

### Introduction

- Writer: The 'author' does not identify himself in any of the three epistles ascribed to him, but it is believed, by most, that they are all from the pen of the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, and brother of James. Note: This first epistle was known to Polycarp, the disciple of Apostle John, and is quoted as his by Irenaeus, the pupil of Polycarp. And with that being so, the century immediately following John's death was filled with witnesses, all declaring that John the Apostle was the writer.
- Date and place of writing: Nothing is mentioned in the epistle which might help in fixing a definite time of its composition. Yet, the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D.70) is not mentioned, many believe it was written before that time. Others believe the destruction of Jerusalem is not mentioned because several years had passed since that event, therefore, there would be no need for its being mentioned. Note: A date around A.D.90 is accepted as being likely for the writing of the epistle. Too, we're not told where John was when he wrote this epistle. But since he spent his later years in Ephesus, it's believed that he must surely have written it during that time period.
- Purpose of writing: This 'epistle' is known as a 'family letter' from the Father to his 'little children'. Remember: There had been a 'great dispersion' of Jews in A.D.70, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. This letter is written to those believers in Christ who had been scattered throughout the countries around about. The purpose for John writing the 'Gospel of John' is found in the last verse of chapter 20 (v.31b): 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name'. Too, his purpose was to encourage those who had accepted Christ as Messiah and Savior: 'that your joy may be full' (I Jn.1:4), and, 'that ye may know that ye have eternal life' (I Jn.5:13).

## Chapter 1

**V.1.** John begins his letter with the words 'That which was from the beginning', represented here as the 'Word of life', speaking of Jesus Christ the Lord. Note: The 'beginning' here is not the same as in **Jn.1:1**. There, John tells us that the 'Word' (Christ) was in existence before the world was created; here, that he was in existence before he was manifested (Pulpit Comm.). Too, Mathew Henry says that Christ is first called the 'Word' (**Jn.1:1**) and afterwards (after the 'incarnation'), 'Life' (**Jn.14:6**), speaking of that which pertains to the Blessed Redeemer, to the only begotten of the Father, to Jesus Christ the Lord.

- 'which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled'. This speaks of the incarnation of Christ (**Jn.1:14**).
- John wrote his Gospel to prove the 'deity' of Jesus, although he was man. Here, in his Epistle, he writes to prove Jesus' humanity, although he was Deity.
- Note: There were Docetic Gnostics in that day that denied the actual humanity of Jesus. They argued that the Lord had only that which 'seemed' (appeared) to be a body, but was not a real physical body at all. Here, John states the fact that the Son of God was actually human, saying that he and his fellow disciples had heard Him preach and teach. Too, for further proof of Jesus having a human body, John says, 'we have seen him with our eyes'. In essence, saying that he whom we have heard and seen was not an illusion or hallucination, but real flesh and blood.
- But John wasn't finished. He went on to give further proof, 'our hands have handled' him who is the 'Word of life' (we have touched him).

**V.2.** 'For the life was manifested'. That which was invisible (Christ; the Word) was made visible to human-kind through the birth of Jesus, through the humanity of our Lord. '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' (**Jn.1:14**).

- Jesus Christ is without beginning and without end; that which always has been and always will be, eternal.
- Note: Dake mentions several things in these first two verses concerning Jesus Christ and His disciples:
  - 1) He is from the beginning, from everlasting.
  - 2) John and the others had heard him (with their ears) preach and teach.
  - 3) They had seen Him with their eyes.
  - 4) Their hands had handled him.
  - 5) He is the Word of life.
  - 6) They bore witness of his life.
  - 7) He is Eternal Life. Note: 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life' (**I Jn.5:12**).
  - 8) Jesus Christ is not the Father, but was with Him from all eternity.
  - 9) He was manifested to John and to others.
- Note: Eternal life can be found only through faith in, and fellowship with, Jesus Christ.

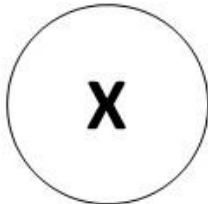
**Vs.3,4.** John wrote his letter in order that his readers, who were not eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus, might enjoy fellowship, not only with them but with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And, that their 'joy may be full'.

- It should be a 'real joy' to all those in Christ Jesus that he has come to 'seek and to save the lost', that he has made full atonement for our sins, that he has conquered sin and death and hell, that he lives as our Intercessor and Advocate with the Father, and, that he will come again for all those who love him and faithfully serve him. Amen!

**Vs.5-7.** This is the 'message': 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all'. After having made it clear that he was writing of the importance of believers having fellowship with God, John proceeds to outline some of the conditions necessary for such fellowship.

- 'Light' represents what is good, pure, true, holy, and reliable. Too, light speaks of 'truth', inasmuch as it exposes all that exists, whether it is good or bad. Note: In the dark, good and evil look alike; but in the light, they are easily seen for what they really are. Therefore, in order for a believer to have fellowship with God, all sinfulness must be put aside.
- 'Light' is immaterial, yet, it is said to be pure and glorious, the condition of 'life'. **John 3:20,21** says, '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'.
- Note: Physically, 'light' represents glory; intellectually, it speaks of truth; and morally, it's a sign of holiness.
- To 'walk in darkness' is to continue in sin and immoral pleasure (the life of the unsaved - **c.f. Fig.2,p.4**). To 'profess' without 'possessing' is hypocrisy; it's to be religious, but lost. While living in such a manner, if we say we have fellowship with God, we lie. Note: Faith in God is not real unless it results in a changed life and good works.
- Nine questions concerning 'sin'.
  - 1) What is sin? (It's transgressing the law of God; disobeying what God has to say in His Word.)
    - Sin is two-fold: (a) Sin nature, and (b) actual sins (**c.f. Fig.2,p.4**). 'Sin nature' is called inbred sin, the body of sin, the old man, body of this death, carnal mind, Adam nature, the flesh, reprobate mind, seed, etc. It is represented by the 'X' in **Fig.1, p.4**. 'Sins' are those things contrary to God's Word (deeds).
  - 2) Where did 'sin' originate? (In heaven, with Lucifer. He was lifted up with pride, desiring to be like God - **Isa.14:12-14**.)
  - 3) Can a man help himself from being born in sin? Does he have a choice in the matter? (No. **Rom.5:12** says, 'Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned'.
  - 4) What does God think of sin? (He hates it - **Jn.3:16-18**. Too, the Bible says, 'The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord' - **Prov.15:9**.)
  - 5) Can sin ever return in a person's life if the person has once been forgiven and delivered from its power. (Surely. In **Jn.5** we read of a man who was forgiven of his sins and healed of an infirmity that had been his for thirty-eight years. Later, while in the temple, Jesus said unto him, 'Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee' (**Jn.5:14**).

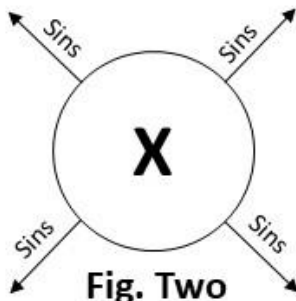
# The Heart of Man



**Fig. One**

“X” represents the ‘Sin Nature’, with which we were born.

(Ps. 51:5, Rom 5:12)

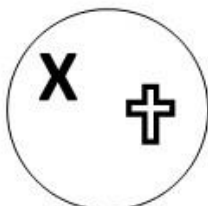


**Fig. Two**

Natural Man (1 Cor 2:6) - unsaved

‘Sin Nature’ has begun to bear fruit (sins).

Now a sinner (Rom 3:23)

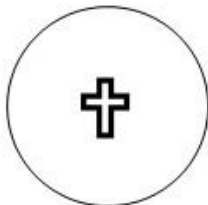


**Fig. Three**

“✝” represents the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Christ).

