our Lord used literal language here to identify the salvation process].
 - 2) The three thousand souls of Acts were born again; but this was accomplished by their obedience to the gospel: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same

Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:36-41).

- a) Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
 - b) John 6:63: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”
 - c) Philippians 2:16: “Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”
 - d) Matthew 4:4: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”
 - e) John 12:48: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”
- 3) The fleshly birth is produced by corruptible seed (seed that is subject to death). The spiritual birth is produced by the incorruptible seed, which is God’s word.
- a) 1 Corinthians 4:15: “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”
 - b) James 1:18: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”
 - c) James 1:21: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - d) Luke 8:11: “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”
 - e) Matthew 13:19: “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”
 - f) Mark 4:14: “The sower soweth the word.”
 - g) John 3:6: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”
2. Verse 19: “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (KJV). “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one” (ASV).
- a. We can know whether we are of God: that we have obeyed the gospel, have become Christians, been saved, and are in the family of God.
 - 1) Romans 8:14-18: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”
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- 2) 1 John 2:3-5: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 4) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 - 5) 1 John 5:1-2: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments."
 - 6) 1 John 1:6-7: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
- b. The world is not the material universe, but the race of unregenerated men. The evil one is the devil; he is the prince of this world and rules the citizens of his domain.
- 1) Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."
 - 2) Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."
 - 5) Matthew 4:1-11: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."
 - 6) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself
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likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

- 7) James 4:7: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
3. Verse 20: “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”
 - a. Christ has supplied us with sufficient reliable testimony to enable us to know God, and to know that the Son is truly the Messiah, and that we are in him.
 - 1) John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”
 - 2) 1 John 1:1-3: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
 - 3) John 20:30-31: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
 - b. “These words are an echo of those in his prayer in the shadows of Gethsemane. ‘And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.’ (John 17:3.) And thus, at the close of the Epistle, the apostle re-emphasizes that with which it began: the eternal life which has been manifested: ‘That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us).’ (1 John 1:1-3.) This is the paramount theme of both the Gospel and the Epistle of John” (Woods, p.324).
4. Verse 21: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”
 - a. Keep (guard) yourselves from idols. There was never a time when idolatry was more wide-spread than during the first century. Athens was filled with idols:
 - 1) Acts 17:16: “Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”
 - 2) Acts 17:22-29: “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”
 - b. John’s closing admonition was greatly needed. There was great danger that the saints might be enticed to turn to idols. The worship of these idols was attended by great displays and sexual orgies. In our day

there is a grave danger that we might exalt some pleasure, property, money, or person into God's rightful place, and thus succumb to idolatry. Anything can become an idol if it takes the place of God in our devotion and service.

c. Coffman gives these timely remarks:

- 1) "Some of John's readers probably lived in Ephesus (where John himself labored); and all of the great pagan cities of that period (including Ephesus) were strongholds of paganism. As Plummer said, 'Where the literal interpretation makes good sense, the literal interpretation is probably right.' And, taking Ephesus as an example of all the great cities of that era, such an exhortation certainly makes good sense.
 - 2) "Ephesus was dominated by the Temple of Diana of the Ephesians, that temple being the center of immorality and licentiousness. The temple institution was a force of incredible power in pagan civilization. The right of sanctuary for criminals of all classes had crowded it with the vilest men on earth. It was the financial center of the pagan culture, occupying about the same status in that ancient culture that the Bank of England enjoyed during the 19th century. 'To have anything to do with the Temple of Diana was to be associated with the very dregs of society...and to be brought into contact with commercialized superstition and the black arts.'
 - 3) "Beyond the literal and immediate application of this final apostolic edict, however, the spiritual overtones of such an admonition are universal and timeless. No Christian must ever set up in his heart any idol which usurps the place rightfully belonging to the Lord. The gods of the ancients lie buried under the debris of millenniums; but people still worship sex, gold, wealth, power, fame, 'success,' youth, humanity, self, pleasure, wine, or even their families, instead of the Lord Jesus Christ. The citadel of the heart belongs to the Son of God who died for us and loosed us from our sins in his blood. The final word of this epistle is directed to the guardianship of that citadel. May the child of God never forget that it belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ" (Coffman, pp.475f).
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Introduction to 2 John

A. The Author of the Epistle is the Apostle John.

1. The author of this epistle simply identifies himself as “the elder.” All conservative scholars believe the apostle John was the inspired author. Even the most radical of the destructive critics admit that Second John and Third John were written by the same person.
2. The external evidence is convincing that John the apostle is the inspired penman.
 - a. Numerous ancient writers identified John as the author.
 - b. Dionysius noted that John did not name himself in his Epistles, “not even in the Second or Third Epistles, although they are short epistles, but simply calls himself the presbyter” (Eusebius, quoted by Woods, p.333).
 - c. Cyprian affirmed that Second John 10 was written by “John the Apostle.”
3. Evidence from the epistle itself is likewise convincing.
 - a. The three epistles of John have the same language, the same ideas, the same ideals.
 - b. There is little that is peculiar to this book, as distinct from the First Epistle, or the Gospel of John.
 - c. Seven or eight of Second John’s thirteen verses are found in First John.
4. From the early days of Christianity this book has been regarded as production of apostle John.
5. “These three Epistles [1, 2, 3 John], like the Gospel ascribed to the same author, are written without a name, but the first paragraph of the First Epistle clearly implies that it was written by an Apostle, while identity of style and diction indicates that all three came from the same writer, and from the writer of the Gospel. They were all three written late in the life of their author, and at a period in the history of the church which implies a long life on his part” (McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity*, p.123).
6. “It is impossible to suppose that these letters are forgeries, there being no possible motivation for such a thing. Certainly, any forger would have flaunted the title ‘Apostle John,’ a title which the author of these letters avoided in favor of the far more humble designation of ‘elder,’ a modesty absolutely incompatible with any theory of forgery. As a matter of fact, the omission of the title ‘apostle’ becomes, under the circumstances, a strong internal evidence of Johanine authorship. Nobody on earth except the apostle John could really have done such a thing. The author of these letters are so universally known and beloved that he needed no other title” (Coffman, p.482).

B. Regarding the date and place of writing, and the people addressed.

1. From the many similarities between Second and Third John it appears that they were written about the same time and probably from the same place. But since the date and place are not indicated in the text, it is not possible to know precisely.
 2. The author may have been an older man, since he describes himself as “the elder.” Also, he frequently spoke to the ones initially addressed as “little children.” Compare:
 - a. “Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul **the aged**, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ” (Phile. 1:9).
 - b. “**The elder** unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth” (2 John 1:1).
 - c. The word used by Paul and John is from the same root.
 3. The evidence shows that the apostle John died near the end of the first century; it is likely that the epistle was written toward the end of his life.
 - a. “Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, iii., 25) relates that John, after the death of Domitian, returned from his exile in Patmos to Ephesus, and went on missionary tours into the pagan regions around, and also made visitations of the neighbouring churches....Such journeys are mentioned, 2 John 12; 3 John
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10,14. If Eusebius be right, both letters must have been written after the Apocalypse, in his old age, which harmonizes with their tone, and in or near Ephesus. It was on one of his visitation tours that he designed to rebuke Diotrephes (3 John 9,10)” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].

- b. “The scholarly Lardner says that John ‘was somewhat advanced in age, and that he had resided a good while in Asia, before he wrote any of these Epistles; consequently I am disposed to think that these two were not written sooner than the first. And as it was before argued that the First Epistle was written about the year 80, these two may be reckoned to have been written between the years 80 and 90.’ We are disposed to feel, in view of the known facts, that the date would be nearer A.D. 90 than A.D. 80, or earlier” (Woods, p.334).

C. Purposes the epistle was designed to fill.

1. John had received some information regarding the *elect lady*, that certain of her children were walking in the truth (verse 4). He rejoiced with her in this happy circumstance. He hastened to issue a warning about the false teachers who were spreading the pernicious error that Christ had not come in the flesh (verse 7). He admonished her to continue in the same manner of life and to avoid the seductions of the false teachers who came her way.
2. The false teachings of the Gnostics were directly addressed by the apostle in the First Epistle of John. The “disciples of Basilides, were going about disseminating his doctrine concerning the person of Christ. Wherefore, as that doctrine overturned the whole scheme of the gospel, and in particular annihilated the atonement which Christ is said in the gospel to have made for the sin of the world by his death, robbed Christians of their best hopes, and turned the whole of their faith into a dream or illusion, John did not content himself with condemning that pernicious doctrine in his first epistle, but judged it necessary, in a more particular manner, to put this lady and her children on their guard against the deceivers who taught it” (Macknight, p.134).

D. General characteristics [Woods].

1. The Second and Third Epistles of the Apostle John are so closely associated, so similar in structure and form, so much alike in purpose and design, that they may be best considered together. That they were written by the same hand is admitted by even the most radical of the destructive critics. In both letters the same general outline is followed, much of the same phraseology occurs, they agree in the use of similar grammatical construction, in the adoption of the same ideas, in the definition given to leading terms, and in the purpose for which written, viz., the strengthening of faith, encouragement under trial, and warnings against, and with reference to, false teachers. They have been called "twin sisters," and it is obvious that they belong together, having issued from the hand of their author near the same time and with the same general design in mind.
 2. *Second John* contains (1) An Address and Greeting (verses 1-3) ; (2) The Main Portion of the Epistle, in which the writer expresses great satisfaction in the loyalty to the truth known to exist on the part of some of the members of the family of the woman addressed, and enjoins love, which he identifies as walking "after the commandments," and warns against false teachers and their doctrines (verses 4-11); (3) a conclusion, in which the author reveals an intention of visiting the person addressed. Certain expressions and dominant terms occur repeatedly in the Epistle, and may, therefore, be regarded as keynotes. "Truth," for example, occurs five times; "love," four times; "commandment," four times. The word "walking" is also of frequent mention in the short missive. Those addressed are commanded to walk in harmony with the Lord's commandment which is declared to be evidence of one's love. (Verses 4, 6.) Walking in truth, keeping the commandments, and continuing in love were favorite themes of the author and were sentiments often alluded to by him, both here and elsewhere in his writings.
 3. *Third John* has (1) an address and greeting (Verse 1) ; (2) the main body of the Epistle, in which John wished Gaius financial and spiritual prosperity, expressed joy at his faithfulness and fidelity to truth,
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complimented him for his hospitality, and denounced Diotrephes for his assumption of dictatorial powers in the congregation to which he belonged (verses 2-12) ; (3) a conclusion, in which the author expressed the expectation of seeing Gaius soon, and closing salutations (verses 13, 14). The word "truth" occurs six times in the Third Epistle of John, a dominant note in all of that apostle's writings, whether in the biography of Christ (the Gospel According to John), the First, Second, and Third Epistles, or the Revelation. The name "God" appears twice in Third John; "Jesus" or "Christ," not at all, though of course, it is implied in the phrase, "For the sake of the Name." (Verse 7.)

4. These Epistles, though brief, are of much value to us today in that they afford us intimate glimpses into the affairs of the early church in a manner not characteristic of the lengthier and more profound Epistles. They also reveal that all was not always harmonious, even in the apostolic age, and that human nature, in its darker forms, carried over into the church, and influenced the actions of men even as now. They contain warnings sorely needed in our time, and which should not be ignored or disregarded. We see in them the danger of denying Christ; of failing in genuine love of the brethren; of not keeping the commandments. And, they supply us with a demonstration of the Christian spirit which should ever pervade and permeate our missives and thus constitute a pattern of Christian correspondence of the highest possible type. They are (a) brief; (b) to the point; (c) stripped of unnecessary verbiage; (d) courteous, sympathetic, and *true*. We would do well to bring our letter writing into conformity with the standard here given. [Woods, pp.321f).

E. An outline of 2 John.

1. Salutation—verses 1-4.
 - a. “The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father” (1:1-4).
 - b. The apostle affirms his love for those who walk in the truth.
 - c. He expresses his regard for the faithfulness for the elect lady and her loyal children.
 2. John issues some kind admonitions and warnings—verses 5-11.
 - a. “And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (1:5-11).
 - b. He urges them to walk in love and keep the comandments: “And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it” (1: 5-6).
 - c. He warns about the deceivers who were doing their evil work: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (1:7-8).
 - d. He describes the deceivers and their dupes: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”
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(1:9).

- e. False teachers are not to be received into one's house nor be bidden godspeed: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (1:10).
- f. To offer comfort to false teachers is to partake of their evil works: "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (1:11).

3. Concluding Remarks—verses 12-13.

- a. "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen" (1:12-13).
- b. He had other things to say to this good lady which could be better expressed in person.
- c. He states his plan to visit and speak face to face before long.
- d. He expresses the greetings from the children of the elect lady's sister.

F. The author of this epistle was John the Apostle [The following information also appears in 1 John]:

1. John was an inspired man.

- a. He and the other apostles were give the promise of Holy Spirit baptism.
 - 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
 - 3) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- b. Men marveled at his knowledge, for they knew that he had received no formal schooling: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).
- c. He was perfect in teaching, although he was not perfect in life: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev 22:8-9).

2. Information about John the Apostle.

- a. John was prosperous and influential in business.
 - 1) He had hired servants and business partners:
 - 2) Mark 1:20: "And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him."
 - 3) Luke 5:10-11: "And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."
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- b. He owned property: “Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (John 19:27).
- c. He was acquainted with the high priest: “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest” (John 18:15).
- d. John was a man of great faith.
 - 1) He left all to follow Lord:
 - a) Luke 5:11: “And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.”
 - b) Matthew 4:21-22: “And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”
 - c) John 1:34-37: “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”
 - 2) No less faith is required today:
 - a) Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
 - b) Luke 14:25-33: “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”
- e. John was a leader among leaders.
 - 1) As an apostle, he had enormous responsibilities for all subsequent time!
 - 2) He was part of the inner circle of the band of apostles; he was given special opportunities which only those three received (Peter, James and John).
 - a) Matthew 17:1-5: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - b) Luke 8:51-56: “And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid,

arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.”

- c) Matthew 26:37-39: “And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”
- f. John had boldness, and was sometimes rash in the early days.
 - 1) He forbade a good work:
 - a) Luke 9:49-50: “And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.” [This was being done in the Lord’s name].
 - b) Luke 9:38-40: “And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.”
 - 2) He wanted to call down fire on certain enemies:
 - a) Luke 9:51-56: “And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”
 - b) Romans 12:17-19: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”
- g. In old age, John was a mellow man.
 - 1) His writings were done mostly in his later years. The word “love” appears more than fifty times in his three epistles. His was not mushy sentimentalism, but genuine love.
 - 2) Tradition claims that he was carried to meetings where he, while leaning on a cane and with quavering voice, would say, “Little children, love one another!” (Woods). Tradition also claims his knees were calloused from kneeling so much in prayer.
 - 3) In old age, generally we are physically weak, but stronger than ever spiritually!
- h. John was a man of energy and ambition.
 - 1) His secular work shows his industry—a business requires patience, skill and determination; he likely faced disappointments and challenges in his fishing enterprise.
 - 2) He requested prominence in Christ’s kingdom, the nature of which neither he nor the other apostles comprehended at the time.
 - a) Matthew 20:20-24: “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are

ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.”

- b) Acts 1:6: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”
 - c) Compare: “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).
- i. John was a man who had special experiences.
- 1) He was honored by Christ for what he was (not who). Compare: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).
 - 2) John saw Janus’ daughter raised and was a witness to the Lord’s transfiguration:
 - a) Mark 5:37-43: “And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.”
 - b) Matthew 17:1-5: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - 3) John heard the Lord foretell Jerusalem’s destruction: “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately” (Mark 13:3, notice also the verses which follow).
 - 4) John was privy to Christ’s agony in Gethsemane: “And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words” (Mark 14:33-39).
 - 5) John was present at the Lord’s trial and was quick to reach his tomb on the resurrection morning.
 - a) John 18:15: “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.”

- b) John 20:4-6: “So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.”
- j. John out-lived the other apostles, was exiled on Patmos, and saw the visions of Revelation.
- 1) John 21:18-24: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”
 - 2) Revelation 1:1-9: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
 - 3) Secular records report that John died at an advanced age, and that the other apostles preceded him in death.
- k. John was a man who had a good personality.
- 1) Some people are hard to love, but he was the disciple Jesus loved (a statement that is given five times):
 - a) John 13:23: “Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.”
 - b) John 19:26: “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!”
 - c) John 20:2: “Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.”
 - d) John 21:7: “Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.”
 - e) John 21:20: “Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which
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also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?"

- 2) We are also told that Jesus loved Lararus:
 - a) John 11:3: "Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."
 - b) John 11:36: "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!"
- 3) The gospel helps us to develop a lovable disposition:
 - a) Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - b) 1 John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."
 - c) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - d) John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
 - e) 1 Corinthians 13:1-7: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

l. John was a dependable man.

- 1) Our Lord committed his mother Mary to John's care: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (John 19:25-27).
- 2) John was chosen for this responsibility above her other children.
- 3) Salome (John's mother) was sister to Mary (Jesus' mother); some allege they were cousins (Turner).

m. He was a pillar in the church:

- 1) Galatians 2:9: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."
- 2) Compare: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).

G. The Gnostic error was ravaging the church at the time John wrote.

1. Gnosticism derived its name from the Greek word *gnosis* ("knowledge").
 - a. Gnostics claimed to have superior knowledge regarding the nature of Christ, Jesus, and man.
 - b. Their "superior" knowledge led them to live lives of indulgence.
2. There were two brands of gnosticism.

- a. *Docetic Gnostics* denied the actual humanity of Christ; they regarded all flesh as inherently sinful, thus decreed it would have been impossible for Christ, who was sinless, to abide in a sinful body of flesh. They argued that the body of Jesus was not real, but an illusion, and that he only appeared to suffer on the cross.
 - b. *Cerinthian Gnostics* attempted to distinguish between Christ and Jesus; they claimed that Jesus was the offspring of Joseph and Mary, and that Christ descended upon Jesus at his baptism and left him on the cross.
3. Gnosticism of either kind is evil for at least two reasons.
- a. It denies the Incarnation of Christ, a truth that is basic to Christianity:
 - 1) John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - 2) John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
 - 3) John 1:14: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
 - 4) Luke 24:39: “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”
 - 5) John 20:24-31: “But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
 - 6) 1 John 1:1-5: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
 - b. Gnosticism assumes that flesh is inherently evil, which contradicts the basic Bible truth that everyone enters the world free of the guilt of sin:
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”
 - 2) Ezekiel 28:15: “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”
 - 3) Matthew 18:3: “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little
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children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

- 4) Matthew 19:14: “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”
 4. This latter idea led them into lives of sinful indulgence.
 - a. They reasoned that the body is always evil, that the spirit was independent of the body, and thus undefiled by the body regardless of what the body did.
 - b. They argued that when one was regenerated he was pure in the spirit, and it did not matter what the body did (it was always evil anyway); the spirit remained pure.
 - c. “They lived lives of unrestrained indulgence, on the ground that a Jewel might lie in a dunghill and be just as much of a gem as in the most costly case! They believed that it was inevitable that their bodies should sin, and they argued that a thorough understanding of these matters left them free to indulge in any course of action which they preferred” (Woods, p.205). [Would a gnostic want to feed milk to his infant which had been poured into a mudhole? Would the milk remain pure?].
 - d. It was this “superior knowledge” that caused them to be called “Gnostics.”
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Second John

A. 2 John 1:1-4: Greetings to the Elect Lady and Her Children.

1. Verse 1: "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth."
 - a. As noted under the introduction, John did not identify himself by name in his writings, but here is enough information included to identify the writer. In this case, he merely calls himself "the elder." He was an "elder" because he was aged when he wrote this letter. Paul used the same basic term when he described himself to Philemon as "Paul the aged" (Phile. 1:9).
 - 1) Since Paul was unmarried, he could not have been an elder, thus he used the term in reference to his age and long experience. We have no reason to assume that John used the term in any other way than to identify his age.
 - 2) The internal evidence points to the writing of this epistle toward the end of the first century, which would make the apostle a very old man. John also sustained a relationship to those to whom he wrote as of a father writing to his children. Since the definite article "the" appears before "elder," his age is being emphasized, thus he is not speaking of an official position in the church.
 - b. The apostle addressed the letter to the *elect lady and her children*. Woods: The words, "elect lady," are translated from the Greek phrase, *eklekte* (elect) *kuria* (lady), and this circumstance has led some to the conclusion that one or the other of these terms should be regarded as a proper name, some assuming that the phrase should be translated "the lady Eclekte," and others, "the elect Cyria." Thus translated, the woman's name is designated by the apostle, being either *Eclekte*, or else, *Cyria*, depending on which of the terms is regarded as the proper name.
 - 1) Cyria is the English spelling of the Greek *kuria*, and, etymologically, means *lady*. This, however, alone considered, is not significant, since all Bible names mean something, viz., Jacob, "supplanter"; Israel, "one who prevails with God"; Jesus, "Savior." On the assumption that either *eklekte* or *kuria* is to be regarded as a proper name, the presumption is that it is the latter, rather than the former, inasmuch as the choice must be between "the lady Eclekte" or "the elect Cyria," and women are never called *ladies* in the New Testament. The word "*kuria*" (lady) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament (other than in this Epistle) though the word *woman*, often.
 - 2) Moreover, in 1 Pet. 5:13, there is a similar reference to an elect sister where, obviously, an individual, though not named, is designated. The marginal reading in the American Standard Version supports the view that the sister addressed by the apostle was named *Cyria*. [p.337).
 - c. Some scholars have thought that a congregation is referred to by the phrase *elect lady and her children*. However, if the church is meant, who are the children? The church is comprised of Christians, thus the children of the church would be meaningless. Further, this elect lady had a sister who also had children. The church has no existence separate from its members. This elect lady was a sister in Christ known to John; she may have been named Cyria. The only information we have about this lady is what John supplies—which is scant.
 - d. The apostle states his love for this lady and her children—*whom I love in truth*. She was a faithful Christian whom John loved in truth—his love was sincere and genuine; it was the love that one faithful Christian has for another faithful Christian. Compare: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). She had several children, some of whom were also faithful; these John also loved. Others who knew the truth also loved these precious ones. Since no mention is made of her husband, it appears he was either deceased or was an unbeliever.
 - e. John later cautioned her (and other saints) from receiving false teachers into her home, which implies

- that she was known for opening her house to receive gospel preachers [verses 10-11]. From this we obviously may learn that she practiced Christian hospitality, a highly commendable custom.
- f. Others who loved the truth also loved her and her children. “That is, all those Christians who had had an opportunity of knowing them, were sincerely attached to them. It would seem, from a subsequent part of the Epistle (2 John 10), that this female was of a hospitable character, and was accustomed to entertain at her house the professed friends of religion, especially religious teachers, and it is probable that she was the more extensively known from this fact. The commendation of the apostle here shows that it is POSSIBLE that a family shall be extensively known as one of order, peace, and religion, so that all who know it or hear of it shall regard it with interest, respect, and love” (Barnes, BibleSoft).
2. Verse 2: “For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.”
 - a. John states here that we love others who love the truth because we love the truth; the truth dwells in us and truth shall always be with us.
 - b. He loved these people, not merely because of some special beauty or pleasant personality they had, but because of the truth which dwelt in him and them. Despite the opposition which the truth faced, John assured them that the truth would be with them forever. There is much that is unlovable about many people, but we can still love them [seek their best interests—Rom. 13:10]. Even in some Christians, there may be some physical deformity or trait that may repel us, but if they are faithful and we are faithful, we will love them despite their deficiencies.
 - c. The apostle affirms his conviction that the truth would always have a place in his heart and in theirs. Even the hatred and persecution of ungodly men could not drive it from them. Those dedicated saints were quite willing to die for the sake of the truth; it is certain that they would not allow some earthly matter to deprive them of the love the truth had engendered in them for one another. Compare: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35-39, ASV).
 - d. In another sense, the truth will ever be present: The word of God cannot be destroyed; it will always be present—even at the Judgment.
 - 1) John 12:48: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”
 - 2) John 17:17: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:22-25: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
 - 4) Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - 5) Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
 3. Verse 3: “Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.”
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- a. The **grace of God** is the principle on which God extends his blessings to humanity. Grace, meaning *unmerited favor*, is offered to sinful man, giving the fallen victims of sin the opportunity to be restored into God's fellowship. His grace makes it possible for the sinner to receive pardon for his unwarranted transgressions of God's will, to be considered as having never been alienated, as having escaped the penalty of sin, and to receive the promise of eternal life.
- 1) Ephesians 2:5-8: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."
 - 2) Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."
 - 3) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
- b. The apostle speaks of **the mercy of God**. God's mercy is produced by his grace [his unmerited favor] and bestows upon man the loving compassion the Father has for his offspring. We sometimes use the two terms [grace and mercy] interchangeably, but in the Greek New Testament they are from two distinct words.
- 1) Grace is from *charis*: graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude): KJV—acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-ious), joy, liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy)" [Biblesoft].
 - 2) Mercy is from *eleos* : compassion (human or divine, especially active): KJV—(+tender) mercy" [Biblesoft].
 - 3) Ephesians 2:4: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us."
 - 4) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
- c. The **peace of God** results when an individual receives the grace and mercy of the Father. Peace is the inner tranquility we experience when we saved by the grace and mercy of God. His grace is extended to all men, and his mercy rids them of the misery which an awareness of sin produces. Peace is the resultant state which exists where grace and mercy have operated.
- 1) "Grace (*charis*) evidences the state of God's mind toward the sinner; mercy (*eleos*), the act of love; and peace (*eirene*), the gift of love—the effect resulting from grace and mercy. These terms marvelously reveal the wondrous scope of God's goodness to man from the beginning to the end. Grace suggests the first approach, the loving disposition on the part of the great Jehovah to supply the means of salvation to a rebellious and recreant race. Mercy is grace expressing itself in action, and peace is the blessed condition of heart redeemed by blood and restored by grace to the status of reconciliation" (Woods, p.340).
 - 2) Colossians 1:21-22: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God
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was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

- 4) Philippians 4:6-8: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”
- d. John’s point of the verse is not a request that the grace, mercy and peace of God be granted to the saints, but is a statement of confident assurance that the ones addressed had received the benefits of God’s grace, mercy and peace. Notice that the apostle used the word *from* in both of the references to Deity—from the Father and from the Son of the Father. The Father and the Son are separate and distinct persons.
 - 1) No man can come to the Father except through the Son—“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).
 - 2) No man can come to the Son unless the Father draws that individual (through teaching)—“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45).
 - 3) No man can know the Father except by the Son—“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18).
 - e. “Grace, mercy, and peace flow out to man in truth and love, keynote words of the Epistle, and embodying the two things nearest the heart of the ‘apostle of love.’ John would have his readers ever to remain faithful to the truth which they had received, and to display always the love which issues from that truth. The word ‘truth’ occurs *five* times in the second Epistle, *six* times in the third” (Woods, pp.340f).
 - f. **Truth** is the means by which the grace of God is revealed to mankind; it was because of God’s love for his offspring that he revealed his truth. The truth is an expression of God’s love and the truth stimulates love in our hearts for God and for our fellowman.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-25: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
4. Verse 4: “I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a command-

ment from the Father.”

