

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



“LAST WORDS” COMMENTARY

LETTERS OF JOHN

(With the Perfect tenses Emphasized)

by

DR. JOHN CAMERON McEWAN

[BOOK 7]

REVISED Easter Sunday 2022

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Salvation is available for all members of the human race.

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation, neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise, nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (I Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:
 My sins are taken away (John 1:29),
 I possess eternal life now (I John 5:11,12),
 I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),
 The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (I Corinthians 6:19),
 And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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CONTENTS

ITEM	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	3
I JOHN CHAPTER 1	27
I JOHN CHAPTER 2	41
I JOHN CHAPTER 3	89
I JOHN CHAPTER 4	110
I JOHN CHAPTER 5	130
2 JOHN	147
3 JOHN	160
DOCTRINE INDEX	171
Perfect Tenses in the Letters of John	174

LETTERS OF JOHN

1. INTRODUCTION

The three letters of John are like Galatians and James, in that they contain basic doctrines that should be the starting point of any ministry in a new church. John has three main themes in his letters, firstly understanding the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His work, secondly the importance of facing, and dealing with sin honestly and completely. If you add to these the third; believe God's Word and apply it to your life, you have John's 'three point sermon', fully expounded in the first letter. It is more than the "recall to the fundamentals" that some commentators believe is the message. It is the preparation to revisit the Gospel message for believers who are soon to meet the Lord as martyrs in the great persecution about to begin, and all who receive this Letter need to really draw close to Him in daily life. It is written by the last apostle, and we believe, in light of the prophetic trends we have seen mature in 2020-2021, has special application to those of us living in the last days of the church before the Lord's return.

The First Letter is in effect John's sermon on, or key point introduction to, his Gospel, and it is best taught in association with a study on the Gospel of John. If we were looking at the best place to begin a new ministry in these "last days", then the pastor could not go too far wrong in beginning with this letter, teaching the Gospel of John also, and then moving straight into Galatians and James. These books will stabilize a church back into fellowship with the one who is truth very quickly, and it is this message that John wants us to get clearly as we advance into his letters. We are used to seeing Paul's letters as easily divided into a Doctrinal section, and then an application, but here the two are intertwined around the central message, which I argue is, "Let His light shine into your life, Love Him, and walk with Him closely every day of your life – you don't have any time to waste!"

INTRODUCTORY SECTIONS

1. Introduction to the Church at Ephesus to which John writes.
2. The Enemy – the Wolves in the Sheepskins
3. Introducing the Form of the Letters
4. The Attacks upon these Three Letters
5. The "Elder"
6. The Two Short Letters 2 and 3 John
7. The Historic Situation
8. The Heresy – Deception and Distraction from the Truth
9. Ethics – The Fruit of the Holy Spirit
10. The "Gnostics" – the "New Agers" of their day
11. The First Letter as a Sermon to be read aloud with the Gospel

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS TO WHICH JOHN WRITES.

There are some key characteristics of the Church to which John is writing. We will return to the subject of this church later in this introduction, but meditate upon these principles below at this point, and we will go further later. We do not have to guess about the current state of this church at the time of writing, for John has revealed it in Revelation 2:1-7, which was written around this time. The deep nature of the Church at Ephesus is beginning to become flawed, and he comments specifically upon its weakness at verse 4. Turn to Revelation, and read these verses. **Revelation 2:1 - 7.**

This church was great, but since it's first days under Paul, nearly forty years before, it had lost its total passion for it's first love. Read through the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians, especially **Ephesians 2:1-10, 2:21-22, 4:25-32, 5:15-21, 6:10-17.** As we go through John's sermon here in 1 John we will see that he builds upon the points Paul made forty years before, and the call may be summed up, in Pauline language as, "Keep on being daily filled with the Holy Spirit, and walk in the Love and Light of the Lord Jesus Christ". God seeks passionate obedient faith, and the great Ephesian Church had lost its way. Persecution is coming and they need to draw close to the Lord before its too late for them.

The church had backslidden and was no longer occupied passionately with the person of Christ; the members had let other things enter their minds and hearts and take over first place. The church had become an institution, and attending services had become a pleasant habit. The church had become familiar, with people being born into Christian families rather than being only converted from paganism. The church had become part of society, like many today, with Sunday

School taking over from evangelism. They had not gone cold, nor were they even lukewarm, but they were on the pathway that would lead to that state of powerlessness over time. This letter is a call to them and also to us, to remember that the Lord wants our passionate 100% commitment to Him, not just our polite and partial obedience.

We must be careful of all these things, for when more emphasis is put on Christian education than evangelism in a local church, when we value our structures more than our passion for the Lord, then there is a danger that the church will be judged in a similar way to that at Ephesus. The Christians were conforming more and more to the world and therefore becoming less distinctive with persecution not being an item of immediate concern, yet its at the door... The danger was, and remains in the world today, seduction away from passionate commitment to the Lord's truth, and passionate engagement with the Lord's person through prayer and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Beware the "days of Noah" mentality! **Matthew 24:35-39**. We are more and more overwhelmed by the Lord's words here, for the "sin" of Noah's day was the sin, and great "evil of unbelief"! **Romans 4:20, Hebrews 3:12-19**. The lost were simply too busy with the pleasant and distracting details of life to be bothered to heed the warnings of Noah. This is described by the Lord as the condition of the days when he returns, and we certainly see that today as we reflect upon the prophetic markers relating to the end days before the Lord's return. John's "last words" are timely for us, and as urgent in their appeal to us as we see the day of the Lord's return drawing near, as they were in his own day, just before all hell broke loose upon the church in the first of 200 years of great persecutions (AD 86 – 312).

The main danger in the West today is not the killing of Christians but their distraction and seduction; their walking away from moment by moment fellowship with their Lord. We have today our established churches filled with mockers and doubters. **2 Timothy 3:1-5, 4:1-4, 2 Peter 3:1-7**. We are all too easily overwhelmed by the cares of this world, and it's many social and internet based distractions, and we are drawn away from living and loving fellowship with the Lord. The Lord's call, and John's here, is to ensure that our fellowship with the Lord is more real than our fellowship with this temporary world! Satan's strategies involve distraction from moment by moment concentration upon Christ.

The church did not passionately teach the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ as thoroughly and as often as they should have, and so people drifted in their hearts away from thinking often of the Lord; what he had done, what he wanted them to do, and what he was going to do at his return. **Malachi 3:16-18, 6-10**. They were not walking through each day in vital union with the Lord through prayer, and study of, and meditation upon the Word. The destroyers of the spiritual life of the congregation came from within; the pastors were not doing their job of magnifying Christ and His Word. They were not preaching confession of sin, and were not emphasizing the importance of the daily filling of the Holy Spirit.

2. THE ENEMY – THE WOLVES IN THE SHEEPSKINS

There were false teachers also, who were there to quickly take advantage of the ignorance and slackness of the believers. Peter had warned thirty years before, **1 Peter 5:8-9**, that the enemy would move quickly in to attack the weak, just as the hungry lion does. In the last days of the first century these attackers were called 'Gnostics'. Look up in the Bible Encyclopaedia, and also Google "Gnostics", and "Gnosticism". Every cult, even today, is still preaching what these early heretics preached in the first and second centuries. John highlights the problems and gives the solutions to the Gnostics and in dealing with these people he confronts all those involved in teaching cultic viewpoints nowadays.

Gnosticism is also the source of the liberal theology, which has destroyed 90%+ of all theological colleges in our world today. The liberal theologians of today attack John's Letters and Gospel more vigorously than any other books of the Bible, other than perhaps some of the letters of Paul. They hate the letters and work attributed to John, for if believers get his message they will walk in the Spirit and see through the falsehoods of liberalism and all cultism quickly.

The liberals separate the historical Jesus from, what they call, 'the Christ of faith', where-as John argues for the unity of the person and work of the real Lord, as the incarnate and soon returning, 'Lord Jesus Christ'. He is the unique person of history and eternity, and He desires our fellowship and our love. John's purpose is academic, it is practical and relational; he wants us to release our love towards the Lord, and in daily, living fellowship with him, be kept from all evil, active in worship and service for Him, and ready for his Return.

We need to be focused upon the reality of the person and work of the Lord; worshipping the true Lord Jesus Christ of history, not the liberal 'jesus', who never lived. It is even dangerous for us to use just the name 'Jesus', as the liberals talk about the "Jesus of history" and separate him from the "Christ of faith". This misleads simple Christians who don't study enough of the Bible to be safe. The liberals, like the early gnostic cultists, believe that Jesus the man, died, and that the 'Easter faith' means that the, 'Christ of faith', rose on Sunday morning in the hearts of the believers. Jesus therefore was, they argue, just a man who set us a great example, but that his ideals and life giving power rose that Easter morning. They say, that his disciples were sitting around after his death saying that even though Jesus the man had died his ideas still live on and this is the Christ of Easter. This is falsehood! It is satanic evil and nonsense – these are not "Christian Faiths", they are satanic inspired religious lies and lead to hell and the lake of fire! He is soon to return to judge this evil!

The modern Gnostics teach that the Christ of faith rose in the disciple's hearts on Sunday morning. This is absolute nonsense, and a satanic lie, and John faces it here and in the Gospel, but it is the creed of many in the liberal churches still. The historic Jesus is the biblical one, and he rose bodily from the grave on Easter morning. The "jesus" of liberalism never lived at all; he is a figment of the evil imagination of men and women who do not want to accept God's miraculous

activity in history! John calls us to hold the miraculous truth, and passionately, prayerfully, engage with the real Lord of all! Refer to the BTB studies on CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS, and also CHRIST - I AM, and also MIRACLES OF CHRIST. Do not ever believe the Gnostics were “early Christian voices” – they were false fake brethren! Like their modern compatriots the theological liberals, they have no part with us, and **Matthew 7:13-23** applies to them.

3. INTRODUCING THE FORM OF THE LETTERS

The Second and Third Letters of John are definitely letters whilst the first one is definitely not. Most conservative commentators believe that this first 'letter', was a sermon which John used to introduce the Gospel of John so that wherever a handwritten copy of the Gospel of John was sent in the ancient world a copy of what we have as the first letter, was sent as an introduction. This is the position I adopt, as it makes the most sense of the evidence before us.

This 'letter' is in the form of a three point sermon, with chapter 1 dealing with the subject, God is light, Chapters 2-4, God is love, and Chapter 5, God is life. The **First** message is that God is light and has revealed himself to man and stepped into history. John's purpose is for the believers to **walk in the light of the One who is truth, love the truth, and live in and walk daily in the truth**. Jesus had said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life...” **John 14:6**.

God's purpose in the incarnation was to bring light into the darkness of a fallen world; for all mankind to see the truth about their sin, God's plan to deal with it, and the right way to live in response to God's plan. The true light shows up the sin problem in man. John's joy in this sermon though, is that God has not left us in our sin, nor does he rub our noses in it. God does not delight in condemnation, as some men do, rather he delights in salvation and sanctification. His desire is that each person might be saved in grace and mercy, and grow in grace and righteousness. **God is Light** to walk by.

This is the power of John's **Second** point; that **God is love**, and as such has revealed Himself to man. God has not added condemnation and insult to our sin injury. He has come to show that, fully seeing our sin, he expresses his love for us and opens the door for us to deal with our sin and our sinful natural tendencies. We live in the sphere of His Love.

The Holy Spirit brings the light of God into our life, and thereby leads us to recognize our sin, **John 16:8-11**, and then he searches us out, and reveals himself as the God of love who forgives all our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. **1 John 1:5-10**. The message of Christianity is at its heart – God loves us – and it is love that has provided a way for eternal fellowship with our God and Saviour. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. **Ephesians 2:4-8**. Grace, mercy and love are His character. **Psalms 103:8-16** is built upon in power here.

John, like Paul before him, wants to stabilize all of us as believers, upon the sure rock of the dependable Character of God. He wants us to have a real relationship with the true God of the universe; the one who loved us and gave himself for us! He wants us passionate about the reality of the message and the reality of being loved and forgiven by the one who made us. Refer to the end of this section for the doctrinal study from the Bible Topic Book. Refer to the BTB study of GOD - CHARACTER OF GOD.

Thirdly, he seeks us to see that **God is life**, and that all who come to Him will have the life God intended, both now and forever. If you accept His love you receive the right and the power to live his life, now and forever. John's Gospel follows the same pattern as the first letter. It provides the message of the one who came to reveal the love of God, enlighten the dark path of man, and open the door to live the life God provides for all who love him. Take time out now to read the following passages. John 1:14, 18 - **light**, John 3:16-18 - **love**, John 5:24 - **life**.

4. THE ATTACKS UPON THESE THREE LETTERS

Those who hate truth will try to discredit those who powerfully proclaim it. John powerfully preaches truth and strongly recalls the people to the full Spirit filled reality of their walk with their Lord. Satan hates this sort of message and so do all who do his work. The main attack upon the legitimacy of the letters centres round their history and then their linguistic structure and their vocabulary. Even in the attacks there are total contradictions between the attackers.