Sins forgiven, saved, a ‘Babe in Christ’, yet carnal (1 Cor 3:1)

A warfare within (Rom 6:7)



**Fig. Four**

Spiritual Man Sanctified. Perfect in Christ.

(1 Cor 2:6, 15; Jn 11:17; 1 Thes 4:3)

- Further questions along this line: Will the devil return to tempt? (Yes) Will the devil continue to try to gain control of a believer's heart and life? (Yes) Note: Temptation will always be the lot of the child of God, but no sin need be committed just because of temptation. We do not have to yield to Satan. 'If we resist him, he will flee from us' (**Ja.4:7**).
  - 6) Under what conditions will sin return? (Never, if we will always yield to God instead of to the devil; if we will walk in the light of His Word.)
    - Conditions which allow sin to return: Failure to pray, read the Bible, attend church faithfully, tithe and give to God's cause, and, obey God's commandments.
  - 7) How many sins does it take to separate a person from fellowship with God? (One)
  - 8) Can a saved man commit sin? (Yes. Any transgression of the law of God, whether it's before being saved or afterwards, is sin. And the penalty for breaking God's law must be enforced, without exception. Note: Some have tried to reason that sin is not sin if committed after being saved; that not only were our 'past sins' forgiven at salvation, but 'present sins' and all 'future sins' as well. That's untrue.
    - If a person willfully sins he ceases to be holy, and fellowship with God is broken. He stands condemned, and incurs the full penalty of the law.
  - 9) Can a saved person be forgiven for sins committed? If so, how often? (Yes, as often as they truly repent.) Note: It's God's will that man be saved (forgiven of his sins), and never falter or fail. But, if a man sins after being saved, he has an 'advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous' (**I Jn.2:1**). Too, we read in **Matt.18:21,22** that the Apostle Peter came to Jesus asking 'how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven' (without number).
  - To 'walk in the light' speaks of a continuous action: to keep on walking; to walk in obedience to the Word. This is God's desire for every believer.
  - Note: In **v.6**, John tells us 'who' it is that has no fellowship with God (those who walk in darkness). Here, in **v.7**, he tells 'who' it is that enjoys fellowship, not only with God but with one another (those who walk in the light).
  - 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin'. Christ, a member of the eternal Godhead (Holy Trinity), hath put on humanity (flesh and blood, at the 'incarnation' (**Jn.1:14**), and so became Jesus Christ). After living a sinless life, Jesus shed his blood on the cross for us. He died to wash us from our sins, to redeem, to forgive, to save, and to bring us into the family of God. And as long as 'we walk in the light of His Word' His blood will continue to cleanse. Remember: Sin interrupts fellowship, but confession restores it.
- V.8.** The question is raised: Is John speaking here of a Christian or a non-Christian, of sins or of the 'sin nature'? Undoubtedly, he has Christians in mind; those who have been forgiven of their 'sins' but are still having a battle with the 'sin nature' within (**c. f. Fig.3, p.4**). Note: Salvation doesn't take care of the 'sin nature'; it takes care of our 'sins', our wrongful 'deeds'. God forgives sins, washes them away, never to be remembered against us again. Amen!
- The correct way of dealing with 'sin' (inherited sin nature) is not to deny that it exists, but to acknowledge it and allow God to help you get rid of it.

- There are many religious groups that teach and believe that the saved man (**c.f. Fig.3,p.4**) can never get rid of the 'sin nature' (the 'X' in the circle) during his lifetime, but only at death. Note: One writer called this 'heresy'. And he went on to say, 'the Christian who believes such as this has not only been deceived, but is missing out on many of God's bountiful blessings which come only by full surrender'.
  - In **Rom.6:6**, Paul tells us that those who have gone on to holiness, loving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (**c.f.Fig.4, p.4**), no longer have to struggle with the 'Adam nature' within, saying, 'Knowing this, that our old man (sin nature inherited from Adam) is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin'. Then, in **v.25** of that chapter, he thanks God for the work that has been done in his heart through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen! But he doesn't stop there. When you come to the next verse (**Rom.8:1**), he says, 'There is therefore now (while still living in this earthly fleshly body) no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh ('old man' has been crucified), but after the Spirit'.
- Vs.9,10.** 'If we confess our sins'. Notice the word 'sins'. John is not speaking of the 'sin nature' with which we were born, but of our 'transgressions', our 'wrongful deeds'. And the only way to forgiveness is to admit we have sinned; then, confess our sins to God with a repentant (sorrowful) heart. Note: True confession involves a commitment not to continue in sin. A person is not genuinely confessing his sins before God if he plans to continue in his sinful ways, just wanting temporary forgiveness. Far too many speak of repenting only after having been caught in their sins; but true repentance is having 'godly sorrow', a 'turning around', a 'going in a different direction'. And the wonderful part of all this, is: true repentance leads to 'new life', fellowship with God, joy, victory, and peace (not only with God but with others).
- Chorus:  
 'Gone, gone, gone, gone; Yes my sins are gone,  
 Now my soul is free, and in my heart's a song;  
 Buried in the deepest sea, Yes, that's good enough for me,  
 I shall live eternally, Praise God! my sins are gone'.
  - Notice: God is not only faithful to forgive sins (transgressions), but to 'cleanse' (purge) from all 'unrighteousness' (sin nature). This speaks of being 'saved' and 'sanctified' (**c.f.Figs.3&4, p.4**).
  - Imporant scriptures:  
**Titus 2:14**. Redeem (forgive sins) and purify (cleanse from sin nature).  
**John 15:1,2**. Branches in Christ (saved) that bear fruit, He purges (sanctifies), that they might bring forth more fruit.  
**Acts 26:18**. Forgiveness of 'sins' (salvation) and 'inheritance among the sanctified'.  
**James 4:8**. Sinners (the lost called to repentance), and those 'double-minded' (sin-nature still abiding in the heart; needing to be purified).  
**Isa.6:7**. Iniquity taken away (forgiven), and sin purged (cleansed).
- V.10.** 'If we say we have not sinned'. (If we say we have not sinned, and, therefore, have no need of confessing or repenting, we make God a liar.) He tells us in **Rom.3:23**, 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God'.

- Note: Sin originated with Lucifer (Satan - **Isa.14:12-14**); entered the world through Adam (**Rom.5:12**); is universal, only Christ excepted (**Rom.3:23**; **I Peter 2:22**); incurs the penalties of spiritual and physical death (**Gen.2:17**; **3:19**; **Eze.18:4,20**; **Rom.6:23**); and, has no remedy but in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ (**Heb.9:26**; **Acts 4:12**) (King James Bible Comm.).

## Chapter 2

**V.1.** John, writing to believers who had accepted the fact that Christ was the promised Messiah, calls them 'my little children'. No doubt, John remembered how the Lord had spoken to him and the other disciples in **Jn.13:33**, saying, 'Little children, yet a little while I am with you'. In fact, John uses this phrase 'little children' nine times in this letter. Now as an aged disciple, having spent most of his life in the ministry, it's likely that many of his readers were his own 'spiritual children'.