- a. The occasion for his rejoicing was in learning that certain of the elect lady’s children were walking in the truth. This seems to imply that some of her other children were not walking in the truth, but this is not necessarily the case. Some of them might not be old enough to become Christians.
- b. The Bible frequently describes the way one is living as the manner in which they walk. The way one walks is the way he lives—the way he usually and habitually lives. Some walk in drunkenness; their usual lifestyle is one that is characterized by drunkenness. But these children of the elect lady were usually and habitually living by the truth of the gospel.
- c. In walking in truth these disciples were simply carrying out the commandments of God.
 - 1) 1 John 1:5-7: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
 - 2) 1 John 2:4: “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
 - 3) 1 John 2:7: “Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.”
 - 4) 1 John 5:2-3: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
- d. One of the important aspects of this verse is the fact that a portion of the inspired Record was devoted to rejoicing that certain saints were faithful.

B. 2 John 1:5-6: Admonitions.

1. Verse 5: “And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.”
 - a. John beseeches the elect lady based on what he has just written. To beseech is to ask, desire, intreat, pray. Brother Woods states that it is a stronger word than our word beseech.
 - b. “We may reasonably suppose that John is here reminding her of the contents of his First Epistle. The parallels between this Epistle and the First are so numerous and so close, that we can scarcely doubt that some of them are consciously made. There are at least eight such in these thirteen verses, as may be seen from the margin of a good reference Bible” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - c. Love is the fulfilling of the law. The love which the commandment requires is not a new commandment, but one which had been emphasized from the beginning of the gospel.
 - 1) Romans 13:10: “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
 - 2) John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
 - 3) 1 John 2:7-8: “Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.”
 - 4) The Lord called it *new*, not because it was a recent revelation, but new in degree and extent—“as I have loved you.” This measure of love had not been specified before the coming of Christianity.

This degree of love is the badge of a faithful Christian—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

2. Verse 6: "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."
 - a. Love prompts us to keep of the commandments of the Lord: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:2-3).
 - b. Having a warm feeling toward God while living in disobedience is without benefit. Emotion, separated from obedience, is worse than useless. "Love, in the absence of obedience, degenerates into fanaticism; duty without love is cold formalism. Where love does not exist, the keeping of God's commandments is irksome and hard. To the faithful, the keeping of his commandments is not grievous, because love makes them light" (Woods, p.344).
 - c. If we love God, we will do what he says; obedience is the one way we have of expressing our love for him; if we thus love God, we will likewise love our fellow Christians, for God directs us to love our brethren. "We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:19-21). Brotherly love and obedience to God go together; if we fail in one, we will fail in the other.
 - d. To love our brethren in Christ is not a mere warm emotion, but the willing of good for them: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Paul summarizes the point of this passage by saying, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Stated positively, he teaches that love seeks the best interests of its object. If we love another person as we ought, we will not wish him any harm, we will do him no harm, our words and deeds toward him will be such as we would want for ourself (Matt. 7:12).
 - 1) "The law requires me not to murder my neighbor, not to steal from him, not to commit adultery against him, not to desire his goods; in a word, not to do him harm of any kind; and if I love him, I will not do him any. Hence, the love of my neighbor is the fulfillment of the law towards him" (Lard, Commentary on Romans, p.406).
 - 2) To love our neighbor as we love ourselves is not all of our duty before God. We must still love him with all our being, which includes and requires that we do all that he demands and wishes us to do. If there should be any question as to the identity of our neighbor, let the querist look to the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).
 - e. To love one another is here specified as a commandment. Our Lord places this as an obligation upon us; it is a duty that we gladly obey—because we love our Lord.
 - 1) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - 2) John 15:14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
 - 3) John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
 - 4) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - f. When we are converted to Christ, fundamental changes are effected on our inner person; whereas we before may have been filled with animosity, malice, and hatred for our fellowman, we now have a benevolent attitude toward them; before our conversion, we may have been willing to subject them to abuse, or at the least, we were indifferent toward their needs. Now that we are a Christian, we want

to help our neighbor, to do something good for him.

- 1) Romans 13:14: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”
- 2) Ephesians 4:26-28: “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.
- 3) Romans 12:17-21: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”
- 4) Matthew 5:38-48: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

C. 2 John 1:7-11: Warnings.

1. Verse 7: “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”
 - a. “For” links this statement with that of the preceding thought: “It is imperative that you be joined together in love and allow this love to issue in Christian conduct, always keeping the commandments which have been given. To do so is to erect the strongest possible barriers against error. That there is an ever-present threat of it is obvious from the fact that many deceivers are gone forth into the world” (Woods).
 - b. The word *deceivers* is from *planoi* which suggests the idea of wandering false teachers who move around looking for those who may be led away from the truth into their own deceptive and destructive error. Compare:
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:1-5: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:6: “For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.”
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:13: “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”
 - 4) Acts 20:28-31: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy

Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

- 5) 2 Peter 2:1-3: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”
- c. The errorists John has particularly in mind were those who will not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh [cf. the Gnostics of 1 John). The Jews, who denied that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, refused to believe that the Messiah had come in the flesh [in the person of Jesus]; the Gnostics denied that he could come in the flesh. Both were wrong.
- d. “In the text here, as in the passages in which the term anti-christ occurs, it will be seen that the apostle sometimes refers to many antichrists, and again to but one. The great anti-christ was the symbol, the representative of the class whose spirit, disposition, design the others adopted. The anti-christ is the head of the apostate church—the church of Rome—and all who teach false doctrine, however much they may differ in detail in their teaching, or oppose one another in their actions, are one in their opposition to the Lord and the cause for which he died. Of what consequence is it that men array themselves against each other in minor details when together they form a solid phalanx against the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord? How quickly do men resolve their differences of a denominational nature when they are confronted with a genuine representative of the truth! The denominational world has ever recognized the church of the Lord as a common enemy; and where it is active, they have disregarded their own distinctive interests to form a common front against the truth. The spirit of the anti-christ is the motivating factor in every false teacher” (Woods, pp.345f).
- e. Brother Coffman offers this: “The heresy of the false deceivers was that of denying the Incarnation. Various scholars have identified such teachers as Docetists, Cerinthians, and Gnostics. Of significance is the fact that the apostle did not yield in the slightest to any of their speculations. The apostolic doctrine is that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God who was Christ, not only after his baptism, but in his death, burial and resurrection as well. With the apostle John, and all the New Testament teachers, the confession of full faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God was central, imperative and absolutely essential to the Christian faith. The ‘many deceivers’ mentioned in 2 John 1:7 stand in this letter opposed to the ‘certain of thy children walking in the truth,’ as mentioned in 2 John 1:4, with the possible interpretation that both those walking faithfully and the deceivers were children of a single congregation. Concerning the deceivers, John here presented ‘a double warning: (1) for the Christians not to be deceived themselves (2 John 1:8,9), and (2) not to give any encouragement to the false teachers (2 John 1:10,11)” (pp.488f).
2. Verse 8: “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”
- a. The apostles counsels his readers to look to themselves; that is, we are to honestly and sincerely examine our own hearts, to see whether we are ready to defend our souls against the attacks these false teachers are to bring upon us. The possibility of apostasy is clearly indicated, therefore, we must regularly examine our preparedness.
- b. Compare: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be probates?” (2 Cor. 13:5).
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- 1) The statement would be foolish if it were not possible for one who had become a Christian to depart from the faith. A Christian can fall away from the faith, and be separated from Christ.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - c) Galatians 5:1-4: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
- 2) The requirement of the verse would be impossible if there were no standard of truth by which to measure ourselves. Those who are not content to believe and obey the Bible, in a feeble attempt to justify their doctrine, assert that there is no absolute standard of truth in religion. If that is so, how could they *know* that truth? Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 13:5 repudiates their assertion. Compare:
 - a) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - b) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - c) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - d) Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - e) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- 3) To examine is to try (to test). How could they put themselves to the test?
 - a) First, there must be an absolute standard by which to measure themselves. That standard, of course, is God's word.
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - (2) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."
 - (3) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - (4) 2 Thessalonians 2:15: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
 - (5) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus

- Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”
- (6) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: “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.”
 - (7) 1 Corinthians 14:37: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”
- b) They were to test their attitudes, words, thoughts, motives, and actions by the word of God. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth [therein], he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).
 - c) We identify true and false teachers by the fruit they produce (the doctrines they preach and practice).
 - (1) Matthew 7:15-20: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
 - (2) 1 John 4:1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
 - (3) 1 Peter 4:11: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”
- 4) To be *in the faith* is to conduct one's self in keeping with the dictates of the faith. *The faith* is used here as a synonym of the gospel system (Christianity).
 - a) Acts 6:7: “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”
 - b) Ephesians 4:4-5: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”
 - c) Galatians 1:23: “But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.”
 - d) Jude 1:3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - 5) To be in the faith is to be a follower of the gospel, a Christian. One enters the faith by obeying the gospel.
 - a) Acts 6:7: “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”
 - b) Acts 2:36-38: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
 - c) Acts 18:8: “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”
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- d) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- c. If we allow ourselves to be overcome by the deceptive and determined efforts of false teachers, we will lose the advantages and blessings wrought out by the apostles. That which was wrought out by the apostles was the gospel.
- d. The Holy Spirit empowered the apostles in several special ways.
- 1) He qualified them to be **ambassadors** of Christ.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
 - b) One who is appointed as an official ambassador has the authority to decide issues and act in the behalf of another. An ambassador to a sovereign country has the authority to act in behalf of its chief of state, and thus of the country itself.
 - c) The apostles were given authority to act in the Lord's stead as they did their work among men; they were given the guidance to fulfill their obligations without error; what they bound had already been bound in heaven and they were the means of announcing and implementing Christ's will.
 - d) Matthew 16:19: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - e) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - f) John 20:23: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained."
 - g) Peter and the other apostles did not bind and loose according to their own designs; rather they were miraculously guided in revealing the law of Christ (Mark 13:11; John 16:12-14; 15:26; Acts 2; Gal. 1:6-12; Rev. 22:18-19). The literal meaning of the Greek text in Matthew 16:19 is, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." From these considerations it is seen that the apostles did not arbitrarily bind and loose, but God did the binding and loosing through them by directing their words.
 - 2) He qualified them to be **infallible witnesses of the Lord's resurrection**.
 - a) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - b) They were able to give their inspired testimony that Christ had truly been raised from the dead.
 - c) Acts 4:33: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."
 - d) Acts 10:39-42: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on to a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead."
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- e) John 15:26-27: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you, from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
 - f) No one on earth today has seen Christ; no one can give direct testimony of his resurrection from the dead; the only witnesses the Lord authorized were his hand-picked apostles, who were empowered to give inspired, infallible testimony. Their testimony was all that was needed, for their generation and for all of remaining history. Their testimony has been forevermore preserved in the inspired writings of the New Testament!
- 3) He gave the apostles **infallible and complete remembrance** of all that Christ taught them.
- a) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - b) John 16:12: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Christ did not allow them to trust their natural memory; they might err.
 - c) John 12:16: "These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him."
 - d) Because of the newness and strangeness of the information he was presenting to them, and because of the fallible nature of human memory, the Lord could not, and never intended to, reveal every truth to them prior to their being clothed with power by the Holy Spirit.
- 4) He **guided the apostles into all truth**.
- a) John 16:12-13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - b) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things..."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 7:12 is an example of this: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away." Christ had not addressed this situation during his personal ministry; it fell to Paul to reveal this part of truth. It is not his personal view that he was presenting for he wrote by inspiration: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).
 - d) When all truth was revealed, confirmed, and recorded, the finished product was the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). It is called "that which is perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13:10, and is described as "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" in Ephesians 4:13. When we read what the inspired apostles and prophets wrote, we learn and understand the truth which was revealed to them by the Spirit: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:1-5).
 - e) This revelation of all the truth is called "the faith which was once [for all time] revealed unto the saints" (Jude 3).
- 5) He **showed them things to come** in the future.
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- a) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
- (1) Some examples of these future events are found in:
- (a) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
- (b) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
- (c) 2 Timothy 3:1-7: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
- (2) Is there anyone on earth today who can predict the future? There are many who claim this power, but they are merely guessing, or are able to read the current situation and make prognostications about the probable developments, or who claim after the fact to have predicted some historical event. These are more often wrong than right; if they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit they could unerringly predict the future. If one is wrong just once, the Bible says that proves he is a false prophet: "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:20-22).
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- 6) He enabled the apostles **to confirm their spoken word with miraculous signs**.
- This was the primary purpose of miracles. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:3-4).
 - Anyone at any time could dream up a religious system, complete with teachings and practices. How could the ignorant and unlearned people of the first century know whether the message of gospel preachers was really from God? It was absolutely essential that those ancient proclaimers have a means of certifying the message they preached; that certification was the ability to perform supernatural acts.
 - The record of many of these miracles, together with the many internal and external evidences, show that the Bible is the inspired, authoritative word of God. There is no need for confirmatory miracles today!
 - If one has truly received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in our time, he will of necessity be thereby enabled to prove his claim by the performance of miraculous signs. "As goes the affirmation, so must be the demonstration!" If he has it, he must be able to demonstrate it!
- 7) He enabled the apostles **to impart spiritual, miraculous gifts** to other Christians.
- Only the apostles had this capability. After Philip had preached the gospel to the Samaritans and many of them had become Christians, it was necessary for one or more of the apostles to be present before they could receive any of the supernatural gifts; hence, Peter and John were sent down and laid hands on them that some of these gifts might be imparted (Acts 8:12-19). Philip could not impart the spiritual gifts; Simon could not obtain that ability to impart that gift to others (8:18-24).
 - Acts 19:6: "And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." The apostle Paul was able to lay hands on the 12 converts at Ephesus and thus impart to them certain of the spiritual gifts.
 - It was necessary for Paul to be personally in Rome in order to impart gifts to certain Christians there. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11). If this could be imparted by any who had a spiritual gift, why did Paul say he had to be there before it could be imparted to them?
- 8) He gave the apostles **full inspiration to receive, deliver, confirm, and record God's revelation**.
- Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Compare:
 - 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them,
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because they are spiritually discerned.”

- (2) Acts 2:1-4: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
 - (3) Acts 2:11: “Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”
 - (4) Acts 2:14-36: “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
- b) Others, such as Mark, Luke, James, and Jude received the miraculous ability to do some of these things, but they obtained this supernatural power through having the hands of an apostle laid upon them. Thus, the primary recipients of this ability were the apostles.
- 9) He **guided the apostles in defending the faith** before rulers and other powerful adversaries.
- a) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand
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- what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
- b) Luke 21:14-15: "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."
 - c) Compare Luke 12:11: "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say."
 - d) While other inspired men who were not apostles were able to do similar things (e.g., Stephen in Acts 6 and 7), it was the apostles who possessed the primary power and ability to do this; others on whom they laid hands could receive one or another of the spiritual gifts, enabling them to defend and proclaim the truth.
- e. The consequences of losing that which was wrought by the apostles was to forfeit their reward. If they remained steadfast with the truth, they would receive the full reward. Faithfulness to the end is required (Matt. 10:22). A worker who quits before the day is over forfeits the full reward of the day's labor; the worker who resigns before putting in the mandatory number of years loses his retirement benefits. "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Heb. 4:1-2, ASV).
3. Verse 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 2) NKJV: "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."
 - 3) ESV: "Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."
 - b. John has just warned against the dangers of being victimized by false teachers; he now provides some specifications of the danger. He declares that if we go onward from the doctrine of Christ, we lose our fellowship with the Father.
 - c. To go onward [transgress—KJV] and to abide not are the same. The first expression is positive and the second is a negative descriptive of the same act. To go onward (transgress) is to proceed beyond the limits set by God's word; to abide not in the doctrine is to fail to do what the word requires.
 - d. The warning is against going beyond what Christ has taught: we must have Bible authority for what we do and teach in religion.
 - 1) Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 2) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."
 - 3) Galatians 1:6-11: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace
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of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.”

- 4) 1 Corinthians 4:6: “Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other” (ASV).
- e. Some allege that the “doctrine of Christ” is the teaching about Christ. In recent years, liberal preachers in the brotherhood, wanting to defend instrumental music in worship, have denied that this passage addresses the subject of authority; they assert that it merely requires that we reject those teachings which deny that Jesus came in the flesh [the *Gnostic* heresy].
 - 1) They understand that if they take the passage at its face value, they will be practicing certain items (instrumental music in worship, for example) without New Testament authority. Even if they were able to rob Second John 9 of its obvious meaning, they would still have to deal with such passages as Colossians 3:16-17: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” We must have the authority of Christ for all that we believe and practice in worship. There is no authority in all of the New Testament for the use of instrumental music in the worship of the Lord’s church.
 - 2) If the apostle means the doctrine about Christ, then his point is that the saints must avoid the error of the Gnostics; if he means the doctrine that Christ taught, then his point is that we must not go beyond what the Lord taught in his word. Which of these views is the correct understanding? We will investigate further to find support for the conclusion that the doctrine of Christ is the doctrine Christ presented [personally and through his apostles].
- f. What the language scholars say about *the doctrine of Christ*:
 - 1) “Of Christ. Not the teaching concerning Christ, but the teaching of Christ Himself and of His apostles. See Heb 2:3. So according to New Testament usage. See John 18:19; Acts 2:42; Rev 2:14-15” [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - 2) “And abideth not in the teaching of Christ *kai* (NT:2532) *mee* (NT:3361) *menoon* (NT:3306) *en* (NT:1722) *tee* (NT:3588) *didachee* (NT:1322) *tou* (NT:3588) *Christou* (NT:5547). Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ which is the standard of Christian teaching as the walk of Christ is the standard for the Christian's walk (1 John 2:6). See John 7:16; 18:19” [from Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press].
 - 3) “*hee didachee* of God, *tou kuriou*, *tou Christou*, the doctrine which has God, Christ, the Lord, for its author and supporter: John 7:17; Acts 13:12; 2 John 9” [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - 4) “B.F. Westcott writes, ‘In the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine which he brought first in his own person, and then through his followers (Heb. 2:3). This sense seems better than the doctrine of (concerning) the Christ, and the usage of the New Testament is uniformly in favor of it’” [The Epistles of John, p.230, quoted by Merideth, *Studies in 1,2,3 John*, p.270].
 - 5) “The *faith* means the *gospel* or the *Christian religion*. In Galatians 1:6-9, the apostle declares that

he had preached the gospel and pronounces an anathema on any man or angel who preached another gospel from that which he had preached. Yet, in this same chapter, verse 23, he says he preached *the faith*. Therefore, the gospel and the faith are one and the same thing” [G.C. Brewer, *Contending for the Faith*, p.18].

- g. How is the phrase used in the New Testament?
- 1) Acts 2:42: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The doctrine indicated was the doctrine the apostles taught, not the doctrine about the apostles.
 - 2) Matthew 7:28: “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.” The doctrine of this verse is the doctrine of Christ, what he taught, not what was taught about him. Compare: “And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine” (Mark 11:18).
 - 3) Mark 4:2: “And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine.” Once more, this doctrine was what the Lord taught, not what was taught about him.
 - 4) Luke 10:16: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” Those who heard or who despised are determined by their reaction to what the Lord taught.
 - 5) Matthew 16:11-12: “How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” The doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was what they taught, not what was taught about them.
- h. Christ delivered his doctrine personally during his earthly ministry and through the apostles; the apostles were guided in laying hands on certain converts which enabled them to extend the work of the apostles.
- 1) Mark 13:11: “But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.”
 - 2) John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
 - 3) John 15:26-27: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”
 - 4) John 16:13-14: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”
 - 5) Acts 1:5, 8: “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
 - 6) Acts 2:1-4: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with
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other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

- 7) Acts 19:1-6: “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”
- 8) Mark 16:15-20: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
- 9) Hebrews 2:1-4: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”
 - i. What can we conclude about “the doctrine of Christ?” Notice the apostle’s use of *whosoever*. In the first epistle, John had warned against the error of the Gnostics; in this second epistle he has addressed these false teachers [verse 7]. With the word “whosoever” the inspired writer broadens the scope of his warning to include any and everyone who goes beyond and abides not in the teachings of Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 7:15-20: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
 - 3) Luke 10:16: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”
 - 4) John 12:48-50: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”
 - 5) Revelation 22:18-19: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this

book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

- 6) 1 Corinthians 4:6: “Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other” (ASV).
 - 7) Colossians 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (ASV).
- j. Liberals in politics and in religion like to describe themselves as *progressives*, while they berate their conservative counterparts as *non-progressives*. They think of themselves as going on from their former status to bigger and better things—thus they are making progress but the conservatives are stuck in old and worn out ideas and practices of the past. The progress of religious progressives is in the wrong direction; they are going away from the truth. Inevitably, such progressives end up in human error—they apostatize from the truth!
- 1) Vincent: Whosoever transgresseth *pas* (NT:3956) *ho* (NT:3588) *parabainoon* (NT:3845). The best texts read *proagoon* (NT:4254) "goeth onward." So the English Revised Version (1885), with "taketh the lead" in the margin. The meaning is, "whosoever advances beyond the limits of Christian doctrine." Others explain of those who would set themselves up as teachers, or "take the lead." Such false progress is contrasted with "abiding" in the teaching. [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - 2) Thayer: NT:4254: to proceed, go forward: in a bad sense, to go further than is right or proper, equivalent to *mee menein en tee didachee*, to transgress the limits of true doctrine (compare our colloquial, "advanced" (views, etc.) in a disparaging sense), 2 John 9, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott-Hort (but the English Revised Version's (1881) marginal reading taketh the lead). [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - 3) The "teaching of Christ" here is not teaching about Christ, or teaching which is Christian in substance or nature; it is the teaching which Christ did personally and through those whom he inspired. It is the teaching of Christ, because he is, in the final analysis, its author, and from him it issued. It is thus an infallible standard, and no deviation from it is possible without apostasy.
 - 4) “To go onward and not abide in this teaching is to lose God. The verb ‘goeth onward’ is from the Greek *proago*, to progress. The meaning thus is: Whosoever becomes *progressive* and abides not in the teaching of Christ hath not God. Men often boast that they are progressive, and movements religious have arisen both in and out of the church through the years whose watchword and slogan was *progressiveness*. Progress is good only when it is in the direction of Christ, and not away from him; and in some matters it is far preferable to be non-progressive, particularly in not going beyond what the Lord has said. Any movement which is away from the teaching of Christ is progress in the wrong direction, and results eventually in the loss of God himself. The price of a sound church is a pure faith and a faultless practice; and this may be had only by faithful adherence to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. We must ever be on our guard against any semblance of departure from that which is written, whether in teaching or practice; and we should remember always that the teaching of Christ and his apostles constitutes the only safe and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for the saints of God” (Woods, p.347).
- k. It is easy to see how one could transgress the doctrine which Christ taught; but how could one transgress the teaching about Christ? It is easy to see how one can abide in the doctrine taught by Christ, but how can one abide in the doctrine concerning Christ? We do not have perfect understanding and we do not live sinlessly perfect lives; but we are expected to distinguish between truth and error

- and act accordingly. We can identify a false teacher and know that his error is error.
- 1) 1 John 4:1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
 - 2) Ephesians 5:11: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”
 - 3) Ephesians 5:17: “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”
- l. One who goes onward and does not abide in the truth, loses his fellowship with God. He that abideth in the teaching, has both Father and the Son. The tense of the Greek term means to keep on abiding in the doctrine of Christ. He turns neither to the left nor to the right; he does not add to the doctrine or remove anything from it; he makes no changes to it.
- 1) Galatians 1:6-11: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.”
 - 2) Revelation 22:18-19: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”
 - 3) Deuteronomy 4:2: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”
 - 4) Proverbs 30:6: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”
 - 5) Joshua 1:6-8: ‘Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.’
- m. The liberal and modernist of today argue that we are living in the space age, and that we need something new for our sophisticated modern society; the Bible was alright (they allege) for the ignorant folks in the dark ages and on the American frontier, but it has been left behind by our modern advances. It is claimed by some that the New Testament was never designed as an all-sufficient standard for all time. But....
- 1) Jude 3: “Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (ASV).
 - 2) Galatians 1:6-9: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be
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- accursed.” [The gospel cannot be replaced or altered; it will be around to the end of time and will be used as the standard by which we shall be judged—John 12:48].
- 3) Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - 4) Psalms 33:11: “The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”
 - 5) Psalms 100:5: “For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”
 - 6) Psalms 119:89: “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”
 - 7) Proverbs 19:21: “There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.”
 - 8) Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”
 - 9) 1 Peter 1:24-25: “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.
- n. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.” Through the years, our brethren have understood the “doctrine of Christ” in Second John 9 to refer to the doctrine which Christ gave and thus to mean the whole gospel system. This would include baptism, the incarnation, the kingdom, singing—indeed, all matters of the gospel. So anyone who would do something that is not authorized in the New Testament would be going beyond the doctrine of Christ and thus, sinful. Preachers have preached that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship goes beyond the doctrine of Christ and is sinful. In an effort to downgrade the importance of the instrument and in an effort to say that instrumental music is not related to essential matters, some want to say that the doctrine of Christ has nothing to do with acts of worship. They take the phrase “doctrine of Christ” and redefine it to mean only things about Christ, like the incarnation. They falsely allege that it has nothing to do with singing. Bible cases show that we must have the approval of God in order to praise or serve him acceptably.
- 1) Leviticus 10:1-2: “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”
 - 2) 1 Samuel 15:20-24: “And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.”
 - 3) 2 Samuel 6:3-7: “And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his
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hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.” [Only certain men were permitted to move the ark, and the Lord had specified the manner in which was to be transported (Ex. 25)].

- 4) 2 Chronicles 26:16-21: “But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.”
- 5) Romans 15:4: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”
- 6) Colossians 2:18-23: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”
- 7) 1 Timothy 1:19-20: “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”
- o. “At the forum held at Freed-Hardeman College in October, 1985, both Rubel Shelly and Monroe Hawley said that they now felt that the doctrine of Christ only meant the incarnation and had nothing to do with the procedures for worship. [Mr.] Fuller writes in the *Christian Standard* (October 13, 1985) that his position is that the ‘doctrine of Christ’ in II John 9 means ‘the incarnation’ (page 4). These men are wrong in this matter.
 - 1) “The participles ‘transgresseth’ and ‘abideth not’ are descriptive of the same process. ‘Transgresseth’ (ASV has ‘goeth onward’) is *proagon*, nominative, singular, masculine, present participle of *proaqa* which means ‘to proceed, go forward: in a bad sense to go further than is right or proper, to transgress the limits of true doctrine’ (Thayer, p. 537). We have under consideration here a transgression, a sin of going beyond true doctrine. Those who claim to progress beyond the doctrine of Christ have progressed too far. False intellectuals, who claim to be advanced thinkers, relegate Christ’s doctrine to the past....
 - 2) “An analysis of the book of II John will show that John uses the words ‘truth’ (II John 1, 2, 4) and ‘commandments’ (II Jno. 9-11) to refer to the gospel. These terms refer to the same body of truth, the gospel. John writes, ‘If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his

evil deeds' (II Jno. 10,11). John is not condemning hospitality to strangers as this is not merely a case of hospitality involved. It becomes a case of becoming a partaker of evil action. We are to help strangers, yes; but not aid false teachers nor lend encouragement to their efforts, and not subject ourselves to their corruption. 'Partaketh' is from *koinonei*, third person, a singular, present, indicative of *koinoneo*, a verb fellowship, 'to come into communion or fellowship, to become a sharer, be made a partner' (Thayer).