I will quote from a number of these people, not to waste your time, but so that, as a serious student of the Word of God, you can identify them quickly. You need to learn about your enemy by hearing their words, and so be able to spot their words when you hear them in the local church from any unbelieving minister. Satan has not had an original thought for a couple of thousand years, and so learning about how the enemy sounds helps protect you from future deception, as most attacks upon truth are repetitions of things that have occurred before. Satan's people all sound the same!!!

One writer observes, “Nearly forty words used by the writer of the Epistle are not found in the Gospel, and there are also common words in the Gospel that failed to make the Epistle at all. The Gospel of John makes much use of the Old Testament, but the Epistle contains no quotation from the Old Testament at all, and perhaps only one reference.” *Note 1

Another attack upon the letters was to separate the three, claiming the first was authored by “a John”, but not necessarily the Apostle John, and that the other two were authored by another John. They do this by identifying his use of the term “elder” rather than Paul's use of apostle, arguing that this makes it unlikely that it is John the apostle who is the author. We will examine this below (The Elder). The early church father Eusebius, writing in the early 300s noted that the authorship of 1 John was unquestioned in his day, but that some disputed the two smaller ones as being from the hand of the apostle, although most accepted them as John's. *Note 2

One writer however observes, “The second and third letters of John naturally form a pair. The similarity between them is too close to admit of any explanation except common authorship or conscious imitation. It would take the ingenuity of the most skilful separator to determine which is the original and which the copy.” He then goes on to say, “A careful comparison of instances of words, phrases, and constructions which are common to the two smaller epistles and the larger epistle establish beyond the possibility of doubt the intimate connection between the two. A knowledge of the first epistle or it’s contents seems almost necessarily presupposed in some passages of the smaller epistles.” *Note 3.

As the believing Commentator Guthrie observes, “Johannine thought pervades the Epistle”. *Note 4. Those attacking the authorship have major difficulties. “If however we assume an imitator, we must confess that he has done his work with rare skill, and upon internal grounds therefore the hypothesis of fiction falls short of complete plausibility”. *Note 5. Note how polite these scholars are! They refute the attackers politely; something I do not believe John would do! We need to reflect as we read these observations on the words of the “Son of Thunder”, on those who would try to undermine his word’s authority, and think about what his response would be.

The linguistic connections between the Gospel and the First Letter are extensive as the following observations make clear and the variance of a few words here and there reflect normal writing of all ages. “The style of the Epistle bears a close resemblance to that of the Gospel, both in vocabulary and style.” *Note 6. “The similarity is not confined to style and vocabulary, but extends to ideas, both as regards doctrine and ethics.” *Note 7. “No imitator of the Gospel could have combined elements of likeness and unlikeness in such a manner.” *Note 8.

Common authorship of the letters and the Gospel is indicated, especially when you look at three key points and words.

1. Logos: - John 1:1, 14, 1 John 1:1, 5:7, Revelation 1:2, 19:13.
2. “Have sin”:- John 9:41, 15:22, 24, 19:11, 1 John 1:8.
3. Paraclete/Comforter: - John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7, 1 John 2:1.

*Note 9. These three words or concepts, plus many more possible examples, make it clear that the author of the three books is thinking and expressing himself the same way; it is the same man.

5. THE “ELDER”

Let us start with the observation of one commentator. “There is nothing in the use of the title ‘the elder’ by the writer of the epistle, that is inconsistent with the belief that he was the apostle John”. *Note 10. The very term “elder” had a specific usage in the early years of the church.

“The ‘elders’ was a general term for the first generation of the leaders of the church. John the apostle, last link between the Lord and the church in the closing decade of the century, was pre-eminently John the Elder”. *Note 11. The other use of the term ‘elder’, meaning old man, may also be appropriate here, for these words are indeed those of an old man; one who has lived long and reflected much upon what matters and what does not. The old man coming out of the severe treatment upon Patmos was getting ready to die, and at such a time in life self disappears and what we believe and who we worship becomes our only theme – that is the feel of John’s work. He has little time for self – it is all about the Lord!

“He was a theologian; the quiet master of the secrets of the spiritual life. He was the calm, strong controversialist who excludes error by constructing truth.” *Note 12. “When this epistle was written John was probably the only surviving apostle. The years had mellowed this disciple whom the Lord loved, the one who had leaned on Christ’s bosom. In this last inspired word to the church, the author retires to the background, unwilling to speak of himself.” *Note 13.

He speaks throughout the epistle, “with the authority of an apostle”, (*Note 14), yet he makes no clear claim to the title by using the word. Is this not consistent with one who was so well acknowledged in his day that he didn’t need to use the title at all? Comparison with Paul’s use of the term is often superficial. Paul used the title, as he was writing in the earliest days and uses the term to make clear that he claims authority to speak in the Lord’s name, but forty years later, John, now in his late eighties or early nineties, does not need to make such claims, for he is the last of that great band.

Some liberals are still determined to argue for the author being, “an elder”, but most do so with some attempt at least to indicate their own shaky ground. “Our tentative conclusion therefore is that the three Johannine Epistles were written in the province of Asia between AD 96 and 110, or thereabouts, by one of the Presbyters who are known to have lived in that province at that period. . . We are here, it must be repeated, in the realm of pure conjecture.” *Note 15. Most, even amongst the liberals, date the letters to between 85 – 110 AD, but we would identify them as between 80-96 AD.

6. THE TWO SHORT LETTERS 2 AND 3 JOHN

The position on these letter’s authenticity is starkly stated by one believing commentator. “John clearly professed to be the work of the same author (as 1 John) and we must choose between accepting this claim on the one hand, and on the other regarding the work as a deliberate fiction”. *Note 16.

Having stated the obvious point here, we must ask ourselves why anyone would forge such short letters? Speaking of 3 John, another believing commentator asks, “It is so brief and so unimportant in content, that we can well understand that

there were few occasions for quoting it, but we could not understand why anyone should have taken the trouble to fabricate it". *Note 17. As we will go through these letters we will see that they do have some very vital things to teach us about attackers of the truth, and the biblical response to such people. They are important, and they have survived for a reason. Both letters are in a very standard letter format that remained fairly consistent for the Greek speaking half of the Roman Empire from the first through to the fourth centuries. These two short letters may have been written quite close to one another, and may even have been, "more or less contemporary responses to the same disturbance". *Note 18.

The scholarly consensus on these letters is as follows. First, examine a grudging acknowledgement from a probable unbelieving commentator. "It is almost impossible to find any serious reason to explain their survival except the authority and reputation of their real author, whoever he may have been". *Note 19. "On the whole, it cannot be said that the arguments for diversity of authorship are sufficient to overthrow the evidence, both internal and external, for common authorship". *Note 20. "The consensus of scholarly opinion through the centuries has held to the common authorship for the fourth Gospel and the Epistles of John". *Note 21. "On the whole, there are no conclusive external reasons for denying the authenticity of these epistles". *Note 22. "The notes of similarity in these three epistles mean I find no problem in accepting the fact that John wrote all three". *Note 23.

It is interesting to see that after nearly 200 years of consistent liberal theologian's attacks upon the integrity and truth of the New Testament books that they have admitted defeat regarding these letters. Even when a commentator wants to undermine their authority he is forced to admit the truth over a number of pages. "The result of a half century of analysis has been to show that the Epistle cannot be explained in terms of written sources; we have to reckon rather with the utilization of tradition by its author. (page 30) . . . Common authorship of all three epistles remains the overwhelmingly probable hypothesis. (page 31) . . . Critics are generally agreed that the linguistic differences between the Gospel and the Epistles are certainly not adequate to bear the weight of proof of different authorship." *Note 24.

7. THE HISTORIC SITUATION

"A definite historic situation lies behind the letter". *Note 25. Like the letter of James to the Jewish churches thirty years before, it is a warning against the enemy's main forms of attack, and a "recall to fundamentals". *Note 26. One commentator speaks of, "the low moral and social tone of Ephesus", (*Note 27), yet all cities, at all times in human history, have had low moral tone! **Galatians 1:4, Titus 2:12**. These scholars are out of touch with our own pagan cities!

We all face the dangers of living in "the devil's world", for he remains until the Lord's advent, the usurping "ruler of this present age". Satan had the right, by consent of men, to offer the kingdoms of this world to the Lord. They were his to offer then, and probably they remain so! **Matthew 4:8-10, Luke 4:5-8**. He is active, he has power, but it is limited, for he was at the Cross and Resurrection totally defeated, and proven inferior in power, **1 John 4:4**, and the Lord will take back the full rulership of this world at His Second Advent. **John 12:23, 14:30, 16:11, Revelation 1:5**.

To live in the light of the truth of Satan's strategy and tactics towards believers, we need to ensure he has no power over us through unconfessed sin in our lives, nor any hold over our mind through false teaching, by the filling of our thoughts with God's truth. Only God's truth "sets us free" from satanic error. **John 10:10**.

The specific nature of this time, is seen in its distance from the days of the earliest apostles. The church had reached the stage of its growth where people were, as we have already noted above, being born into Christian homes. While this is a lovely thing, it presents the young person with a challenge that the pagan convert did not have; namely the challenge to truly see the reality of the fallen world and recognize and quickly deal with sin and evil, as the dangers they are to very life. The pagan convert could look back and remember their earlier state and live in the godly fear of any return to that way of life.

However, the young believer who had grown up in the protective environment of the Christian home, would not know the great evils of paganism at first hand, and so would be open to deception, distraction and destruction by satanic attack that traded on their ignorance of danger. A person is never in greater danger than when they do not see the reality of it!

"The real danger is the attitude of the children themselves towards the Christian faith and life. The enthusiasm of the early days of the faith is no longer theirs. Their Christianity has become largely traditional, half hearted, and nominal. They found the moral obligations of their religion oppressive. The 'world' had great attractions for them. They wished to be on better terms with it than their faith allowed." *Note 28. Refer to the BTB studies at the end of this chapter. **WORLD, WORLDLINESS**.

Compromise is argued for when the distinctions between positions are not clearly seen. This is the heart of Satanic temptation to all within the churches since the days of the apostles; to get them to compromise with evil, and live weakened and defeated lives, slaves to his viewpoint, and to sin. There are some viewpoints that do not allow of any "dialogue", for the acceptance of one is the destruction of the other over time. It is this way with Satan's viewpoint and the doctrinal walk of the spiritual believer. There is no compromise, negotiation, arbitration, or agreement between the viewpoints; they are at war with each other. That warfare has been constant for 2000 years, but is worsening today.

Each of us either live and serve within the protective walls of divine viewpoint through Bible doctrine in our lives, or we stumble along to destruction with human viewpoint taken from Satanic propaganda. **Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:9-13, 2 Corinthians 6:16**. Refer to the BTB studies at the end of this chapter. **CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION, SPIRITUALITY, THINKING BIBLICALLY**. Satanic control of media today saturates the viewpoint of all who are not Bible

saturated – we have entered an intense “battle for the mind”, with media being used to manipulate opinion like never seen before other than in dictatorships.

My position is that the historical situation of Ephesus is exactly like our own in the 21st Century as we face the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people of John’s last days, just like our own, required a daily spiritual routine to keep themselves safe against distraction, distortion, deception and deviousness. Failure to practice spiritual alertness resulted then, as it still does, in personal disaster. The heart of the letter is the command to live in vital fellowship with God, for anything other than a vital active and regular fellowship with the Lord will open us to moral, spiritual, social and even financial disaster. Safety only exists with the Lord’s close company, on His path, and as the days darken towards the Lord’s Second Advent that becomes more real for each of us also – the unwary are destroyed quickly today.

Nothing, other than vital fellowship with the Lord will keep us from deception and disaster. John wants the believers at Ephesus to be just that, active believers in, and practitioners of the truth that comes from passionate fellowship with Christ Jesus. As they fellowship with the Lord, they will experience his light shining into their lives, they will know his love for them, and they will see his power working through them. In this position alone are they safe from deception. We also are safe only in our walk with the Lord in vital moment by moment fellowship. “The over arching thrust of this letter is fellowship with God”. *Note 29

John calls the church then and now, “into the inner experience of genuine Christian life. He urges them to recapture the intoxication, power, victory, and joy of apostolic Christianity in place of the dead formalism of ritual and tradition.” *Note 30. He wants them to join with him and those who have walked with him through the long years. He calls them to fellowship with the Lord and fellowship with the leadership. “Stay with us – be assured – is the burden of every paragraph.” *Note 31. He is writing about that life, and all it means for men, to readers who have not been eyewitnesses of it, but can participate in all it means through their fellowship with eyewitnesses. *Note 32.