- 'these things write I unto you, that ye sin not'. John realized that born-again believers are capable of falling into sin. Yet, he does not teach that the Christian must sin; instead, he exhorts his readers to live without sin.
- 'that ye sin not' was John's reason for writing. Not only is this the real purpose of the Gospel, it is the demand of the Gospel, as well: That those saved; those whose sins were forgiven, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb; those born-again and adopted into the family of God; go out of the sinning business (quit sinning altogether). **Examples.** (1) After healing the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus said to him, 'Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee' (**Jn.5:14**). (2) After forgiving the woman taken in adultery (**Jn.8**), Jesus said, 'Go and sin no more'.
- Question is asked: Is such a life possible? (Surely. The Lord would never have made such a command if it was impossible for us (believers) to obey.
- Jesus also said (**Matt.5:48**), 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'. As born-again believers we are to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. If we love in that fashion, we will be 'perfect' in the eyes of God.
- 'And if any man sin'. Notice: John didn't say 'when' a man sins, but 'if' he sins. This refutes the doctrine 'that Christians must sin every day', as taught by some. Too, the answer is found in **Jn.1:7** . . . 'walk in the light, as he is in the light'.
- 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous'. If a believer falters (commits a sin), he still has hope. If he repents he has God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, acting as his 'defense counsel' pleading his case before the Father.

**V.2.** 'And he (Jesus, our Redeemer) is the propitiation for our sins'. 'Propitiation' means that Jesus took on Himself the punishment for our sins and satisfied God's righteous judgment against sin (Full Life Study Bible). Here, Christ is not only the Righteous Lawyer who is on very familiar terms with the Father (Judge), but is before the Father on our behalf as the 'atoning sacrifice' . . . providing a covering (propitiation) for our sins. Note: When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, God killed an animal and shed innocent blood to provide covering for their nakedness. And just as the skin of that animal was a covering for Adam and Eve, Jesus Christ the Righteous is our atoning sacrifice, our propitiation.

- 'and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world'. This does not mean that the atonement is automatic for all those of the world who have sinned, but simply that if anyone of the world will believe in Christ and confess his sin, he too will find the atonement sufficient.



**Vs.3-6.** The question is asked: 'How can someone be sure he belongs to Christ?' This passage of Scripture gives the answer. It is to 'love God' and 'keep His commandments'.

- Listen to the words of Joshua when speaking to the two and a half tribes of Israel that settled in the land east of Canaan, 'Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul' (**Jos.22:5**). Note: That was an Old Testament requirement for fellowship with God, and continues as a New Testament truth for our day.
- At the time of the 'Passover Supper' on the night before his crucifixion, Jesus said to the disciples, 'If you love me, keep my commandments' (**Jn.14:15**).
- Too, remember: Fellowship with the Lord is conditional. If it is broken, it will never be on God's part. Note: Loving God and keeping his commandments are inseparable. (1) If a person loves the Lord, he will keep his commandments. (2) If a person keeps God's commandments, it will be through (because of) his love for God.

**V.4.** Anyone professing to be a Christian, and fails to keep God's commandments, is a 'liar'. The truth is not in him. He is deceiving himself.

**V.5.** 'But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected'. Question is asked: Is the 'love of God', mentioned here, His love for us or our love for Him? Some say, it cannot be His love for us, inasmuch as his love has always been perfect. Others say that it speaks of our love for Him. **\*\*I believe rather than it being God's love 'for' us, it is God's love 'within' us that is being perfected as we continue on to know Him in a greater measure. And that, in a sense, could be called 'our love for Him'.** Note: When writing to Roman believers, Paul said, 'And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us' (**Rom.5:5**).

- When this 'love', which God has placed in our hearts, is perfected, we will have fulfilled the Lord's command, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect' (**Matt.5:48**). It's in loving Him with our entire being (all our heart, soul, mind, and strength) and keeping His commandments (**c.f. Fig.4,p.4**). 'Hereby, we do know that we know him'.
- **V.6.** 'Abiding in him' is to follow his example in complete obedience, and, in loving service to others. The person who abides in Christ will show forth Christ's attributes: the 'Fruit of the Spirit' (**Gal.5:22,23**).

**Vs.7,8.** The commandment to love is as old as man himself, yet, both old and new. It is 'old' because it comes from the Old Testament (**Lev.19:18** - 'Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord'); but 'new', because Jesus explains it in a radically new way (**Jn.13:34** - 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another').

- Jesus gave this renewed commandment a depth of meaning which it did not have before, saying, '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' (**Jn.15:12,13**).

- The new commandment is, 'Darkness is vanishing and the true light is now shining'. Note: The 'true light' of Jesus Christ has invaded the 'darkness' of this present era. Jesus has come, and he is 'love' personified.

**Vs.9-11.** No one can 'walk in the light' and at the same time have bitterness or hatred in his heart toward a Christian brother. Question is raised: Can a person actually believe he is 'in the light' while, in reality, he is yet in darkness? (Surely. Many have been deceived in this very thing.)

- Men fall into 'two classes': Saved or unsaved; righteous or unrighteous. (1) Those in fellowship with God, walking in the light of his Word, or, (2) Those not in fellowship with God, walking in darkness.
- 'No man professing a Christian experience who hates his brother has received a saving knowledge of truth' (Dake).
- Another said, 'Where love is not, there is hatred. The heart is not empty'. I agree. (No love, no light.)
- The 'brotherly love' mentioned in **v.10** is none other than 'agape love', a love that is 'self-sacrificing', a love that gives of itself for the happiness and well-being of others.
- Another question: Does this mean if you dislike someone you aren't a Christian? (No) These verses are not talking about disliking a disagreeable Christian brother. There will always be those we will not like as well as others. John, here, is focusing on the attitude that causes us to ignore or despise others, to treat them as enemies or competitors. Note: Christian love is a 'choice'. We can choose to be concerned with people's well-being and treat them with respect, whether or not we feel affection toward them.

**Vs.12-14.** This section consists of six sentences, each beginning with 'write' or 'have written'. John is writing to believers of all ages and who are in different stages of Christian maturity.

- Note: There are two schools of thought as to those to whom John is writing:
  - 1) John is counseling three groups:
    - a. Little children. A general title for believers.
    - b. Fathers. Mature Christians.
    - c. Young men. New Christian.
  - 2) John is counseling four groups (with a different Greek word for each), although the term 'little children' is mentioned twice.
    - a. Little children (**v.12**). Gr. teknia, infants; new born.
    - b. Little children (**v.13**). Gr. paidia, little children; those able to walk and talk.
    - c. Young men. Gr. neaniskoi, those grown to the prime of life and no longer tossed about like children by fallacies.
    - d. Fathers. Gr. pateres, those matured in the Lord.
- Note: Regardless of the 'stage of Christian living' in which we might find ourselves, there should always be a desire to grow in the Lord, to be more and more like Him.

- Chorus: To be like Jesus; To be like Jesus;  
All I ask, is to be like him.  
While on life's journey, from earth to heaven,  
All I ask, is to be like him.
- Important to remember: In each stage of life, God's 'word' is relevant.