- 3) "Paul writes, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them' (Eph. 5:11). Doctrine is important. We are not to fellowship nor be partakers of those those who do not bring the doctrine of Christ" (*The Beacon*, Bellview Church of Christ, March 20, 1986).
- p. Brother Woods offers the following excellent analysis of the passage:
- 1) The "teaching of Christ" here is not teaching about Christ, or teaching which is Christian in substance or nature; it is the teaching which Christ did personally and through those whom he inspired. It is the teaching of Christ, because he is, in the final analysis, its author, and from him it issued. It is thus an infallible standard, and no deviation from it is possible without apostasy.
 - 2) To go onward and not abide in this teaching is to lose God. The verb "goeth onward" is from the Greek *proago*, to progress. The meaning thus is: Whosoever becomes *progressive* and abides not in the teaching of Christ hath not God. Men often boast that they are progressive, and movements religious have arisen both in and out of the church through the years whose watchword and slogan was *progressiveness*. Progress is good only when it is in the direction of Christ, and not away from him; and in some matters it is far preferable to be non-progressive, particularly in not going beyond what the Lord has said. Any movement which is away from the teaching of Christ is progress in the wrong direction, and results eventually in the loss of God himself. The price of a sound church is a pure faith and a faultless practice; and this may be had only by faithful adherence to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. We must ever be on our guard against any semblance of departure from that which is written, whether in teaching or practice; and we should remember always that the teaching of Christ and his apostles constitutes the only safe and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for the saints of God.
 - 3) He that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son.—This is the same thought as that of the clause preceding, but stated positively, and with the addition of the phrase, "and the Son." (Cf. 1 John 2:23.) "He that abideth" (*ho menon*, keeps on abiding) in the teaching (of Christ) is the individual who recognizes the inviolate character of the teaching and veers neither to the right nor left of it. He regards the teaching of Christ (and that continued through his apostles) as the complete deposit of truth for this dispensation to which nothing more will be added, and from which nothing may be taken, and which is, therefore, the infallible standard of Christianity. He who recognizes this, and abides in it faithfully, has both the Father and the Son. There is such an intimate relationship subsisting between the Father and the Son that to have one is to have the other. Conversely, he who has not the one cannot have the other. And, one has neither when he fails to adhere steadfastly to the teaching of Christ. [Woods, pp.347f].
4. Verse 10: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."
 - a. Roadside accommodations were not plentiful in those ancient days, and not all of these inns were safe. When Joseph and Mary arrived at Bethlehem, the inns were filled and no private homes were available; they found it necessary to take shelter in a stable. As gospel preachers traveled through Gentile lands, they could find a place to stay with faithful brethren, who were taught to show hospitality. But in the present special case, John directed the elect lady not offer encouragement to those false teachers who were spreading their error.
 - b. Christians are taught to gladly give hospitality: "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to
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- hospitality” (Rom. 12:13). This faithful sister was accustomed to extend hospitality. She was here given the duty of deciding whether the teacher who wanted to stay in her home had the doctrine of Christ.
- c. She was not to receive them into her house if they did not teach the truth; she was not even to give them greeting. “The greeting was ‘*Chairo!*’ literally, *goodspeed* or *Godspeed*. This greeting was more than mere formality; it was an approval of the course being pursued by the one thus greeting, and included a desire for success in the effort attempted.” (Woods, p.349).
 - d. In a practical way, how could this lady determine whether a preacher was to be received into her house? Obviously, there is a standard by which they could be tested. To learn whether he was a gnostic, she could ask what he taught about the nature of Christ; to see if he was a Judaizer, she could ask what he taught about Christianity and the Law of Moses. Of course he could lie, but he would be quickly exposed when he began teaching.
 - 1) 1 John 4:1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”
 - 3) Galatians 2:4-5: “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”
 - 4) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (ASV).
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 4:6: “Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other” (ASV).
5. Verse 11: “For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
- a. The reason for extending such a greeting to false teachers is that one became a participant in the evil works being accomplished.
 - b. “(1) John does not here forbid hospitality to strangers, or, for that matter, to false teachers when, in so doing, false teaching is neither encouraged nor done. Were we to find a teacher known to be an advocate of false doctrine suffering, it would be our duty to minister to his need, provided that in so doing we did not abet or encourage him in the propagation of false doctrine. (2) What is forbidden is the reception of such teachers in such fashion as to supply them with an opportunity to teach their tenets, to maintain an association with them when such would involve us in the danger of accepting their doctrines. The passage teaches that we must do nothing that would in any way support or encourage the teaching of that which is not true. To do so is to share in the guilt of the teachers themselves. The principle here taught may not be legitimately extended to include association or hospitality extended to unbelieving relatives, strangers, or even false teachers when in so doing we do not (a) aid them in their work; (b) lend encouragement to their efforts; (c) subject ourselves to the danger of corruption from them. The test is, Does one become a partaker by the action contemplated? If yes, our duty is clear; we must neither receive them nor give them greeting; if No, the principle here taught is not applicable” (Woods, pp.349f).
 - c. It is our Christian duty to aid one in need, even an errorist, provided we do not abet or encourage him
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in spreading his lies. What is forbidden is supplying them with an opportunity to teach error or with encouragement to do so. We must not do anything that would in any way lend support to or encourage false teaching.

- d. Coffman offers this: Present-day Christians are very reluctant to receive this teaching, Smith stating that: *Heretics are our fellow-creatures, and our office is to win them. If we close our doors and our hearts against them, we lose our opportunity of winning them and harden them in their opposition.* All such comments fail to take into consideration the identity of the people John was speaking about. They were false teachers of anti-Christian doctrine, having already acquired the status of open enemies of the Lord and of his Church. What John said of them was absolutely in line with the admonition of Jesus Christ himself who taught, concerning false teachers, that his followers were to "let them alone!" (Matt. 15:14). Hospitality and friendship extended to known enemies of the truth is a violation of our Lord's word, as well as that of the apostle John. Many a young Christian, unaware of the true nature of the enemy, as well as of the cunning seductiveness of error, has violated the prohibition here with a result of their own everlasting ruin [pp.491f].
- e. "[Neither bid him God speed] *Kai* (NT:2532) *chairein* (NT:5463) *autoo* (NT:846) *mee* (NT:3361) *legete* (NT:3004)—‘and do not say to him, hail, or joy.’ Do not wish him joy; do not hail, or salute him. The word used expresses the common form of salutation, as when we wish one health, success, prosperity, Matt 26:49; Acts 15:23; 23:26; James 1:1. It would be understood as expressing a wish for success in the enterprise in which they were embarked; and, though we should love all people, and desire their welfare, and sincerely seek their happiness, yet we can properly wish no one success in career of sin and error” (Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).

D. 2 John 1:12-13: Conclusion.

1. Verse 12: “Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.”
 - a. There were many things John wished to communicate to her but it was not expedient to do so now with pen and ink. Either the matters to be discussed were too sensitive in nature or too detailed to put into writing easily, or from the fact he was soon to see her face to face. He would wait until present to speak these things personally.
 - b. Paper was made by pressing pith from papyrus plants into sheets and pasting them together. Ink was made by mixing soot and water with gum.
 - c. “The material designated by the word used by John *chartees* (NT:5489) was the Egyptian papyrus, and the particular thing denoted was a leaf made out of that plant. The sheets were made from membranes of the plant closely pressed together. This plant was found also in Syria and Babylon, but it was produced in greater abundance in Egypt, and that was the plant which was commonly used. It was so comparatively cheap, that it in a great measure superseded the earlier materials for writing-plates of lead, or stone, or the skins of animals. It is probable that the books of the New Testament were written on this species of paper” (Barnes' Notes, BibleSoft).
2. Verse 13: “The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.”
 - a. This salutation was from the children of the elect lady’s sister. That their mother was not included suggests that she may have not lived in that area or may have been deceased.
 - b. Nothing more is said about this second lady but from what is said we can know:
 - 1) She was a Christian herself, since she was of the elect: “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious” (1 Pet. 2:4).
 - 2) She had reared her children to become Christians.
 - 3) She was a mother; she was not nun; she performed her special function in life:
 - a) 1 Timothy 5:14: “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house,

give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

- b) 1 Timothy 2:15: “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”
 - c. We do not know this saintly lady by name, but along with countless others of like precious faith, we shall know them and be known by them in eternity.
 - 1) Mark 12:41-44: “And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”
 - 2) Hebrews 11:32-40: “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”
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Additional Thoughts on “The Doctrine of Christ” by Guy N. Woods

Is the doctrine (teaching) of Christ, referred to in 2 John 9, doctrine (teaching) about Christ, or teaching which Christ did personally and through his chosen emissaries? What is the meaning of the statement, “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God” (ASV)?

The “doctrine (teaching) of Christ” is not a genitive of the object—teaching about Christ—but a subjective genitive—the teaching which the Lord himself did and that which he also accomplished through his agents. An induction of a few of the many occurrences of this construction makes clear this conclusion:

a. The “doctrines (teaching) of the Pharisees” were not matters biographically descriptive of this Jewish sect, but teaching which this Pharisaical movement sought to urge upon others (Matthew 15:9).

b. The “doctrine (teaching) of devils” was not detailed descriptions of demons, but teaching with which these wicked spirits sought to infect others (1 Timothy 4:1-6).

c. The “doctrine of vanities” taught by the heathen and denounced by Jeremiah was not teaching about vanity, but vain teaching itself (Jeremiah 10:8).

d. The “doctrine of Balaam” was not biographical data gathered to acquaint others with this faithless and apostate prophet, but the doctrine (teaching) which Balaam attempted to teach others (Revelation 2:14).

e. The “teaching” of the apostles did not consist of a collection of facts concerning Paul, Peter, John and the rest, but the teaching which these men did as ambassadors of the Christ (Acts 5:28).

f. The “principles” (doctrine) of Christ were not the rules by which he governed his own life, but that which he promulgated for his followers (Hebrews 6:1).

These are all of the same construction and are subjective genitives—clear instances of the chief feature of the genitive of “whence-case”—*out of*, or *from*. (See Winer, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Ninth English Edition, Edinburg, p. 230.) When John wrote, “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and Son,” (2 John 9, ASV), he was demonstrating that adherence to the “doctrine” (teaching) of Christ was the divine test, set up to judge the Gnostic perverters then plaguing the church. This was then, as it is today, the only infallible standard of conduct.

Verse 8, immediately preceding, warns of the loss sustained in listening to these false teachers and deceivers mentioned in verse 7. Verse 9 identifies and explains the loss—that of God himself! Whosoever goes beyond the teaching of Christ—the body of teaching which he gave to the world, “hath not God!” The verbs “goeth onward” and “abideth not” are descriptive of the same act; the first presents it positively, the second, negatively.

“Goeth onward” translates *proagoon* (the preferable reading here) and is a bit stronger in significance than the English phrase. It was used in early Greek to describe the action of an officer in urging his command forward; and, as used by John, appears to convey the double sense of going beyond that which is taught with the

implication of progress and superior knowledge. As a matter of fact, our English words *progress*, *progressive* and *progression* derive from the same verb translated “goeth onward” in the American Standard Version at this place. (See any unabridged English dictionary.)

Men often boast that they are progressive in religion; and movements, in and out of the church, have appeared whose watchword is *progressiveness*. Progress is good only when in the direction of Christ, and not away from him. In some matters it is infinitely better to be non-progressive—one of which is in not going beyond what the Lord has said! We have seen from the beloved apostle himself that any movement which is away from the teaching of Christ is progress in the wrong direction, and results eventually in the loss of God himself. The price of a sound church is a pure faith and a faultless practice. This may be enjoyed and maintained only by undeviating adherence to the truth taught in the New Testament. Faithful disciples of the Lord will evermore be on guard against any semblance of departure from that which is written, whether in teaching or practice.

Pas proagoon is not exactly of the same significance as *pas ho proagoon*. The former phrase means every one who leads onward—that is, beyond the teaching of Christ. The latter, *pas hoproagoon*, the phrase used by John in the passage under study (2 John 9), means every one who is of the group of the disposition to lead onward beyond the teaching of Christ.

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Introduction to 3 John

A. The Author of the Epistle is the Apostle John.

1. The author is simply identified therein as “the elder.” All conservative scholars believe the author to have been the apostle John. Even the most radical of the destructive critics admit that 2 John and 3 John were written by the same person.
2. The external evidence is convincing that John the apostle is the inspired penman.
 - a. Numerous ancient writers identified John as the author.
 - b. Dionysius noted that John did not name himself in his Epistles, “not even in the Second or Third Epistles, although they are short epistles, but simply calls himself the presbyter” (Eusebius, H.E. VII, xxv).
3. The internal evidence is even more convincing.
 - a. The three epistles of John have the same language, the same ideas, the same ideals.
 - b. There is little that is peculiar to this book, as distinct from the First Epistle, or the Gospel of John.
 - c. The writer describes himself in the same way, writes in a similar style, and uses many of the same phrases.
4. It is not surprising that from the earliest ages of Christianity this book has been regarded as the production of “the disciple whom Jesus loved”—the apostle John.
5. “These three Epistles [1, 2, 3 John], like the Gospel ascribed to the same author, are written without a name, but the first paragraph of the First Epistle clearly implies that it was written by an Apostle, while identity of style and diction indicates that all three came from the same writer, and from the writer of the Gospel. They were all three written late in the life of their author, and at a period in the history of the church which implies a long life on his part” (McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity*, p.123).

B. Date and place of writing, and people addressed.

1. From the many similarities between Second and Third John we infer that they were written about the same time and probably from the same place. But since the date and place are not indicated in the text, it is not possible to know precisely.
 - a. The author appears to have been an aged man (“the elder”); he often referred to his readers as “little children.” In Philemon 9, “aged” is from same word translated “elder” in 3 John 1 and other places.
 - b. John died near the end of the first century; it is likely that the epistle was written near the close of his life.
 - c. Lardner says that John “was somewhat advanced in age, and that he had resided a good while in Asia, before he wrote any of these Epistles; consequently I am disposed to think that these two (2 and 3 John) were not written sooner than the first. And as it was before argued that the First Epistle was written about the year 80, these two may be reckoned to have been written between the years 80 and 90” (Woods, p.334).
 - d. Woods thinks it was written nearer to 90 A.D. than 80 A.D.
 2. Third John was addressed to Gaius, a name commonly used in the New Testament (Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom. 1:23; 1 Cor. 1:4). We cannot know whether the Gaius of 3 John is one of these.
 - a. He may have been an elder or deacon in the congregation where he worshipped; he was a man of benevolence (verses 5-6) and greatly devoted to the truth (verse 3).
 - b. John commended Gaius for his faithfulness, and for the hospitality he had shown to the gospel preachers who had come his way; he encouraged Gaius to continue in these and not be deterred by the opposition caused by Diotrephes.
 - c. John wrote to rebuke Diotrephes for his arrogance and love of pre-eminence.
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- d. He wrote also to commend Demetrius, a faithful disciple, whom Gaius is admonished to imitate (verses 11-12).
- e. Three people are named in the letter:
 - 1) Gaius—a dependable Christian, liberal giver, hospitable, and devoted.
 - 2) Diotrephes—a church boss, dominating, boastful, and proud.
 - 3) Demetrius—commended by all, humble, kind, and worthy.
3. Characteristics of the Epistle.
 - a. The second and third epistles of John are alike in form and purpose.
 - 1) In both, the same general outline is followed, much of the same phraseology occurs, and similar grammatical construction is used.
 - 2) The definitions given to leading terms are alike.
 - 3) The purpose is similar: to strengthen faith, give encouragement to face trials, and to warn against false teachers.
 - b. Third John contains three main divisions.
 - 1) Address and greeting: verse 1.
 - 2) The main portion in which the apostle wished Gaius financial and spiritual prosperity, expressed joy at his faithfulness, complimented him for his hospitality, and denounced Diotrephes for his assumption of dictatorial powers in the congregation where he worshipped; a commendation of Demetrius is given also: verses 2-12.
 - 3) The conclusion in which he expresses his expectation of seeing Gaius soon: verses 13-14.
4. Certain key expressions occur repeatedly.
 - a. Truth—occurs six times.
 - b. The name “God” appears twice (verse 11), but Christ is not specifically named although alluded to in verse 7 (“for his name’s sake”).
 - c. The idea of “walking in truth” appears as it does in the second epistle.
5. The epistle is brief but of much value to us today.
 - a. Warnings are included which are needed today, which must not be ignored.
 - b. It shows the danger of assuming dictatorial powers.
 - c. It gives a commendation of hospitality.
 - d. It is brief, to the point, stripped of unnecessary verbiage, courteous, sympathetic and true.

C. An outline of 3 John.

1. Salutation: verses 1-4.
 - a. John’s prayer for the health and prosperity of Gaius.
 - b. Appreciation for his walking in truth.
 2. Information regarding those who carry the gospel to the lost: verses 5-8.
 - a. They go forth for the sake of the Name (of Christ).
 - b. They take no support from unbelievers.
 - c. The church has a duty to support them.
 - d. Those who support missionaries share in the blessings of the work.
 - e. Cooperation in this work is implied.
 - f. Endorsement of the work by the apostle.
 3. The church under the domination of Diotrephes: verses 9-10.
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- a. Diotrephes had used malicious words against John and others.
 - b. He rejected the letter John had written unto the church.
 - c. He forbade the church to receive the missionaries.
 - d. Excluded from fellowship those who did receive them.
4. The faithfulness of Demetrius: verses 11-12.
 5. Conclusion: verses 13-14.

D. Barnes' Introduction to Third John.

1. This brief Epistle, written to a Christian whose name was Gaius, of whom nothing more is known (compare the notes at 3 John), and in respect to which the time and place of writing it are equally unknown, embraces the following subjects:
 - a. The address, with an expression of tender attachment, and an earnest wish for his welfare and happiness, 3 John 1-2.
 - b. A commendation of his character and doings, as the writer had learned it from some brethren who had visited him particularly; (a) for his attachment to the truth, and (b) for his kindness shown to the members of his own church, and to strangers who had gone forth to some work of charity, 3 John 3-8.
 - c. The writer then adverts to the fact that he had written upon this subject to the church, commending these strangers to their attention, but that Diotrephes would not acknowledge his authority, or receive those whom he introduced to them. This conduct, he said, demanded rebuke; and he says that when he himself came, he would take proper measures to assert his own authority, and show to him and to the church the duty of receiving Christian brethren commended to them from abroad, 3 John 9-10.
 - d. He exhorts Gaius to persevere in that which was good—in a life of love and kindness, in an imitation of the benevolent God, 3 John 11.
 - e. Of another person—Demetrius—who, it would seem, had been associated with Gaius in the honorable course which he had pursued, in opposition to what the church had done, he also speaks in terms of commendation, and says that the same honorable testimony had been borne of him which had been of Gaius, 3 John 12.
 - f. As in the second Epistle, he says, in the close, that there were many things which he would be glad to say to him, but there were reasons why they should not be set down "with ink and pen," but he hoped soon to confer with him freely on those subjects face to face, and the Epistle is closed by kind salutations, 3 John 13-14.
 2. The OCCASION upon which the Epistle was written is no further known than appears from the Epistle itself. From this, the following facts are all that can now be ascertained:
 - a. That Gaius was a Christian man, and evidently a member of the church, but of what church is unknown.
 - b. That there were certain persons known to the writer of the Epistle, and who either lived where he did, or who had been commended to him by others who proposed to travel to the place where Gaius lived. Their particular OBJECT is not known, further than that it is said (3 John 7) that they "went for his name's sake;" that is, in the cause of religion. It further appears that they had resolved NOT to be dependent upon the pagan for their support, but wished the favor and friendship of the church—perhaps designing to preach to the pagan, and yet apprehending that if they desired their maintenance from them, it would be charged on them that they were mercenary in their ends.
 - c. In these circumstances, and with this view, the author of this Epistle wrote to the church, commending these brethren to their kind and fraternal regards.
 - d. This recommendation, so far as appears, would have been successful, had it not been for one man, Diotrephes, who had so much influence, and who made such violent opposition, that the church refused
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- to receive them, and they became dependent upon private charity. The GROUND of the opposition of Diotrophes is not fully stated, but it seems to have arisen from two sources: (a) a desire to rule in the church; and (b) a particular opposition to the writer of this Epistle, and a denial of any obligation to recognize his instructions or commendations as binding. The idea seems to have been that the church was entirely independent, and might receive or reject any whom it pleased, though they were commended to them by an apostle.
- e. In these circumstances, Gaius, as an individual, and against the action of the church, received and hospitably entertained these strangers, and aided them in the prosecution of their work. In this office of hospitality another member of the church, Demetrius, also shared; and to commend them for this work, particularly Gaius, at whose house probably they were entertained, is the design of this Epistle.
 - f. After having returned to the writer of this Epistle, who had formerly commended them to the church, and having borne honorable testimony to the hospitality of Gaius, it would seem that they resolved to repeat their journey for the same purpose, and that the writer of the Epistle commended them now to the renewed hospitality of Gaius. On this occasion, probably, they bore this Epistle to him. See the notes at 3 John 6-7. Nothing more is known of Diotrophes than is here specified. Erasmus and Bede supposed that he was the author of a new sect; but of this there is no evidence, and if he had been, it is probable that John would have cautioned Gaius against his influence. Many have supposed that he was a self-appointed "Bishop" or "Pastor" in the church where he resided; but there is no evidence of this, and, since John wrote to "the church," commending the strangers to "them," this would seem to be hardly probable. Compare Rev. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14. Others have supposed that he was a deacon, and had charge of the funds of the church, and that he refused to furnish to these strangers the aid out of the public treasury which they needed, and that by so doing he hindered them in the prosecution of their object. But all this is mere conjecture, and it is now impossible to ascertain what office he held, if he held any. That he was a man of influence is apparent; that he was proud, ambitious, and desirous of ruling, is equally clear; and that he prevailed upon the church not to receive the strangers commended to them by the apostle is equally manifest.
3. Of the rank and standing of Demetrius nothing more is known. Benson supposes that he was the bearer of this letter, and that he had gone with the brethren referred to in order to preach to the Gentiles. But it seems more probable that he was a member of the church to which Gaius belonged, and that he had concurred with him in rendering aid to the strangers who had been rejected by the influence of Diotrophes. If he had gone with these strangers, and had carried this letter, it would have been noticed, and it would have been in accordance with the apostolic custom, that he should have been commended to the favorable attentions of Gaius. In regard to the authenticity and the canonical authority of this Epistle, see the introduction at the beginning of the Second Epistle. [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].
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THIRD JOHN

A. Salutation to Gaius: 3 John 1-4.

1. Verse 1: “The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.”
 - a. The author identifies himself simply as “the elder,” the same term used in the salutation of Second John; Paul used the same word to describe himself in Philemon 9. Both John and Paul were speaking of their age; neither was saying he was an elder in the official sense.
 - b. John addressed the letter to “the well-beloved Gaius” which shows that Gaius was highly esteemed by other Christians. And John declares his own love for this faithful saint. Gaius was a faithful Christian whom John loved in truth—his love was sincere and genuine; it was the love that one faithful Christian has for another faithful Christian. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).
 - c. The name *Gaius* was commonly used in the first century, so we are not able to know whether this is the same individual as one of those mentioned in other New Testament passages:
 - 1) Acts 19:29: “And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.”
 - 2) Acts 20:4: “And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.”
 - 3) Romans 16:23: “Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.”
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 1:14: “I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius.”
2. Verse 2: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (KJV). “Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (ASV).
 - a. John’s wish (prayer, see ASV) for Gaius was that his health might be as sound and his circumstances as prosperous as his soul. He again used the tender term “beloved” in reference to Gaius, a word that also appears in verses five and eleven.
 - b. John prayed that Gaius might prosper. This seems to imply that he was not a financially prosperous man. It also appears that this dear brother was not in good health. John’s prayer was that he might be more prosperous financially and obtain a greater measure of physical health. Another possibility, of course, is that the apostle prayed for the continuation of his financial and healthful well-being.
 - c. “This verse thus contains an address of affection; it reveals that John was praying for his beloved friend and brother in the Lord; it informs us that that for which he prayed was that Gaius might (a) prosper (financially) ; and (b) be in health; that such should be to the extent that his soul prospered. Here, incidentally, is the standard by which to determine how rich one may safely become: *just so long as the soul prospers!* So long as one enjoys soul prosperity, his riches bless and benefit not only himself, but others; when they impair spiritual health, the interests of the soul demand, as in the case of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17, 31), that a surgical operation be performed and they be severed from us!” (Woods, p.357).
 - d. The well-being of our soul is vastly more important than the health of our physical body or our financial standing. John’s statement shows that the soul can prosper. How would this be possible if the soul is merely the life-force of our body [an error of the Watchtower Witnesses and other materialists]? The health of one’s soul is the pre-eminent concern:
 - 1) Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things

- shall be added unto you.”
- 2) Matthew 16:24-26: “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
 - 3) Luke 9:23-26: “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.”
3. Verse 3: “For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.”
- a. John rejoiced when brethren came and bore witness of the truth Gaius maintained and in which he walked. The verbs (*came* and *testified*) are present participles which suggest brethren on more than one occasion brought this excellent report to John about Gaius. From these reports John could know that Gaius was walking in the truth—he directed his life by the truth of the gospel. No greater tribute could be paid to a Christian than this!
 - b. We are not told who these brethren were, but it is likely that they were the ones Diotrephes would not receive (verse 5-10). The brethren who brought the good reports about Gaius were obviously telling the truth about both Gaius and Diotrephes.
 - c. John had written a letter of recommendation to the church in behalf of these brethren (verses 5-9); Gaius had been hospitable to them. Gaius was liberal in giving, hospitable, and performed good works (verses 5-6); this John describes in verse 3 as “walking in the truth.” Faith without works of obedience is no more beneficial than faith without love or works without love.
 - 1) Galatians 5:6: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”
 - 3) 1 John 3:16-19: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.”
 - 4) James 2:14-26: “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was

imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

4. Verse 4: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”
 - a. John indicates his great satisfaction when his children (those whom he converted to the truth, or those with whom he was closely associated) walked in truth. This great joy is felt by all who see those they have been instrumental in converting to Christ growing in the faith. It may be the case that John had taught and converted some of these members, including Gaius.
 - b. The Greek word “greater” is a double comparative, thus giving added emphasis to the term, as “betterer” or “more better” would be [Coffman, Woods].
 - c. When someone we converted returns to the world or to some false religion, our hearts are sorely afflicted; when we see our converts growing and prospering in the faith, our hearts rejoice. Whether they remain faithful or fall away, our soul is safe in either case: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:11-15).
 - d. “From verses 5 and 6, it appears that Gaius' faithfulness consisted not only of devotion to the cause of the Lord, but in liberality, hospitality and good works. In these matters that disciple continued; and this, John described as *walking in truth!* Again, there is emphasized here, that which is repeatedly taught throughout the Bible: it is not possible to separate theory and practice in genuine Christianity” (Woods, p.359).
 - 1) Galatians 5:6: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”
 - 2) John 13:17: “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

B. Information Regarding Evangelism: 3 John 1:5-8.

1. Verse 5: “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers.”
 - a. John commends Gaius for the various acts of faithfulness he had done, including the hospitality he had shown for the brethren and others. Diotrophes may not have liked these good deeds of Gaius, but John (and consequently the Lord) spoke highly of such kind and beneficial deeds.
 - b. Public Inns: It is noteworthy that all the indisputable designations of "inn" come in with the Greek period. Josephus (Ant., XV, v, 1; BJ, I, xxi, 7) speaks of "Public inns" under the name of *katagoga*, while in the Aramaic Jewish writings we meet with '*ushpiza*', from Latin *hospitium*....these are used of public inns, and they all correspond to the modern "*khan*" or "*caravanserai*." These are to be found on the great trade routes all over the East. In their most elaborate form they have almost the strength of a fortress. They consist of a great quadrangle into which admission is gained through a broad, strong gateway. The quadrangle is enclosed on all sides by a 2-story building, the windows in the case of the lower story opening only to the interior. The upper story is reached by stairways, and has a gangway all around, giving access to the practically bare rooms which are at the disposal of travelers.