Living fellowship requires that anything that separates us from the loved one is removed before it brings a cloud between us. It is sin that separates man and God and confession of sin is the starting point for John’s words on this matter. 1 John 1:9-11. He wants all the believers to rest in their relationship with the Lord; for our moment by moment prayers to be as normal as our talks with friends and family. He wants us to value this fellowship with the Lord above the level of anything else, for it is the key to happiness, but even more to our survival in the dangers of this present world. “Fellowship means common thoughts and interests. Have you learned to know the Saviour’s love? Do you enjoy the precious things that the Apostle John is telling us about?” *Note 32.

The letters are meant to be a challenge and they are. Twenty six times he commands us “abide”! We must obey here, or we are lost to the delivering power of the love of the Lord, and will find ourselves living in fear and uselessness. 1 John 4:18-19. The message of John is conservative, for he sees that unless we conserve the truth as first revealed, we will slip into error. The second law of thermodynamics applies most powerfully into ethics and theology! All things tend to decay unless constantly renewed. **Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Ephesians 4:23, Colossians 3:10.** Don’t go for something new, for its not “new” at all – its as old as all satanic deception. “That message which you received at the beginning is the message to which you must cling and is that which must abide in you.” *Note 33.

8. THE HERESY – DECEPTION AND DISTRACTION FROM THE TRUTH

“The immediate aim of this epistle, as we have seen, is to meet a critical situation arising out of the preaching of a distorted form of Christianity. By way of meeting it, the author recalls his readers to the original springs of Christian belief. What the author is giving is in fact the common, original Gospel of primitive Christianity.” *Note 34.

There is the “spirit of heresy” and the “spirit of schism” condemned as enemies of the truth in John’s day, and they still exist today. “Every age of Christendom up to the present has rather exaggerated rather than dwarfed the significance of this condemnation”. *Note 35. Satanic strategy has not changed, nor does it need to, for the ignorance and laziness of believers regarding doctrine that would otherwise keep them safe, ensures he has ready targets for deception in every age.

Truth alone protects against deception! If the truth is neither known, nor believed, then people are able to be picked off by the enemy with ease. Proverbs 29:18. If we do not ensure that the truth holds us in stability, then error will enslave us. John’s letters form a practical counter to error. The people are warned of the reality of false teachers and their message, as well as clear indications as to what to do when they arrive, for they will arrive in every congregation that stands for truth! Satan hates truth, and will oppose it! Satan’s best people are not in the pub, they are the fakes he places in churches to lead God’s people into powerless, deceptive and destructive errors.

The answer to error is neither simple truth, nor simple spiritual enthusiasm, but the dynamic combination of the two. Holy Spirit empowered application of the Word into life is the only secure anti-dote to the impact of evil in any place, for then there is love towards God, fellowship with God and with the brethren, and love towards mankind. Truth always works out in worship towards God and works of righteousness towards mankind. **James 2:14-26.** Anything less than this does not produce the life that the Lord requires of us as his witnesses here. It is the Holy Spirit taught, led and empowered life that is called for by John.

Many commentators betray their spiritual deadness at this point, for to them the walk of faith is a cold, formal, and religious thing. While speaking of the Ephesians problem, they demonstrate it in their own lives! They are not Spirit led

men or women. When a commentator avoids reference to the Holy Spirit they betray their lack of spiritual life. Test my own words on this matter and look back at this introduction, for if I do not speak often of the Lord who loved me and gave himself for me, then I do not love him. If I do not speak often of the Spirit and the need to walk in his power, then I do not walk in that power myself. If we do not speak often of a person, we do not have our being filled up with them, and our love is weak! **Malachi 3:16-18**. Test the commentators of the Word of God by these “fruits” of love that you ought to find on every second page. Refer to the BTB study CHRISTIAN LIFE: FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Words may be true, and points made relevant, but they may not go far enough to solve the problem being confronted. This is John’s challenge to these people; they have started on a formal path that will lead to cold and formal faith. God’s desire for us is that we “catch the fire” and live Holy Spirit led and empowered lives, where love for the Lord dominates all decision making and forms the core of the answer to all life’s problems.

Reflect upon the three comments below, and ask the questions, do they go far enough? Do they show spiritual fellowship and insight, or simply indicate religiousness?

1. “The writer, however, insists that while glib talk about religious experience is a snare and a delusion in the absence of serious attention to daily conduct, a truly virtuous life can spring only out of a unique relation to God which is not achieved by us, but granted by his grace.” *Note 36.
2. “Whatever religious emotion may be aroused in the soul by the contemplation of the divine being, it is not worthy to be called agape unless it issues in concern for some fellow human being, which will lead us to serve him at our cost.” *Note 37.
3. “We have indeed no power to follow such revelations of scripture into supposed consequences, but our strength is to hold with absolute firmness the apostolic words as St John has delivered them to us.” *Note 38.

The work of the Holy Spirit is left out or down played in each comment here. What is said is correct, but it does not go far enough to heal the spiritual disease that faces the church! We must be fearful of not giving people the whole counsel of God, for a little will not deliver them, any more than the right medicine in the wrong dosage will not heal the patient.

9. ETHICS – THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John wants these people to live in the fullness that they can have in Christ Jesus, and that means living out the fruits of joy, righteousness, holiness, and love. He wants their “joy to be full”, **1 John 1:4**, their sin to be faced and dealt with, **1 John 1:9, 2:1**, and their love for others to be practical and powerful, **1 John 3:18**. “No New Testament writer makes a stronger ethical demand than John does, and no New Testament writer more strongly condemns a so called religion which fails to issue in ethical action.” *Note 39. “John mentions love, faith, righteousness, sonship, assurance, and so on. He looks at these things from various angles and shows how they are related to one another.” *Note 40.

Fellowship with God will result in love for all God has made. If love does not flow outwards, then something is not happening on the inside. “Our author, with a sure instinct, thinks of Christian morality as being from first to last a matter of obedience to the divine command of love or charity.” *Note 41. As we have seen already, this does not go far enough, for God’s desire for us is that we enter into close fellowship with Him, and that HIS love empowers all we do.

Ethical actions will always flow from a Love-centred viewpoint. A person cannot abuse or take advantage of another if they have a view towards all people, that each one is one for whom Christ died. A harsh view towards individual people, is a view unenlightened by the reality of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Refer to the BTB study on THE SIN BARRIER, and also SALVATION.

10. THE GNOSTICS – (the original “New Age” deceivers)

While Gnosticism as a fully finished ideology-theology had possibly not fully formed by this time, it’s basic beliefs were in place with the many false teachers of John’s day, and even before in the days of Paul. These basics form the central core of all major attacks upon Christian doctrine through the centuries, and must be considered as “Satan’s fundamentals”. Their origin is in Post-Aristotelian Philosophy, where all the beliefs of modern liberalism are readily seen.

The reasons these things come together over a short time frame is because they are the satanic religious prescription for spiritual powerlessness! The theological liberalism they create still is powerless. It would be funny, if it wasn’t so sad for the deceived fools who follow liberalism in any of its forms, to reflect upon their empty powerless belief system. Liberals wonder why their churches are empty, and yet there is no hope, no power and no positivity in their message! Waffle doesn’t build fellowships, but it encourage unbelievers to remain in spiritual blindness.

Their satanic fundamentals are **firstly a denial of the true incarnation** itself. This theology does not want God becoming man, but will accept a god-like man, a man who shows god, and a gifted man, but they do not want the Lord Jesus Christ being both God and Man; the Hypostatic Union. Refer to the BTB study on this topic below. HYPOSTATIC UNION. They do not want to acknowledge the need for a real Saviour; they want a moral example, one amongst others.

"The error was not so much Docetism as a total denial of the character of Jesus as Christ and Son of God. They had no interest in the person of Jesus, the quality of his life as an ethical example, or his death as a means of atonement. For them Jesus was simply a man. . . . They had no doctrine of salvation by the work of Christ, but probably claimed to possess eternal life thanks to their direct knowledge of God; they even claimed to have seen God. They did not need forgiveness and cleansing because they claimed to be sinless, and yet they ignored both the ethical teaching of the Old Testament and the commandments of Jesus." *Note 42.

The **second** element of Satanic theology is a **disconnection between belief and ethical actions**. Ethical and moral relativism are common within this "school". Satan knows that if he can get us to slip further and further into pleasurable but addictive sinful practices, then he will hold us away from the path of righteousness that the Lord wants us to walk. Satan does not want confession of sin to be taught or practiced, for he wins when people fail to confront sin, and he is especially victorious when they won't acknowledge it at all.

Satan's viewpoint re-defines sin, so that all things that work for him in deluding people, are excluded from the definition. A common example is, sexual activity outside marriage is alright if the lovers do actually "love" each other, whatever their gender or sexual "preferences". Adultery is defined as a "sin against love", and where there is love in the immoral sex, then that is fine! This evil viewpoint has saturated philosophy and false religion through the centuries and deceived and led to destruction many servants of God who followed their Old Sin Nature rather than the Holy Spirit.

The **third** element of Satanic theology is the **avoidance of any reference to the Holy Spirit Filled life**. Legalism is fine with the enemy, and many false religious systems are thoroughly legalistic, with many rules and practices to make people feel holy without ever meeting the Lord as their Saviour and their God. Satan wins every time a person is deluded into thinking they can satisfy the holy standards of God by their own efforts, or that formal religious observance is all that is required by God. This explains the otherwise baffling association of legalism and immorality at times. It is the sin of the "days of Noah", where people choose the demons or distractions, rather than hear Noah's warning. Genesis 6:1-6.

How can a person who is so obsessive and compulsive about their legalistic system, yet be a sexually immoral person, or a dishonest business person? The reason is, that both legalism and immorality are twin strategies of Satan and feature in all his false religious systems; theologically they belong together as polar opposite weaknesses and strengths but both within the same Old Sin Nature. Refer to the BTB study ANGELS – SATAN'S STRATEGY AND TACTICS.

Remember Jesus words in **Matthew 7:13-23** – by their "life fruit" you know their origins! Their religious system is defined by Jesus very clearly – It is "wickedness". Many will apparently be genuinely baffled when sent to hell to await their eternal fate in the Lake of Fire, for they will think they were serving "jesus" – but it wasn't the reality – just Satan's deception. It is the awareness of this truth that makes us feel the urgency to speak truth aloud in these last days.

The early teacher of this sort of theology was Nicholas of Antioch, who founded the group called after him, the "Nicolaitans". **Revelation 2:14-16**. From this brief reference in Revelation and their being tied back to Balaam and Balak, we can see that their viewpoint involved sexual immorality and money lust, but under the cloak of formal religion, special doctrine, prophetic words, and pious prayers. They didn't believe in anything so "crude" as salvation by faith, rather they preached unity with the divine through special knowledge that they believed, was revealed by their teachers alone.

Notice that pride is at the heart of this form of false teaching, as it is of all other forms of satanic doctrine; for it is pride and self-centeredness that is Satan's calling card. When theological teaching makes people feel proud of their special knowledge, and special in their doctrines, yet not concerned about the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives, then the logical conclusion is that they have been deceived by the enemy. Satan loves people to feel "special", for then they believe they can get away with sins of all sorts! Satan seeks for us to be self centred, for then immorality is but a millimetre away.

"Salvation according to the Gnostics came from knowing theories rather than from faith in a Saviour. Only the initiated (the special ones) who knew the Gnostics secrets were in the light." *Note 43. This is why John speaks so strongly about walking in the light of the Lord; for the concept had been high jacked by the enemy, and it's truth needed to be seen and lived out. The true light of the Gospel message needed to shine into the lives of all people, and they all needed to walk in the holiness of that light.

The enemy were not from the philosophical schools, but had left the church itself. **1 John 2:19, 2 John 10-11**. They were not just humble believers, but some had even been leaders of the church itself. They claimed prophetic gifting. **1 John 4:1ff, 3 John 9-11**. As we go through the letters we will see the specific nature of their attacks, and will note the general things that characterize Satan's viewpoint down the centuries, as well as some specific things that stem from the time they lived in. These relate especially to the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD and the persecution of the surviving Jewish people, and the unsaved Jewish groups role in the Roman persecution of the church.

At this time (90s) the Jewish population of Judea was still very high in the north and the countryside, but the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD - 40 years after the rejection of Jesus as Messiah) had brought to a head the hatred of Rabbinic Judaism for the Messianic (Christian) Jews in the land. The Mishnah is written in 78AD, and is specifically anti-Jesus in places. John will emphasize that belief in Jesus as Messiah is a central doctrine, and this can be seen as a clue to the attacks upon the Messianic aspects of Christianity by the Gnostics, who were arguing that God's judgment of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation were evidences that God was finished with Israel. John's Gospel can be seen as a very specific rebuttal at the Mishnah's attacks on Jesus and the new Messianic Church. These attacks on the messianic community will expand during the Second Jewish revolt, but even more after 138, with the total failure of the Second Jewish Revolt,

when the last Jews were cast out of Judea, only to fully return in the 20th Century and re-establish their nationhood in 1948.