**Vs.15-17.** In the preceding verses John encourages all believers to continue on with the Lord.

- 'Love not the world'. It is obvious that both 'love' and 'the world' are used in a different sense here than in **Jn.3:16**, where it is said that 'God so loved the world'. One love is selfish, the other unselfish. In one, 'the world' means the sinfulness of human life, while the other speaks of the human race.
- Here, John gives a clear warning against 'worldliness', a word which is often misunderstood. Some think it speaks entirely of 'external behavior', i.e. how we dress, where we go, the people with whom we associate, etc. But 'worldliness' is more than this. It is a matter of the heart, and is characterized by the three attitudes mentioned: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (1) 'Lust' is the preoccupation of gratifying physical desires; (2) 'materialism' - a craving and desire for accumulating things; and, (3) 'pride' - to be obsessed with one's status or importance (Life Application Bible). Note: The 'temptation of Eve' (**Gen.3**) is a good example.
- Not only does the word 'world', mentioned in **v.15**, consist of the evil, immoral, and sinful pleasures, it refers to a spirit of rebellion, resistance, and indifference to God.
- Note: Satan uses the ideas, morality, desires, culture, governments, education, music, science, art, entertainment, media, religion, etc., to oppose God, His Word, His righteous standards, and His people. Examples: He uses the 'medical profession' to promote the killing of unborn babies, 'agriculture' to produce life-destroying drugs (alcohol, narcotics), 'education' to promote ungodly and humanistic philosophies, and 'entertainment media' to destroy godly standards. In essence, the 'world system' is under Satan's dominion (**Jn.12:31**). But it's not going to always be that way. Through the death and resurrection of our sinless Savior, Satan's days are numbered. Amen! At present, he is still active as the 'god of this world'. That's why Paul tells us to 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil' (**Eph.6:11**).
- Important that we remember: As long as the 'sin nature' is allowed to remain in a Christian's heart (**c.f.Fig#3, p.4**) there will be a 'pull' (tendency) toward the things of the world. And John tells us that no man can love both God and the 'world'. If a believer gives in to the 'pull' toward the world and returns to a life of sin, it will cause the Holy Spirit to depart from his heart and life. Sin separates from God. Worldliness and righteousness cannot co-exist.
- 'And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof'. The 'world system' (that for which the unsaved strive for in life) will one day pass away. It's temporary, and headed for destruction.
- 'But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever' (he who perseveres in doing the will of God will live on for ever). Note: Such a promise should give encouragement to every believer to continue on with the Lord, loving Him, serving Him, and doing His will.

**Vs.18-21.** Believers warned against apostates who deny the true deity of Christ.

- 'It is the last time' (the last hour before the second coming of Christ). Note: It was Christ's coming into the world that marked the beginning of the 'last days' (**I Cor.10:11; I Pet.4:7**).
- 'Ye have heard that antichrist shall come'. Writer is speaking of the 'one' believers had heard of through Daniel, Paul, and others; who will come on the scene during the 7-year Tribulation that is to come upon mankind after the 'rapture' of the saints (**II Thes.2:3; Rev.13**).
- 'Even now are there many antichrists'. Even in John's day there were those who professed to believe in Christ, and yet, continued to love the world and sinful pleasures; and, were distorting the Gospel and its message of the cross. By doing so, they were placing themselves against Christ and those righteous.
- 'They went out from us, but they were not of us'. 'When these antichrists departed from their fellowship with true believers, they were not in a saving relationship with Christ' (F. Life Study Bible). Two thoughts: (1) They had never experienced the 'new birth' (**Jn.3:3-8**), or (2) they, at one time, had been saved (forgiven of their sins) but had departed from 'faith in Christ'. (I agree with the later.)
- 'If they had been of us' (if they had loved the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and, had continued with us). But something had changed all of that. They had looked back, and had returned to the things of the world. When they did, they lost out with God.
- 'they would no doubt have continued with us'. Note: I believe John is referring primarily to 'false teachers' who had departed from the faith; had left the church (body of believers) and the truth of the Gospel; and, were promoting heretical doctrine (**4:1**). Here, the writer is warning believers against them (apostates who were denying the deity of Christ - **Heb.6:4-6**).
- 'But ye have an unction from the Holy One'. The 'oil' with which you are anointed is the same as that which Christ was anointed (the anointing of the Holy Spirit, referring to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers).
- 'and ye know all things'. Does not mean these believers were omniscient (all-knowing), but that they could see things rightly in the light of God's Word. They knew all things concerning Christ and his religion. Therefore, they had no need for the supposedly superior knowledge of these false teachers (antichrists) and deceivers. Note: The effect of the aforementioned 'unction from the Holy One' had made this possible.
- The reason I write unto you is not because you do not know the truth, but to confirm the truth you already know; and, that no lie comes from the truth.

**Vs.22,23.** These unbelieving Jews and Gnostics denied the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus, and, that he was the promised Messiah. They considered him to be nothing more than a common man, the son of Joseph and Mary.

- Some believe these 'antichrists' of John's day were attempting to be loyal to God while denying and opposing Christ. John says, such is impossible. Jesus is God's Son (the promised Messiah), and to deny Him is to reject God's way of revealing himself to the world.
- No one can be born again (saved from sin) who denies that Jesus is the Son of God. Such a person knows neither God nor Christ (**Jn.3:16**).

**Vs.24,25.** A believer will abide in Christ and enjoy fellowship with Him only as long as he stays with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles (**Eph.2:20**).

- To abandon the truth of the Gospel is spiritually fatal, separating one from Christ. Too, it is perilous to run after 'new teachings or new revelations', that which is not found in the teachings and doctrines of the Christian faith. Question is raised: If a person does not allow God's Word (Gospel) to abide in his heart and life, then what? (John himself gives the answer in **Jn.15:6**, when he said, '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').
- That's why it is so important to 'know' the truth, and then, 'live it'. Our very souls and eternal destiny depend on it.

**Vs.26,27.** I have written to warn concerning those who would lead you astray.

- 'Ye need not that any man teach you'. Every born-again child of God is given the anointing (the Holy Spirit) to lead them into truth (**Jn.14:26; 16:13**). As we abide in Christ and read His Word, the Holy Spirit will help us understand its truths. Note: As believers, we have two safeguards to help us from falling into error: (1) Biblical revelation, and, (2) The Holy Spirit. Because of that, believers have no need for teachers who go beyond that which is recorded in God's Word.

**Vs.28,29.** 'Abide in him'. Note: The only guarantee we have of our constantly abiding in him, is: 'keeping his commandments'.

- He who abides in Christ can know that he is ready for the Lord's return. But he that fails to abide in Christ will experience terror and shame in that day (**Jn.15:1-6**).
- Two things the Christian knows in **v.29**: (1) That Christ is righteous, and (2) Those who live righteous lives are born of God.

## Chapter 3

- First, John tells us who we are: members of the family of God. Then he tells us who we are becoming: reflections of God (like Him). And in the remainder of the chapter he tells us what we have as we grow in His likeness: (1) victory over sin (3:4-9); (2) love for the brethren (3:10-18); and (3) confidence before God (**3:19-24**).
- V.1.** 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us'. Look with wonder and amazement at the 'love' the Father hath given us. Note: The 'manner of love' mentioned here speaks of the marvelous 'quality' rather than marvelous 'quantity' (size, amount).
- 'that we should be called the sons of God'. What love! Knowing that God, the Creator, is our Father, and we are His children, is one of the greatest revelations of the New Testament, the highest privilege offered to man. John said, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name' (**Jn.1:11,12**). Amen!
  - Since Jesus is the 'only begotten' of the Father, believers are 'sons of God' by 'adoption'. In **Rom.8:15** Paul says, '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'. Again, Paul says (**Gal.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'. Note: God didn't send His Son Jesus to earth, but to Calvary's cross to redeem mankind, to pay the penalty for man's sins.
  - Chorus: He paid a debt he did not owe: I owed a debt I could not pay,  
I needed someone to wash my sins away.  
And now I sing a brand new song, Amazing Grace,  
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.
  - 'therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not'. Believers in Christ have a nature that is totally foreign to that of the unsaved. They (world) don't understand why we are no longer like them (as we once were), how we could change so quickly, nor, why we live as we now live since being saved.
  - Someone said, The 'real aliens' of today's world are not the 'extra-terrestrial beings' zipping around in UFOs(?), but those who are true Christians.
- V.2.** 'now are we the sons of God'. Notice: This is not something that has been promised for the future, but is a reality at this present time: 'now'. Our sins have been forgiven, and we have been adopted into the family of God. Amen!
- 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be'. Our future state has not yet been made manifest. According to **Rom.8:29**, the Christian life is a process of becoming more and more like Christ. And this spiritual growth process will not be complete until we see him face to face (**I Cor.13:12; Phil.3:21**).