- 1) Their Evil Name: There is usually a well of good water in the center of the quadrangle, and travelers as a rule bring their own food and often that of their animals (Judg. 19:19) with them. There are no fixed payments, and on departure, the arranging of *haqq el-khan* generally means a disagreeable dispute, as the innkeepers are invariably untruthful, dishonest and oppressive. They have ever been regarded as of infamous character. The Roman laws in many places recognize this. In Mishna, Yebhamoth, xvi. 7 the word of an innkeeper was doubted, and Mishna, `Abbodhah Zarah, ii.4 places them in the lowest scale of degradation. The New Testament is quite clear in speaking of "Rahab the harlot" (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). The Targum designates her an "innkeeper," while Rashi translates *zonah* as "a seller of kinds of food," a meaning the word will bear. [*~Chimchi*], however, accepts both meanings.
 - 2) This evil repute of public inns, together with the Semitic spirit of hospitality, led the Jews and the early Christians to prefer to recommend the keeping of open house for the entertainment of strangers. In the Jewish Morning Prayers, even in our day, such action is linked with great promises, and the New Testament repeatedly (Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3John 1:5) commends hospitality. It is remarkable that both the Talmud (Shab 127a) and the New Testament (Heb. 13:2) quote the same passage (Gen. 18:3) in recommending it. [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, ISBE].
- c. Showing hospitality is a great blessing to those in need of it, but it is even a greater blessing to those who show it. In our modern society, when thieves and murderers operate under the guise of religion and need, we must exercise caution for the safety and well-being of our family; but there are many occasions in which hospitality may be safely practiced.
- 1) Matthew 10:42: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."
 - 2) Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - 3) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Modern transportation and accommodations have removed many of the usual opportunities that might otherwise be given us to show hospitality. "Doing good" includes hospitality.
 - 4) The Mosaic Law required the Israelites to be hospitable: "*But* the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:34).
- d. "What is in view here is the marvelous hospitality of Gaius extended to traveling brethren who were spreading the gospel; and the words 'strangers withal' show that he did not merely entertain those with whom he was personally acquainted. There were good solid reasons why traveling preachers of that day depended upon faithful brethren such as Gaius for their maintenance. The scarcity of inns, the disreputable character of such inns as were available, and the general poverty of many Christians contributed to this necessity" (Coffman, p.506).
2. Verse 6: "Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well."
 - a. The ones identified by the pronoun *which* [who] includes the brethren and strangers of the preceding verse. These strangers were also brethren in the Lord with Gaius. These testified to the church of Gaius' faithfulness and acts of love. The congregation mentioned is not further identified, though it was probably the church in Ephesus where John is said to have been living at the time. It appears that the commendation of Gaius given by these brethren was presented before the church.
 - b. The second part of the verse indicates that these same preachers were planning another trip to where

Gaius lived. John urged Gaius to aid them again and to send them forth on their journey in a manner that is worthy of a faithful saint. It was customary then for the host to go with his guests a little way as they departed his house to continue their journey, providing some food for the travelers, and to bid them God speed as they journeyed.

- 1) Romans 15:24: “Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.”
 - 2) Titus 3:13: “Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.”
 - 3) Acts 21:5: “And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.”
 - 4) Growing up in rural Tennessee during the 1940s, we often visited and were visited by relatives, sometimes spending the weekend. The method of travel was on a farm wagon pulled by a team of horses or mules. When the visiting family started back home, the youngsters of the other family would run along beside the departing wagon, talking and laughing for perhaps a mile. Company was thoroughly enjoyed and we wanted to delay the parting for as long as possible.
3. Verse 7: “Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.”
- a. The name mentioned was the name of Christ:
 - 1) James 2:7: “Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?”
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:16: “but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name” (ASV).
 - 3) Acts 3:6: “Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”
 - 4) Philippians 2:9-11: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - 5) Ephesians 1:19-23: “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
 - 6) Colossians 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - 7) Acts 4:11-12: “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 - 8) Acts 5:41: “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”
 - 9) Romans 1:5-6: “By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.”
 - b. “Thus early in the history of Christianity, the *name* represented all that Christ was and taught and did. When the shadow of Dark Ages descended upon the world, the word became a passport in dangerous places, serving as an introduction and protection to those who accepted the Lord's standard. When the
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- agents of persecution came to ferret out the martyr, and when civil and papal edicts shut the door of sympathy, occasionally help could be obtained by knocking at the door of others, and whispering, ‘In the Name!’ As the *name* in the Old Testament stands for Jehovah so in the New Testament, it is the synonym for *Christ*. These words explain why the hospitality which Gaius accorded the missionaries which came his way was so essential and important. They ‘went forth,’ not in their own name, or by their own authority, but ‘in the name of’ (by the authority of) Christ, to bear his message to the lost. They were thus entirely worthy of the bounty bestowed upon them, the shelter and food which they receive” (Woods, pp.361f).
- c. These traveling preachers accepted no aid from the pagan Gentiles, lest they should be charged with preaching for worldly gain. It was not likely that the unbelieving Gentiles would have proffered any material support to these workers; John’s point here is that they did not ask the Gentiles for any help. What a great contrast this is to the television *evangelists* of our day! Not only do they accept money from anybody, they are extremely bold in soliciting it.
 - d. “Gaius will lodge these missionaries, but this is the least he will do; he will also send them forward on their journey, which does not mean with only a friendly goodbye but with adequate supplies. Since they traveled on foot and often covered considerable distances until some other congregation or some friend like Gaius gave them new supplies, this sending forward required money. The love of Gaius would not be miserly. John knows that Gaius will send these brethren forward ‘in a manner worthy of God,’ of him in whose cause they are assuming no little hardship even when they receive much help” (Lenski, quoted by Vestal, *Studies in 1,2,3 John*, ADL Lectures, 1987).
4. Verse 8: “We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.”
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) “I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not” (ASV).
 - 2) “We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth” (NKJ).
 - b. We (Christians who are able) have an obligation to render aid to those who are willing to go forth bearing the precious seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). These willing workers are not to receive help from unbelievers, so it is incumbent upon the saints to do all they can in support of evangelism.
 - c. John uses the word “receive” [*welcome*, ASV]. We have an moral obligation to aid and assist these faithful preachers as they journey forth spreading the gospel. We are to receive them with a warm welcome; we are to do so on a continuing basis.
 - d. “As those who welcome and support those who preach false doctrines become partakers with them 2 John 9), so those who receive and maintain those who preach the truth become fellow-workers for the truth. The word ‘welcome’ is translated from a word which, in the first century, signified the reception of people into one’s house, the association which attends such receptions; the fellowship which obtains; and the readiness with which, under such circumstances, provisions are supplied them” (Woods, p.362).
5. Verse 9: “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) “I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority” (ESV).
 - 2) “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us” (NKJ).
 - 3) “I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not” (ASV).
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- b. John had written a letter to the church where Diotrephes and Gaius were, but the ungodly Diotrephes would not receive “us.” He rejected the letter; and if it had been carried by the missionaries, they were also rejected; since the letter came from John, he likewise was rejected.
- c. Diotrephes may have been an elder or preacher; he had a position of influence, whether scriptural or assumed. He loved to have *preeminence*—a strong desire to be the chief. The attitude is one which is completely forbidden by the gospel.
- 1) Matthew 23:1-12: “Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”
 - 2) Philippians 2:1-5: “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”
 - 3) Romans 12:10: “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another” (NKJ).
 - 4) Romans 12:10: “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor” (ESV).
 - 5) Matthew 20:25-28: “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
 - 6) Even a scripturally-appointed eldership is not to act as lords of God’s flock: “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- d. Unfortunately, the spirit of Diotrephes has not died, for there are too many today who seek to hold preeminence in local congregations—as self-appointed dictators, as *she-elders*, as matriarchs or patriarchs, or as *head-elder*. Even some preachers have assumed a position of domination over the congregation they serve.
6. Verse 10: “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”
- a. John had intentions of visiting the region; if he were able to do so, he assured Gaius he would
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- remember the wicked works and words of Diotrephes. He would not be intimidated by this evil man. John promised he would deal justly. The tense of the word “doeth” indicates that his evil deeds were constantly being done.
- b. “[Prating against us] The word ‘prate,’ *fluareoo* (NT:5396), occurring nowhere else in the New Testament, means to ‘overflow with talk,’ (Greek *fluoo* (NT:5397), Latin: ‘fluo,’ flow); to talk much without weight, or to little purpose; to be loquacious; to trifle; or, to use an expression common among us, and which accords well with the Greek, to run on in talk, without connection or sense. The word does not properly imply that there was malignity or ill-feeling in what was said, but that the talk was of an idle, foolish, and unprofitable character. As John here, however, specifies that there was a bad spirit in the manner in which Diotrephes expressed himself, the real thing which is implied in the use of the word here is, that there were much talk of that kind; that he was addicted to this habit of ‘running on’ against the apostle; and that he was thus constantly undermining his influence, and injuring his character” [Barnes' Notes, Biblesoft].
 - c. “Diotrephes did not content himself with merely talking—‘prating against us with wicked words’; he acted, as the remainder of the verse shows. The original word for ‘prating’ (*phluareo*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and it means, according to Thayer, Arndt-Gingrich, et al, to utter nonsense, to bring idle or unjustified charges, to accuse one falsely with malicious words. (Cf. 1 Tim. 5:13 where the kindred term for tattlers is found.) John threatened Diotrephes with the same type of treatment which Paul said that he would give the Corinthians. (See 2 Cor. 13:1-3)” (ALC, 1965, p.151).
 - d. He refused to receive the brethren which came from John in the Lord’s name—wholly unwarranted action. If Diotrephes had no liking for the apostle John, it is obvious that he would be antagonistic toward those John sent. He also forbade others in the congregation to receive these messengers.
 - e. Those who refused to bow to his will were expelled from membership in the congregation. Diotrephes was not able to sever the relationship which obtains between the faithful saints and their Lord; Christ adds the saved to the church and only he can remove them from that state (when they become unfaithful). But Diotrephes could force their exclusion from the local congregation [although he had no authority to do so].
 - f. Diotrephes was truly a servant of the devil. John warned that he would properly deal with this ungodly man; he does not specify how he would do so. Compare:
 - 1) “This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you” (2 Cor. 13:1-3).
 - 2) “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:19-20).
 - 3) “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our
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passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:1-7).

- g. Diotrophes “was an ambitious, unscrupulous, church boss, opposed alike to apostolic authority and missionary work, a servant of Satan and an agent of the devil. Diotrophes' conduct was insubordination of the most advanced type and the apostle promised to deal in summary fashion with him when he arrived. Just what course John would follow, he does not indicate; we may be sure that he would expose the rebellious disposition characteristic of the man, exhibit the ungodliness he was manifesting, and warn the saints against him. He would, of course, be divested of any further authority in the congregation; and if he did not repent, would be speedily excluded from the fellowship of the church” (Woods, p.364).

C. The Faithfulness of Demetrius: 3 John 1:11-12.

1. Verse 11: “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”
 - a. John had described the ungodly Diotrophes; he now calls on Gaius not to imitate that which is evil (one such as Diotrophes), but to imitate (mimic) that which is good. The apostle now gives the good example of Demetrius and uses him as the kind of example Gaius is to imitate. Diotrophes' example was to be shunned; but Demetrius was one who could be safely followed. Paul is used in the scriptures as a good example for all saint to imitate:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”
 - 2) Philippians 4:9: ‘Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.’
 - 3) Ephesians 5:1: “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”
 - b. He who does good is of God since He is the source of all that is good. Even ungodly men may do infrequent acts of goodness, but the pattern of their lives is not good but evil. But good men such as Demetrius and Paul get their attitudes and practices from God.
 - c. “Here, again, the verb ‘doeth’ is a present participle (*poion*), and thus denotes a settled mode of life. Conversely, he who practices evil continually evidences that he has not seen God, i.e., has never become acquainted with him” (Woods, p.365).
 - 1) 1 John 3:6-7: “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.”
 - 2) Matthew 15:18-19: “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”
 - 3) Matthew 12:34-37: ‘O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’
2. Verse 12: “Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.”
 - a. In direct opposition to Diotrophes, Demetrius was held in high esteem as a godly man by all who knew him; they bore witness to this effect. John adds his own witness that Demetrius was a good man.
 - b. His life was directed by the dictates of the truth (God’s word), and thus the word itself bore witness that Demetrius was a good man. An outlaw is one whose life is repudiated by the law which he violates; a law-abiding citizen is one whose life is approved by the law.
 - c. John assures Gaius that he already knows the reliability of John’s testimony. This is not merely John’s

unsupported assertion, although for one who knew the apostle that would be sufficient. The statement is made part of the inspired text, thus has the double stamp of veracity—the affirmation of the apostle himself and that of the Holy Spirit by whose guidance John wrote.

- d. Having a good report from those who know us is exceedingly important—this determines the weight of our Christian influence. [The following excerpt is taken from the author's commentary on Matthew 5].
- 1) If our country suddenly lost all or even most of Christianity's saving influences, think of the horrible consequences that would quickly develop. All of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) would increase to the fullest degree. There would be no reason extant for God to preserve the nation (Ps. 9:17; Isa. 60:12; 2 Chron. 7:14; Deut. 9:3-5; 2 Kings 17:13-18; Jer. 18:7-10; 51:49,53; 51:54-56,58).
 - 2) Where the influence of Christianity is not found, "the living conditions for the masses are wretched; a few rich masters rule with a ruthless and iron hand. Liberties are crushed; little value is placed on human life; living conditions are squalid; and opportunities for betterment are few" (Marlin, J.T., *The Sermon on the Mount*, Spiritual Sword Lectures, p.62). There is no way that any nation can long continue without the preserving, uplifting influence of godliness. Christianity is the only hope for a happy future for our nation or any other nation.
 - 3) Therefore, if Christians (the salt) lose their savor, with what shall society be flavored and preserved? There would be no hope. And the passage (Matt. 5:13-16) illustrates the utterly worthless state of an apostate Christian! He is represented as adulterated salt which has no flavoring or preserving quality. Corrupted salt cannot be thrown on the fields for it still has power to destroy good crops; it can only be thrown on the footpaths and roads where it is trodden underfoot. Such a Christian is good for nothing! This teaches the supreme importance of remaining completely unadulterated by the world. It is significant that salt does not lose its special qualities unless it becomes adulterated from without. Left pure, salt retains its qualities. But saints, like salt, can become contaminated and thus lose their special properties which make them valuable and useful to the Lord.
 - 4) Faithful Christians are the only ones who can really give light to the world (and this is the reflected light of Christ!). The world of the first century was in utter darkness as is shown by the crime, strife and sin which were so prevalent. The great Greek philosophers (Plato, Socrates, Aristotle) had given their wisdom and influence to the world but the world was still steeped in spiritual darkness.
 - 5) In the face of the failure of the earth's great men (philosophers, political and military leaders, religionists, *et al*), the Lord announced in this passage that those lowly Jewish disciples (fishermen, tax collectors, etc.) would be the world's hope for light! The great thinkers have been baffled by this.
 - 6) The ordinary Christian who knows little or nothing about philosophy and other human wisdom, knows and understands more about life than the greatest worldly experts. This is possible because he knows the Book, which gives us all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12; Acts 20:32; John 10:10; Matt. 5:1-12; 5:13-7:29).
 - 7) "The world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21, ASV). About 35 years after the Lord's church was established, Tacitus (the Roman historian), wrote with astonishment: "This pestilent superstition, thou checked for the time being, broke out afresh, not only in Juda, where the mischief started, but also at Rome, where all manner of horrible and loathsome things pour in and become fashionable" (see Marlin, p.69). This unbelieving scholar could not understand how the flame of Christianity could go on burning. God's truth is not based on worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

D. 3 John 13-14: Conclusion.

1. Verses 13: "I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee."
 - a. The apostle had other things he wanted to address to Gaius, but he knew that he could communicate that information better to him orally. Since he was planning to see Gaius soon, those matters could be better left until they could meet face-to-face. While we would be most interested in learning the details of these "many things," it was not viewed by the Holy Spirit as sufficiently important to be made part of the permanent record.
 - b. The "pen" was a reed used as a stylus; the "ink" was a black substance prepared by mixing soot and oil. Writing material is mentioned also in these passages:
 - 1) 2 John 1:12: "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 3:3: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."
2. Verse 14: "But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name."
 - a. The apostle again expresses his hope to see Gaius soon and speak face to face with him. Thus, he expects to communicate the matters suggested in verse 13 with him first hand. To speak personally is more effective, easier and quicker than writing.
 - b. Peace be unto thee was a common greeting:
 - 1) John 20:19: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."
 - 2) John 20:26: "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."
 - c. *Peace* sums up the blessings that faithful Christians have in Christ. When disobedience obtains between man and God, a state of war exists, not peace. What is more important than having peace with God? To be in a state of sin is to be hostile toward God, whether one realizes it or not. But if one faithfully obeys the gospel, he has peace with God (Eph. 2:11-22). This peace is made possible by the sacrificial death of Christ (Phil. 4:6,7,9; Acts 10:36). Peace is one of the prominent blessings Christians have.
 - 1) Romans 8:6: "For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace."
 - 2) Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - 4) Romans 15:13: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 13:11: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
 - 6) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - 7) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - 8) Philippians 4:6-7, 9: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all

understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus....Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

- 9) Acts 10:36: “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all).”
- d. The friends salute thee—John is joined in the salutation by friends of Gaius, perhaps residing in Ephesus. These friends are not identified, but obviously were faithful members of the church of Christ. We wonder whether this reference might be the source of the common name worn by the Quakers? The following reveals some pertinent information about this human institution:
- 1) “The Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, is a body of Christians that originated in 17th century England under George Fox. In 1988 the society had 200,260 members, with heavy concentrations in the United States (109,000), East Africa (45,000) and Great Britain (18,000). Quakers unite in affirming the immediacy of Christ's teaching; they hold that believers receive divine guidance from an inward light, without the aid of intermediaries or external rites. Meetings for worship can be silent, without ritual or professional clergy, or programmed, in which a minister officiates.
 - 2) “Although their antecedents lie in English Puritanism and in the Anabaptist movement, the Society of Friends was formed during the English Civil War. Around 1652, George Fox began preaching that since there was ‘that of God in every man,’ a formal church structure and educated ministry were unnecessary. His first converts spread their faith throughout England, denouncing what they saw as social and spiritual compromises and calling individuals to an inward experience of God. In spite of schism and persecution, the new movement expanded during the Puritan Commonwealth (1649 - 60) and after the restoration of the monarchy (1660). By openly defying restrictive legislation, Friends helped achieve passage of the Toleration Act of 1689.
 - 3) “In colonial America, enclaves of Quakers existed in Rhode Island, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and western New Jersey. In Pennsylvania, founded by William Penn as a refuge for Quakers and as a ‘holy experiment’ in religious toleration, Friends maintained an absolute majority in the assembly until 1755 and remained a potent force until the American Revolution. Between 1754 and 1776, Friends throughout America strengthened their commitment to pacifism and began to denounce slavery. After the Revolution, Friends concentrated on a wide variety of reform activities: Indian rights, prison reform, temperance, abolition, freedmen's rights, education, and the women's movement.
 - 4) “In a conflict over theology that was complicated by social tensions, the Society underwent a series of schisms beginning in 1827 and ending with the formation of three major subgroups: Hicksites (liberal), Orthodox (evangelical), and Conservative (quietist). During the 20th century, however, Friends have attempted to heal their differences. Many yearly meetings have merged, and most Friends cooperate in organizations such as the Friends World Committee for Consultation and the Friends World Conferences. The rapid growth of pastoral Quakerism in Africa and of silent meetings in Europe makes the Society of Friends an international organization.
 - 5) “The American Friends Service Committee is an independent service organization founded in 1917 to aid conscientious objectors. Today it also provides help to the needy in the United States and a number of Third World countries” [J. William Frost, Quaker website].
- e. Salute the friends by name—in saluting by name, the name of each was to be specifically mentioned. It pleases us all to have our names remembered and called.
- 1) John 10:3: “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own by name.”
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:19: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord

knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

- 3) John wanted to follow the Lord’s example and have Gaius greet the brethren by name for him.
- f. “The tremendous importance of this letter is seen in the fact that it deals with the prime sin of the ages, the seeking and the grasping on the part of evil men for the control levers of God's church on earth. The spirit of Diotrephes still rides high and mighty in the ecclesiastical counsels of the earth, denying and contradicting the holy teachings of Christ and his apostles; but the loving apostle unmasked it for what it is in the glowing lines of this precious fragment of the word of the Lord” (Coffman, p.514).
3. Some General Lessons Gleaned From Third John [The following is taken from *Biblical Notes*, Sept., 1983, written by Roy Deaver].
 - a. The apostle John, faithful, elderly, servant of the Lord, is a beautiful example of how God wants us to deal with error. When John learned about the problem caused by the dictator Diotrephes, he immediately got to work on the problem. His message was clear, pointed, and forceful. Such sins (as those of Diotrephes) are not to be ignored, and are not to be tolerated among God’s people.
 - b. It is right for us to be concerned about physical health. It is more important that we be concerned about our spiritual health. The right concern about our spiritual health will cause us to be meaningfully concerned about our physical health. We must present our bodies unto God.
 - c. Like John, we ought to rejoice in every right effort to extend the influence of the truth. We must be anxious to get the whole gospel to the whole world—in our generation. Now!
 - d. To be right with God we must walk in the truth. We walk in the truth by observing God’s commandments, by being obedient to His will. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Lk. 1:5,6).
 - e. Like John, we rejoice in hearing about the faithfulness of those whom we have been instrumental in bringing to the Christ.
 - f. We are acting faithfully” (i.e. according to God’s will) when we do the best we can to help those faithful servants who are determined to accomplish the Lord’s will.
 - g. It is right and good and necessary for missionaries to report on their work “before the church.”
 - h. We should send out and support those who labor in the gospel “... in a manner worthy of God” (NASV, verse 6).
 - i. Faithful servants of the Lord will work...for the sake of the Name.” They will not work to accomplish their own will, but the will of Him to whom they belong.
 - j. These missionaries went forth “...accepting nothing from the Gentiles.” It is important that we do nothing (that is, in the area of expediency) that would in any way jeopardize our efforts to reach men with the gospel of Christ. However, we must be faithful in proclaiming that gospel. We cannot compromise, and be right with God.
 - k. In supporting faithful servants of the Lord, brethren are being “fellow-workers with the truth.” Compare: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:3-5).
 - l. When one rejects what the Bible teaches he is rejecting the authority of the apostles, the authority of the Christ Himself, and the authority of God.
 - m. It is right and is necessary that faithful men deal with any and all who would hinder the Lord’s work. These must be identified, and their sins must be pointed out.
 - n. Diotrephes could refuse to do according to the letter from John, and he could reject the authority of John, but John was right. Diotrephes was wrong! Diotrephes will face John’s letter in the Judgment.

- o. When men use “wicked words” in talking about the Bible, and when they refuse to recognize its authority—they are guilty of the sins of Diotrephes.
- p. Diotrephes was guilty of the terrible sin of “anti-ism”—the sin of making a law that God did not make. Cf. Acts 15:1, Gal. 2:1-5; 1 Tim. 4:1-3. This is a sin which has always plagued the church. It is just as sinful for one to attempt to make a law which God did not make as it is for one to violate a law which God did make.
- 1) Acts 15:1: “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.”
 - 2) Galatians 2:1-5: “Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”
- q. It needs to be observed that John wrote this letter (condemning Diotrephes) before he talked with him “face to face.” And, it is possible that John never did get to talk with Diotrephes “face to face.” The idea that I have to talk personally with a false teacher (who has taught his false views publicly) before I can respond to him and to his teaching, is wrong.
- r. Diotrephes was not an “eldership.” There is no evidence that he was even one of the elders. He assumed the authority to disfellowship any and all who would violate a law which he had made. He had no such authority. He stood condemned for assuming such.
- s. It took some real courage for some of the brethren (who wanted to help the missionaries) to proceed to do so in spite of Diotrephes and the law which he had made. But, they did help the missionaries, and they were disfellowshipped. Not all “fellowship” is right, and not all “disfellowship” is wrong. The fact that certain ones were disfellowshipped by Diotrephes did not mean that they were out of fellowship with God. And, if there were some brethren who joined Diotrephes in his views, and who were thus in fellowship with each other, it does not follow that they were in fellowship with God.
- t. John says: “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.” He cites a wonderful example, the man Demetrius. He was truly a man of good report—from everyone, from the truth, and from the apostle John.
- u. Many things *can* be dealt with in *writing*, and *ought* to be dealt with in *writing*, and are *best* dealt with in *writing*. But, there are some things which can be dealt with “face to face.”
- v. The word “receive” is used in verses 9 and 10. Diotrephes refused to “receive” John and John’s letter. Diotrephes refused to “receive” the brethren—the missionaries, and he (Diotrephes) forbade and cast out of the congregation the brethren who did (or who did want to) receive the missionaries. “Receive” here is the translation of the Greek *dechomai*, compounded with various prepositions in different passages. We should study this word as it is used in the following: Acts 18:27; Romans 16:2; Acts 2:41; Acts 15:4; Acts 21:17. The following (from Thayer) is significant: “...the suggestion of a welcoming or an appropriating reception generally cleaves to *dechomai*.”
- 1) Acts 18:27: “And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the

disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.”

- 2) Romans 16:2: “That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.”
- 3) Acts 2:41: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”
- 4) Acts 15:4: “And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.”
- 5) Acts 21:17: “And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.”