Relations between Gentile and Jewish believers were also strained by these debates, but more by later events. The Messianic Jewish believers in Y'Shua as the Messiah, still hoped in the 90s, for reunion with their Rabbinic neighbours and brethren; they hoped for them all to see that Jesus was indeed Messiah. It was a forlorn hope, and after the failure of the Second Jewish Revolt in 138, the surviving Jewish churches in Judea were destroyed by the Romans, along with all the Synagogues. Anti-Jewish feelings will run high in the Eastern Empire, as the Jewish rebel's supporters will murder tens of thousands of citizens all across the provinces of North Africa, Cyprus, Crete, and Asia in the 130s.

The Gnostic Cultists, also targeted by John, simply wanted all such viewpoints about Jesus/Y'Shua put aside, as "primitive" and they argued all the apostles taught were now superseded by their "modern" doctrines. They were the first "Replacement Theologians", and they were as wrong as their modern counterparts, and equally satanic in origin. The last of the Jewish apostles John, corrects these things, for his last days, and right through to our own days, the last days before the Lord's return. God is not finished with Israel! Refer to the BTB study at the end of this section. ISRAEL. Refer to the Post-Graduate texts in the Diploma File – "Israelology".

11. THE FIRST LETTER AS A SERMON TO BE READ ALOUD WITH THE GOSPEL

"The two documents not only touch each other in thought, but inter-penetrate each other, and the Epistle is constantly suggesting questions which the Gospel only can answer." * Note 44.

There are many obvious and deliberate parallels between the first letter and the Gospel. Examine the following verses and see how they tie together. Compare the following verses:

1 John 2-3	John 3:11	then	1 John 1:4	John 16:24
1 John 2:11	John 12:35	-	1 John 2:14	John 5:38
1 John 3:5	John 8:46	-	1 John 3:8	John 8:14
1 John 3:13	John 15:18	-	1 John 3:14	John 5:24
1 John 3:16	John 10:15	-	1 John 3:22	John 8:29
1 John 3:23	John 13:34	-	1 John 4:6	John 8:47
1 John 4:16	John 6:69	-	1 John 5:9	John 5:32
1 John 5:20	John 17:3			

*Note 45

"It reads more like a homily (sermon) than an epistle, and I believe, that is because it is a sermon. It is not difficult to imagine a Christian congregation listening to it's delivery with it's frequent personal exhortations." *Note 46. It reads like notes from a verbal presentation. The authors of the Translators Handbook note the following. "The discourse does not develop along logical lines and does not proceed systematically from one point to the next, but has a spiral construction. At the end of the discussion of one theme the writer likes to prepare his readers for the next." *Note 47. While they refer to readers, these are hallmarks of a delivered speech rather than a written treatise. It is easy for us, with books all around us to think of "reading", but in the 1st century people heard the Word, only a few read the Word.

John speaks with clear apostolic authority, and with a pastoral heart. "An unmistakable air of authority and a noticeable desire to build his readers up in their faith are at the heart of the writer's efforts." *Note 48. Like all pastors who know their people John repeats his points, and returns to them (the "spiral" construction that is common of good teaching) again and again in greater depth each time.

"The writer does not expect his readers to discuss and evaluate what he says, but to recognize it as true. . . . Repetitions which every reader notices are deliberate. Nothing is acceptable until it has been said and repeated and confirmed." *Note 49. Let us remember the apostolic approach, for it was to proclaim truth, and challenge all to spiritually discern the things said. They proclaimed revelation in Holy Spirit power, and expected each genuine believer to respond as they opened their heart to the Word. Let us approach all teaching the same way. Proclaim the truth and expect the Spirit to move in power in the lives of those who are indeed "His".

"No church congregation or committee feels confident that it has grasped the point until it has heard it three times, and hence the writer sensibly drives home the convictions that must be made to stick." *Note 50. It is a passionately delivered sermon, by the old under shepherd who loves his young sheep. He is concerned for them, lest they fall from the truth into the error that will destroy them. It is a "loving and anxious sermon". *Note 51. We are urged by John to be without fear, 1 John 4:18, but it is right to be anxious about the spiritual and physical health of those we love, especially when they are in danger of fatal error. It is right and proper to "fear" falling short of the standards to which the Lord has called us! Hebrews 4:1-2. Refer to the BTB for the study on FEAR.

John loves these people. He is not just teaching them truth, but leading them into the truth that will bring them joy. John 10:10. "The writing is from first to last with intense personal feeling. . . . He is bound to them and they to him; they are the crown of his joy, and their joy is the fullness of their faith." *Note 52. "Anyone who reads attentively will find in each writing, life largely, light largely, and the repudiation of darkness; truth continually, grace, joy, the flesh and blood of the Lord, judgment, forgiveness of sins, God's love for us, and the mutual love enjoined upon us." *Note 53.

The first letter is the sermon that gets us close to John's heart for the people the Lord had given him oversight of. It is his "covering letter" for the Gospel message. *Note 54. "The Gospel gives the historic revelation, the Epistle shows the revelation as it has been apprehended in the life of the society and of the believers." *Note 55. "The Gospel is written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing you might have life through his name. The Epistle is written to people who already believe that Jesus is the Christ, but have never settled the question of their present position, or of the possession of Eternal Life that ye might know!" *Note 56.

One commentator draws these comparisons between the Gospel, the First Letter and The Revelation. The Gospel presents, Miracles – power – conviction. The First Letter presents, Messages – patterns – confirmation. The Revelation presents, Manifestations – prophecy – comfort. *Note 57. All three are John's, indeed we believe they are the Lord's "Last Words" for the churches of our own day as well as the last days before the full persecutions hit the churches.

Let us "catch the fire" as we read each of these works of our father in the faith – John.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST: FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

1. Old Testament saints had difficulty in distinguishing between the two advents of Christ. (1 Peter 1:10,11)
2. Old Testament prophecy has Christ coming as a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. (Isaiah 53:7)
3. Old Testament prophecy has Christ coming as the conquering King and Lion of the tribe of Judah. (Is 11:1-12)
4. Jesus commenced his ministry announcing the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17) This connects the first and second advents.
5. Old Testament Prophecy showed that the Messiah would:-
 - a) be born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14)
 - b) be of the tribe of Judah. (Genesis 49:10)
 - c) be of the house of David. (Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 33:21)
 - d) die as a sacrifice. (Isaiah 53:1-12)
 - e) be crucified. (Psalm 22:1-21)
 - f) be resurrected from the dead. (Psalm 16:8-11)
 - g) return to earth at his second advent. (Zechariah 8:3)
 - h) be seated at the right hand of God. (Psalm 110:1)
6. It should be noted that the return of Christ for the Church (the Rapture) as given in (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18) was not revealed in the Old Testament - it is a mystery doctrine of the Church (Colossians 3:4-6)
7. The day of the Second Advent is characterised by supernatural darkness
 - a) When Christ returns every eye shall see him (Matthew 24:29-30) Christ is the light of the world and he will return to a world covered in darkness (symbolic of sin).
 - b) The darkness is similar to the darkness of the day of our Lord's crucifixion which hid the Lord Jesus Christ from man's sight whilst he was bearing our sins. (Mark 15:33)
 - c) The Second Advent delivers the Jewish believers besieged in Jerusalem by the King of the North. (Daniel 11, Zechariah 12:1-3, 14:1-4)
 - d) Other passages indicating that the day of the Second Advent is a day of total darkness on the earth. (Isaiah 13:9-10, Ezekiel 32:7-8, Joel 2:10-11, Joel 3:14-15, Amos 5:18, Zechariah 14:6, Matthew 24:29-30, Luke 21:25-27, Revelation 6:12-17)
8. Heralds of the Two Advents of Christ
A herald is a person who preceded' a King in ancient times to announce his arrival. The King that we study is the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a) First Advent
 - i) Human herald - John the Baptist (Matthew 3)
 - ii) Angelic heralds - Angels (Luke 2:1-15)
 - b) Second Advent
 - i) Human heralds - Moses, Elijah (Revelation 11)
 - ii) Angelic herald - The mighty angel (Revelation 10)

CHRIST - I AM

The use of the " I AM" means that the Lord was saying that He is God. In Exodus 3:14 God reveals Himself to Moses as, I AM THAT I AM. Using this phrase at His arrest in John 18:2-6, He caused the army group to fall backwards due to His power as God flashing forth for a millisecond, before being led away as a willing sacrifice. We are not confronted with

the Jesus of liberalism here, but with the Lord of lords, King of kings, God stepping down to speak authoritatively to mankind. There are seven "I AM's" in the New Testament.

1. PROVISION - I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE John 6:30-35 - The feeding of the five thousand - a miracle involving bread. God provided miraculous physical food in the desert for forty years - Manna. Christ is our spiritual food. He says that he is the only source of spiritual food for you. There is life in no other. No one else can satisfy the spiritual hunger in man. He tells us He is the bread from heaven - He shows Himself as God. The bread of the Passover - unleavened, pierced and griddled; speaking of his body.
2. SPIRITUALITY - I AM THE LIGHT John 8:12 - The feast of Tabernacles (where He also told the people to have the everlasting water John 7:37-39). When the Lord says this He is saying that He is the only source of pure light as shown in His matchless character. He is stating that He is God. 1 John 1 says that God is light and in Him is there no darkness at all. We are to walk in the light in fellowship with God.
3. SALVATION - I AM THE DOOR John 10:7 - The Sheepfolds of Jerusalem, Psalms 22-24. To be the door of the sheepfold, He is the only way into the plan of God. Anyone that tries to come any other way is a liar and a thief. If this is not true there is no way to God.
4. GUIDANCE - I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD John 10:11 - the good shepherd, the only one who really cares. Many from other religions say that they really care but it is Jesus the good shepherd, the only one who really cares. All other systems drop you into hell.
5. RESURRECTION - I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE John 11:20-25 - The death of Lazarus. Christ conquers death proving He is God, the resurrection and the life, He is the way the truth and life forever. The only way to eternal life is in Christ Jesus. To reject Him is to have eternal life in the Lake of Fire
6. TRUTH/LIFE - I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE John 14: 6 - There is no other way to gain meaning in this life and eternal life than through him. We are related to the King of kings and Lord of lords who came and died for us that we might live. We should be obedient to our Lord who bought us with His blood. I am the way the truth and the life. The only way to live is in the truth, the only way to have life and have it more abundantly is in Him. The only way to God is through the God man Jesus Christ. We need to live in Him as He is the only one who has the truth.
7. PRODUCTION - I AM THE TRUE VINE John 15:1-5 - Walking from the Passover meal past the Temple towards Gethsemane, He talks about the spiritual production that is ours in union with Him. I am the true vine - the only way to spiritual productivity is in Christ Jesus through the fruit of the Spirit. Love Joy Peace and the other fruit is only available in Christ. You have to be in the vine to have fruit. Many unbelievers want joy and peace but they cannot have it without Christ.

MIRACLES OF CHRIST: CATEGORIES

1. Healing Miracles of Command
 - a) Healing the sick from afar:-
 - i) Nobleman's son at Cana. (John 4:46-54)
 - ii) Centurion's servant. (Matthew 8:5-13)
 - b) Healing the sick in person:-
 - i) Man with the withered arm. (Matthew 12:9-13)
 - ii) Man by the pool of Bethesda. (John 5:1-15)
 - iii) The ten lepers. (Luke 17:11-19)
 - iv) Two blind men between the two Jerichos. (Luke 18:35-43)
2. Healing Miracles of Touch
 - a) Simple Touch:-
 - i) Peter's mother in law. (Matthew 8:14-15)
 - ii) A leper. (Matthew 8:2-4)
 - iii) Woman with a haemorrhage. (Matthew 9:20-22)
 - iv) Two blind men. (Matthew 20:30-34)
 - v) Crippled woman. (Luke 13:10-13)
 - vi) Dropsy case. (Luke 14:1-6)
 - vii) Malchus' ear. (Luke 22:49-51)
 - b) Other Activity in the Touching:-
 - i) Blind man at Bethsaida. (Mark 8:22-26)
 - ii) Man born blind. (John 9:1-41)
 - iii) Deaf and dumb man. (Matthew 15:29-31)
3. Resuscitation Miracles