- 'when he shall appear, we shall be like him'. Question is raised: Is John saying we, as sons of God, will be like God? or is he saying we will be like Christ? (Some say we will be like God (Pulpit Comm.); while Rothe, Dake, and others believe the words 'like him' to mean: like Christ. **\*\***I tend to agree with the latter.
- Too, some have asked: To what extent will we be like him? Will we be deity? Will we be omnipotent or omniscient or omnipresent? **\*\***We don't know all the details, but my answer to these questions is 'no'. We will not be deity; therefore, we will not have these aforementioned characteristics. But 'we shall be like him', inasmuch as we will have received our resurrected glorified bodies.

**V.3.** Those who hope to go in the 'Rapture' (of one day being with the Lord) will purify themselves, 'even as he is pure'. 'Not only does the Lord command believers to live holy, but their new nature (after accepting Christ as Savior) inclines them to do so. Their hope of heaven will dictate and constrain them to do so. It is a contradiction to such hope to indulge sin and impurity' (Matt. Henry). Remember: Heart purity is not only possible and God's will (**I Thes.4:3**), it is God's requirement for heaven. It's those having 'pure hearts' that will see God (**Matt.5:8**). We read in **Heb.12:14** that the Holy Spirit anointed the author to write, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness (heart purity), without which no man shall see the Lord'.

**Vs.4,5.** All sin is lawlessness, and all lawlessness is sin. Note: 'The law' means the law of God in its fullest sense, not the Mosaic Law. In reality, 'sin' is defined as the transgression of God's will: '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 neighbor as thyself' (**Matt.22:37-39**). Anyone who habitually commits sin, also habitually commits lawlessness.

- Christ came that he might take away our sins; not just to convict, causing us to realize we have sinned, but to forgive and take them away.
- 'and in him is no sin'. He 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (**Heb.4:15**). Note: And that's the life he desires for every Christian: that we might walk as he walked, and live as he lived. To be like Jesus should be our 'goal' in daily living.

**Vs.6,7.** The man who is constantly abiding (living) 'in Christ' does not habitually sin. And anyone who is constantly sinning has not seen him with true discernment, nor has he known him.

- 'Little children, let no man deceive (seduce) you'. (Don't allow anyone to lead you away from the truth of God's Word into believing that character and practice can be separated.) 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous'. Note: It is impossible for an unrighteous man (someone habitually sinning) to live in harmony with God's will (righteously).

**Vs.8-10.** The man whose life is habitually sinful is spiritually a son of the devil. 'The devil sinneth from the beginning'. Question is raised: Which beginning? The beginning of what? (1) Has the devil (Lucifer) always been? (No. As an angel, he is a created being.) (2) Was Lucifer present when God created the heaven and the earth (**Gen.1:1**)? (Yes. The 'sons of God' who

shouted for joy when the foundation of the earth was laid were created angels (**Job 38:7**). (3) Was the devil's beginning, mentioned here in this verse, at the beginning of human history (**Gen.1:26**)? (No. John is likely speaking of the devil's rebellion against God (**Isa.14:12-14; Eze.28:12-15**)).

- Satan was the first sinner, and has never ceased to sin. And all those who continue in sin are his followers rather than followers of God.
- 'The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil', which, according to **Jn.10:10**, are to kill, steal, and to destroy. Question: In what sense has Christ destroyed the works of the devil? (In the life of believers.)
- 'and he cannot sin' (Gr. 'hamartano' - cannot practice sin; cannot keep on sinning). Those born of God do not continue in their sinfulness. Note: Although the KJV version sounds as if a born-again believer cannot sin, that is not what John is saying. Man has been given a free will, and can return to sin at any time he so chooses.
- Various teachings concerning sin:
  - 1) A born-again believer cannot return to sin.
  - 2) Sins of believers are not real sins. Note: Would be good to ask David and Peter if their sins were real.
  - 3) God automatically forgives sins of a believer; without repentance and confession.
  - 4) God does not see a believer's sins. Instead, He sees the blood of Christ, in which the person has previously trusted.
  - 5) Sins are imputed to the believer. After salvation, whatever a person might do is not charged to his account.
  - 6) A believer does not sin, but commits occasional misdeeds.
  - 7) All sins of a believer's past, present, and future are already forgiven, at salvation.
- Note: All of the above teachings are unscriptural false doctrines.
- In **vs.6-10**, John is saying a person truly born-again cannot make sin a way of life, because the life of Christ cannot exist in one who practices sin. To have God's life abiding (remaining) within, and at the same time continuing in sin, is a spiritual impossibility.

**V.10.** Both the saved and unsaved are manifest (made evident, revealed) by their deeds (actions, life-styles). 'The tree is known by his fruit' (**Matt.12:33b**).

- 'whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God'. Note: The one thing God requires of every believer, is: That we live righteously. According to **Isa.1:16,17**, we are to 'cease to do evil, and learn to do good'.
- Beginning with **v.11**, we are told how Christians are to live together: to love one another (a truth as old as human-kind).

**V.12.** Cain is mentioned as an example; that which we are not to follow. He 'was of the wicked one (of Satan), and slew his brother'.

- Cain killed his brother, Abel, because Abel's offering (deed) was righteous. It was according to that which God required; and God accepted it. Cain's offering was rejected by God because it did not meet God's requirements.



**V.13.** 'Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you'. Don't be surprised if the unsaved reject you, if they refuse to accept you into their circle of friends. Expect no better treatment from the world than that which Abel received from Cain, or that which Jesus received from those of His day. Note: People who live good godly lives expose and shame those who don't. In **Jn.15:18**, Jesus said, 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you'.

**Vs.14,15.** When hatred, bitterness, and malice have been replaced in our hearts by the love of God, it's then that we can be assured 'that we have passed from death unto life'. Amen!

- 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer'. Remember: Christianity is a religion of the heart. In **Matt.5:21,22**, Jesus tells us that anyone who hates another person is a murderer at heart. To have bitterness toward someone who has wronged you is like a dreaded cancer within that will eventually destroy you. We must never allow a 'root of bitterness' to grow in us or in the church.

**Vs.16-19.** We can readily understand what it means to truly love by the manner in which Christ loved. Think about it: 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom.5:8). And we are to follow his example.

- If we are not willing to give material things to those in need we certainly wouldn't lay down our lives for them.
- Love is more than just words; it's action (deeds).
- Questions raised: (1) If a brother is slothful (lazy), or (2) if he is in a financial bind because of his mishandling or misusing that which he has, or (3) he refuses to tithe, what then? How far should we go in trying to help? My answer: Love him enough to try to help. Encourage, exhort, assist by pointing out truths from God's Word, etc.; while at the same time seeking wisdom from God. Think of what Christ might do in similar situations, and then endeavor to do likewise.

**Vs.20,21.** 'If our heart (conscience) condemn us'. Remember: Our conscience is not infallible, but God is. He knows all.

- 'God is greater than our heart'. Some have asked if this means that God is more merciful or more rigorous (strict). The answer is 'neither'. Our hearts (consciences) may be deceived; He cannot be deceived.
- 'If our heart condemn us not'. If the consciousness of 'genuine love' sustains us before God when our heart reproaches us, much more may we have confidence towards Him when it does not reproach us (**c.f.2:28**).

**Vs.22,23.** 'And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him' (Jn.15:7).

- Seven requirements for effective praying:

- 1) Must have a 'sincere faith' (**Mk.11:24**). Believe. Note: Sincere faith is based on God's word, whether the 'word' is written or oral. The Apostle Paul makes it very plain in **Rom.10:17**, saying, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God'.

- 'All things are possible to him that believeth' (Mk.9:23). We are to 'ask in faith, nothing wavering' (**Ja.1:6**).