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Introduction to Jude

A. The Author of the Epistle Calls Himself Jude.

1. “This brief document claims as its author ‘Judas the brother of James.’ There is some doubt as to whether he was Judas the Apostle (Luke vi. 16; John xiv. 22) or the Judas who was one of the Lord’s brothers (Mark vi. 3). If the correct rendering of Luke vi. 16 were ‘Judas *brother* of James,’ this would identify him as the Apostle; for here he gives himself this title. But the general usage of the Greek language is against that rendering...and in favor of the rendering ‘Judas *son* of James.’ Again, it has been held by some that the James whose brother he was, is James the Apostle, son of Alphaeus; but this is highly improbable.
 - a. “The preponderance of opinion is that he was brother of the James called the Lord’s brother, and consequently himself a brother of the Lord, and that he designates himself by the former title rather than by the latter, because it was more modest in view of the fact that the Lord had long ago ascended to heaven. It is confirmatory of this view, that he omits to style himself an Apostle, and that he rather distinguishes himself from the Apostles by speaking of the latter in the third person, saying, ‘Remember the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.’
 - b. “This Epistle bears no internal evidence of date except that it was written after the church had become infested by a large number of desperately wicked men (4-12). Its striking similarity to the second chapter of II Peter shows that one of the two writers had seen the other’s Epistle and made much use of its material. If it could be determined with certainty which is the older of the two, this would help to fix the date of Jude; but the question, though long debated, is still unsettled” (McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity*, pp.122f).
2. We would question whether one inspired New Testament writer ever found it necessary to copy material from any other New Testament writer; if he was inspired to write part or most of the information ascribed to him, he could just as easily be inspired to record every other part. There is no reason why the Holy Spirit could not reveal similar information to two different writers at different places or times. The Holy Spirit could have done similar things to different speakers who were operating at different places.

B. The Author is Jude, the Lord’s half-brother.

1. Several men with the name found in the New Testament.
 - a. The Judas with whom Paul lodged in Damascus: “And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11).
 - b. Judas Barsabas: “Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren” (Acts 15:22).
 - c. Judas the son [or brother] of James (Luke 6:16: Acts 1:13: John 14:22—an apostle.
 - 1) Luke 6:16: “And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.”
 - 2) Acts 1:13: “And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.”
 - 3) John 14:22: “Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”
 - d. Judas the half-brother of the Lord [they had the same mother but not the same father].
 - 1) Matthew 13:55: “Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?”
 - 2) Mark 6:3: “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.”

- 3) Mary and Joseph had four natural sons and at least two daughters; Jesus was, of course, born of the virgin birth to Mary: "...Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:20; cf. Isa. 7:14).

The Twelve Apostles

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James, Son of Zebedee	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James, son of Alphaeus	James	James	James
Lebbeus, Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Simon Zelotes	Simon Zelotes
Simon the Canaanite	Simon	Judas, son of James	Judas, son of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot

2. Which of these men named Jude [Juda or Judas] was the writer of the book of Jude? If the writer is not one of those named earlier, then there is no way to identify him. It is not likely that an unknown person would have been permitted to write part of the New Testament.
- a. The Judas of Acts 9 is not likely, for he owned a house and lived in Damascus.
 - b. There is no indication that Judas Barsabbas had a brother named James; the writer of Jude did have such a brother (Jude 1). The apostle James, the brother of John, was dead (Acts 12). This James [of Jude 1:1] was the one prominently mentioned in connection with the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13: Gal. 1:18: 2:9).
 - 1) Acts 15:13: "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me."
 - 2) Galatians 1:18: "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."
 - 3) Galatians 2:9: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."
 - c. The writer of Jude was not an apostle: the authoritative nature of the book would call for him to identify himself as an apostle if he were such. Paul identified himself as an apostle in the salutation of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus; the

nature of his other letters, together with the fact that he was so well known by them, did not require that he emphasize his apostleship. Jude is not one of the apostles:

- 1) Jude 1:1: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." [He did not call himself an apostle].
- 2) Jude 1:17: "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." He distinguished himself from the apostles of Christ, clearly indicating that he was not one of their number.

d. It follows that Jude, the half brother of the Lord, is the author of Jude.

3. He identifies himself as "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" (Jude 1).

a. The most widely known James at this time [about 65 A. D.] was the Lord's brother (Acts 15:13: Gal. 1:18: 2:9). This James is not the apostle James [cf. Acts 12]. The writer of James was another half-brother to Jesus [according to scholarship] and was the full brother of Jude.

b. Jude was married: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (1 Cor. 9:5).

c. He did not at first believe in Jesus:

1) John 7:3-8: "His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come."

2) Acts 1:14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

d. "Eusebius preserves a story which he derived from Hegesippus that in the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian, two grandsons of Jude, Zocer and James, were summoned before the king for examination on the ground that they belonged to the royal line of David and might seek to regain the throne. When he saw that they were poor peasants, that their hands were horny with toil, and that they owned only thirty-nine acres of land he dismissed them with contempt. From the same source, we learn that these men became elders, and lived until the time of Trajan; and that they were greatly honored because of their faithful testimony before the king" (Woods, p.375).

e. He was a humble man, since he names his spiritual relationship with the Lord before his fleshly kinship with Jesus. Compare:

1) Luke 11:27-28: "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

2) Matthew 10:36-37: "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

C. Some Characteristics of the Epistle of Jude.

1. There were certain troubles which then confronted the brethren that needed to be addressed.

a. It seems clear that Jude intended to write a message regarding the common salvation, but that special circumstances had arisen which demanded that the brethren earnestly contend for the faith (see verse three).

b. False teachers had arisen and were threatening the spiritual welfare of the church; Jude wrote to call

- on the brethren to strive in behalf of the faith and against error.
2. The epistle is rather severe in exposing and denouncing the error that threatened the church.
 - a. If Jude had been an apostle, it would have added even greater authority to the instructions if he had identified himself as an apostle; since he did not do so, it follows that he was not an apostle.
 - 1) Jude 1:1: “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”
 - 2) Jude 1:17: “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - b. Several examples of judgment against the wicked are given by Jude: “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 1:5-6).
 - c. False teachers are referred to as ungodly, filthy dreamers, murmurers, and complainers:
 - 1) Jude 1:4: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - 2) Jude 1:8: “Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.”
 - 3) Jude 1:16: “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.”
 - d. He compares false teachers to Cain, Baalam, and Korah.
 - 1) Cain offered an unacceptable sacrifice to God, and when it was rejected, while his brother’s was received, Cain slew his brother Abel.
 - 2) Baalam sought to obtain an ungodly reward from the Moabite king Balak. When God did not let him pronounce a curse upon Israel, he told Balak that if he induced the Israelite men to engage in idolatry and fornication with the Moabite women, God would curse Israel.
 - 3) Korah raised a rebellion against the leadership of Moses while Israel was in their wilderness stage; God caused the ground to open and swallow this man and his henchmen.
 - 4) False teachers, despite any pleasing qualities they may manifest, are as evil as Cain, Baalam and Korah!
 3. Jude is very similar in content to the book of Second Peter.
 - a. Both warn against heretics who deny the Lord that bought them:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:1: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”
 - 2) Jude 1:4: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - b. These false teachers were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:2: “And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”
 - 2) Jude 1:4: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”
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- c. They had crept into congregations privily and worked deceptively:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:1: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”
 - 2) Jude 1:4: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - d. Their motive was covetousness:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:3: “And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:15: “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”
 - 3) Jude 1:11: “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”
 - e. Heretics despised authority and railed at dignitaries:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:10: “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”
 - 2) Jude 1:8: “Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.”
 - f. False teachers employ swelling words of vanity:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:18: “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.”
 - 2) Jude 1:16: “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.”
 - g. These errorist are ignorant, being influenced by neither reason nor the gospel, but conduct themselves as beasts:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:12: “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.”
 - 2) Jude 1:10: “But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.”
 - h. They are likened to Baalam:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:15: “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”
 - 2) Jude 1:11: “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”
 - i. They are further described as springs without water and clouds carried away by winds:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:17: “These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.”
 - 2) Jude 1:12: “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.”
4. Jude is filled with ideas set forth in groups of three.
- a. The saints addressed as described as sanctified by God, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called: “Jude,
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the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called” (Jude 1:1).

- b. Jude wished for them mercy, peace, and love: “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied” (Jude 1:2).
- c. The filthy dreamers “defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities” (Jude 1:8).
- d. About eleven such groups of three are found in the letter.

D. The Epistle of Jude is Authentic.

1. Jude is quoted by ancient writers and assessed by them to be inspired.
 - a. Tertullian [155-223] believed it to be genuine and apostolic.
 - b. Clement of Alexandria [150-215] quoted it as scripture and commented on it.
 - c. Origen [185-254] accepted it.
 - d. Didymus of Alexandria [311-395] wrote a commentary on Jude.
 - e. The councils of Laodicea [360], of Hyppo [393], and Carthage [397] put Jude in the canon where it has remained ever since. [Of course, God had already made it part of his inspired word].
2. Those who question the authenticity of Jude [or other parts of the Bible] usually do so because there is something in the book which contradicts their own presupposition. Many reject Genesis because it contradicts their presupposition that the earth and all life came as a result of evolution. Jude has been charged with quoting from apocryphal writings which, allegedly, argues against his inspiration.
 - a. But if he did quote from uninspired sources, it does not follow that he endorsed other parts of those writings which he did not quote.
 - b. Paul quoted from three heathen poets and to one of the quotations he added: “This testimony is true” [Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12-13]; but this does not mean the whole poem is true.
3. “If, in this epistle, there had been any thing inconsistent with the true Christian doctrine, or anything tending to reconcile the practice of sin with the hope of salvation, there would have been the justest reason for calling the...author into question. But instead of this, its professed design, as shall be showed by and by, was to condemn the erroneous doctrines which, in the first age, were propagated by corrupt teachers for the purpose of encouraging their disciples in their licentious courses; and to make those, to whom this letter was written, sensible of the obligation which their Christian profession laid on them, resolutely to maintain the faith, and constantly to follow the holy practice enjoined by the gospel” (Macknight, p.175).

E. People addressed, and date and place of writing.

1. The epistle is simply addressed to “them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called” [Jude 1].
 - a. No name is therefore given, no geographical detail is named.
 - b. It was designed to have universal appeal in the church, and needed by all Christians, in every locality and age, even though it was initially written to fulfil a special local need.
 - c. Some scholars think those initially addressed were primarily of Jewish background since so many references and examples are cited from the Old Testament; however, this evidence is not conclusive.
 - d. “Estius and Witsius were of opinion that Jude wrote to Christians every where, but especially to the converted Jews—Hammond thought this epistle was directed to Jewish Christians alone; and with a design to secure them against the errors of the Gnostics.—Benson also thought it was written to Jewish believers; especially to those of the western dispersion. For, according to him, Jude wrote to the very persons to whom Peter wrote his epistles. But I agree with Lardner in thinking, that the inscription of this letter leads us to believe, that it was written to all without distinction who had embraced the gospel” (Macknight, p.181).
 2. No information is given in the epistle or out of it which definitely establishes the exact time and place it
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was written.

- a. “With reference to neither date nor place is it possible to speak with any degree of assurance, inasmuch as no data exist either in the Epistle, or out of it, from which such information may be derived. From the Jewish undertones of the Epistle, traditions regarding the residence of Jude and his descendants, and the fact that other members of Joseph's and Mary's family resided in Palestine, the supposition is that such was the residence of Jude, and that the Epistle was written from there and perhaps the city of Jerusalem itself. All of which we may be sure is that it was written during the latter half of the first century of the Christian era; and that it has been preserved for us as a product of inspiration. Neither the date nor the place of writing involves matters of importance to us today” (Woods, p.376).
- b. “The time and place, when and where this Epistle was written, are extremely uncertain. Dr. Mill fixes its date to the year 90, principally because the false teachers, whom Peter describes as *yet to come* are mentioned by Jude as *already come*. But on a comparison of this Epistle with the second of Peter, there does not appear to be such a remarkable difference in their phraseology as will be sufficient to prove that Jude wrote his Epistle so long after Peter's second Epistle, as Dr. Mill supposed: though it proves, as most critics agree, that it was written *after* the latter. The very great coincidence in sentiment and style between these two Epistles renders it likely that they were written about the same time; and, since we have seen that the second of Peter was in all probability written early in A.D. 65, we are induced with Lardner to place it towards the close of the same year, or perhaps in A.D. 66” (Horne, p.477).

F. Outline of Jude.

1. Introduction—Jude 1-4.
 - a. Salutation: verses 1-2.
 - b. Purpose of the letter: verse 3.
 - c. Occasion of the Epistle: verse 4.
 2. Warnings—Jude 5-19.
 - a. Three examples of punishment from the Old Testament which show that the wicked will be punished.
 - 1) Rebellious Israelites in the wilderness: verses 5, 8.
 - 2) Certain angels who sinned: verses 6, 9.
 - 3) Sinful people of Sodom and Gomorrah: verses 7, 10.
 - b. Three cases of wicked individuals 11.
 - 1) Cain.
 - 2) Baalam.
 - 3) Korah.
 - c. A discussion of the wicked men who were assailing the church: verses 12-19.
 - 1) Illustrations from the natural world: verses 12-13.
 - 2) Similar to those whom Enoch noticed: verses 14-15.
 - 3) Could be recognized by their evil talk: verse 16.
 - 4) Foretold by the apostles: verses 17-18.
 - 5) Could be known by their wicked conduct: verse 19.
 3. Exhortations to faithfulness—Jude 20-25.
 - a. They were to:
 - 1) Be firm in faith: verse 20.
 - 2) Be steadfast in love: verse 21.
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- 3) Be confident in hope: verse 21.
- b. They were to treat others:
 - 1) Some with kindness: verse 22.
 - 2) Some with sternness and vigor: verse 23.
 - 3) Shun the evil of all sinners: verse 23.
 - c. They were to be grateful to God for:
 - 1) His aid in keeping them faithful: verse 24.
 - 2) His mercy in saving them: verse 24.
 - 3) His wisdom in helping them: verse 25.
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JUDE

A. Jude 1:1-2: Introduction.

1. Verse 1: “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:.”
 - a. We are not left to wonder about the author’s identity; he identifies himself as Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James. He styles himself as a servant of Christ. He could have identified himself as a physical brother of Jesus [half-brother]. How would you have identified yourself under those circumstances? What Jude wrote was true and would not be more true if he had identified his kinship with Jesus. Those who do God’s will are greater than those who merely have a fleshly tie with him:
 - 1) Matthew 12:46-50: “While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”
 - 2) Luke 11:27-28: “And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”
 - b. A servant [*doulous*] is one who gladly surrenders his will to another, a disposition not always characteristic of literal slaves but which is always true of followers of Christ. “He does not call himself an apostle, as Paul and Peter in their introductions, and seems to distinguish himself from the apostles in Jude 17-18: ‘The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they said,’ etc. We are told that Christ’s brothers did not believe on him (John 7:5); and, in Acts 1, the brothers of Jesus (Acts 1:14) are mentioned in a way which seems to separate them from the apostles. *Doulos* (NT:1401), ‘bond-servant,’ occurs in the introductions to Romans, Philippians, Titus, James, and 2 Peter. Brother of James. That Jude does not allude to his relationship to the Lord may be explained by the fact that the natural relationship in his mind would be subordinate to the spiritual (see Luke 11:27-28), and that such a designation would, as Dr. Alford remarks, ‘have been in harmony with those later and superstitious feelings with which the next and following ages regarded the Lord’s earthly relatives.’ He would shrink from emphasizing a distinction to which none of the other disciples or apostles could have a claim, the more so because of his former unbelief in Christ’s authority and mission. It is noticeable that James likewise avoids such a designation” [Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by Biblesoft].
 - c. The literal meaning of name Jude is “renowned.” It is a contraction of Judas. It was a common name among the Jews of the first century [about nine different persons are so named in New Testament:
 - 1) Luke 3:33: “Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda.”
 - 2) Luke 3:26: “Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda.”
 - 3) Luke 3:30: “Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim.”
 - 4) Matthew 10:3: “Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.”
 - 5) Matthew 13:55: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?”

- 6) Matthew 10:4: “Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.”
- 7) Acts 15:22: “Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.”
- 8) Acts 9:11: “And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.”
- 9) Acts 5:37: “After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.”
- d. “James, identified as ‘a brother’ of the author, was himself author of the New Testament book which bears his name, and who, too, omitted any reference to the relation which he likewise bore to the Lord. Neither of these faithful disciples suffered the inclinations of the flesh to lead them to a boastful announcement of their position, and both with becoming humility laid stress on the fact that they were simply servants. (Cf. James 1:1.) To be a *bondservant* of the Lord is truly to occupy the most enviable position possible to man today. See, at length on the identity of Jude and James, the introduction to the Epistle” (Woods, p.382).
- e. To those who are sanctified by God the Father [beloved in God the Father, ASV]. They are set apart by God and are special people of God. They are the beloved of God: they are to be different from other people. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).
- f. He describes them as being preserved in Christ. This keeping is conditional, as clearly shown in the statement of verse 21: “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” There is security in Christ, but one has a personal responsibility—there is the condition of faithfulness.
 - 1) Philippians 2:12: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:4-5: “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
 - 5) If this verse means that one cannot fall and be lost then the rest of the book is for naught. Why worry about admonishing them to build up themselves and keep themselves in the love of God? What difference would it make if apostasy was not a real threat?
- g. Jude speaks of their having been called. That calling is done by the gospel: “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 2:14).
 - 1) The calling is done by the gospel in this practical manner:
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - b) Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto

salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

- c) Matthew 20:16: “So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”
 - d) Romans 10:13-18: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”
 - e) 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”
 - f) Hebrews 5:8-9: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
- 2) Those who respond to his call are beloved of God and secure in Christ [provided they keep themselves in the love of God—verse 21]. One thus described enjoys the greatest privileges and blessings available. What greater status could we have than to be recipients of God’s compassion and loving care?
2. Verse 2: “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.”
- a. Mercy, peace and love are associated because they sum up the blessings most needed by the Christians of any generation. These originate with God, and Jude expresses his desire that those be multiplied [abound] in the lives of his readers.
 - b. “Some one has observed that the richness of the language of Jude’s salutation has never been surpassed. The idea which it expresses is like a copious harvest, perpetually increasing; for from God proceeds, not only the communication of his blessings, but the ever increasing growth and augmentation of those blessings. *Mercy* is God’s compassion in the forgiveness of our sins; *peace* is the tranquil state which is ours as a result of his mercy in the pardon of our transgressions; while *love* is the expression of God’s feeling toward us which makes it possible for us to become his children. (Cf. 1 John 3:1-3)” [ALC, 1965, pp.155f].
 - c. This verse is very short and to the point, but none could express a more important thought to faithful saints. God’s mercy provided for our redemption; his peace (and peace within ourselves and with other people) is an outgrowth of our salvation; and love permeates the entire transaction.
 - d. Mercy.
 - 1) God is a merciful God.
 - a) Exodus 34:6: "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 1:3: "Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort."
 - c) Ephesians 2:4: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us."
 - d) Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
 - e) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
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- 2) Mercy includes a sense of pity plus a desire to furnish relief. To be real, it must be active. Compassion is included in mercy:
 - a) Proverbs 14:22: “Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.”
 - b) Hebrews 2:17: “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”
 - c) James 2:13: “For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”
 - d) James 3:17: “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”
 - 3) Mercy is needed in every relationship. Much misery is caused or continued by intolerance (a lack of mercy). How many marriages and homes have been ruined by a lack of mercy? How many weak saints have been driven away because mercy was not exercised?
 - 4) Mercy is to flow from our lives in three different streams:
 - a) In deeds of service: “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:25-37).
 - b) In kindness of judgment.
 - (1) James 1:19: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”
 - (2) John 7:24: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”
 - (3) 1 Corinthians 13:7: “Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”
 - (4) Luke 6:37: “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”
 - c) In forgiveness: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32).
 - e. Peace.
 - 1) A naval officer whose ship was being buffeted by a storm was confronted by his wife, who cried out with alarm, “How can you be so calm in such a storm?” He arose and drew his saber and
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- pointed it at his wife's breast. He then asked her, "Aren't you afraid?" She replied, "Of course not." "Why?" asked the officer. "Because," his wife answered, "I know the sword is in the hand of one who loves me too much to hurt me." "Then," said her loving husband, "remember, I know in whom I have believed, and that He holds the winds in His fist and the waters in the hollow of His hand." [Author unknown].
- 2) Peace has more than one facet.
 - a) We have peace with God.
 - (1) Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - (2) Ephesians 2:12-17: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*...And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."
 - b) We have peace with our fellowman. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16).
 - c) We have peace within our own selves.
 - 3) The peace of God will keep (guard) our hearts. "The Greek word for 'guard' is a military term, signifying a sentinel who keeps guard over a castle or camp, or a well-garrisoned stronghold (Isaiah 26:1-3). This word is used only in three other places in the New Testament (2 Cor. 11:32; Gal. 3:23; 1 Pet. 1:5). The peace of God serves as a sentinel or well-garrisoned stronghold to keep one's thoughts and their source protected from everything that would produce anxiety. Thus the promise here is that the praying Christian who relies on the care and protection of God shall have peace secure within, whatever outward troubles may besiege" (Tolle, p.69).
 - a) 2 Corinthians 11:32: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me."
 - b) Galatians 3:23: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."
 - c) 1 Peter 1:5: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- f. Love.
- 1) Romans 8:38-39: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - a) God's love is expressed to mankind through Christ; by means of the gospel of Christ, God reveals and imparts his love for us. None of the things named can cause God to quit loving us!
 - b) Whether we live or die, God loves us. Mighty angels, powerful governments and powers, things now present or to come in the future, or the extremes of height or depth, or any other creature, can cause God to stop loving us.
 - c) If this passage is addressing our love for God, then none of these things can make us give up our love for him. Only if we grow weak within ourselves, will our love for God wane.
 - 2) 1 John 3:1-2: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he
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shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

- a) Those who live righteous lives are begotten of God (1 John 2:29). The apostle addresses the remarkable blessings that derive from that spiritual connection with the Heavenly Father.
- b) The word “behold” [*eidete*] calls attention to the love God has bestowed upon us. John refers to the *quality of love* the Father has exhibited toward us. Thus, the profound degree of God’s love is emphasized.
- c) So great and beneficial is this love that it has made it possible for us to be called the *children of God*. If we comprehend the greatness of God, then we can appreciate the awesome nature of being called God’s children! Just think of it—the Creator and Ruler of the universe, is our spiritual Father! We have the benefit of his beneficence; we have direct access to his aid; we have the providence of the Almighty at our disposal! Of course, he helps us through his laws—the laws of nature and the law of the Bible.

B. Jude 1:3-4: The Occasion for Writing the Letter.

1. Verse 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - a. Jude shows his warm regards toward his brethren by addressing them as his *beloved*. One of the key characteristics of the saints in the first century is their closeness. False teachers and reprobates did not imbibe this tender spirit, but it was clearly manifest on the part of the faithful.
 - 1) Acts 2:41-47: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
 - 2) Acts 4:32-35: “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”
 - 3) Acts 11:28-30: “And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”
 - 4) Acts 20:34-38: “Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”
 - 5) Ephesians 4:28: “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his

- hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”
- 6) Ephesians 4:32: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”
 - 7) Acts 9:36-43: “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.”
- b. It is apparent that Jude had been contemplating to write concerning the common salvation, but a more pressing need arose.
- 1) From this verse we perceive that “Jude had been diligently preparing to write a somewhat formal treatise on a subject which was of common interest to all of them, namely, the salvation which had been provided through Christ. But before Jude had an opportunity to finish that worthy undertaking, a situation arose which made it necessary for him to issue a severe warning and urge the brethren to defend their faith against certain insidious assaults which were being made upon it” (ALC, 1965, p.156).
 - 2) “Jude intimated that he was writing under compulsion. He had been giving all diligence to this matter. This indicates that he was reluctant to write and that he had been considering it thoughtfully and prayerfully, but he felt *constrained* to write this Epistle. The fact that he made the Epistle very short shows that he was not afflicted with the *mania scribendi*. He wrote only what was necessary but he covered a wide field in these short verses. He had something to say and felt impelled by the importance of his message and by the exigency of the moment to say it” (G.C. Brewer, *Contending for the Faith*, p.16).
 - 3) The common salvation to which he refers is the state of safety which the redeemed have in our Lord. The common salvation is available to all and denied to none who were willing to submit to the requirements it imposes. The common salvation deals with the common sickness—sin; it has a common remedy—the blood of Christ, gospel of Christ (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 2:12-13; Rom 5:8-9; 1:16); is obtained and kept by the common faith [Titus 1:4; Jude 3; Eph 4:5]. All of those in Christ enjoy the same benefits and advantages. Titus 1:4 speaks of the common faith: “To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.”
- c. The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet. “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:29-33).
- 1) The statement in 1 Corinthians 14:31 shows that those who were endowed with the spiritual gifts had control over their use. The plain statement here, plus the whole tenor of the passage, shows that they could determine when or if the gift was to be exercised. The influence was not such as to destroy self-control.
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- 2) If they could not restrain themselves then God was the author of confusion. The one speaking could stop when he pleased; the other could wait until the proper time. By following the instructions given here by Paul, their services would be orderly, confusion would be eliminated, and God would be glorified.
 - 3) Before Jude the prophet could pen the message regarding the common salvation (a highly valuable message), he was moved by the Holy Spirit to produce the epistle as it is before us. In view of Paul's discussion about prophets and their messages in the passage referred to above, it appears that this is the best understanding of Jude's statement in verse three.
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THOSE IN CHRIST HAVE THESE BLESSINGS

BLESSING	REFERENCE
In the Kingdom	Colossians 1:13
Redeemed by Blood of Christ	Colossians 1:14
Forgiven for Offenses	Ephesians 1:7; Acts 2:38; 22:16
Spiritually Alive	Ephesians 2:1-5; Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17
Near to God	Ephesians 2:13
Reconciled to God	Ephesians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Sanctified	1 Corinthians 1:2
New Creature (Creation)	2 Corinthians 5:17
Liberty	Galatians 2:4
Have Hope	1 Peter 1:3-5
Saved	2 Timothy 2:10

THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE OUT OF CHRIST

CONDITION	REFERENCE
Spiritually Dead	Ephesians 2:1-5
Children of Disobedience	Ephesians 2:2
Children of Wrath	Ephesians 2:3
Aliens & Strangers	Ephesians 2:12; Matthew 7:23
Have No Hope	Ephesians 2:12
Without God	Ephesians 2:12
In the World	Ephesians 2:12
Far Off From God	Ephesians 2:13,17
In Spiritual Darkness	Ephesians 4:18