- a) By Command:-
 i) Lazarus. (John 11:1-46)
- b) Touch and Command:-
 i) Widow of Nain's son. (Luke 7:11-17)
 ii) Jairus' daughter. (Mark 5:21-43)
4. Miracles where Faith was an Issue
- a) Command:-
 i) Nobleman's son at Cana. (John 4:46-54)
 ii) Centurion's servant. (Luke 7:1-10)
 iii) Ten lepers. (Luke 17:11-19)
 iv) Paralysed man. (Mark 2:1-12)
 v) Man at pool of Bethesda. (John 5:1-15)
 vi) Withered arm. (Matthew 12:9-13)
- b) Touch:-
 i) Two blind men. (Matthew 9:27-31)
 ii) A leper. (Mark 1:40-45)
 iii) Woman with a haemorrhage. (Luke 8:43-48)
5. Miracles where Sin was an Issue.
 i) Paralysed man. (Mark 2:1-12)
 ii) Man by pool of Bethesda. (John 5:1-15)
6. Miracles associated with Parables or Teaching.
 i) Withered arm and lost sheep. (Matthew 12:9-13)
 ii) Man born blind and the good shepherd. (John 9, John 10:1-16)
 iii) Casting out of the demon from the dumb man. (Luke 11:14)
 iv) Unclean spirit who returns. (Luke 11:14 cf. Luke 11:21-28)
- v) Cursing of the fig tree and the teaching on faith. (Mark 11:20-26)
7. Miracles associated with the Sabbath Controversy.
 i) Healing of the man at Bethesda. (John 5:1-15)
 ii) Healing of the man with a withered arm. (Mark 3:1-6)
 iii) Crippled woman healed. (Luke 13:10-21)
 iv) Case of dropsy healed. (Luke 14:1-6)

MIRACLES OF CHRIST: CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

MIRACLE	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Water made wine - at Cana				2:1-11
Healing the Nobleman's Son				4:46-54
The Drought of Fishes			5:1-11	
The Man with an unclean spirit		1:23-6	4:33-5	
Healing Simon's Mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:30-1	4:38-9	
Healing the leper	8:2-4	1:40-5		
Healing the Paralytic	9:2-7	2:1-12	5:17-26	
The Impotent Man				5:1-15
The Withered Hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
The Centurion's Servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
The Widow's Son at Nain			7:11-17	
The Man Dumb and Blind	12:22			
Stilling the Storm	8:23-7	4:35-41	8:22-5	
The Gadarenes Demoniac	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
The Daughter of Jairus	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
The Afflicted Woman	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:43-48	
Two Blind Men, Dumb Demoniac	9:27-34			
Feeding of the Five Thousand	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
Syrophenician Woman's Daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Deaf and Dumb Man	15:29-31	7:31-7		
Feeding of the Four Thousand	15:32-8	8:1-9		
The Blind Man near Bethsaida		8:22-6		
The Demoniac Boy	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43	

The Temple tax tribute money	17:24-7		
The Man born Blind			9:1-41
The Dumb Demoniac		11:14	
The Crippled Woman		13:10-17	
The Man having Dropsy		14:1-6	
The Raising of Lazarus			11:1-46
The Ten Lepers		17:11-19	
The Blind Man near Jericho	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43
The Withered Fig tree	21:20-22	11:20-25	
Healing the ear of Malchus		22:49-51	
The Draught of Fishes			21:6-11

GOD: CHARACTER OF GOD

1. Whilst God is three persons all three persons have exactly the same essence or character:

a) SOVEREIGNTY

The Father (Ephesians 1:11 , cf Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 6:10, Hebrews 10:7, 9)

The Son (John 5:21, Revelation 19:16)

The Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11 , cf Hebrews 2:4)

b) RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Father (John 17:25)

The Son (Luke 1:35, Hebrews 7:26, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Spirit The Holy Spirit

c) JUSTICE

The Father (Job 37:23, cf 8:3)

The Son (Acts 3:14, John 5:22, Revelation 19:11)

The Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20)

d) LOVE

The Father (John 3:16)

The Son (Ephesians 5:25, 1 John 3:16)

The Spirit (John 16:7-11, 1 Corinthians 2:10)

e) ETERNAL LIFE

The Father (John 5:26)

The Son (Micah 5:2, cf John 1:1-2, 1 John 5:11)

The Spirit (Isaiah 48:16)

f) ALL-KNOWING

The Father (Hebrews 4:13, cf Matthew 11:27, 1 Peter 1:2)

The Son (John 18:4, cf Matthew 9:4, John 2:25, 1 Corinthians 4:5)

The Spirit (Isaiah 11:2, cf 1 Corinthians 2:11)

g) EVERYWHERE

The Father (2 Chronicles 2:6)

The Son (Matthew 28:20, cf Ephesians 1:23)

The Spirit (Psalm 139:7)

h) ALL-POWERFUL

The Father (Mark 14:36, cf 1 Peter 1:5)

The Son (Hebrews 1:3, cf Matthew 24:30, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 3:21)

The Spirit (Romans 15:19)

i) UNCHANGEABLE

The Father (Hebrews 6:17, Psalm 33:11)

The Son (Hebrews 13:8)

The Spirit (John 14:16)

j) TRUTH

The Father (John 7:28, John 17:3)

The Son (1 John 5:20, cf John 1:14, 14:6, Revelation 19:11)

The Spirit (1 John 5:6, cf John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13)

WORLD

1. World under control of Satan:
 - a) ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
 - b) god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)
 - c) he deceives the world (Revelation 12:9).
 - d) Satan is filling the world with his propaganda (1 Timothy 4:1).
2. Jesus Christ created earth (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18). He gave control to original mankind (Genesis 1:28) but man lost it at the fall (Genesis 3:6).
3. Sin and spiritual death are the basis of Satan's rule over this world. Therefore, God so loved the world that He gave a Saviour (John 3:16), hence Christ as a title in this connection. Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).
4. Therefore Christ is the saviour of the world (John 3:17; 4:42; 1 John 4:14). The Saviour who gave His life for the world (John 6:33); hence Christ has a title in this connection. Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).
5. Therefore Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33), so that the believer can overcome the world (1 John 5:4,5).
6. Consequently believers in Christ must not love the world (1 John 2:15,16). Nor must believers conform to the world (Romans 12:2). Worldliness is what you think, which may be demonstrated by what you do.
7. World control by Satan will stop at the Second Advent. However, believers will continue forever (1 John 2:17).
8. Also, the Word of God abides forever (1 Peter 1:23,25), and is designed to overcome the ruler of this world (1 John 2:14). Therefore, not conforming to the world and overcoming the world are accomplished through Bible doctrine, by which God has made foolish the wisdom of the world (1 Corinthians 1:20; 3:19).
9. It is therefore of greatest importance that the believer's attitude is based on the Word of God (Philippians 2:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; Isaiah 26:3,4; Philippians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 10:4,5; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 1:5,6,8).
10. Backsliding is characterised as friendship with the world (James 4:4).

WORLDLINESS

1. Worldliness means to follow the beliefs and philosophy of man rather than that of God
2. Worldliness is the opposite to Godliness; it is thinking/doing in opposition to God's revealed word. Titus 2:11-14.
3. All people are faced with the constant choice of following God's way or the world's. Romans 5:12, 3:19, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Ephesians 2:12, James 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20.
4. Satan is the "prince of this world", and has power to deceive those who are negative to God's plans. John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Peter 5:8,9.
5. We must not love the world, 1 John 2:15-17.
6. We must hate all the world stands for, in thought and in deed. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 11:30-32, Galatians 6:14, James 1:27, James 4:4, 2 Peter 1:3,4, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 19.
7. We must not return to our old behaviour patterns, Ephesians 2:1-7.
8. This evil world system and the prince of this world will be condemned. Matthew 18:7, John 12:31, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 2:1ff.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SEPARATION

1. Believers are instructed to be separated from habitually carnal believers. (1 Corinthians 5:10, 11)
2. Separation is ordered from apostate religious organisations. (2 Corinthians 6:17)
3. Separation is commanded from unbelievers where scripture is compromised by the relationship or marriage, business partners. (2 Corinthians 6:14 ff)
4. Separation is commanded from the human viewpoint. (Romans 12:2, Romans 16:17, 18)

5. Separation is commanded from pseudo spirituality. (Romans 16:17, 18)
6. Separation is commanded from those who seek pleasure in fast living - pursuit of parties, immoral situations. (1 Peter 4:4)
7. Separation is commanded from other believers who reject Bible doctrine. (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15)

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SPIRITUALITY

1. All Christians have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. When we allow Him to control our lives, we are said to be "filled with the Spirit" or "walking in the Spirit".

2. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be lost by
 a) Grieving the Spirit - by sin
 b) Quenching the Spirit - by not submitting to His leading
 c) This is called being carnal, or controlled by the flesh, the old sin nature.

3. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be regained by
 a) confessing sin (1 John 1:9)
 b) surrendering your life to God (Romans 12:1-2)
 c) This is called being spiritual, or controlled by the Holy Spirit.

4. Only the Holy Spirit in us can produce good works acceptable to God - anything in our own strength is unacceptable (Romans 8:8-9, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

5. The spiritual believer
 a) Imitates God. (Ephesians 5:1, 1 John 3:9)
 b) To glorify Christ. (John 7:39, John 16:14)
 c) Fulfills the Law. (Romans 8:2-4, Romans 13:8)

6. In the Bible the human race is divided in three Categories:-

[a] Natural Man - A person born physically alive, but not regenerated. He may be highly sophisticated, civilised, gentle and kind, but is completely ignorant of any spiritual phenomena. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Equivalent to the cold person in the church in Laodicea.

[b] Carnal Man - A person regenerated or born again but living his life under the power of his old sin nature. Prolonged activity in this area produces a Christian who is still a baby. (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). Equivalent to the lukewarm person in the church of Laodicea.

[c] Spiritual Man - A person regenerated and living generally in the power of the Holy Spirit. He discerns the difference between the things of God and man. (1 Corinthians 2:11-13) He has fellowship with God in his daily life. (Ephesians 5:18-20) Equivalent to the hot person in the church of Laodicea.

7. Carnality

[a] The believer possesses an Old Sin Nature after salvation (1 John 1:8, Romans 7:14,15).

[b]. The Old Sin Nature is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).

[c]. The believer under the control of the Old Sin Nature is called carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Romans 7:14).

[d]. The Old Sin Nature frustrates bona fide production in the life of the believer (Romans 7:15).

[e]. The Old Sin Nature is acquired at the point of physical birth (Psalm 51:5).

[f]. We are therefore considered spiritually dead at the point of physical birth (Romans 5:12).

[g]. The Old Sin Nature has several facets: areas of weakness produces sins, areas of strength produces human good. It has trends towards asceticism or lasciviousness. In many cases asceticism is considered to be spirituality.

[h] The Old Sin Nature is not found in the resurrection body.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: THINKING BIBLICALLY

1. We must think with Holy Spirit filled discernment. Refer SPIRITUALITY.

2. Our discernment is determined by the amount of God's Word we have read, understood and applied into our lives. Colossians 1:9-11. Refer EBCWA CD or website for detailed study Colossians 1.
3. Our human IQ is of no significance in thinking biblically, for the Holy Spirit will teach us as we seek to learn and are obedient to what we learn. 1 Corinthians 1:19- 2:16. Refer EBCWA CD/website for detailed study of 1 Corinthians 1.
4. To think biblically we must apply what we know. James 1:21-25. Refer EBCWA CD or website for detailed study of James 1. There is no such thing as knowledge that remains unapplied, for such "knowledge" is simply self deception.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1. The filling of the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life (love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance). (Galatians 5:22-23) Note that "fruit" is singular - all the characters are produced at the same time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Fruit of the Spirit is also listed as follows:-
Romans 14:17 - Righteousness, Peace, Joy
Colossians 3:12-15 - Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Peace, Thankfulness
1Thessalonians 1:3 - Faith, Love, Endurance, Hope
2. In principle, it is the imitation of God (Ephesians 5:1). The reason we are left on the earth after salvation is to produce fruit. (John 15:16, Philippians 4:17)
3. We produce fruit by hearing the word (Mark 4:20-28) and applying it to our lives. (Hebrews 4:2)
4. Failure to grow and produce fruit means divine discipline even to the point of the believer's early departure from this life. (Luke 13:6-9 John 15:2)
5. Rewards in eternity are distributed on the basis of faithful production. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10)
6. Fruit is not to be confused with spiritual gifts. These are listed in (Romans 12:6-8; 15:18-19; 1Corinthians 12:8,10; 1Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:1) and other places.
7. One can know Christians by their fruit (Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 6:43-45; 1John 3:10 & 11; John 15:8) especially by their love (John 13:35) but not by their gifts, as Satan can imitate them (2Thessalonians 2:9).
8. Three natural fruits represent some of the facets of the fruit of the Spirit: Apples - love, Grapes - Joy, Pomegranates - Peace.
9. In Galatians 5: 22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is divided into three sections
[a] Love, Joy and Peace towards God;
[b] Patience, Goodness and Kindness towards others;
[c] Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control towards oneself.