- Note: Some teach that when a person accepts Christ as Savior, he is given all the faith ever needed. All he has to do is appropriate (use) it. But that isn't necessarily true. According to the verse mentioned above (**Rom.10:17**), the 'faith' of a believer continues to grow as he prays, reads, and studies the word of God. Too, on another occasion (**Matt.8:26**), when the disciples awakened Jesus from sleep while in a boat in the midst of a storm, Jesus said, 'O ye of little faith'.

- 2) Pray 'in the name of Jesus' (**Jn.14:13,14**).
- 3) Prayer to be according to 'God's will' (**Matt.6:10; I Jn.5:14**). Note: It's been asked: How could the Prophet Elijah be certain that the God of Israel would answer his prayer and send rain at a particular time (**I Kgs.18:41**) after there having been no rain for three and one-half years? Answer: Because the prophetic word of the Lord had come to him earlier (**I Kgs.18:1**).
- 4) Must keep his commandments. To 'love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and will all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself' (**Lu.10:27**). And according to **I Jn.5:3**, 'his commandments are not grievous'.
- 5) Not only must we pray according to God's will, we must be 'in' God's will if we expect him to answer. If we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, he will give us the things for which we ask (**Matt.6:33**).
- 6) To be effective, we must be persistent. Ask, and keep on asking; seek, and keep on seeking; knock, and keep on knocking. Must never give up.
- 7) Must 'abide (to wait for; to endure without yielding) in Christ', and have his words 'abide in you' (**Jn.15:7**).

**Vs.23,24**. God's commandment is: 'That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another'. Note: In the Bible, a person's name represents his character. It speaks of who he really is. Therefore, not only are we to believe in Jesus' words, but in his very person as the Son of God, as well. To believe 'in his name' means to pattern our lives after his, to become more like him.

- We are to put our total trust and faith in Christ, believing that he will do all he has promised.
- 'This is 'proof' that he is truly dwelling within through the gift of his Spirit' (Knox).

## Chapter 4

- V.1.** 'Try the spirits whether they are of God'. As Christians, we are admonished to test all professed Christian teachers, writers, preachers, prophets, etc., who claim their work or message comes from God. The reason for testing every spirit (i.e., a person moved or inspired by a spirit) is 'because many false prophets are gone out into the world'. No teaching or doctrine is to be accepted as authentic solely on the basis of success, miracles, or apparent anointing. Jesus said (**Matt.7:22,23**), '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'.
- A question is raised concerning these false prophets: Are they actually out to deceive when it comes to the things of God, or, is it that they have been deceived, and therefore, are sincere in their teaching, although wrong? Whatever the case, we, as Christians, are to 'try the spirits' as to whether or not they are of God.
  - Different ways to try (test) the spirits:
    - 1) Check what is said with what God says in the holy Scriptures.
    - 2) The prophet's commitment to the body of believers (**2:19**).
    - 3) His lifestyle (**3:23,24**).
    - 4) The 'fruit' of his ministry (**4:6**).
    - 5) His relationship with the world (**v.5**).
    - 6) His love of the brethren (**vs.7-12**).
    - 7) But the most important test of all, says John, is what a person believes about Jesus Christ (i.e., his being conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin, deity, is fully God and fully man, sinless life, substitutionary death on the cross for sins of the world, burial, resurrection on the third day, ascension into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father as the one mediator between God and men).
- V.2.** 'Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (confesses that Jesus is the Promised Messiah, the Christ of glory, the Son of God, Deity) is of God'. Note: This does not mean that the person who believes that Jesus is come in the flesh is a Christian. Such a confession is of God; but that alone doesn't bring salvation.
- V.3.** 'Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God'. Therefore, he is of the evil one (**c.f.3:10**). Note: Some people believe everything they read or hear. Unfortunately, many things printed and taught are not true. We are to verify every message we hear, even if the person who brings it says it is from God.
- That which is 'not of God' is the 'spirit of antichrist' (**c.f. II Jn.7**); and such a spirit was already prevalent, even in John's day.
  - Liberal theologians and religious cults are 'antichrists' inasmuch as they deny the full deity of Jesus Christ. Too, those who deny these truths subject themselves to demonic spirits.

**V.4.** 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them'. 'Them', here, speaks of false teachers. They are on one side with the apostle's readers on the other. And it's from this standpoint that they of God's family are to 'try the spirits whether they are of God'.

- As believers, you 'have overcome' these false teachers, 'because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world'. Amen! The one side has God with them, the other, Satan.
- The Scriptures tell us that the Holy Spirit dwells within the believer. And it's through Him we can overcome the evil in this world; including sin, Satan, trials, tribulations, persecution, and even false teachings.
- The Spirit of God dwells in you, and He is more mighty than men or devils. Therefore, through Him we can victoriously achieve God's will for our lives.

**Vs.5,6.** The spirit that prevails in these false teachers leads them to this 'world'. Therefore, since they belong to the world, they speak of the world (they profess a worldly messiah and savior).

- The tragedy is: 'the world heareth them'. Note: False teachers are popular with the world because, like the false prophets of the Old Testament, they tell people what they want to hear. The world loves its own.
- 'We are of God'. We are 'born' of God, 'taught' of God, and 'anointed' of God. Because of that, 'he that knoweth God heareth us' ('he who knows the purity and holiness of God, the love and grace of God, the truth and faithfulness of God . . . must know that he is with us' **(M. Henry)**).
- 'Those who truly know God will recognize and willingly accept the word of the apostles for what it really is: the Word of God' **(K.J. Bible Comm.)**.
- 'He that is not of God heareth not us'. They don't want to hear their sins denounced, nor listen to demands that they change their lives.
- Note: It's through this test of 'true Christianity' that we can know the 'spirit of truth' and the 'spirit of error'.

**Vs.7-21.** 'The true children are born of God through faith in the propitiation of the Son of God' **(Scofield)**. 'This is the acid test of a born again experience' **(Dake)**. 'God is Love, and love is the surest test of birth from God' **(Pulpit Comm.)**. Oftentimes, love is thought of as a 'feeling'. But 'in reality, love is a choice and an action' **(The Living Bible)**. 'A strong fervent exhortation to holy Christian love' **(M. Henry)**.

**V.7.** 'Beloved, let us love one another'. John exhorts believers to love others, to be concerned about them, and, to seek their welfare. Then, in the remainder of the Book he describes the meaning of 'perfect love', and gives many reasons as to why we should love others.

- 'Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God'. 'Love' comes down from heaven, and is ours from God. James says, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness' **(Ja.1:17)**. A question is raised: Does that mean an unsaved person does not love? (No. It means those unsaved have not experienced the love of God in their hearts. They know nothing of the 'joy' and 'peace' that comes through accepting Jesus Christ, God's love-gift to the world, as Lord and Savior.)

- For mankind, 'love is a choice', and 'God is its source'. He loved us enough to give his only begotten Son (**Jn.3:16**).
- Note: 'Love' is listed in **Gal.5:22,23** as one of the 'fruit of the Spirit'. Question: Do these fruit of the Spirit become a part of a Christian's character at salvation? (Yes. The seed of each is planted in the person's heart upon accepting Christ as Savior, but it is up to each individual to grow spiritually, to develop the fruit, and, to become more Christ like, being led by the Holy Spirit.)

**V.8.** 'He that loveth not knoweth not God'. John is once again warning believers against false teachers, saying, a person may profess to know Christ as Savior (to be born again), but only those who exemplify the love of the Father actually possess His divine nature.

- 'A man who knows nothing of the attributes of God, has, without doubt, an imperfect knowledge of God' (**Pulpit Comm.**).
- 'God is love'. 'Love' is God's very nature. And when a person accepts Christ as Savior, that person takes on the nature of God. He begins to show forth a love that is altogether different than that which he might have possessed beforehand. Note: It's the Holy Spirit dwelling within a person's heart that loves through the saved individual.