- d. Information had come to Jude regarding a grievous threat the brethren were facing from false teachers; this needed to be immediately addressed. He therefore changed his subject matter. This does not mean that an inspired man could dictate to the Holy Spirit which subject he would discuss. It may be the case that Jude was planning to present a thesis on the common salvation without the need for inspired guidance; once a subject had been revealed by the Spirit, when that information was understood by some preacher or teacher, he could teach that same material to others without direct, supernatural guidance.
- 1) That is the way that preachers and teachers develop lessons and instruct others today. While his original subject matter was of great importance, the subject he was led to discuss was of greater immediate need. This subject he addressed was indeed given to him by inspiration of the Spirit.
 - 2) It was needful (*I was constrained*—ASV) to change the subject matter from the common salvation to the need to earnestly contend for the faith. “The next phrase is rendered too weakly by the Authorized Version, It was needful for me to write unto you. Neither does the Revised Version quite bring out the idea when it substitutes, I was constrained to write unto you. What is in view is an objective necessity; certain circumstances which had arisen and imperatively demanded writing. So that we might translate it, ‘necessity arose for me to write,’ or, ‘an emergency occurred constraining me to write.’ He was thus induced to write in the way of exhorting them” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - 3) Jude says that he was constrained to change his plans. The word for constrained is also used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:16: “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” Compare also:
 - a) Luke 14:18: “And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.”
 - b) Hebrews 7:27: “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”
- e. Jude was not indifferent to the interest of the brethren; he gave diligence to give to them that which they most needed; as important as the original theme is, the appearance of false teachers made it obligatory that he should address the present problem; he knew the importance of maintaining the purity of the faith against error. It was the Holy Spirit who decided what the subject of his epistle was to be; it was the Spirit also who guided Jude in penning the message which the Spirit gave him.
- f. It became necessary for Jude to write in order to *exhort* them. Exhort: "To incite by words or advice; to advise or warn earnestly" (Thayer on *parakaleo*). Vine gives this definition: “To admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct (always prospective, looking to the future, in contrast to the meaning to comfort, which is retrospective, having to do with trial experienced)” (Vol. 2, p.60).
- 1) Philippians 4:2: "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:10: "And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:19: "But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner."
 - 4) Hebrews 13:22: "And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words."
 - 5) Acts 2:40: “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”
 - 6) Romans 12:8: “Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” Some have the gift of exhortation. This was one of Barnabas' strong points (Acts 4:36; 11:22ff). "Exhortation was a
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- power of persuading and encouraging others to work, and of counseling, comforting, and consoling them when in distress. This is a peculiar and useful talent" (David Lipscomb, *Commentary on Romans*, p.224).
- g. Jude wrote to exhort them to *earnestly contend* for the faith.
- 1) "To 'contend earnestly' (*epagonizesthai*), is literally, to wrestle, and as here figuratively used, denotes the extreme efforts which are to characterize the faithful in their defense of the truth, however formidable and numerous its enemies may be" (Woods, p.385).
 - a) One authority says the Greek word translated "earnestly contend" presents the picture of a man contending, striving earnestly with all his powers to protect and maintain his title to the championship in some athletic sport.
 - b) Another says the word suggests the picture of a soldier to whom a certain piece of ground has been assigned to defend against the attack of an enemy.
 - 2) Our obligations are great to defend the truth, but the force we are to use in defense of the faith is not physical:
 - a) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - b) Matthew 26:51-53: "And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"
 - c) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - d) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 3) "There are very important deductions which are mandatory in such a declaration, the first being the possibility of apostasy. As Mayor put it, 'It is possible (as shown by the following examples) for spiritual blessings once given to be lost unless we use every effort to maintain them.' Another deduction is that hostility to the truth exists and will continue to exist throughout history. What is meant is that Christians shall vigorously fight for and defend the truth. Barclay pointed out that the Greek word used here 'contains the root of our English word agony. The defense of the faith may well be a costly thing; but that defense is a duty which falls on every generation of the church'" (Coffman, p.527).
 - 4) "[That ye should earnestly contend] Compare Gal 2:5. The word here rendered 'earnestly contend'—*epagoonizesthai* (NT:1864)—is one of those words used by the sacred writers which have allusion to the Grecian games....This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means 'to contend upon'—i.e., 'for or about' anything; and would be applicable to the earnest effort put forth in those games to obtain the prize. The reference here, of course, is only to contention by argument, by reasoning, by holding fast the principles of religion, and maintaining them against all opposers. It would not justify 'contention' by arms, by violence, or by persecution..." [Barnes' Notes, BibleSoft].
- h. "The particular subject of the exhortation is described as the duty of contending earnestly for the faith;
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the contention being expressed by a strong term somewhat analogous to that used by Paul in Phil 1:27, and the 'faith' being taken, not in the subjective sense of the quality or grace of belief, but in the objective sense of the things believed. This 'faith' is declared to have been delivered once for all (so, with the Revised Version; not once delivered, as the Authorized Version puts it, which might mean 'once on a time') to the saints. It is not stated by whom the deliverance was made. The unexpressed subject may be God, as some suppose who point to the analogy of 1 Cor 11:23 and 15:3; or it may be the apostles, as others hold who look to the analogy of such passages as 1 Cor 11:2; 2 Peter 2:21, and especially the seventeenth verse of the present Epistle itself. The main point is, not the author or the instruments of the deliverance, but the fact that such a deliverance has taken place. What has been transmitted is carefully defined, not, indeed, as a system of doctrine, but at least as a sum or deposit of things necessary to be believed. This is said to have been given once for all, so that there is no repetition or extension of the gift. It is described, further, as committed, not to the Church as an organization, nor to any particular office-bearers, but to the saints in general" (Pulpit Commentary).

- 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) John 16:12-14: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."
 - 3) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- i. Jude directed the brethren to earnestly contend for *the faith*. The definite article [the faith] shows that there is only one faith. False teachers have been very successful in getting precious souls to believe that there are many "faiths" and that one is as acceptable as the other; that it does not really matter what you believe as long as you believe something about Christ and are sincere in your belief. Therefore, to declare before the general public that there is but one faith is to arouse charges of bigotry, narrow-mindedness, and ignorance.
- 1) But Ephesians 4:4-6 declares there is only one faith [one God, Lord, etc.]. The same passage that reveals there is only one God also reveals there is but one faith. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).
 - 2) This faith is the one gospel. "Faith" is a basic part of the gospel system; it is put for the whole.
 - a) Titus 1:4: "To Titus, mine own son after *the common faith*: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."
 - b) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - c) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"
 - d) 1 Timothy 1:2: "Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - e) 1 Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

- f) 1 Timothy 5:8: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
 - g) 1 Timothy 6:10: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
 - h) 1 Timothy 6:21: "Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen."
 - i) 2 Timothy 3:8: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."
 - j) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
- 3) But men want to develop their own teachings (Mark 7:7-9,13; Acts 20:29-31; 1 Cor. 4:6, ASV; 2 John 9). After developing their own teachings, they foist them on the unsuspecting, and claim that "one faith is as good as another." The Bible says, "There is ONE faith," but men speak of many different "faiths."
- a) Mark 7:7-9: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."
 - b) Mark 7:13: "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
 - c) Acts 20:29-31: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - e) 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (ASV).
 - f) We must "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent" (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11. Unity will exist only if all know, believe and follow the same teachings. Christ is the only authorized source of our spiritual instructions. Neither the church nor the individual has the right to bind or loose religious teachings. The common salvation is the salvation that is shared by all who have received the one faith once delivered to the saints.
 - g) The one faith is that specific faith identified in Galatians 3:23-25: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
 - h) The one faith is the doctrine of Christ as revealed by the Spirit unto the holy apostles and prophets:
 - (1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
 - (2) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my
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name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

- (3) John 20:30-31: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
 - (4) 2 John 1:9: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”
 - (5) James 1:25: “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”
 - (6) 1 Peter 1:23-25: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
- i) It involves the whole scheme of divine revelation of God for man.
- (1) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - (2) James 1:21: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - (3) Galatians 1:6-11: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.”
 - (4) Galatians 2:4-5: “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”
 - (5) 2 Timothy 4:1-5: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”
 - (6) 1 Timothy 6:20: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.”
- j. This one faith is intended to be in effect for the remainder of Time—it was once delivered to the saints. "Once" means "once for all time."
- 1) This same Greek word is used also in Hebrews 9:25-28: “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must
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- he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Since Christ died for mankind only once, so the one faith was given but once.
- a) Our High Priest does not have to make continual, regular sacrifices in our behalf, as the Levitical high priests had to do for the Israelites. Those Old Testament high priests entered the Most Holy Place annually, with the blood of the sacrifices (and not with their own blood).
 - b) If this were true of Christ, it would be necessary for him to go to the cross on a regular basis to suffer and die, again and again. But at the end of that age, Christ appeared just one time, and was able to put away sin by sacrificing himself on the cross. His sacrifice was a one-time-only act; it was **once for all time**.
- 2) “This faith has *once for all* (*hapax*) not simply formerly as the King James Version implies, but for all time been delivered to the saints. The meaning is that the truth is delivered for all time; it is a permanent deposit, it will never be superseded, amended or modified. As it now stands it is a perfect, adequate, complete and inviolable deposit of truth, providing the means with which to confute the gainsayer, and resist the advocate of false doctrine. This deposit of truth was infallibly delivered, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:21), and no part of it is superfluous or unnecessary” (Woods, p.385).
- a) Galatians 1:11: “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.”
 - b) 2 Peter 1:21: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
 - c) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - d) 2 Peter 1:3: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”
- 3) “[Once delivered unto the saints] The word here used *hapax* (NT:530) may mean either ‘once for all,’ in the sense that it was then complete, and would not be repeated; or ‘formerly,’ to wit, by the author of the system....Perhaps the more usual sense of the word would be, that it was done ONCE in the sense that it is not to be done again, and, therefore, in the sense that it was then complete, and that nothing was to be added to it. There is indeed the idea that it was FORMERLY done, but with this additional thought, that it was then complete. Compare, for this use of the Greek word rendered ‘once,’ Heb 9:26-28; 10:2; 1 Peter 3:18. The ‘delivering’ of this faith to the saints here referred to is evidently that made by revelation, or the system of truth which GOD has made known in his word. Everything which He has revealed, we are to defend as true. We are to surrender no part of it whatever, for every part of that system ‘is’ of value to mankind. By a careful study of the Bible we are to ascertain what that system is, and then in all places, at all times, in all circumstances, and at every sacrifice, we are to maintain it” (Barnes).
- 4) Vine’s comment on the word *once*: 1. *hapax* NT:530 denotes (a) "once, one time," 2 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:7,26-27; 12:26-27; in the phrase "once and again," lit., "once and twice," Phil 4:16; 1 Thess 2:18; (b) "once for all," of what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition, Heb 6:4; 9:28; 10:2; 1 Peter 3:18; Jude 3, RV, "once for all" (KJV, "once"); v. 1:5 (ditto); in some mss. 1 Peter 3:20 (so the KJV). 2. *ephapax* NT:2178, a strengthened form of No. 1 (*epi*, "upon"), signifies (a) "once for all," Rom 6:10; Heb 7:27, RV (KJV, "once"); 9:12 (ditto); 10:10; (b) "at once," 1 Cor 15:6 [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson

- Publishers].
- a) 2 Corinthians 11:25: “Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.”
 - b) Hebrews 9:7: “But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.”
 - c) Hebrews 9:26-27: “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”
 - d) Hebrews 12:26-27: “Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”
 - e) Hebrews 9:28: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”
 - f) Hebrews 10:2: “For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.”
 - g) 1 Peter 3:18: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”
 - h) Jude 1:3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - i) Romans 6:10: “For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”
 - j) Hebrews 7:27: “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”
- k. The faith was once delivered *unto the saints*. For obvious reasons, the scriptures were not revealed to unbelievers for them to record and pass along to others.
- 1) Passages:
 - a) Ephesians 3:1-5: “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”
 - b) 2 Peter 1:19-21: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
 - 2) “*The Faith Once for All Delivered to the Saints*. Here again Jude disclaims any intention to write something new to the disciples. In this we see his humility further manifested and we also see that this Epistle deserves a place in the canon even if Jude was not inspired. He does not reveal anything but pleads for that which had already been revealed and which was then a common possession of all saints. He declares that this had been delivered *once for all*. The King James Version says once delivered, but a thing that has been delivered once certainly has not been delivered twice or repeatedly and the meaning is therefore the same. It was delivered one time for
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- all time. This is an impeachment of those who come to us with new revelations or visions or dreams. The Lord did not intend that his will should be made in installment, these installments to be given as the centuries pass by. He delivered the faith to the saints and expects them to keep it unto the end. This passage alone is sufficient to refute the claim of the Roman Catholic Church that the voice of the pope is the voice of God and that God continues to speak through any such living representative. It is also a refutation of such pretended revelators as Joseph Smith, Mrs. Ellen G. White, or any other person who claims to speak by inspiration or revelation today. If what these persons say is exactly the same as the faith once delivered, then there is no need for their revelation. If it is in any way different from the faith once delivered, then it must be repudiated. We, therefore, should give especial emphasis to Jude's exhortation to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.'" [G.C. Brewer, *Contending for the Faith*, p.17].
- 3) "The question may arise as to whom these saints were. The claim is made by the Roman Church that these were official representatives of the Lord and that the faith was from them passed on to their successors. This claim is refuted by the fact that the faith was *common*. It did not belong to a specially chosen group of officials but it belonged to all of God's servants. Some people think that a saint is a heavenly being and that no mortal person or earth dweller could be a saint. Those who hold this idea have never read the New Testament—or the Old either—very carefully. All Christians are saints and they are called saints in the New Testament more often than they are called anything else. This word is applied to God's children fifty times in the New Testament. It is also applied to God's servants in the Old Testament. It is used thirty times in that part of the Bible. It is sometimes used to designate heavenly beings or angels, and the *saints on earth* are spoken of in contrast with some saints who are not on earth. (Psalm 16:3.) The word literally means 'holy ones' and it may easily be applied to heavenly beings as it is in Deut. 33:2 and Dan. 8:13. All the New Testament uses of the term, however, apply to Christians or children of God. The faith has, therefore, been committed to God's children. Paul tells us that this gospel was given to the saints just as Jude does. (Col. 1:26.) He also speaks of having the gospel entrusted to or committed to him. (Tit. 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:11; Gal. 2:7.) He and the other apostles were ambassadors through whom this faith was given to all the saints. (Eph. 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20.) They were the inspired and miraculously empowered agents to whom the faith was committed and through whom it has been given once for all to God's children. We are to hold that faith and to contend for it throughout the Christian age. (Heb. 2:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:2.)" [Brewer, pp.17f].
- a) Colossians 1:26: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."
 - b) Titus 1:3: "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."
 - c) 1 Timothy 1:11: "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."
 - d) Galatians 2:7: "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter."
 - e) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
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- f) 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”
2. Verse 4: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (KJV). “For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (ASV).
- a. Jude here states the occasion for writing: certain men had crept in privily, spreading their false teachings. These men are not identified by name, merely by that which they were speaking. Brother Woods suggests that they had entered as it were by a side door [*pareisedusaan*] and without revealing their true motive. This is the common practice of false teachers.
- 1) 2 Peter 2:1-3: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”
 - 2) Acts 20:28-31: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”
 - 3) Galatians 2:4-5: “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”
 - 4) Matthew 7:15-20: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
- b. Who were of old written of beforehand [ASV]. There should be no surprise on the part of the saints about the appearance of these false teachers for warnings were given in the scriptures about the coming of such. Jude does not identify the writers who made the predictions. Any of the Old or New Testament writers who predicted this would be included.
- 1) Acts 20:28-31: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and
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- know the truth.”
- 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”
 - 4) 2 Peter 2:1-3: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:1-7: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
- c. Calvinists misuse this statement to try to justify their false notion that God had predestinated some to be lost [*ordained*, as it is rendered in the KJV].
- 1) But in the statement there is nothing to indicate the condemnation was unconditional, or that it was announced in eternity, or that it was determined without regard to the moral character of those thus condemned.
 - 2) “The word ‘ordained,’ appearing in the King James Version, has properly given way to the more accurate rendering, ‘written of beforehand,’ literally, placarded or set forth (*progegrammenoi*), compare the word *programmed*; and this was from of ‘old’ (*palai*), a word never used of an eternal decree, but always of something occurring in time. All that may properly be deduced from this statement is that from ancient times condemnation had been declared upon all who did as these men were doing, i.e., leading the saints astray. The divine law, existing from the beginning, condemned these men and all others who violated it, and no more than this was intended by the inspired writer. Who the writer, or writers, was who made this prediction is not stated. Obviously, the period must be projected into the Old Testament when this condemnation was placarded; but to what period of Old Testament prophecy, or to what prophetic writer of that period, does not appear” (Woods, pp.386f).
- d. Jude describes these men as being ungodly in character; their irreverence and blasphemous speech were obvious. Having this kind of heart, they were not afraid to pervert the grace of God into lasciviousness or even to deny the Lord.
- 1) “This ungodliness is next shown to take the form of an immoral perversion of spiritual privilege —turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. By the grace of God is meant the whole gift
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- of redemption offered in the gospel. It is called here the grace of our God; the turn thus given to the expression indicating at once the dear and intimate relation to God into which the writer and his fellows in the faith have been introduced, and their shuddering sense of the shameless use to which his gift was debased. The thing to which that grace was perverted is described by a word of wide and evil application, denoting every species of unbridled conduct, but particularly unblushing licentiousness.
- a) “The same ungodliness in these men is further declared to rise to a denial and disavowal of all Divine claims upon them. The Revised Version, which is more rigorously true to the original here than the Authorized Version, gives an alternative rendering, denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, in the text, but denying the only Master, and our Lord Jesus Christ in the margin. The question is whether God and Christ are separately mentioned as both objects of the denial, or whether Christ alone is referred to; both the titles, Master and Lord, being applied to him. The question is not easy to decide.
 - b) “Among the strongest arguments in favour of the latter view are the two considerations that the attitude of these men to God has been already stated in the previous clause, and that in 2 Peter 2:1 we find both the verb and the noun which are used here applied to Christ. On the other side, it is urged that the parallel in 1 John 2:22 favours the double reference here; that the title here rendered ‘Master’ is never applied to Christ except in the single instance of 2 Peter 2:1; that the epithet ‘only’ is used more properly of God, as in verse 25 of this same Epistle; that it is difficult to distinguish between the two titles, if both are referred to Christ here....The case is stronger on the whole on the side of the twofold subject being in view.
 - c) “But it is further asked whether this denial of God and of Christ is meant to be a theoretical denial or a practical. It is the practical disavowal of God, which appears in a godless and unbridled life, that seems chiefly in view. But there is no good reason for excluding the idea of corrupt doctrine or teaching. The latter is not expressed, it is true, in the terms adopted in the Epistles of John....But it is possible enough that the seeds which were to develop into the pronounced Gnosticism of a later time were already sown, and that in such speculative error Jude saw the ally of a life which was regardless of all Divine restraint” [Pulpit Commentary, Biblesoft].
- 2) These ungodly men were perverting the gospel which reveals the grace of God. They were perverting it by twisting its teachings to make it appear that gross fleshly indulgences was permitted under the grace of God. Such teachings denied the Lord both in doctrine and life.
- a) Titus 2:11-12: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”
 - b) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - c) Galatians 1:6-9: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”
 - d) 2 Peter 2:18-19: “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for
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of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”

- e) 1 Corinthians 6:9-18: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”
 - f) 1 John 3:7-10: “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”
 - g) Romans 6:1-6: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”
- 3) The false doctrine of making Christian liberty and God’s grace an excuse for ungodly living is persistent even today. Some in the church today are advocating this in various degrees. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4).
- e. These were denying the Lord Jesus. We can deny him by the way we live. Our confession of him extends to our daily lives.
 - 1) Matthew 10:32-33: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”
 - 2) Titus 1:16: “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

C. Jude 1:5-7: Cases of the Sinful Receiving Well-deserved Punishment.

- 1. Verse 5: “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not” (KJV). “Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not” (ASV).
 - a. The first of three examples is that of the disobedient Israelites in the wilderness. This case of God

bringing sure punishment on evil-doers was perfectly familiar to those to whom Jude wrote. Indeed, every knowledgeable Christian is apprised of what happened to Israel in the wilderness.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 10:1-11: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”
- 2) Psalms 68:1-35: “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it. Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon. The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same. They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war. Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon

- stretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.”
- b. They murmured, were in unbelief, rebelled, worshiped idols, engaged in immorality, were fickle, were opposed to the idea of being committed to God in their hearts.
 - c. “The sins of the people of Israel during this period were exceedingly numerous and grave. Their constant and determined murmuring; their faithlessness in the promises of Jehovah; their unwillingness to go into the land of Canaan; the idolatry of the golden calf; their gross fleshly corruption, are matters duly recorded in great detail by the sacred historian. All of this is summed up under the basic sin of unbelief. The application intended by Jude is that regardless of how secretly men may work, God will eventually ferret them out and deliver them over to the condemnation they deserve. Israel, a mighty nation, perhaps two millions strong, was saved out of Egypt and then the majority of its people, because of unfaithfulness, were destroyed. Though they engaged in the formalities of religion and complied in outward fashion with the ritualism required, they were unwilling to adopt the principles of righteousness into their hearts and lives. They were opposed to the idea of God ruling the heart, the life, and the nation and they died under the divine and irresistible judgment of God. The implication is that if half a million men were executed for violation of God's law through their disobedience, then these false teachers who were teaching, in principle, that for which these multitudes suffered death, would not escape!” [Woods, p.388f].
2. Verse 6: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”
 - a. Jude uses the case of the rebellious angels as his second example to show the certainty that the wicked will be punished. We are not told the circumstances of this case, thus it is useless to speculate. Peter also cites this episode: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4).
 - b. Isaiah 14:12-15 and Luke 10:7-20 have nothing to do with this subject.
 - 1) Isaiah 14:12-15: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” [A sober reading of this passage reveals that Lucifer is not Satan, but Babylon, specifically the king of that pagan empire].
 - 2) Luke 10:8-20: “And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through

- thy name. **And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.** Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” [The Lord did not refer in this passage to the ancient fall of Satan from his heavenly status; he was simply describing the injury Satan and his cohorts suffered at the hands of our Lord’s faithful disciples, as they cast demons from those possessed by them].
- c. Jude affirms here that the angels who kept not their first estate [principality—ASV] but left their proper habitation, are kept in everlasting bonds under darkness until the Judgment. They will surely be punished for their sinful conduct. Angels are created beings and are subject to sin. But there is no provision for their restoration if they commit sin. Sinful angels have no hope of salvation. These sinful angels lived in the direct presence of God, they knew full well what they must do and what they must not do; their transgression cannot be excused; only punishment awaits them.
 - d. Here we have a plain statement about some angels who sinned. We are not told what their transgressions were. The word *angel* means “messenger.” The term is sometimes used in reference to a human messenger; for example, John the Baptizer is spoken of in this light: “As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my *messenger* before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee” (Mark 1:2). There is no reason here to interpret “angels” as men in our text, but rather we are to understand the reference to be to the heavenly messengers who violated God’s will. We have no way to know the nature of their sin, when they committed this sin, or the number of angels who sinned.
 - e. “Much speculation has been indulged in regarding this matter. There is a popular view that Gen. 6:2-4 involves an unholy association between angels and women, and that the sin of the angels was fornication ‘with the daughters of men.’ This exposition is based on an erroneous view of Gen. 6:1-4. There is no reference to angels in that passage. The ‘sons of God’ were human beings. Others, with more reason, have concluded that these angels were the same as those alluded to by Jude when he said that ‘they kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation,’ and are kept ‘in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.’ (Jude 6.) Some hold to the view that Satan was a created angel; that he led a revolt in heaven (Rev. 12:7); that the occasion for the revolt was spiritual pride and a desire for higher position (1 Tim. 3:6); and that for such arrogance and presumption he was cast out of heaven. Inasmuch as it is inconceivable that God created these angels wicked, the following conclusion seem certain: (1) they were originally holy; (2) they sinned; (3) the occasion of their sin was in abandoning their ‘proper habitation’; (4) as a result they were thrust down to a place of bondage” (Woods, pp.165f, commenting on 2 Peter 2:5).
 - f. Second Peter 2:5 and Jude 1:6 both say that these rebellious angels will be there until the judgment of the last day. The nature of this place is the same as that in which the rich man (Luke 16:23-26) was being confined and punished; it is reasonable to identify these two places as the same. “The word here rendered ‘hell’ is ‘Tartarus,’ a word not found in any other of the sacred writings. The meaning of the word must therefore be sought in the pagan literature. Strachan said: ‘In Homer, Hades is the place of confinement of dead men, and Tartarus is the name given to a murky abyss beneath Hades, in which the sins of fallen immortals are punished’....It was natural for Peter, writing to Greeks, to use their word with reference to the state of condemnation of the angels, but without endorsement of any of the pagan traditions about the fallen Titans....It would appear that the demons themselves used another of the pagan words for this very place. See Luke 8:31, where is the record that the demons besought Jesus not to send them into the aby ss” (Coffman, p.316).
 - g. Peter and Jude were guided by the Holy Spirit in recording their epistles. The words used were not of their choosing: “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man
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knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual"(1 Cor. 2:9-13).