SALVATION: SIN - BARRIER BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

INTRODUCTION

1. The Character of God:
 - a) God is sovereign, absolute righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, all powerful, all knowing everywhere, unchangeable and truth.
 - b) God is one in essence but three in personality: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three personalities have the same essence.
 - c) God the Father is the planner of man's salvation; God the Son is the executor of the plan of salvation, and God the Holy Spirit is the revealer of this plan.
2. God's Divine Plan:
 - a) A conference was held in eternity past between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Divine Planning) whereby it was made possible for man to have fellowship with God.
 - b) God's foreknowledge recognized a barrier would exist in time and that all people would be behind this barrier. (Romans 3:23)
 - c) Sin is a failure to measure up to God's perfect righteousness, a failure to possess "The perfect righteousness". Man cannot remove this barrier. God's Righteousness and Justice must be satisfied before His love can come to man.

d) God the Father is the author of a plan whereby He decided to treat the human race on the basis of Grace (all the Father does for us). Grace is receiving a gift. It is undeserved and unmerited, and contrary to all human concepts.

e) God the Son removed the barrier by His death on the cross. We receive Him as our personal Saviour, and perfect righteousness is credited to us. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

AN EXPLANATION OF THE BARRIER AND ITS REMOVAL

1. Problem of Sin:

a) Sin exists in three categories: imputed sin, (all sinned when Adam sinned) inherent sin (the sinful nature) personal sin (sins committed).

b) Man is a sinner because Adam sinned and passed down the sin nature to the human race. The penalty of sin is spiritual death (Romans 5:12, 6:23) Every member of the human race is a sinner as far as God is concerned. (Romans 3:23)

c) In John 8:31-32 Jesus Christ addressed the Jews who believed on Him and told them to go on in truth and use what He provided. Truth sets us free from the Mosaic Law to serve the Lord and operate in grace.

d) The unbelieving, religious Jews (v 33) said they were Abraham's seed and not in bondage. They were actually in bondage to the Roman Empire, their religious leaders, and the Mosaic Law. He told them about the bondage of sin.

e) They are all born in the slavery of sin, for no member of the human race can free himself or other members of the human race. Jesus Christ became true humanity to liberate the human race. He was born outside the slavery of sin by the virgin birth as the God-Man. He paid the price for freedom of the human race - this is redemption.

2. Solution to the Problem of Sin: Redemption and Atonement:

a) The "son abides in the house forever" (John 8:35), for Jesus Christ is "the son". He is eternal life and holy and when man believes on Him man is free and enters into union with Jesus Christ. Christianity is a relationship to Jesus Christ, not a religion.

b) The purchase price of our redemption is His blood (1 Peter 1:18,19, Ephesians 1:7, Revelation 1:5, Hebrews 9:11-14, Galatians 3:13) , representing His death. Jesus Christ bore the sins of the whole world (past, present and future) on the cross.

c) God is absolute righteousness and justice; the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23, Colossians 2:14). Jesus Christ cancelled the "IOU" the human race owed God. The human race owes God perfect righteousness.

d) God is perfect righteousness and we cannot pay perfect righteousness. Jesus Christ died on the cross, paying the penalty of our sins. This is expiation (Romans 5:8)

e) The doctrines of Redemption and Expiation are found in Psalm 22:1-6. God the Father and Holy Spirit left the Son because He was bearing our sins on the cross. (Matthew 27:46)

3. The Problem of the Penalty of Sin solved by Expiation (Colossians 2:14)(Romans 6:23)

a) Expiation and Propitiation are two sides of the same coin with propitiation being in relation to God while expiation looks at the problem from man's side.

b) By expiation the offence which renders the person guilty in the sight of God is covered from the eyes of God by the effective dealing with the problem by propitiation.

4. The Problem of Physical Birth (John 3) and its Solution: Regeneration:(John 3:1-15)

a) Nicodemus (v 1) was a Pharisee. He was a very religious man, attending church three times a day and praying seven times a day. He was sincere and was a product of "salvation by works".

b) He was also a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night because he was too busy during the day doing "good". (v 2)

c) He called Jesus Rabbi or "Doctor". He admitted more than most Pharisees for he said they knew Jesus came from God, for no one could keep doing the miracles He did except God was with Him. (v 2)

d) Jesus interrupted, knowing his problem. "Except a man be born again". Nicodemus needed to be born again. (v 3)

e) Why is the new birth necessary? Man is born in this world with a soul (ability to understand and categorize human phenomena), a conscience (standard by which we judge right or wrong), and a sin nature (the source of all personal sins). The human spirit is inactivated. We are born physically alive and capable of having fellowship with members of the human race, but we are spiritually dead and cannot have fellowship with God (Ephesians 2:1). We need to be born again.

f) Nicodemus' response (v 4). He cannot think in terms of spiritual things for he has no human spirit. He asked if he could be born again physically.

g) The new birth is a spiritual birth (v 5), so Jesus Christ uses spiritual language, - water.

i) The context determines the meaning of "water" (1) Salvation - (Isaiah 55:1, Revelation 22:17) (2) God the Holy Spirit - (John 7:37-39) (3) God's Word - (1 Peter 1:23, Ephesians 5:26, James 1:18)

ii) Here "water" is used symbolically for God's Word. The new birth is a spiritual birth. The Kingdom of God is the kingdom of eternal relationship with God.

h) Contrast of two births (v 6). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh (physical birth). That which is born of the Spirit is spirit (spiritual birth)." Nicodemus should not be surprised (v 7). He needed to be born again.

i) The illustration (v 8) the wind. It can be heard but not seen. The new birth is not visible. Nicodemus still does not understand (v 9).

j) Jesus Christ used sarcasm (v 10,11) to shock Nicodemus. He is a doctor of divinity and does not understand. The Trinity ("we") knows what they speak (all knowing). Nicodemus does not have an open mind.

- k) No member of the human race (v 13) ever ascended, but Jesus Christ who came from heaven (as the God Man). As God He is everywhere, and as God and Man, Jesus Christ is on earth at the same time.
- l) How to be born again (v 14,15). Jesus Christ refers to (Numbers 21:4-9) the incident of the brazen serpent which was raised on a pole. This pictures Jesus Christ hanging on the cross bearing the sins of the world. (Colossians 2:14,15)
- m) The result (v 15). Whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall not perish but have eternal life. The problem of physical birth is removed by the new birth. We are born spiritually by regeneration or the new birth.

5. Problem of Human Righteousness and Its Solution: Justification and Imputation:

- a) Man has no righteousness in himself as far as God's viewpoint is concerned although he may be more righteous than other members of the human race when he compares himself with them. (Isaiah 64:6)
- b) God is absolute righteousness and He cannot have fellowship with us when we have human righteousness. Good deeds put us more in debt to God. (Romans 4:1-4)
- c) Perfect or absolute righteousness is credited or imputed to us at the moment of salvation. (2 Corinthians 5:21) - imputation.
- d) We are justified or made righteous on the basis of the absolute righteousness which God gives us.

6. Problem of the Character of God and Its Solution: Propitiation and Reconciliation.

- a) Propitiation is an act of God whereby He is satisfied with the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus Christ satisfied the righteousness and justice of God.
- b) Reconciliation looks at the cross from man's viewpoint. Man is reconciled to God. God is never said to be reconciled. Propitiation looks at the cross from God's viewpoint.

7. Problem of Position in Adam and Its Solution: Positional in Christ

- a) At the moment of salvation we enter into union with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:38,39, 2 Corinthians 5:17). This is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- b) By our first birth we are "in Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:22). By the new birth we share Christ's eternal life, His righteousness, His destiny, His sonship, His priesthood. etc. Everything He is, we are-, and all He has, we have.
- c) Christianity is a relationship to Jesus Christ that cannot change. The barrier between God and man has been removed by Jesus Christ on the cross.
- d) The issue now is the person of Jesus Christ. He has solved the problem of sin in the human race.

SUMMARY OF THE BARRIER AND ITS REMOVAL

BARRIER	WORK OF CHRIST
SIN (Romans 3:23)	Redemption (1 Corinthians 1:29-30, Colossians 1:14) Atonement (1 John 2:2, 2 Peter 2:1)
PENALTY (Romans 6:23)	Expiation (Colossians 2:14)
BIRTH (John 3:6)	Regeneration (John 3:3, Galatians 3:26, John 1:11-12)
CHARACTER OF GOD (Romans 3:23)	Propitiation (1 John 2:2, Romans 3:25)
RIGHTEOUSNESS OF MAN (Isaiah 64:6)	Justification (Romans 3:24, Romans 5:1) Imputation (Romans 3:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
LIFE (1 Corinthians 15:22)	Position in Christ (1 John 5:11-12)

SALVATION

1. Salvation is the gift of God by grace through faith.
2. We cannot work for salvation - we must receive it as a gift. (Ephesians 2:8, 9, Romans 4:4-5)
3. The only means of salvation is by trusting that Jesus Christ died for your sins, was buried and raised from the dead. He therefore paid the penalty for sin, and conquered death. (Acts 16:30-31, John 3:16, 14:6, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
4. We are saved so that we can serve God. (Ephesians 2:8-10) Our good works show that we have been saved.
5. Salvation includes many other doctrines such as Imputation, Justification, Redemption, Propitiation, Reconciliation and Sanctification.

CHRIST: HYPOSTATIC UNION – GOD - MAN

1. Hypostasis means standing together under one essence, two things united under one with no loss or transfer to the other and no change to either. In the person of Jesus Christ the two natures, divine and human, were inseparably linked with no loss or transfer of properties or attributes, and no mixture or loss of separate identity the union was personal and eternal. The Lord Jesus Christ is still perfectly human and divine Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-14, Romans 1:2-5, Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 1:4
2. The incarnate person of the Lord Jesus Christ included undiminished deity. Jesus Christ is God, He remained co equal and co eternal with the Father while on earth. Christ is eternal because God is eternal life. His deity was never affected by His death, resurrection and session. As God Jesus Christ could not die. However as a baby in the cradle he was holding the universe together.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ was also true humanity; body, soul and spirit although due to the virgin birth he had no old sin nature 1 Peter 2:22
4. The two natures of Jesus Christ are united with no transfer of attributes. Each set of attributes corresponds to the respective natures. The divine attributes such as eternal life, all knowing, everywhere, refers to His divine nature, the human attributes correspond to His human nature. To remove any attribute from His deity would be to destroy deity.
5. No aspect of the divine nature was lacking, although certain attributes were not exercised in line with the Father's plan Matthew 4:1-10
6. The union of the two natures in the person of Christ must be considered personal, human to the human, divine to the divine. They are never mixed. The union was therefore personal and hypostatic; one essence with two natures.
7. Deity did not indwell humanity or possess it. The union was more than sympathy and harmony, it was unique combining the two natures eternally. He is the God – man
8. Christ had two natures in one person, therefore he could be supremely powerful yet weak at the same time.
 - a) Deity cannot be tempted, humanity can. Matthew 4:1-10
 - b) Deity cannot thirst, humanity can John 19:28.
 - c) Deity is omniscient , humanity learns Luke 2:40,52
9. The necessity of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in the following:-
 - a) To be our Saviour he had to be man as God cannot die. Hebrews 2:14,15, Philippians 2:7,8
 - b) To be our mediator He had to be equal with both God and man. Job 9:2, 32-33, 1 Timothy 2:5-6
 - c) To be our High Priest He must be a man. Hebrews 7:4,5 14-28; 10:5, 10-14
 - d) To be a king he must be a man, a Jew in the line of David. Psalm 89:20-37, 2 Samuel 7:8-16
10. There are three categories of sayings or actions of the Lord:
 - a) From his deity alone John 8:58
 - b) From his humanity alone John 19:28
 - c) From his hypostatic union - John 11:25,26
11. The uniqueness of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is a key doctrine to understand for all believers, for it is on this point that the accurate preaching of the gospel rests. 1 Timothy 3:16
12. The gospel in one word is Immanuel - God with us. John's testimony on this point. John 1:14. In Christ we see God's love and favour towards man. As God revealed himself in the Old Testament, so He perfectly reveals himself in the person of the unique person of the universe, the God man the Lord Jesus Christ.

ANGELS – SATAN'S STRATEGY AND TACTICS

STRATEGY

Whilst God is trying to call out personnel for the angelic council Satan is trying to confuse and blind minds as to what God's plan is. He does this by deceit. He tries to keep the gospel from the unbeliever and to keep doctrine from the believer so that they will not grow.

His other strategy is to try and eliminate Israel by pogroms and anti-Semitism. It is said that Christ will gather the Jews not Zionism as is happening at the moment. If he could destroy all the Jews which he cannot he will destroy the Plan of God.

TACTICS

These are the techniques used by Satan to try and achieve his strategy. His main tactic is implied in John 8:44 where he is seen as the father of lies. There is no truth in Satan. He is a liar and has been from the beginning. The only truth is Christ the Word. Any one who deliberately distorts the truth is working for Satan. Rejection of Christianity is a rejection of the truth. By application all religions are therefore false.

Christians as a whole have failed to move out into all the areas of life and therefore have not claimed leadership in these areas and they have been forfeited to the unbeliever. Such areas as literature, history, philosophy, music, science and the like.

The Christian should be a conqueror ideologically and not militarily. During this time Satan tries to cause conflicts such as creation versus evolution, relativism versus absolute values, internationalism versus nationalism. In the international area he causes war and strife.

Satan tries to confuse the believer. In Romans 6:6-11 the Bible says that the sin nature shall not have dominion over you. We are told to resist the devil and he will flee from you. Sometimes when we resist it does not work because the temptation is from your sin nature. You need to apply relevant Scriptures to your situation.