**V.9.** God's love to us is clearly seen in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world as the 'greatest gift' ever given, so that believers might have eternal life through his sacrificial death and resurrection. This is proof of God's love 'toward us' (a better translation is 'in us').

- 'This is love indeed; it is his only Son whom he has sent, and he has sent him to give us life' (**Pulpit Comm.**).

**V.10.** It wasn't our love toward God that caused him to give his Son to die for our sins. Too, it wasn't because we deserved or merited his love that caused him to provide redemption from bondage. It was all because of his love. He loved us when we had no love for him. The Apostle Paul said (**Rom.5:8**), 'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'.

**V.11.** Because of God's love for us in giving his Son to die in our stead, we 'ought to love one another', following his example. We are to love those he loves ('all the world').

**V.12.** 'No man hath seen God at any time'. Note: John uses these identical words in **Jn.1:18**.

Too, while speaking to the woman at the well in Samaria, Jesus said, 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth' (Jn.4:24). It's believed that John is speaking of the 'Divine Being' (Godhead; Elohim) rather than the Father in particular. He does not make this statement to imply that to love an invisible Being is impossible; but that our love for others shows that God abides in us.

- Dake says the statement 'no man hath seen God at any time' means: no one has comprehended, or fully understood. He goes on to give his version of the statement: 'No man hath ever comprehended fully, or experienced God, at any time, in all His fulness, save the only begotten Son'. (I disagree with this interpretation.)

- Scofield: 'God, in His triune Person, no human being in the flesh has seen. But God, veiled in angelic form, and especially as incarnate in Jesus Christ, has been seen of men'.
- A question is raised: Will those in heaven, having received their glorified bodies, see God the Father? (J. Vernon McGee seems to think not. I think we will.)
- 'His love is perfected in us'. Our love towards God is perfected and brought to maturity as we show forth our love toward others, and especially toward 'them who are of the household of faith' (**Gal.6:10**).

**Vs.13,14.** When we accept Christ as Savior He gives to us of His Spirit; and by that, we know that we are His and He is ours. We are in Him, and He in us. Paul says (**Rom.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'.

- 'We have seen and do testify'. This refers to the testimony of the apostles. 'That God sent the Son (to the cross) to be the Savior of the world'.

**Vs.15,16.** There were 'false teachers' in the early church (both Jew and Gentile) who denied the reality of the incarnation. Therefore, if someone of that day accepted the truth of the incarnation, and believed in Christ's physical death to atone for sin, and his bodily resurrection, that person would likely accept Christ as personal Savior.

- Note: A person can confess with the tongue without having a change of heart and life. But to be born-again, he must believe in his heart as well as confess with his mouth.
- The 'confession' mentioned here speaks of that which the Apostle Paul wrote in **Rom.10:9**, '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'. Too, the writer to the Hebrews, said, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him' (**Heb.11:6b**).
- He who continues in love continues in God, and God continues in him.

**Vs.17-19.** 'Herein is our love made perfect'. It is because 'God is love', and because he lives within, that love can be truly accomplished in us. Heretofore, John has said, if 'we abide in Christ', 'have fellowship with the Father', 'endeavor to keep His commandments', 'remain separate from the world', 'abide in the truth', and 'love one another', then 'we may have boldness (absolute confidence) in the day of judgment' (confidence that we will not stand condemned on that day).

- 'Because as he is, so are we in this world'. 'We realize that our life in this world is actually his life lived in us' (**N.T. in Modern English**). Note: Jesus was God's Son, in whom he was well pleased. We too (those saved) are God's children and the object of his goodness. Therefore, since Jesus called God his Father, so may we, since we are accepted in the Beloved.
- Some false teachers of today have altered the true meaning of the statement: 'Because as he is, so are we in this world', and are teaching that we, as believers, are actually 'little Gods'.
- How foolish!
- 'There is no fear in love'. Perfect love banishes (expels; drives out) fear (**I Cor.13**).

- 'Because fear hath torment'. Fear implies punishment, and there is no dread or punishment to the one who has perfect love. Note: There is a distinction between 'the fear of God' and 'being afraid of God'. All believers are to 'fear God'. We read in **I Pe.2:17**, 'Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king'.
- 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love'. If a man fears, there is an imperfection in his love.
- 'We love him, because he first loved us'. As Christians, we do not fear, but love. The 'principle of love' is here repeated, and shows clearly that the false teachers do not pass the test. They claim to love God, but fail to love a brother (another person) who is right there before their eyes with a real need. Love is 'action' (must be demonstrated), while love in 'word' leaves a lot to be desired. It is not real.
- Note: John lists 'six liars' in these first four chapters, as those who say:
  - 1) they have fellowship with God, and yet, walk in darkness **(1:6)**;
  - 2) they have no sin **(1:8)**;
  - 3) they have not sinned **(1:8)**;
  - 4) they are Christians, yet, do not keep God's commandments **(2:4)**;
  - 5) that Jesus is not the Christ, and there is no God **(2:22)**; and,
  - 6) they are Christians, yet, have hatred toward men **(4:20)**.

## Chapter 5

- This chapter emphasizes the 'Doctrine of Christ'.

**V.1.** 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God'. Note: To believe in the Incarnation involves more than just intellectual assent (head faith). It requires being 'born of God' (accepting Christ as Savior; being born again; having sins forgiven). It's sad, but far too many believe that Jesus is God's Son, and, that he died for the sins of the world; yet, have not believed in him for salvation (**Jn.3:16**). Salvation is a matter of both the mind and the heart (**Rom.10:9**). Everyone who believes from the heart that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ of glory, and exercises faith in his atoning blood, is 'born of God'.

- 'and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him'. Therefore, those who love God the Father will surely love his Son, Jesus. Too, not only will believers love Jesus, they will also love others 'born of God'. And remember, it is God who determines who the other family members are, not us. We are simply called to accept and love them.
- Question is raised: How about those who don't believe in Jesus, yet profess that they love God? Is that possible? (No. That's the teaching of Judaism, and possibly many other religions.)

**Vs.2,3.** When a person loves God and keeps his commandments, it's proof that he loves the brethren. Too, loving the brethren is proof that we love God.

- 'and his commandments are not grievous' (not difficult to keep). It's not hard to live right and obey God's Word. In fact, it's the best and easiest life in all the world. It's the love for the things of the world that makes God's commandments seem grievous. Solomon said, it's 'the way of the transgressors that's hard' (**Prov.13:15**). It's disobedience that brings guilt. And guilt brings fear. Jesus said (**Matt.11:30**), 'my yoke is easy, and my burden is light'. 'The Christian, whose 'will' is united with the 'will of God', will not find obedience to that will (keeping his commandments) a task' (**Pulpit Comm.**).

**Vs.4,5.** The 'world', in Scripture, refers to Satan's worldwide system of deception and wickedness. And here, John mentions Christians as being 'overcomers' three times. Too, John clearly defines who these 'overcomers' are. They are those who believe that Jesus is God's Son (Deity), who love God, and, who keep his commandments. The word 'overcomer' literally means that a believer has continual victory over the world. To say it another way: Our 'faith' is the key to victory over the world. Note: In **Rev.1:11**, Jesus instructed the Apostle John to write letters to seven churches in Asia. Then, in **Chs.2,3**, John was to outline the promises to those who were overcomers.

- Note: It should be the desire of every Christian 'to be an overcomer', to live in victory, and, to be ready for heaven at all times.

**Vs.6-9.** In first five verses of chapter, overcomers are described as those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Here, we have the witness (testimony) of God the Father and God the Holy Ghost regarding the truth of the deity of Jesus Christ.