- h. The estate [principality] from which these sinful angels fell is translated from the Greek term *arche*, a word which describes an office or position. These rebellious angels abandoned this exalted situation, and are now restrained without hope, awaiting the final Judgment. Barnes gives the following:
- 1) The word rendered "estate" *archeen* (NT:746) is, in the margin, "principality." The word properly means, "beginning, commencement;" and then that which surpasses others, which is "first," etc., in point of rank and honor; or pre-eminence, priority, precedence, principedom. Here it refers to the rank and dignity which the angels had in heaven. That rank or pre-eminence they did not keep, but fell from it....
 - 2) [But left their own habitation] To wit, according to the common interpretation, in heaven. The word rendered "habitation" *oikeeteerion* (NT:3613) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means here that heaven was their native abode or dwelling-place. They left it by sin; but the expression here would seem possibly to mean that they became "dissatisfied" with their abode, and voluntarily preferred to change it for another. If they did become thus dissatisfied, the cause is wholly unknown, and conjecture is useless....
 - 3) [He hath reserved in everlasting chains]....Peter says, "chains of darkness;" that is, the darkness encompasses them "as" chains. Jude says that those chains are "everlasting," *desmois* (NT:1199) *aidiois* (NT:126). Compare Rom 1:20, "his eternal power and Godhead." The word does not elsewhere occur. It is an appropriate word to denote that which is eternal; and no one can doubt that if a Greek WISHED to express that idea, this would be a proper word to use. The sense is, that that deep darkness always endures; there is no intermission; no light; it will exist forever. This passage in itself does not prove that the punishment of the rebel angels will be eternal, but merely that they are kept in a dark prison in which there is no light, and which is to exist for ever, with reference to the final trial. The punishment of the rebel angels AFTER the judgment is represented as an everlasting fire, which has been prepared for them and their followers, Matt 25:41" [Barnes, Biblesoft].
- i. Angels are created beings; they are evidently subject to commit sin; but there are no provisions mentioned in the Bible whereby a fallen angel may be redeemed. The fallen angels are kept in chains of darkness unto the day of judgment. What will happen to them at this time? The same thing that will happen to wicked men: final judgment will be passed on them and they will be forever consigned to hell. Since these wicked angels could not escape the vengeance of the Almighty, neither will the false teachers and other sinful people of the earth. This is the precise point of Jude's argument.
3. Verse 7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."
- a. The third example of evildoers being punished encompasses the evil citizens of Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities about them. Genesis 19 sets forth the details of the terrible punishment visited upon these very wicked people. Admah and Zeboin were cities near Sodom and Gomorrah included in the destruction. Zoar, in the same area, was spared due to Lot's intercession [Gen. 19:22].
 - 1) Genesis 19:19-22: "Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See,

- I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.”
- 2) Deuteronomy 29:23: “And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath.”
- b. Their cities were destroyed, and the inhabitants also. The location of these cities has not been proved, although it appears they lie buried beneath the dingy depths of the Dead Sea. The initial account is recorded in Genesis 19:23-29: “The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.”
- 1) Isaiah 1:9-10: “Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.”
 - 2) Ezekiel 16:48-56: “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done. Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters. When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them: That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them. When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride.”
 - 3) Luke 17:28-32: “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.”
 - 4) Jude 7: “Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”
 - 5) 2 Peter 2:6: ‘And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.’”
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- c. The prominent sin of these wicked cities has furnished the name for one of our modern plagues—sodomy (and other forms of homosexuality). Nations of the ancient past had to learn from direct experience, just how awful are the consequences of this sinful practice on society. The Grecians and Romans became afflicted with this spiritual disease. America and other modern nations have allowed this evil to become accepted; indeed, to speak out against it is to incur the wrath of the guilty, and to risk punishment from the judicial authorities. The evil people of Sodom and Gomorrah went after strange flesh—homosexuality, bestiality, etc. This led to their destruction just as it has led to the overthrow of many other societies.
- 1) Romans 1:22-27: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”
- d. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plains serves as an object lesson and warning to all who would live ungodly lives. Wise men have observed: “A fool never learns from the mistakes of others.” “A generation that does not learn the lessons of the past is doomed to repeat the same mistakes of those who went before.” Inspiration declares:
- 1) Romans 15:4: “ For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:6: “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:11: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”
- e. “By the fact of their being overthrown, he showed that they were to be condemned, or that he disapproved their conduct. Their calamity came expressly on account of their enormous sins; as it is frequently the case now that the awful judgments that come upon the licentious and the intemperate, are as plain a proof of the divine disapprobation as were the calamities that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah. [Making them an ensample...] That is, they were a demonstration that God disapproved of the crimes for which they were punished, and would disapprove of the same crimes in every age and in every land. The punishment of one wicked man or people always becomes a warning to all others” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by BibleSoft].
- f. Brother Woods gives these comments:
- 1) A fanciful theory, and with many adherents today, is that the antecedent of "these" in this verse is the "angels" of verse 6, and that Jude here describes the sin of the angels as fornication and the lust for "strange flesh." In support of this view, reference is made to Gen. 6:4, where the phrase "sons of God" is interpreted to mean "angels of God," and the conclusion is thus drawn that the Nephilim, there described as "mighty men that were of old, men of renown," resulted from cohabitation between angels and earthly women! In *some* manuscripts of the Septuagint Version, a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, begun about the third century before
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- the Christian era, instead of the reading, "sons of God," "angels of God" appears. Moreover, it is alleged that the pronoun *toutois* (these) is masculine gender, whereas Sodom and Gomorrah are neuter, and thus do not agree; and since a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, the reference is not to these cities but to the angels.
- 2) In refutation of this interpretation, the following considerations should be noted:
 - a) The word "angels" in the Septuagint manuscripts alluded to is not a translation of the original Hebrew text, but an unwarranted interpretation injected from Alexandrian influences.
 - b) *Toutois*, dative plural of *toutos*, has the same form in both masculine and neuter gender; hence, the objection based on the gender of the pronoun fails.
 - c) In determining the antecedent of a pronoun, where two or more are grammatically possible, the nearer one is to be selected.
 - d) *Toutois* (these) refers to that which is nearer in the context. The translators, had they intended to refer to a more distant antecedent, would have supplied *those* instead.
 - e) The sin which the angels committed was in leaving their proper habitation and in not keeping their principality. There is nothing said in the reference to their sin of any sexual deviation or co-habitation of women by them.
 - f) The word "Nephilim" occurs in Num. 13:33, where the reference is obviously to the offspring of men, and not angels.
 - g) "The Nephilim" were not angelic beings of monstrous prodigies resulting from a crossing of species, but gigantic human beings, men of great renown physically.
 - h) It is an immutable and inviolable law of reproduction that everything brings forth *after its own kind*. This law is announced and affirmed repeatedly in the book of Genesis. (Gen. 1:11, 12, 21, 24, etc.) The Lord himself affirmed that angels are sexless beings and never marry. (Luke 20:35.)
 - 3) It follows, therefore, that any interpretation of Jude 6, which makes the sin of the angels the same as that which characterized the cities of the plain—fornication and unnatural sexual indulgence—is fanciful, erroneous, and absurd....These cities, in the condemnation which befell them, serve as examples of what happens to those who disobey God. The verb "set forth" (*prokeintai*) means to lie exposed, as a corpse laid out for burial. The word example (*deigma*), from a word occurring only here in the New Testament, means to exhibit or show, and as used here to indicate the demonstration which the cities of the plain afford to the vengeance inevitable to those in disobedience.
 - 4) They suffered the punishment of "eternal fire," not that the fire which consumed them is eternal, but that their punishment was so utter and so permanent that the nearest approach to it will be seen in the destruction which shall be characteristic of those who suffer *the eternal fire*. Their destruction thus stands as a symbol of that which shall eventually be the lot of all ungodly men. [Page 390].
 - g. The wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah died in the fire and brimstone which fell from heaven; they entered *tartarus* where fire still tormented them; after the judgment their eternal destiny will be consignment to unending punishment of fire.
 - h. Jude used this punishment as an example of what shall happen to all wicked and ungodly men. We have a growing world of lost humanity around us today who are following in the evil steps of those ancient rebels. Lost on them and others is the great truth of Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

D. Jude 1:8-10: Some Are Wicked and Some Are Good.

1. Verse 8: “Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.”
 - a. Having given three illustrations of the certainty of divine punishment, examples including Jews, Gentiles, and Angels, the writer now turns to apply these examples to ungodly people of his own day.
 - b. In like manner [likewise] identifies the conduct of the false teachers of his day with that of Sodom and Gomorrah. In their wicked imaginations, these filthy dreamers lived in a putrid world of impurity.
 - 1) They defiled the flesh by sins that were beyond contempt in their vileness (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
 - 2) They exhibited contempt for all authority, whether civil or divine.
 - 3) They did not hesitate to speak evil of men who occupied high places.
 - c. Compare: “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” (2 Pet. 2:10). Remember that Peter is speaking in chapter two of false teachers (verse 1). Many false teachers live clean lives (morally), but many do not. The cases of various infamous television preachers several years ago illustrate the immorality common to some. The following comments relate to 2 Peter 2:10:
 - 1) Some scholars, with the case of Sodom fresh in mind from the preceding verses, think that the “lust of uncleanness” (“lust of defilement”—ASV) is a reference to homosexuality—a particularly vile sin. Clarke offers this thought: “That is, God will in the most signal manner punish them that walk after the flesh—addict themselves to sodomitical practices, and the lust of pollution; probably alluding to those most abominable practices where men abuse themselves and abuse one another” [Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1996 by Biblesoft].
 - 2) The wicked men of whom Peter speaks not only walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, but they also despise government. They had contempt for authority. Anything or anyone who opposed them became the victims of their hatred.
 - 3) That is certainly true in our world today, when we speak against the evils of homosexuality. Efforts have been made in our nation to enact “hate laws.” Under such legislation, anyone who speaks against homosexuality would be in great peril. It is also true when we expose false religious teachings. Many pay lip-service to the Scriptures, but when their doctrines and practices are shown to be in opposition to the Bible, they reject the authority of God’s word; they even scorn certain biblical themes and passages which oppose their false doctrines and sins.
 - 4) We have a generation coming on the scene in our country which has very little respect for authority—parental, school, law enforcement, judicial, biblical. It is enough to cause God-fearing people to tremble over what lies in store for the future.
2. Verse 9: “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”
 - a. Michael is first mentioned in the scriptures in Daniel and later in Revelation. He was an archangel, a term meaning chief of the angels.
 - 1) Daniel 10:13: “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”
 - 2) Daniel 10:21: “But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.”
 - 3) Daniel 12:1: “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”
 - 4) Revelation 12:7: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon;

- and the dragon fought and his angels.”
- b. Jude’s point is clear—the false teachers and other wicked ones found it easy to speak evil of others, even of godly men and righteous doctrines. The same is true today. But Michael the Archangel would not bring a railing accusation against Satan himself, though the evil nature and practices of our arch-enemy was beyond doubt. He tersely stated, “The Lord rebuke thee.”
- 1) Romans 12:17-21: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”
 - 2) Matthew 5:10-12: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”
 - 3) Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”
 - 4) Luke 23:8-11: “And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.”
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:21-25: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”
 - 6) Luke 23:34-37: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.”
- c. “Barclay's summary of the meaning of this whole verse is excellent: ‘If the greatest of good angels refused to speak evil of the greatest of evil angels, even in circumstances like that, then surely no human being may speak evil of any angel.’ It is absolutely unnecessary to suppose that Jude was here quoting from Philo, or the apocryphal book of Enoch, or Josephus, or ‘The Assumption of Moses,’ nor any one of half dozen alleged ‘sources.’ The last clause of this verse is a quotation from the Old Testament book of Zech. 3:2; and we may be certain that the rest of this verse is just as authentic as the last clause. It is helpful to remember that the writer of this epistle had been reared in the same family with Jesus Christ our Lord, having had more than a quarter of a century of the most intimate association with the Lord, and that such a statement as is found in this verse undoubtedly reflects the Saviour's own supernatural wisdom. It should not disturb anyone that the kernel of truth mentioned here was endlessly vulgarized and extended in an apocryphal book” (Coffman, Electronic Edition).
- d. We are told that Michael contended with the devil; the contention had to do with the body of Moses;
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in this dispute he did not bring a railing accusation [judgment] against the devil; he merely said, "The Lord rebuke thee." Nothing is given regarding when this dispute took place, what prompted it, or the results of the disputation. This is probably the most difficult statement in the epistle, and has been abused by too much speculation.

- e. "Merely to state the views which have been expressed regarding it would require a treatment of the subject far beyond the limits of this commentary. Jewish tradition and Rabbinic literature abound with allusions to such an advent, but such sources are wholly unreliable in reconstructing the facts in the case. Jude, an inspired writer, affirmed that the event occurred. It is sufficient for us simply to believe it; it is surely unnecessary for us to vindicate Jude's veracity by proving that the facts related occurred and are testified to by other writers. The lesson which the author desired to be drawn from his remarks is obvious. The ungodly characters, about whom he was warning his readers, spoke of angelic dignities in a fashion which even an archangel did not dare adopt in speaking to the devil. The argument is an *a fortiori* one. The meaning is, If one of the highest beings in the angelic world restrained himself from the use of railing judgment against the devil, how much more unjustified was it for these false teachers to disregard the dignity of those against whom they spoke" (Woods, p.393).
- f. They disputed over the body of Moses, perhaps regarding the burying place. When Moses died atop Mount Nebo, God buried his body. "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34:1-6).
 - 1) "What is indicated in Jude's words here is that there was conflict between Michael and Satan over the body of Moses; we may surmise (and it is only that) that perhaps Satan wanted to use the body for purposes like the worship of relics in succeeding ages. At any rate, the lesson is, THE archangel did not bring a railing accusation against the devil himself, saying, 'The Lord rebuke thee' (Zech. 3:2). How strange it is that mortal, weak, ignorant, vile and sinful men would rail against heavenly beings, a thing which the archangel would not do, even though apparently having the right to have done so" (Coffman, Electronic Edition).
 - 2) Since the church is called the body of Christ, is it possible to call Israel the body of Moses? If so, the dispute might have been in regards to the nation of Israel—its status or its future. But a passage is to be taken as a literal statement unless there is something in the context which requires it to be seen as a figure; there is nothing in Jude's statement that would require or permit it to be taken figuratively.
- g. From Pulpit Commentary:
 - 1) When contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. These last words occur in Zech 3:2, where they are addressed by the Lord to Satan. The term used for "disputed" points to a contention in words. The phrase rendered "railing accusation" by the English Version, and "invective" by others, means rather a judgment or "sentence savouring of evil-speaking," as Alford puts it. Following the Rhemish Version, therefore, the Revised Version renders it a "railing judgment." What is meant, then, is that Michael restrained himself, leaving all judgment and vengeance even in this case to God. But what is the case referred to?
 - 2) The Targum of Jonathan, on Deut 34:6, speaks of Michael as having charge of the grave of Moses,

- and there may be something to the same effect in other ancient Jewish legends (see Wetstein). But with this partial exception, there seems to be nothing resembling Jude's statement either in apocryphal books like that of Enoch or in the rabbinical literature, not to speak of the canonical Scriptures. Neither is the object of the contention quite apparent—whether it is meant that the devil attempted to deprive Moses of the honour of burial by impeaching him of the murder of the Egyptian, or that he sought to preserve the body for idolatrous uses such as the brazen serpent lent itself to, or what else.
- 3) The matter, nevertheless, is introduced by Jude as one with which his readers would be familiar. Whence, then, comes the story? Some have solved the difficulty by the desperate expedient of allegory, as if the body of Moses were a figure of the Israelite Law, polity, or people; and as if the sentence referred to the giving of the Law at Sinai, the siege under Hezekiah, or the rebuilding under Zerubbabel. Others seek its source in a special revelation, or in some unrecorded instructions given by Christ in explanation of the Transfiguration scene.
3. Verse 10: “But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.”
- a. But these false teachers had no qualms about speaking harshly and violently against things about which they knew nothing, matters entirely outside their knowledge and experience. Paul described similar people in Colossians 2:18: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” What they perceive as giving them great happiness and pleasure, would be the source of their downfall.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:1: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”
 - 2) Proverbs 6:27: “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?”
 - 3) Galatians 6:7-8: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”
 - b. These men boasted of superior knowledge and claimed it as the reason for their sinful, lascivious behavior; they were in reality on the level of brute beasts in the way they lived. Compare: “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption” (2 Pet. 2:12).
 - c. Brother Woods has this excellent observation on 2 Peter 1:12: “The fallen angels recognized the moral law of God and felt the wrath which came upon them in their disobedience; whereas, these false teachers, though greatly inferior to the angels (verse 11), were like mere animals in disregarding utterly any laws of a higher world. Like wild beasts of prey which exist solely for the gratification of fleshly appetites, and eventually to be taken and destroyed for the harm they do, these false teachers, as similar creatures without reason or rational conduct, deserved no better fate. In their senseless railing against matters about which they knew nothing, they would eventually suffer the destruction which was wrought out for all whom they deceived. In destroying others, they would, themselves, eventually, be destroyed” (p.171). “But whoso shall offend [*cause them to stumble*] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Matt. 18:6-7).
 - d. Today, wicked men and false teachers rail at the existence of God, the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the gospel plan of salvation, scriptural worship, the church of our Lord, and about Christian living. The faithful have never been lacking in enemies. Knowing the spiritual condition of
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those lost in sin, and being appraised by the Bible of the awful fate awaiting them, we are moved to pity when we contemplate their end. Our heart aches to help them to see the error of their ways! But, they are unwilling to listen.

- e. “Their desires became the rule of their lives, and the flesh the source of their gratification. They were wicked, ungodly men, and their destiny determined and sure. Like Cain, Balaam, and Korah, examples offered in the next section, their error was coupled with disaster and would not long delay its effects” (Woods, p.394).

E. Jude 1:11-13: The Wicked Condemned.

1. Verse 11: “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) “Woe unto them! For they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah” (ASV).
 - 2) “Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah” (NKJ).
 - 3) “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah” (ESV).
 - b. The false teachers introduced in verse 4 are now likened to Cain, Balaam, and Korah. A pronouncement of “woe” is made, indicating the misery which will inevitably come upon them. Compare: “And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!” (Matt. 24:19).
 - c. Three well-known Old Testament cases are brought forward to establish the fact that well-deserved punishment is sure to come upon the disobedient.
 - d. Cain is cited because he was the first truly corrupt man; when his worship was rejected by the Almighty while his brother’s was accepted, he was filled with envy, bitterness, and anger; he proceeded to murder Abel. God had revealed to Cain and Abel the worship they were to offer; Abel offered his worship by faith (Heb. 11:4; cf. Rom. 10:17). Cain offered items for worship which God had not authorized. In jealousy and rage, Cain slew his brother.
 - 1) 1 John 3:12: “Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”
 - 2) Genesis 4:7: “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.”
 - 3) Hebrews 11:4: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”
 - 4) Romans 10:17: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - e. Balaam is included because he sought to abuse his prophetic gift for material gain; he was unconcerned about the effects on Israel if he succeeded in getting God’s people to sin; the most important thing to Balaam was not speaking truth but getting gain.
 - 1) Numbers 22:5-7: “He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they

- came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.”
- 2) Revelation 2:14: “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”
 - 3) 2 Peter 2:15: “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”
 - 4) Numbers 25:1-9: “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.”
 - 5) Numbers 31:16: “Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.”
 - 6) Numbers 31:8: “And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.”
- f. Korah is included because he rebelled against divine authority (Num. 16:1-35).
- 1) Numbers 16:1-3: “Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?”
 - 2) Numbers 16:28-35: “And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.”
- g. By connecting these false teachers with these Old Testament characters, Jude shows that they were
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guilty (at least in principle) of murder, covetousness, rebellion, and pride. The evil manifested in those Old Testament men was also present in those false teachers (vs. 4) and threatened the peace and harmony of the church, and could cause many souls to be lost.

2. Verses 12-13: “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) “These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn leaves without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever” (ASV).
 - 2) “These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (NKJ).
 - 3) “These are blemishes on your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, looking after themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever” (ESV).
 - b. *These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.*
 - 1) The brethren frequently had fellowship meals in which all would share. The ones with more to provide would furnish enough for themselves and some of the others who could contribute little or nothing.
 - 2) The false teachers and other evil men would take part in the feasts. Jude describes them as spots; other renditions of the passages depict them as hidden rocks—ready to rip the bottom from the spiritual ship of the faithful. They were both a blemish on the occasion as well as a great danger.
 - 3) These evil men would have no shame or fear in deceiving and destroying the saints. They were very bold and assertive; they would endeavor to run rough-shod over the brethren. That is the way it often is today, when a congregation takes into its bosom a number of false brethren; these wicked ones soon take over, leaving the faithful with little choice—they either join with the evil ones, fight against the wicked efforts, or move to another location. In either case, it is more than likely that the original work will have been wrecked. The property and money are stolen, years of work and influence are destroyed by self-centered servants of Satan.
 - c. *Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds.*
 - 1) During a dry spell, the appearance of clouds causes hope to rise in the bosom of the farmer; but when the cloud moves away or dissipates, any hope of precipitation vanishes. There was much hope of rain, but nothing came of it.
 - 2) So it is with the false teachers. They promise much but produce nothing worthwhile. When a liberal element takes over a congregation, it is often the case that the numbers swell, but that does not indicate growth. These errorists offer what the worldly-minded want; this attracts other men of this world. Despite the presence of large numbers of people, that does not indicate strength—real spiritual strength.
 - 3) There are times when the Lord’s work is popular and meets with great numerical success (Acts 2:41). But more generally, the truth is not well-received by the population; in those many cases, the faithful are few; they comprise the minority.

- d. *Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.*
- 1) In the fall of the year, fruit trees are expected to be laden with ripe fruit. These false teachers claim to offer a full harvest of good things, but in the final analysis, they can produce nothing!
 - 2) Not only do they produce no fruit, they are twice dead; they have no fruit, their tree is dead, and their tree is pulled up by the roots. A tree that has no life in it is dead; a dead tree that has been uprooted from the earth is twice dead!
 - 3) Matthew 15:13-14: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
- e. *Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.*
- 1) Just because there is much movement and commotion is not proof of life and productivity. The waves of the sea keep crashing upon the shore, sending foam to cover the beach. But in a moment the foam is gone and the wave has receded, leaving nothing behind but the flotsam and jetsam—items that have little or no value.
 - 2) The liberals give indication of great activity; there is often a great deal of commotion around the building. But generally this activity has more to do with fun and games than real Bible study, pure worship, and other beneficial work.
- f. *Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*
- 1) "Instead of moving on in a regular orbit, as lights to the world, bursting forth like erratic comets, or rather fiery meteors, with a strange glare, then doomed to fall back again into black gloom" [JFB, Biblesoft].
 - 2) "If the 'wandering stars' are to be identified with any particular order of the heavenly bodies, it will be with the comets rather than the planets, the movements of the former seeming, to the common eye, so much the more erratic. The doom which is declared to be in reserve, no doubt takes its form so far from the immediate figure of the comet vanishing into the unseen. But the idea expressed is not so much that of suddenness as that of certainty and irreversibility. It is the doom which Christ himself pronounces to be prepared (Matt 25:41), and, therefore, inevitable and perpetual. In confirmation of this statement of the certainty of the doom, the readers are next reminded of the Lord's judicial coming, and of that as the subject of prophecy" [Pulpit Commentary].
- g. Brother Woods has some outstanding comments:
- 1) With a wealth of imagery and in vivid detail here and in the verse to follow Jude describes those who threatened the peace and purity of the church and against whom he wrote. They are described as "hidden rocks" in the love feasts in which the saints participated. Like sunken reefs which could not be seen on the surface of the water, but which would inevitably wreck any ship which struck them, so these men gave no warning of the threat which they posed. The "love-feasts" were meals common to the apostolic age at which the saints met from social, charitable, and humanitarian reasons. They appear to have had their origin in the practice of wealthier members of the congregation providing food for the poorer ones, and eating with them, in token of their brotherliness. These feasts are not to be identified in any way with the Lord's supper; indeed, when this supper was corrupted into such a meal, it occasioned a sharp rebuke from Paul. (1 Cor. 11:17-34.) But that saints were accustomed to meet together for common meals follows from this reference to such by Jude, from a similar reference in 2 Pet. 2:13, and from numerous statements from ecclesiastical writers in the early centuries of the Christian era. They were suspended by the fourth century because men of the type of whom Jude wrote turned them into ungodly revels.
 - 2) Shepherds that without fear feed themselves;—Instead of submitting themselves to the true shepherds of the flock—the elders—they affected to be shepherds themselves, their true motive
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- being to feed themselves! This statement is similar in content to that occurring in Ezek. 34:2: "Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the sheep?" "Yea, the dogs are greedy, they can never have enough; and these are shepherds that cannot understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, from every quarter." (Isa. 56:11.)
- 3) Clouds without water, carried along by winds;—Note a similar statement in 2 Pet. 2:17, "springs without water, and mists driven by a storm." These false teachers were like clouds which offer promises of refreshing showers, but are carried along (borne past, *parapheromenai*) and leave no rain. In a land of little rainfall such as Palestine, indeed, in much of the East, the appearance of clouds offering refreshing rain is eagerly watched by the farmer, but when the cloud is borne along by the wind leaving no moisture hope yields to despair. These false teachers, like clouds devoid of water, were pretentious, boastful, promising. Yet, in their wake they left only disappointment. To an Oriental, it would not be possible to suggest a more expressive and vivid figure than that which here appears. Cf. Prov. 25:14: "As clouds and wind without rain, so is he that boasteth himself of his gifts falsely."
 - 4) Autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;—"Autumn" here is from *phthinoporon*, a word meaning, literally, late autumn, hence, trees on which there is no fruit at the season when it is most expected. Jude may have recalled here the parable of the barren fig tree, which teaches the same lesson of legitimate expectation unfulfilled. The lesson, however, is carried further here. The tree was not only barren; it was twice dead, and in addition, plucked up by the roots. There was, therefore, no possible chance for fruit from such a source! Such was the character of the false teachers about whom Jude wrote.
 - 5) Wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.—The first two figures which Jude used, hidden rocks and clouds, referred to the false pretensions of the men about whom he warned and their disaster to which their teaching and conduct led. The third, that of the fruit tree twice dead, described their wretched condition of complete barrenness. The two which this verse contains, foaming waves of the sea, and wandering stars, suggest their lawlessness and shamelessness and their ultimate fate. The figure of the foaming sea waves as illustrative of the wicked is used by the prophet Isaiah: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isa. 57:20.) The reference is obviously to the flotsam and jetsam borne on the crest of the waves and cast up from time to time on the beach. These men with their "great swelling words of vanity" (2 Pet. 2:18) were like the great waves that break in foam and leave the beach littered with tangled and worthless refuse. Or, like wandering stars without direction or orbit, they shine for a while and then pass into utter darkness. For them the blackness of darkness has been reserved forever and ever. Religious teachers are often likened to stars in the sacred writings. (Rev. 1:16; 2:1.)
 - 6) There is striking resemblance between this entire section and that which occurs in 2 Pet. 2:1-22. The notes should be consulted there in connection with the comments which are made here. (Pages 395f).
- h. That the saints of that era were accustomed to meet together for common meals appears from this reference by Jude, by 2 Peter 2:13, and from the writings of uninspired writers; the type of men Jude describes turned these godly occasions into ungodly revels.
 - i. Brother Coffman offers this:
 - 1) Hidden rocks in your love-feasts ... The metaphor appears to be a sunken shoal, or reef, upon which the unwary mariner might suffer shipwreck.
 - 2) Love-feasts.... This, according to Robinson, suggests something near a mid-century date (61-62 A.D.) for Jude. Essential to the success of these evil poachers in the Lords' vineyard was the secret
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and stealthy *modus operandi* which attended their operations.

- 3) Shepherds that without fear feed themselves ... Like everything else in his letter, Jude here drew this from the Old Testament example of "shepherds that feed themselves" (Ezek. 34). Ezekiel called them "fat cattle" who abuse the flock of God, fouling their food with refuse, etc.; as some would say today, "They were fat cats, living in luxury while impoverishing others."
- 4) Clouds without water ... Note that this is a metaphor drawn from the arid area of Judaea, perfectly ordinary, and universally known. Clouds without water were a terrible disappointment to people who needed rain most of the time.
- 5) Carried along by winds ... A similar cloud metaphor having the meaning of instability. Now one may see such a cloud; then he doesn't. That was the way it was with the false teachers.
- 6) Autumn trees without fruit ... The autumn trees here were those which normally bore their fruit in the autumn. Fruit time was disappointment time for those who looked to barren trees.
- 7) Twice dead, plucked up by the roots ... In a sense, an unfruitful, or barren tree, was "dead"; but, when it had already been grubbed up from the earth, it was "doubly dead." "Spiritually, these men were twice dead in having returned after baptism to the death of sin." Many have likewise identified this as parallel with such passages as Heb. 6:4-7.