Satan will try and mislead you in the area of divine guidance. Satan can set up situations that will lead you out of the geographical will of God which can even extend to martyrdom. You need to do things in the Lord's timing. Satan also perverts Scripture as seen in Luke 4:11 with the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ where he misquotes Psalm 91:10,11

When people wrote the Scriptures they did not sit around with a blank mind. They used their minds and were led by the Holy Spirit as to what to write. When they had visions or dreams their minds were not turned off. When confronted by the Lord Jesus Christ Paul spoke to Him, He used his mentality.

In 2 Corinthians 11 ministers can act as messengers from Satan. Part of the Satanic attack is to get people to look inwardly rather than at their position at the right hand of the Father. With the case of suffering and sickness its source is sometimes difficult to determine as it can be the purpose of God or it can be an attack of Satan. This is hard to discern.

Often the more spectacular manifestations is the method used to distract one from more important things such as studying and applying the Word.

With regards to the Word we have the teaching of false doctrine such as saying that Christ did not actually die on the Cross, that He was not truly human nor divine.

In relation to the gospel we have the picture in the parable of the Sower and the Seed of the bird coming down and taking away the seed that is sown. In regard to worship he will mock God through senseless words. Matthew 16 tells of Christ commanding Peter to get behind him as Peter is enthusiastic but has wrong concepts which Jesus saw as Satanic in origin as they did not conform to the Word of God. In Acts 5 Satan filled the heart of Ananias and Sapphira. He works in the children of disobedience.

Later on we will look at the strategies and tactics of the church. Spiritism and Occultism is something that the Christian should not dabble in. In Deuteronomy 18:9 the Jews were told not to seek guidance from spiritism or occultism. The main attacks on the church nowadays is not through cults but through spiritism and eastern religions and drugs. This is an attempt to break down the mentality of the soul. By these means you are opening the person up to demonic forces.

ISRAEL

1. Israel has a future which was promised to Abraham. (Genesis 12:1-3)
2. Israel's future is based on regeneration. (Romans 9:6-14)
3. Israel's future is related to the land of Palestine. (Genesis 15:18, Numbers 34:1-12, Deuteronomy 30:1-9)
4. Israel has a King forever - the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ in the Millennium. (2 Samuel 7:8-16, Psalm 89:20-37)
5. The promises were confirmed to Jeremiah in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31ff, Hebrews 8:8-13)
6. Israel's future begins as a nation at the Second Advent of Christ. (Zechariah 14:1-9)
7. Israel's future is guaranteed, even though the nation is now in dispersion under the discipline of God. (Isaiah 5:26-30, 14:1-3, 10:20-23, 11:11-16, Zechariah 10:6-12)
8. Israel had a purpose
 - a) To witness to the holiness of the one true God. (Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 43:10,12)

- b) To illustrate to the nations the blessings derived from serving the one true God. (Deuteronomy 33:26-29, 1 Chronicles 17:20-21, Psalm 144:15)
- c) To receive, record and broadcast the Scriptures. (Deuteronomy 4:5-8, Romans 3:1-2)
- d) To receive and proclaim the promised Messiah. (Genesis 3:15, 12:3, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6)

9. The nation Israel is now in dispersion under the discipline of God. The Church has replaced the mission of Israel during the Church Age. (Romans 11) When the Church is removed in the Rapture, Israel will again take up its purpose during the Tribulation. (Revelation 7:4-8)

FEAR

1. Fear is seen in two ways in scripture.

[a] Firstly as a mental attitude sin that is incompatible with our status as children of the most high, the ruler of the universe.

[b] Secondly it is used to describe the correct attitude towards God the Lord for all his creatures.

There is godly fear, awe, and respect for God as God, and there is inappropriate fear, which is the cringing fear of one who believes the other is able to hurt them. This second kind is wrong for us as children of God, for none can harm us without God's permission for we belong to Him.

2. Our occupation with the persons and majesty of God is often spoken of as "fear" in the legitimate sense for believers. 2 Samuel 23:2-3, Nehemiah 5:9, Job 28:28, Psalms 19:9, 34:11-12, 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, 10:27, 22:4, Malachi 3:16, Ephesians 5:21.

3. Fear as a mental attitude sin is spoken of in, 1 Samuel 17:11, 24, Proverbs 29:25.

4. In God's grace plan for us fear has no place. His plans for us are always divinely good, and any testing situation is for our good. Romans 8:28.

5. Fear is an expression of a failure of faith in the plan. Exodus 14:13-14, Deuteronomy 31:6-8, Joshua 8:1, 1 Chronicles 28:20, Isaiah 41:10, 2 Timothy 1:7.

6. Spiritual death is one way of describing Satan's kingdom and is the place of the source of fear. Hebrews 2:14,15

7. In spiritual death, Adam was afraid. Genesis 3:10, this fear motivated Adam to produce religious activity (fig leaves) and lies. Genesis 3:7

8. Salvation removes the basis of fear, which is condemnation from the Justice of God (spiritual death).

9. Spiritual maturity provides freedom from fear. 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 13:6, 1 John 4:18, 1 Corinthians 13:5b

10. Carnality and any form of religious activity that leads us away from grace and daily obedience to the Word enslaves the believer to Satan through fear. Galatians 5:1; Romans 8:15

11. The mature believer is commanded to fear nothing he may suffer in life, for by means of God's grace provision all we ever may need is provided for us. Revelation 2:10

12. The baby believer is sustained by believing God's Word, obeying his commands hour by hour to daily life, and rest upon his promises. Hebrews 4

13. As we become mature believers we continue with this resting on the promises but in addition to this we are sustained by our understanding / application of entire categories of God's Word - we have then moved beyond the promises to confidence in the very character of God itself.

14. Illustration: A woman who asks every hour, "Do you love me?" needs assurance through many promises, and many actions backing the promises up. Once she gets to truly know her husband, and her love is fully established in him through his faithfulness to her, she has absolute assurance, and doesn't need constant reminders of his love by specific words. She is full of confidence through knowledge of her husband's character.

15. Chapter's 3-6 of Hebrews deal with the falling away from growth and confidence by these believers. The spiritual principle of Chapter 4 is the means of getting them back on target.

16. In Hebrews 13:6, we see the objective of the writer, freedom from fear by their daily, moment by moment living the awareness of the love of Christ for them, and the power of Christ available to them.

17. The writers of Scripture identify correctly that when the believer is fearful, he imitates the unbeliever ("cowardly" – Revelation 21:8), and that is not right given our great position. Hebrews 11:27 "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is unseen." This is our standard!
18. Fear is a mental attitude sin that shows our mind has moved away from thinking of the Lord. 1 Samuel 17:11,24
19. Fear is a sign of falling back into domination by the "prince of this world". 1 Samuel 18:12,29 21:12 28:20
20. Absence of fear is a big part of maintaining a dynamic mental attitude. Hebrews 13:6 11:27
21. There is only one legitimate fear; it is the fear of failure to enter spiritual maturity. Hebrews 4:1
22. Love demands absence of fear. 1 John 4:18. They are two opposing mental attitudes.
23. Fear is not part of the Divine Plan for the Believer. 2 Timothy 1:7 Exodus 14:13-14 Joshua 8:1 Isaiah 41:10 2 Samuel 1:7
24. Courage and lack of fear is a sign of mature spiritual status. Psalm 3:6 Psalm, 56:3 Hebrews 11:27
25. Fear is the power by which the Evil of Satan rules among mankind. Hebrews 2:14-15 Genesis 19:30 (Lot) 1 Kings 18:9-14 (Obadiah), both Lot and Obadiah show how the failing believer lives in constant fear.
26. Fear is the word used to mean "Occupation with Christ" when related to the attitude of the mature Believer toward Christ. 2 Samuel 23:3 Nehemiah 5:9,15 Ephesians 5:21 Job 28:28 Psalm 19:9 34:10 Proverbs 1:7 9:10 Proverbs 10:27, 1 Peter 2:17

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Even the worst of commentators however, cannot help themselves, for they handle the Word of the living God, and each will (sometimes in spite of themselves) provide some insight that can lift up a point for prayer and application. Remember the promise of God, the word will not return void, it will always accomplish what the Lord intends.

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CHAPTER 1

1 JOHN 1:1-4

“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; 2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 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. 4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”**

KEY WORDS

Was	en	imperfect, active, indicative, singular; was with Perfect stability in God’s being.
Beginning	arche	absolute, primal beginning of all things.
Heard	akouo	perfect , active, indicative; heard – with lasting Results for the hearers (plural).
Seen	oraο	perfect , active, indicative, plural; we have all Seen, with lasting results.
Looked	theaοmai	aoist, middle, indicative, plural; we all took Time to look, consider, contemplate significance.
Handled	pselaphao	aoist, active, indicative, plural; we all, like

Word	logos	Blind men, touched, explored the reality with all Our senses – tactile, active exploration.
Life	zoe	the mind behind the expression.
Manifested	phaneroo	(Genitive) the life-giving word; living expression aorist, passive, indicative; at that point in time It was revealed in fullness.
Seen	orao	perfect , active, indicative; we have fully seen. The results of this were permanent for us all.
Bear witness	martureo	present, active, indicative; we keep on witnessing
Show	ap-aggello	present, active, indicative; we keep on giving our Report with authority of all the details seen.
Eternal	aionios	Without beginning or end – beyond concept of time.
Manifested	phaneroo	aorist, passive, indicative; was made clear to us.
Seen	orao	perfect , active, indicative; seen-lasting results
Heard	akouo	perfect , active, indicative; heard-lasting results
Declare	apaggello	present, active, indicative; we keep on announcing The truth of what we have seen and heard.
Have	echo	present, active, subjunctive; that we might have. Purpose/desire expressed.
Fellowship	koinonia	setting apart of personal agendas/desires for a Common life, common desires, shared direction.
Write	grapho	present, active, indicative; we keep on writing.
Joy	chara	joy – deep, calm satisfaction of the soul.
Full	pleroo	perfect , passive, subjunctive; that it might be Made full-be filled to God's intended capacity.

REFLECTION

Turn to now and read these first four verses. 1 John 1:1. John's subject is the Lord Jesus Christ, His incarnation and His work, and the application of the incarnation into daily life for every believer. This is the emphasis of this letter; application into life of the transforming knowledge of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, from Creator of the universe, Light of the Universe, Saviour of the Universe, and soon to be acknowledged King of the Universe.

The early Gnostic heretics were speaking of powerful and secret knowledge about the divine being, and they loved to talk about it; even pray piously about it with their cloaks over their heads like Medieval monks. John's answer to them is blunt and direct. Knowledge that does not transform the life into the image of Christ is not about Him. It is as phoney as the fake spirituality of the false teachers. Many sound pious, but they are just self righteous.

The primal battle between good and evil centres in the church in the battle between what is true and what is false, what is real and what is phoney? This letter is a recall to the real revelation of God, the truth in Christ, and so the spiritually genuine. It is a blunt confrontation with Satan's strategy to deceive, distract, distort, and then delay believers from the will, path and purposes of God for them. John's answer is to re-ground us all in the reality of the Character of Almighty God, and the wonder of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who fully shows us God's Holy Character.

The first phrase, 'that which is from the beginning'; John is referring to the beginning of time itself; the primal moment when the world was made. In the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ we get a glimpse into this moment, for the one seen and touched by the apostles, is the creator of the universe.

In this phrase, by his use of the Greek word "arche", John brings together the primal moment of the creation and the similarly unique moment when the creator became a creature. As followers of the Lord Jesus we share, with the apostles, the uniqueness of relationship with the one who made the worlds and who upholds them with his hand. If we ground all discussion of our faith in this reality, then we are stabilized in a truth that is secure.

That which was from the beginning - preposition "apo" - from the ultimate source. The false systems of theology all believed that man had access only to "derived" sources, whereas Christianity from the beginning has been the faith that states that the Creator has visited the Creation – we have the words of God from the ultimate source of all things. The creator is the saviour! The beginning of our faith is the work and the unique person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the creator of this entire universe, and He is the author of salvation for all within it who will turn to Him. It is this phrase that refers to the beginning of creation and the incarnation, that brings us back, as John intended it to, into the Gospel itself. Turn to the Gospel of John and read now slowly through Chapter One. Now notice the echoes of the Gospel as we go through the Letter.

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

Faith has its beginning and ending in Him, and unless you get your understanding and relationship with Him right you have no chance of being even near the truth. By emphasizing this phrase, "in the beginning", John emphasizes the historical facts. He was there at the start of Jesus earthly ministry, and he knows what has and is happening and he knows what he has seen. The truth about the Lord is not based in cunningly devised fables. **2 Peter 1:16.**

Having met the Lord and watched and heard his words and deeds, John is also in a position to comment upon the dependability of the creation story. The facts of the incarnation make more real and believable the creation narratives, for the one who made the universe has visited his created planet and has revealed himself. His message to man about the end of the creation is also to be taken as seriously as his instructions for living within it. As creatures in a creation we need to hear and heed the creator. This becomes critical as we draw near His Return. Matthew 25:13-30.