- 'This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ'. This, no doubt, refers to Jesus' baptism (water) at the beginning of his ministry and to his death (blood) on the cross.
- 'And it is the Spirit that beareth witness'. This speaks of the testimony of God that comes through the Holy Spirit. And since the Holy Spirit (God) cannot lie, His testimony is true.
- 'For there are three that bear record (witness)'. Note: The remainder of **v.7** and the first nine words of **v.8** are not contained in any of the Greek uncial (hand-written) manuscripts nor quoted by any Greek Father until late in the fifth century. It's believed the portion mentioned here was translated from the Vulgate (a Latin version of the Bible authorized and used by the Roman Catholic Church).
- 'There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood'. These three testify that Jesus is the Son of God. Note: The Old Testament law required the testimony of two or three witnesses to establish the truth of a particular matter (**Deut.17:6; 19:15**).
- Three witnesses to the humanity and Sonship of Jesus:
  - 1) Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus when he was baptized by John in the Jordan (**Matt,3:16,17**).
  - 2) The water, a three-fold witness:
    - a. Water Baptism, symbolizing Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.
    - b. Water of the Word, bearing witness to the incarnation.
    - c. Water and blood at Jesus' crucifixion, testifying to his humanity.
  - 3) The blood, testifying not only to the humanity and sonship of Jesus Christ, but guaranteeing redemption from sin.
- 'And these three agree in one'. Note: They are not 'one', as was Jesus and the Father mentioned in **Jn.17:22**, but totally agree to the fact of Jesus' humanity and sonship.
- God's witness of His Son is greater than that of men, because the witness of men, at times, can be deceitful (**I Kings 21:8-13**). But the witness of God is always true.

**Vs.10-12.** The believer not only has the 'outward witness' of God concerning His Son, but a 'personal witness' from God within (in his heart) to his faith (**Rom.8:14-16**).

- But the person who refuses to believe what God has said concerning His Son and salvation makes him out to be a liar. Note: Such rejection is the ultimate form of blasphemy.
- 'God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son' (only in Christ Jesus). 'Eternal life is in God's Son and cannot be received or possessed in any other way. It is Christ's life in us. And it's ours as long as we maintain a vital faith relationship with Him' (**Full Life Study Bible**).
- 'The main idea of 'eternal life' in John's writings has no direct reference to time. It's possessed already by believers; and is not a thing of the future' (**Pulpit Comm.; Jn.3:36**).
- Note: Robert Shank (an ordained So. Baptist preacher) set out to prove that the doctrine of 'Unconditional Eternal Security' was scripturally sound. He prayed, studied, and had a right spirit. Then, he began to write. And when his work was completed he had proved just the opposite. His book is entitled: 'Life in the Son'.
- The Bible teaches, throughout, that after getting saved we must determine in our hearts to 'continue on', to fight the good fight of faith, and, to cross the finish line with victory. When

speaking to some Jews who had believed on him, Jesus said, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed (Jn.8:31). 'If ye continue'.

**V.13.** 'That ye may know that ye have eternal life'. This is John's purpose for writing this epistle.

- Note: John doesn't say, 'ye shall have eternal life. He wants us (believers) to know eternal life is ours now.
- Eternal life doesn't refer primarily to a 'period of time', but to 'a person'. It involves having a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ (God's only begotten Son), and possessing His nature.
- Many of our day are being taught (falsely) that you cannot actually know that your sins are forgiven and that you have eternal life while still in this body; but that you will have to wait until death and the judgment before knowing for sure. How sad! Think about it: To live without the assurance of salvation (eternal life) is to live with fear and anxiety.
- Fanny Crosby, a song-writer of yesteryear, expressed it well in her wonderful hymn, 'Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood'. Amen! Thank God, we can know!

**Vs.14,15.** As believers, our confidence is in God. And 'if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us'. Note: To pray according to God's will is to pray in accordance with what He would want. And, remember, not only must we pray according to God's will, we must be in God's will if we expect him to hear and answer. The question is raised: How can we know God's will concerning a given issue? (In many instances we know His will because it is revealed in Scripture. At other times His 'will' is made known only through earnest prayer.) Yet, when we know what the will of God is in a certain matter, we can ask in confidence and faith.

- The point is not, if God hears our prayers He grants our petition, but, that if we know He hears our prayers 'we have the petitions that we desired of him'. We know his purposes for us will be accomplished, so we must leave the timing of the answer to him. Note: It may be years before we perceive that our prayers have been answered. And, again, we may never see the fulfillment of our petition in this life; but we know that God has answered. Trust Him, no matter what!

**Vs.16,17.** Christians are to pray for those of the body of Christ (believers) who have sinned, i.e., prayer for spiritually weak believers who need the prayers of God's people to minister life and grace to them. Such would be a prayer of love, and is surely in God's will. But we must remember, the prayer of one person can never cancel another's free-will. Note: According to **2:1**, if a Christian brother sins there is still hope. Amen!

- 'There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it'. For a former believer who has committed a 'sin unto death' (spiritual death), the church cannot pray with assurance that God will give more grace and life. Thoughts concerning a sin unto death:
  - 1) John is speaking of the one unforgivable sin, which is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (**Mt.12:31,32**).
  - 2) 'The willful and obstinate rejection of God's grace and persistence in unrepented sin' (**Pulpit Comm**).

- 3) Any premeditated and unconfessed sin that causes the Lord to end a former believer's life.
  - 4) 'The rejection of God's truth to the point that one died in unbelief' (**KJ Bible Comm.**).
- It's believed by some that if a person sets himself firmly and persistently in opposition to the Divine will of God, our interceding in prayer will be to no avail. Possibly so, yet, I believe we should continue praying for our loved ones, and others, unless God's lifts the burden to do so.

**V.18.** 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not'. Christians (born again believers) do not practice (continue living in) sin (**c.f. I Jn.3:9**).

- 'but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not'. Two interpretations: (1) The 'he', here, refers to Jesus Christ, as the only begotten of the Father. The devil cannot touch him. (2) Since we, as believers, are no longer of the devil, he has no dominion over us. He can only tempt (persecute, try, test, accuse) us to the degree God allows (**I Cor. 10:13**). Note: Jesus keeps (protects) the believer from the wicked one (Satan). And because the believer belongs to God, Satan must operate within God's sovereignty, and he cannot function beyond that which God allows (**Job 2:4-6**).

**V.19.** There are only two types of people: Children of God and children of the devil. 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life' (**v.12**).

- 'We know that we are of God'. Question is asked: 'How do we know we are of God?' (If we confessed our sins and repented with godly sorrow, we are saved. At that moment God forgave, because the Bible, God's Word, says so (**Rom.10:9,13; I Jn.1:9**). By faith we believed what God has revealed in His Word, and were forgiven (saved; born again). Amen! He abides!
- 'The whole world lieth in wickedness'. The reason this is true: Satan, the wicked one, is the god of this world. He is the evil one, and he controls the present evil age. Note: Although God is sovereign, yet, at this present time the world is not under God's dominion, but is in rebellion against His rule and is enslaved to Satan.

**V.20.** Note: In **v.13**, the Apostle tells those of us who are believers that he has written these things that 'We may know that we have eternal life'. Then, in the following verses, he mentions some things that 'we know' as believers: (1) When we ask according to his will, we know he hears us. (2) Knowing he heareth us, whatever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (3) 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not' (does not continue in sin). (4) 'We know that we are of God'. (5) Too. 'we know that the Son of God is come' (Christ Jesus has come among us, and has given us the discernment to know the true God). We are in Christ, and Christ is in us. Amen!

**V.21.** 'keep yourselves from idols' - 'from anything and everything that would occupy the place in your heart due to God' (**Amplified New Testament**). Love God first and last (**Matt.22:37**).