F. Jude 1:14-16: The Prophecy of Enoch.

1. Verse 14: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."
 - a. The patriarch Enoch was one of the greatest men of the early Old Testament history; we know little about him except what is stated in the following verses, plus our text.
 - 1) Genesis 5:21-24: "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:5: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."
 - 3) He walked with God in that far away time not long after the creation. Only one other man has it specifically said about him that he walked with God: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:8-9).
 - b. Moses did not record the fact that Enoch was a prophet; it was left to Jude to tell us this truth. He was the seventh from Adam: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah (Gen. 5:3-32).
 - c. Jude, writing by inspiration, relates to us that Enoch was a prophet of God, and that he had predicted the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of his saints [*holy ones*]. The purpose of the Lord's coming was specifically said to bring judgment upon all the ungodly ones of earth. The inspired writer of this epistle properly applied this impending punishment to the false teachers of his day. Of course, Enoch's warning was intended for all men of every generation.
 - d. How did Jude know of Enoch's prophecy since it was not otherwise recorded? The same Spirit who guided Enoch, also guided Jude.
 - e. The apocryphal book entitled "Book of Enoch" was discovered in 1773 in a copy of the Ethiopic Bible, and was translated into English in 1821 (Woods). This uninspired book contains a statement similar to that made by Jude in this passage. Some claim that Jude quoted from this book, but from the evidence obtainable, it appears that the unidentified author of the apocryphal book quoted from

Jude. "The book cannot be certainly traced back of the third century, and there is no reliable evidence when it was written. An examination of it reveals that it was written by a Jew; that its author subscribed to the idea of a judgment such as that taught in the New Testament; and that it was influenced by New Testament conceptions. Numerous matters in it suggest a post-apostolic origin. There are sharp variations between the statement allegedly cited by Jude and the actual statement as it appears in Jude. There is more reason for supposing that the book of Jude is older than this so-called 'Book of Enoch,' and that the author quoted from Jude rather than Jude from him! In the same fashion that Peter knew that Noah was a preacher, that Lot was vexed in Sodom, and that Paul knew the names of the Egyptian magicians; Jude learned of Enoch's prophecy—by inspiration" (Woods, p.399).

- f. "The word 'saints' we now apply commonly to 'redeemed' saints, or to Christians. The original word is, however, applicable to all who are 'holy,' angels as well as men. The common representation in the Scriptures is, that he would come attended by the angels (Matt 25:31), and there is doubtless allusion here to such beings. It is a common representation in the Old Testament also that God, when he manifests himself, is accompanied by great numbers of heavenly beings" (Barnes, BibleSoft).
- 1) Matthew 25:31-46: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world....And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels....And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - 2) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
- g. The Lord will come with myriads of his holy ones.
- 1) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - 2) Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
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Jude 14 – The Prophecy of Enoch

What are the implications of Jude’s reference to a prophecy of Enoch? Study this matter with us.

Jude refers to one of the Old Testament patriarchs when he says: “... Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones ...” (v. 14).

A passage quite similar to this is found in the apocryphal Book of Enoch. Some have suggested that Jude quoted his prophecy from this source and thus the Book of Enoch was inspired. Others allege that this quotation discredits Jude as an inspired writer. Neither inference is warranted.

Even if Jude had quoted from the Book of Enoch, that would not imply the book’s inspiration – any more than Paul’s quotation from a pagan poet would demand inspiration for that source (cf. Acts 17:28). Furthermore, quotations from a secular source, simply to make an *ad hominem* point, do not reflect upon the divine origin of a biblical book (cf. Titus 1:12).

Where did Jude get his quotation? It is useless to speculate for the record does not say. He may have received it directly from the Spirit. He may have quoted from some earlier source to which the writer of the Book of Enoch also had access. No conclusion can be drawn in the absence of more precise information.

Certainly the passage does not demand the conclusion that Jude took his quotation from the Book of Enoch, suggesting the apocryphal document was inspired of God. Whatever the immediate source, ultimately Jude quoted prophecy. Make a marginal note: *No proof that this quotation is from Book of Enoch.* [Wayne Jackson].

2. Verse 15: “To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”
 - a. Enoch predicted that the wicked will be charged with all of their evil deeds and hard words. The Lord will execute righteous judgment upon all, to convict the ungodly of their evil works, to expose them for the harsh and ugly things which they have spoken against him. In the Greek text, the words “ungodly sinners” appears at the end of the sentence to give emphasis to what the writer said.
 - b. From this statement we learn that the patriarchs near the beginning of time knew of the Judgment day with its rewards and punishments. We ordinarily think of them as knowing very little, but they had knowledge of some matters.
 - c. “The patriarchs were doubtless possessed of a much more profound grasp of truth than is customary to assign them in our day. That the world was later engulfed in ignorance and superstition and lost the knowledge of Jehovah does not argue that they were never in possession of such. The blindness which later characterized them was due to apostasy and to a repudiation of the truth which they once possessed” (Woods, p).
 - d. Genesis 20: "And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake."
 - 1) He feared for his own safety, thinking that there was no fear of God in Gerar. He had thought the same thing about Egypt (12:12), and evidently with good cause. God brought some severe plagues against Pharaoh and his people for Sarah's sake.
 - 2) Abraham misjudged Abimelech and his people. He expected to see fear of God at that place; that reverence was not obvious to him at the first. The fact that the people of this place retained a measure of knowledge of God indicates that some still possessed information about God, information that had been passed down through the generations from Noah's time.
3. Verse 16: “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.”
 - a. These words given by Jude offer additional details of the characteristics of the false teachers being contemplated.
 - b. They were murmurers— people who offered strong complaints about the circumstances of their life. They were regularly giving voice to their unhappy situations; it is likely that they placed the blame of these problems on God himself.
 - c. They walked after their own lust, thus giving themselves over to a life at lasciviousness. They chose the baser way of life rather than the higher and nobler. They lived for the fleshly gratification to which they had given themselves.
 - d. They uttered great swelling words by which they sought to deceive others; these words were ostentatious—they sounded important but were empty of meaning; the design of these words was to deceive those who were more interested in the sound than the sense of words.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:18-19: “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.”
 - 2) Psalms 144:11: “Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.”
 - 3) Ezekiel 13:8: “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.”
 - 4) Ephesians 5:6: “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the

wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

- e. They also showed respect of persons for the purpose of gaining some advantage. They would “butter-up” the rich and powerful for what they could get out of such association.
- f. These characteristics are not foreign to any society or to the church of any age. The same condemnation assigned to such in the ancient days, will be assigned to their modern day brothers.
- g. From Coffman: “Bennett's comment on this verse is: ‘When it was safe to do so, they blustered and bullied, and played the superior person, but they cringed to rich men, and flattered them for the sake of dinners and presents.’ Another analysis of this verse was given by Wallace which pointed out the numerous charges against the evil men enumerated in this single verse: (1) they are grumblers; (2) they are complainers; (3) they are malcontents; (4) their sole guide is their lusts; (5) they are noisy boasters; and (6) all that they do is directed to procuring some personal benefit for themselves. How many on earth today are described by this same analysis?” (Electronic version).

G. Jude 1:17-23: Exhortations To Faithfulness.

1. Verse 17: “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - a. Jude calls on the brethren to remember the words which they had learned from the apostles of Christ concerning certain trials to come on them:
 - 1) Acts 20:29-31: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:1-4: “I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables” (ASV).
 - 4) 1 John 4:1-3: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”
 - b. Jude speaks of the apostles in the third person—which indicates that he was not an apostle. Since the epistle is strong and authoritative, it would have added even greater authority to the message if the writer was an apostle and had affirmed that fact. Here would be the ideal place for such an affirmation, But the statement made here is such that would have been made by one who was not an apostle. The teachings referred to were familiar to Jude’s readers; they had heard the apostles give these instruction or had read their writings on it; they were familiar with the apostles.
 - c. “*The words which have been spoken....* There is no need to inquire whether this means ‘written words’ or ‘spoken words’; for apostles were still living when this was written, and it could have been, and probably was, both. What is truly significant here, as it regards dating the letter, is that the apostles

of Christ at the time were not contrasted with any such officials as later rose in the church; but they stand here as the only authority appealed to, a condition that points squarely at the early 60's or earlier" (Coffman, *ibid.*).

2. Verse 18: "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts."
 - a. Compare: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:1-4).
 - b. Peter indicated the kind of mockery that the unbelievers would offer regarding the alleged delay in the coming of Christ. Jude does not offer any specification of their mockery. He simply states that these mockers would walk after their own ungodly lusts. Jude is commenting on what the brethren had learned from the apostles.
 - c. Regards *the last time*, consider Hebrews 1:1 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1). "These last days" is a reference to the Christian Age, the last dispensation of time. It began with the death of Christ and will end with the return of Christ.
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Compare: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 2) Joel 2:28: "And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16-17).
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:1: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."
 - 6) Matthew 12:32: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."
 - 7) When the Lord returns, the entire universe and time itself will be no more: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner

- of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:8-13).
- d. Regarding *the last days*, consider Acts 2:17: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."
- 1) Joel predicted that some marvelous events would transpire "in the last days." Some attribute these last days to the closing period of the Mosaic Age. God's miraculous dealings of that era began with the birth and ministry of Christ. The Mosaic Age ended with the crucifixion of the Lord, but Joel's prediction had to do with the events beginning on the Pentecost Day (Acts 2) following our Lord's death.
 - 2) This last great demonstration of supernatural powers (excepting those associated with the return of Christ at the end of time) was predicted by Joel. Micah 7:15 also contains a reference to these "marvelous" powers, stating that they would last for a time period equivalent to the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan (forty years). It is unlikely that the closing years of Jewish history from Pentecost to 70 A.D. would have been designated at the "last days."
 - 3) In view of other references, including the present passage (Acts 2:16-17), it is clear that the *last days* is a reference to the last dispensation of time, the Christian Age (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:1-2; Jude 3).
 - 4) It is during this last age that Christ reigns on his throne at God's right hand:
 - a) Acts 2:33-36: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - b) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
3. Verse 19: "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) "These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit" (ASV).
 - 2) "It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit" (ESV).
 - 3) "These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit" (NKJ).
 - b. "The word translated 'make separations' is a rare one in the sacred writings, and means to cause divisions, parties, factions in the church. It is a compound word, made up of the prepositions *apo*, from; *dia*, through; and the noun *oros*, a section line. As here figuratively used, it designates one who draws a line through the church and sets one part over against another. It is a vivid and impressive picture of the actions of church dividers, factionists, troublers of the people of God. Some ancient versions render the phrase, 'they who make separations,' as 'these are makers of sects'; and Luther translated it, 'makers of factions'" (Woods, p.403).
 - c. The word translated "sensual" is from the same root word as that found in 1 Corinthians 2:14 where it is translated *natural*. "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they
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are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (1 Cor. 2:14, ASV). Concerning the word soul:

- 1) The word *soul* sometimes is used in the Scriptures to denote the animal life which man has in common with animals. In this sense, animals have souls.
 - a) Psalms 74:19: "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude *of the wicked*: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever."
 - b) Psalms 72:13: "He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." The needy are those in need of physical necessities; the provisions given was food to sustain their lives.
 - 2) The word sometimes refers to the spirit; in the usual case, the words *spirit* and *soul* are used interchangeably in the Scriptures.
 - a) Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The part of man which will be saved in eternity is called "the spirit."
 - b) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - c) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." The part of man which is subject to eternal punishment is here called "the soul."
 - d) Genesis 35:18: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin." What was it that departed from the dying body of Rachel? It was her spirit (her soul). It survived the death of her body.
 - e) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." The spirit survives the death of the body; this spirit is also called the "soul."
 - f) 1 Kings 17:21: "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again."
 - g) Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him." The spirit (soul) is formed within the physical body of a man.
 - h) Daniel 7:15: "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me." His spirit (soul) was able to be grieved; it was present in the midst of his physical body. The spirit (soul) is separate from the body.
 - i) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."
 - 3) The word *soul* is also used in the Scriptures in reference to individuals (persons). "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Pet. 3:20).
 - 4) The word *soul* is used in the Scriptures in reference to animal life which we possess in common with beasts. In this sense, animals have souls.
 - a) Psalms 74:19: "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude *of the wicked*: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever."
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- b) Psalms 72:13: "He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." The needy are those in need of physical necessities; the provisions given was food to sustain their lives.
- 5) Sometimes the word is used in distinction from the body and spirit: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).
- a) Paul here expresses his desire that the brethren be completely sanctified by the God of peace. This is not some miraculous change which God brings upon us, but the gradual growth we undergo as we study, learn, and improve in the Christian life.
- b) It was his desire also that their whole spirit, soul, and body should be preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ. A distinction is made here between the spirit and the soul. Man is a triune being, possessing a physical body, physical life, and a spirit.
- d. Those who are sensual possess a wisdom which is from below rather than that which is from above: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3:15).
- 1) It is **sensual** because it pertains to the lustful nature of sinful man: "'Belonging to the *psuche*, soul' (as the lower part of the immaterial in man), 'natural, physical,' describes the man in Adam and what pertains to him (set in contrast to *pneumatikos* 'spiritual'), 1 Cor 2:14; 15:44 (twice), 46 (in the latter used as a noun); James 3:15, 'sensual' (RV marg., 'natural' or 'animal'), here relating perhaps more especially to the mind, a wisdom in accordance with, or springing from, the corrupt desires and affections; so in Jude 19." [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
- 2) There are three aspects of man's nature. He possesses a spirit, a soul, and a physical body. The word "soul" is often used in reference to the "spirit" (the immortal part of our nature). When it is used in distinction from the spirit, "soul" refers to our animal life (cf. Ps. 78:50).
- 3) "Inasmuch as the word *soul* is thus used, the adjective *psuchike* is literally, *soulish*, *natural*, or *animal*. Thus, the word (as an adjective) describes the condition of man when he is governed by the lower impulses of his nature, and not by his spirit, his higher being" (Woods, *Commentary on James*, p.187).
- e. Jude declares that they "have not the Spirit."
- 1) Some scholars think that their not having the spirit might have reference to the defective attitude or disposition of mind. Compare:
- a) Romans 8:9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."
- b) Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
- 2) "Having not the Spirit ... The blessed Spirit, long having been grieved, insulted, resisted, lusted against, and at last 'quenched' by themselves, such men were no longer capable of any goodness whatever" (Coffman, *ibid.*).
- 3) It is certain that these false teachers were not following the directions given through the Holy Spirit. Their condition appears to be that of having blasphemed the Holy Spirit.
- f. The sin of blaspheming the Spirit is not a single act but a sin of disposition. It is developed gradually.
- 1) One grieves the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) by not living right.
- 2) One resists the Spirit (Acts 7:51) when he withstands the word and refuses to believe the truth.
- 3) One quenches the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19; cf. Heb. 10:29) when he disputes, denies, opposes, rejects, hates, perverts, and refuses to obey the word of God.
- a) Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of
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- redemption.”
- b) Acts 7:51: “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”
 - c) 1 Thessalonians 5:19: “Quench not the Spirit.”
 - d) Hebrews 10:29: “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”
- 4) The result is a hard heart on which the Spirit-given word has no effect, since he has rejected that message of truth.
- a) Matthew 13:13-16: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."
 - b) John 12:37-40: "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."
 - c) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
 - d) Hebrews 10:26-29: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
- 5) One can get himself into such a state of hardheartedness that he will not and cannot accept the gospel; but if he can muster a change in his attitude of heart, he could receive salvation. Many get themselves into such a deep state of rebellion and hardness that they cannot (or will not) obey the gospel: this is the type person the Lord describes as a blasphemer of the Holy Spirit! This sin can be accomplished by words spoken or by deeds done, which reflect the hard, impenitent attitude of heart that rejects the truth of God's word.
- 6) The Bible gives examples of this sin.
- a) Acts 13:44-46: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear *the word of God*. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the *word of God* should first have been spoken to you: but seeing *ye put it from you*, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
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- b) Acts 28:24-28: "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."
- c) If we hate the truth, reject it and refuse to believe and obey it, we are guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit; if we are concerned about whether we have committed this sin, that is a sure sign we have not!
- 7) 1 John 5:16 speaks of a sinful condition which a fallen saint can develop that puts him into the same dire situation: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." The ASV gives this wording: "If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request."
- a) What is this sin unto death? He is not speaking of some specific sin for all manner of sins may be forgiven: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:9-11).
- b) This sin is such that it can be identified. The death contemplated is not physical death for this we all face; spiritual death is meant. It is sin that a child of God could be guilty. It was possible for one to distinguish the difference between the sin unto death and the sin not unto death.
- c) The apostle John addresses sin and pardon in his epistle. Each Christian can commit sin: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10).
- d) We can live a life that is above sin [although we will invariable stumble into an occasional instance of sin] if we fill our minds and hearts with God's word:
- (1) 1 John 3:9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."
- (2) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
- (3) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
- e) If we commit an act of sin, John reminds us that we have an advocate in Heaven: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2).
- f) If we confess our sins, our Lord is willing to pardon us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).
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- g) With these thoughts and facts in mind, we may be able to identify what the sin unto death is:
- (1) The Lord will forgive every sin that we sincerely confess (1 John 1:9).
 - (2) There is a sin which the Lord will not pardon (1 John 5:16).
 - (3) Therefore, the sin unto death which the Lord will not forgive, is a sin which a brother will not confess.
- h) “If, however, my brother exhibits stubborn impenitence and persistent rebellion, following the commission of his sin, it is useless to petition the Father in his behalf. The sin unto death is thus a disposition of heart, a perverseness of attitude and an unwillingness of mind to acknowledge one's sin and from it turn away. Such a disposition effectively closes the door of heaven in one's face” (Woods, p.322).
4. Verse 20: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” (ASV).
 - 2) “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit” (NKJ).
 - 3) “But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit” (ESV).
 - b. Jude draws a contrast between the sensual men of the above verses and the saints to whom he was writing. He directs them to build themselves up on their most holy faith. “Building” is a reference to their growth in Christianity. With faith as the foundation, they were to construct a spiritual building:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:5-11: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
 - 3) Ephesians 2:20-22: “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”
 - 4) Ephesians 3:17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.”
 - 5) Colossians 2:7: “Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”
 - c. He directed them to pray in the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) In the age of miracles, the supernaturally-endowed could pray inspired prayers. In this sense, those who had the spiritual gift to offer such prayers were to use it.
 - a) We have a case of this kind of inspired prayer in Acts 4:24-30: “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made

heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.”

- 2) All prayers are to be offered within the boundaries of God’s word, which was given by the Spirit. In this sense, brethren are to offer prayers in keeping with the will of God.
 - a) 1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”
 - b) 1 Corinthians 14:15: “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”
 - c) Romans 8:26: “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”
5. Verse 21: “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (ASV).
 - 2) “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (NKJ).
 - 3) “Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life” (ESV).
 - b. Love of God—is this his love for us or our love for him? In this case, it is God’s love for us. We keep ourselves in his love by shaping our lives and hearts by his will.
 - 1) John 15:9-10: “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” “In John 14:15, the Lord said, ‘If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments,’ where it is clear that he meant, ‘Your love for me is to be seen in the keeping of my commandments.’ There, the love under consideration is that which the disciples have for the Saviour; here, the love is that which the Lord has for his disciples. By keeping his commandments, we also abide in his love; thus, (1) those who bear fruit abide in the vine; (2) those who love the Lord keep his commandments; (3) those who keep his commandments abide in his love. And all who thus do, walk in the light. (1 John 1:7.) A comparison is drawn between the love Christ has for his followers and the love which the Father has for him. It is significant that the Lord does not ask his disciples to do that which he himself does not do. As it was necessary for him to keep the commandments of his Father to abide in the Father's love, so is it necessary for the disciples to keep the Lord's commandments to abide in his love. The motivating factor in each case is love” (Woods, *Commentary on John*, p.326).
 - 2) In telling them to keep themselves in the love of God, human response is clearly included in the salvation process. God provides the means and place of salvation; our part is to remain faithful to his word.

- 3) If a Christian fails to do so, he cuts himself off from the provisions of salvation.
- c. Jude sums up the blessings of salvation by his reference to the “mercy of Christ.” Compare: “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas. 5:11). When God completes his purposes in the lives of men and women who serve him, though their lives might have hardships and troubles, yet his aim is to show great mercy and compassion. In the case of some, that result is experienced even in this life; in all cases, the glory and grandeur of heaven is bestowed upon the faithful. God is full of pity [compassionate; tender-hearted]; he is full of mercy. It is hard for us to perceive the purpose God may have for us to fulfill; the difficulties and hardships we must endure in the short-run may becloud his ultimate aim. It is exceedingly important that we come to know God’s word, to obtain as much wisdom as possible, and to trust God to do what is right. If our lives are ordered by his word, the outcome is predictable, despite the short-term problems—we will be blessed, especially in eternity, with far more that we could ever dream! We must love him, trust him, serve him—and all will be well!
- d. The great aim of the gospel system is to bring as many people into Heaven as possible. It is in Heaven that eternal life is provided.
- 1) Mark 10:30: “But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”
- 2) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”
6. Verse 22: “And of some have compassion, making a difference.”
- a. Other versions:
- 1) “And on some have mercy, who are in doubt” (ASV).
- 2) “And on some have compassion, making a distinction” (NKJ).
- 3) “And have mercy on those who doubt” (ESV).
- b. “There are various classes of humanity, and vastly different attitudes toward religion manifested by those of the same class, thus our approach to them must be influenced by the attitude characteristic of them. Some, in error, will be honest doubters, and with these we are to deal with infinite tenderness and patience; those who are perplexed, bewildered, confused, are to be tenderly escorted to the truth” (Woods, p.405).
- c. “This cannot be intended to teach that they were not to have compassion for all people, or to regard the salvation of all with solicitude, but that they were to have special and unusual compassion for a certain class of persons, or were to approach them with feelings appropriate to their condition. The idea is, that the special feeling to be manifest toward a certain class of persons in seeking their salvation was tender affection and kindness. They were to approach them in the gentlest manner, appealing to them by such words as ‘love’ would prompt.
- 1) “Others were to be approached in a different manner, indicated by the phrase, ‘save with fear.’ The class here referred to, to whom ‘pity’ *eleate* (NT:1653) was to be shown, and in whose conversion and salvation tender compassion was to be employed, appear to have been the timid, the gentle, the unwary; those who had not yet fallen into dangerous errors, but who might be exposed to them; those, for there are such, who would be more likely to be influenced by kind words and a gentle manner than by denunciation. The direction then amounts to this, that while we are to seek to save all, we are to adapt ourselves wisely to the character and circumstances of those whom we seek
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to save....

- 2) “[Making a difference] Making a distinction between them, not in regard to your ‘desires’ for their salvation, or your ‘efforts’ to save them, but to the ‘manner’ in which it is done. To be able to do this is one of the highest qualifications to be sought by one who endeavors to save souls, and is indispensable for a good minister of the gospel. The young, the tender, the delicate, the refined, need a different kind of treatment from the rough, the uncultivated, the hardened. This wisdom was shown by the Saviour in all his preaching; it was eminent in the preaching of Paul” (Barnes, Biblesoft).
7. Verse 23: “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (ASV).
 - 2) “But others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh” (NKJ).
 - 3) “Save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh” (ESV).
 - b. “Snatch them from the flames of fire ... is metaphorical, meaning ‘rescue them, as you would someone from a burning building.’ Pity mixed with fear ... The subversives are indicated in this. No fellow-being lost in sin is otherwise than an object of pity in the hearts of Christians; but the danger to Christians themselves who might attempt to rescue some in this group is real and threatening. Regardless of Christian pity for some of the lost, there must be fear in attempting their rescue, a fear commanded in this verse; and the omission of the words ‘save them’ in the second clause, as well as the hatred of their very ‘clothing’ which is enjoined, falls short of any apostolic edict that any rescue at all should be attempted in the case of some. The great words of Jesus concerning the blind guides was ‘Let them alone!’” (Coffman, *ibid.*).
 - c. “Hatred has its legitimate field of exercise. Sin is the only thing which God hates; so ought we. Even the garment—proverbial: avoiding the least contact with sin; hating that which borders on it. As garments of the apostles wrought good in healing (Acts 19:12: cf. the woman with an issue of blood, Matt 9:20-21), so the garment of sinners metaphorically; i.e., anything brought into contact with their pollution is to be avoided.... Compare as to leprosy and other defilements, Lev 13:52-57; 15:4-17. Anyone touching the garments of those so defiled was excluded, until purified, from religious and civil communion with the sanctified people of Israel. Christians who received at baptism the white garment, in token of purity, are not to defile it by any approach to defiled things” (JFB, Biblesoft).
 - d. Some people have descended more deeply into error and sin than others; they are dangling over the very fires of *Gehenna* [figuratively]. Such are to be snatched from the fire. In doing this we are to be careful that we do not partake of their uncleanness.
 - e. Zechariah 3:1-4: “And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.”
 - 1) In the vision, the order is issued (from God, through the angel) for those standing nearby to remove the filthy clothing from Joshua. These others are not identified in the text, but their identity is unimportant. The removal of Joshua's filthy garments symbolizes the taking away of his guilt. In

fact, the verse plainly affirms that God would cause his "iniquity to pass from thee." In causing his iniquity to pass away, God would clothe him with other raiment; that is, clean and pure garments would replace the filthy clothes.

- 2) There is a time for plain, bold words, but one must not stoop to the level of the sinner in trying to rescue him from the fire.

H. Jude 1:24-25: Conclusion.

1. Verse 24: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (KJV). "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy" (ASV).
 - a. The Lord is able to keep [guard] the saints from falling [stumbling], and can set them before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy.
 - b. To guard indicates the protection which the Lord extends to his people who keep themselves in the love of God (vs. 21). It is possible for a Christian to stumble but not fall into condemnation. Peter and Barnabas stumbled into sin in refusing to fellowship certain Gentile Christians: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. 2:11-14). Paul was able to turn them from their folly by his quick but kindly rebuke.
 - c. Jude offers no support to the theory of the impossibility of apostasy; he does not affirm that God guards all whether they keep themselves in his love or not. Only those who avail themselves of the means of escape provided are thus protected.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
 - 2) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:1-11: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

- 4) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - d. Jude affirms that the Lord is able to set the faithful before him in glory. He is able to help us to stand firmly and faithfully to the end. Our cooperation is essential.
 - 1) John 10:27-29: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 3) We will stand before him in the last day without blemish (pure and blameless), provided we keep ourselves from the defilement of sin and remain faithful in his service. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).
 - e. Consider the great joy awaiting the faithful in eternity:
 - 1) Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:3-9: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."
 - 3) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 4) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - 5) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 2. Verse 25: "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (KJV). "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen" (ASV).
 - a. "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore (or, unto all the ages). So the Revised Version renders it,
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in accordance with the best-authenticated text. Documentary evidence renders it necessary to omit the 'wise' in the 'only wise God' of the Authorized Version, to insert the clause, 'through our Lord Jesus Christ,' to omit the 'and' before the 'majesty,' and to adopt the extended expression of duration in the closing sentence. Thus the largest possible ascription of praise is made to God. It is the ascription of an honour which is confessed to belong to him eternally, before the world was, as well as in the present, and on to the eternity which is yet to enter. This is his in his character of Saviour—Preserver of them that are tending to fall, Redeemer of the weak and sinful; and, therefore, it is 'through Jesus Christ'" (Barnes, Biblesoft).

- b. "The glory, majesty, dominion and power here ascribed to him is past, present, and future, embracing all time, and the whole of eternity. And thus the Epistle closes on a note of genuine faith and trust in the Lord, having begun with a prayer and a petition that mercy, peace, and love might abound. Fearlessly Jude had rebuked the deceitful workers threatening the peace and security of the church; with scathing denunciation he had condemned those who corrupted the faith and sought to lead the saints astray; and now, with tenderness and faith he commits his readers to the Source of all good—"to the only God our Saviour"—their Protector, Defender, and Lord. May we, through equal fidelity to his will and way, make him ours as well!" (Woods, pp.407f).

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