The word for 'looked upon', is the aorist middle indicative of "theaomai", which is a term used in a theatre where you gaze intently at a play. You concentrate on a play if you are in the audience. John is saying, we really concentrate on the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the one we realized we needed to see! The other word that could be used to see is "blepo", which means to glance at. Note also the perfect tenses in these first verses; twice he notes we "saw" and we "heard" the facts that are summed up in the person and work of Jesus the Christ. The results of what he saw and heard are eternal in significance, not just for John, but for all who see the truth, hear the truth, and believe.

Theaomai, is also used in relation to the resurrection in the Gospel. John looked at, ate, spoke and lived with the Lord Jesus Christ for three years and therefore knows about Him in detail, and so when he met the risen Lord he knew it was truly the Lord, and that He was now Lord, King and God. John underlines that he knows what is true and what isn't, and he is giving the facts about the one he calls the, 'Word of Life'.

The Gnostics considered Jesus Christ was just a man, whilst others believed him to be a ghost, not really human. John corrects both views, and he does it on the basis of three years personal study of the Lord close up. John says, we heard (perfect, active, indicative of akouo), we saw (perfect, active, indicative of horao), we gazed upon, we handled with our hands [aorist, active, indicative of pselaphao). In every way possible he has explored the reality of the message and the messenger. There are eternal consequences for hearing, believing, and obeying, and also for not taking this seriously.

By putting things this way to start with, John underlines that the Lord was real, not a ghost; but a real person who could be seen, heard and touched. The Lord was a person who was/is able to be met using all our human senses, and looked at calmly and thoroughly. The Lord's title here, (The Word of Life), reminds us of the importance of the message being given, for outside the person of the Lord there is neither life nor hope. His message (word) alone gives life, and we must know the facts, for our eternal life depends on it. To ignore so great salvation has eternal consequences. Hebrews 2:3.

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:)

This verse reminds us that the message is tied up in the unique person of the universe; that Christianity is not a philosophy, but a relationship with the unique person of the universe, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He also backs up verse one, noting that there is evidence for all that he will say of the Lord. For the Lord's life was manifest, (aorist, passive, indicative, of phaneroo), or made fully known through the incarnation. The Gnostics argued that only a few could 'know' the truth, John counters this by saying that the Lord revealed himself openly for all to know the truth. There are no secret doctrines, nor any inner circles of higher status than others. John 18:20.

John will "manifest" in his own life, and throughout the Gospel and the three letters, the spirit of true humility and service, that is the spirit filled hallmark of the genuine servant of the Lord. In the Christian message there is no room for arrogance, superiority, or special status for anyone other than the Lord – who is the Saviour and servant for salvation of all. Servant-Leadership is the theme of John, for it was the message of the Lord. **Matthew 20:25-28.**

We saw him, John says, and we keep on testifying (present, active, indicative of martureo), to what we have seen. It is from this word that we get the word martyr. We have witnessed to this truth, John says, and are happy to keep on doing so, even unto death.

"Martureo" is in the present tense, active voice, indicative mood. The present tense means we keep on doing it, active voice - we do the action, and the indicative mood is the way to underline the reality of it. John is saying that he is not misleading you in what he says. We testify unto you about the man and the message, and the message is about eternal life. This is a message that he must get right and John testifies that he has written the truth alone. John will, in the Gospel and the Letters, show that Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God with us, and that he, with the other disciples, has had this direct revelation, and have the solemn responsibility to pass it on to all.

The message is the "good news" of eternal life through Christ Jesus. Go back through the preaching that is recorded for us in Acts, and notice that the main theme of the apostolic preachers was the truth of the Bodily Resurrection of the Lord and the significance of this for our very brief present space-time life, and our eternal life.

Our focus is to be eternity not time! This is not the message of many today, and John recalls us to the apostolic message, that eternal reality is to transform our perceptions of the meaning of events in time. Eternity is to transform our agenda for time. In Christ eternity stepped into time, and the result in our daily, time dominated lives is to be significant. Refer below to the BTB study on ETERNITY PAST.

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.

John now describes the gospel proclamation. What we have seen and heard, we declare it unto you that you may also have fellowship with the Lord and with us. When you know the truth you have an obligation to share what you know, that others might be helped also. Remember, when you study this letter from John in a Bible study situation you are not only having fellowship with the Lord but also with John. The word for fellowship is the Greek word, *koinonia*. It is the word for church as well as for fellowship. It means equality, loving, caring partnership, the setting aside of personal interests and the joining with others to share a common life and common interests; it is a word that encompasses the joy of being with those with whom we share the same interests, now and forever.

We have spiritual roots, and spiritual ancestors and family; John is one of them. Enjoy your roots. Going back in history right through to Adam we have believers who are our ancestors, yet also may be seen as our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have in Christ fellowship, not only in time, but also in eternity. There is the opportunity to share fellowship with the apostles every day through the study of the Bible, as well as fellowshiping with the one they spoke of.

Notice before leaving this verse the tenses of the Greek verbs here. The word for "seen" is again in the perfect tense, indicating an event that occurred at a point in time, but with results that go on forever. To meet the Lord in truth is to be transformed forever by that meeting. Those who have met the Lord are transformed – no transformation = no meeting!

This is the Christian message; that we have a life transforming message and it is ready for all to hear also. John keeps on declaring the truth to all who will hear, because it is so important. It is the truth that the Holy Spirit works upon in the lives of each unsaved woman and man, not anything else. **John 16:8-11**. This is our challenge; to be transformed daily by the truth and to share it with all who will hear us as we heard. Refer to the BTB study HOLY SPIRIT – EFFECTUAL CALLING, FILLING OF THE SPIRIT, MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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

John's purpose in writing this letter is that our joy in the Lord might be full. In the gospel, John notes that living for the Lord is to know abundant life, **John 10:10**. Joy - "charis", is a deep inner happiness or peace. It is the contentment of a soul which is grounded in fellowship with Christ, and thankful for who he is, and for all he has done. This is deep spiritual contentment with what the Lord has done, joy in spirit at what has been received, not any shallow emotional experience, although it will be accompanied by emotion at times.

Despite hurt, sickness, loneliness you can still have the joy that John speaks of. You can have a psychological depression, be in bed in pain and still have this joy in the Lord. What John is offering here in the rest of this letter, is the spiritual mechanics to ensure you live in the sphere of joy; the things you must do to live the Christian way of life, walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit, facing sin honestly and getting to know the Lord Jesus Christ more fully each day you fellowship with him. Refer to the BTB doctrinal study on JOY at the end of this section.

The doctrine of the Character of God, and the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ are so very important. If you get to know the Holy Character of God you can be strong in weakness because you are related to him who is strong. You know Him who has called you. Joy is the by-product, or fruit, of quietly contemplating the person and work of God on your behalf. **John 15:11, 16:24**. This joy is a fruit of walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that everything around you is seen through the perspective of the Plan of God for you. Such a believer asks, "Lord, what are you teaching me in this?" And then they ask, "what would you have me do Lord?" This is joy in the midst of pressure, walking with Jesus in worship and service that reaches beyond space-time in its significance.

Isaiah had this joy in the midst of the Assyrian invasion of the land, in the midst of the siege of Jerusalem, knowing 700 years in advance the truth of **Romans 8:28-39. Isaiah 61:10-11**. Habakkuk found the same faith based joy as he confronted the same historic threats from Assyria and the disaster facing his land. **Habakkuk 3:16-19**. Paul was able to have inner joy in prison as shown in his writing of Philipians. **Philippians 1:21-26**. He reminds the Corinthian church that they establish joy in their souls by application of faith. **2 Corinthians 1:24**.

A Roman jail, or even house arrest in a rented house, was the most depressing and unsanitary place on earth. The State did not feed you under arrest, your friends did that, as well as taking away your excrement and providing fresh straw for you to lie on. However in this environment Paul was able to write the "Prison Epistles", each being an "epistle of joy", as Paul sees the eternal, and he sees the temporary stressors as exactly that. **Ephesians 3:14-21**.

The Christian life can be summarized within the concept of, 'getting to know Him', so that we can have joy in Him. The word for 'full' is the perfect, passive, subjunctive of *pleroo*. The perfect tense reminds us that the joy that fills us now has eternal results; it goes on forever. The only question for each of us is, will we let the Holy Spirit bring this joy into our soul in the fullness the Lord desires for us here and now. We will have tribulation here; we have the Lord's word on that! **John 16:33**. We are meant, in his power, to have his joy in the midst of the tribulation, and that means joy in relationship.

The passive voice of the Greek verb reminds us that we receive this joy through the work of the Holy Spirit within us, and the subjunctive mood reminds us that maybe we will be 'filled up' with joy, or maybe we won't. It depends on our obedience to the things John is going to cover in this letter. Only the spiritual have this joy; only those who walk with him know this joy. The challenge is to walk in the spirit's power; to be spiritual rather than carnal. Daily we are to put our spiritual armour on and think God's thoughts regarding each daily challenge, rather than think carnal, earth bound thoughts of doubt and despair. Refer to the BTB study at the end of this section, CHRISTIAN LIFE - MENTAL ATTITUDE, and also see page 16 for the study on CHRISTIAN LIFE - SPIRITUALITY.

APPLICATION PRINCIPLES FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Our faith is based upon historic fact, backed by eyewitness testimony, all of which would have been admissible in court. We have not followed myths and fables, but the testimony of a unique event, when the creator became a creature and entered our world to transform all that by faith accepted him. Are we proclaiming the unique incarnation and salvation event? Acts 26:23ff, 1 Tim 1:4, 4:7, 2 Tim 4:4, Tit 1:14, 2 Pet 1:16.
2. The Lord Jesus was fully God and fully man during his incarnation. He is the unique person of the universe. Refer to the BTB study on the HYPOSTATIC UNION on page 20. Do we have a clear idea of the significance of this doctrine and the reality of the person and work of the Lord?
3. God's purpose for each human being, is that each might come to know the Lord's person and work on their behalf, and worship him for his work on their behalf. God seeks man's free will based response to his work so that he might bless each person in their new reality and transform their lives upon this earth and forever.
4. Our destiny in Christ is eternal. Our eternal life began at the point of salvation. Are we living in the joy of the Lord, celebrating this reality daily in the midst of our pressures? Are we still living as if we are in the hold of the old reality of our lives; "sin and death"? Let us put on the armour of the Holy Spirit each morning and celebrate the eternal life joy of the Lord.

DOCTRINES

ETERNITY PAST (How we must express it from within space-time)

1. Jesus Christ existed before the foundation of the world in glory with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (John 1:1-2; 17:5,24).
2. In eternity past the Godhead agreed to permit sin to become manifest in the world of men before being eliminated forever from the universe (Hebrews 9:26).
3. In eternity past the Son of God agreed to come to earth as a human being to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).
4. In eternity past it was ordained that Christ would be slain for the ungodly (1 Peter 1:18-20; Hebrews 10:5-10).
5. In eternity past the world and stars were created by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:10; Colossians 1:16).
6. Man was placed on the earth to be made "a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men (1Corinthians 4:9).
7. In eternity past believers were chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4). Christ is chosen, we share as believers his election.
8. In eternity past a book was written containing the names of those who would believe and survive the destruction of the universe (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 17:8; 20:15).

However, whilst God knew who would believe, he did not coerce human free will.

HOLY SPIRIT - EFFECTIVE CALLING

1. Drawing (gk. elkuo) means to draw, lead or impel. In this case the drawing or calling is in love. All the elect will freely respond to the work of the Holy Spirit. The drawing provides the motive to respond.
2. All people are called to repent, but only the elect are drawn. (John 3:16, 36, 12:32 16:8-11, 1 John 2:2)
3. Believers, Called Ones, Elect, are all names for the same person. God calls, the Holy Spirit works, we simply respond to the call of Love. (Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16)
4. The calling provides the motivation for the expression of love in the unbeliever who is positive towards salvation. (Philippians 2:13)
5. God can thereby give His gift of salvation to the elect. (John 1:13, Romans 9:16 Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5-6)
6. God therefore gets the glory for His work, we get the benefits (Jude 24-25)
 - (a) God planned it in eternity past.
 - (b) God provides it at the cross.
 - (c) God prepares for it in the life by conviction.

- (d) God provides the motivation to accept the offer.
- (e) God gives the gift of salvation to the elect.
- (f) God gives the Holy Spirit to the new believer.
- (g) God has prepared a new body for the believer.

HOLY SPIRIT: MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. TO THE UNBELIEVER

a) RESTRAINING (2 Thessalonians 2:7)

If unbelievers were unrestrained in the Church Age the one world system which Satan is trying to establish would come. After the rapture of the Church it will come.

b) CONVICTING (John 16:7-11)

- i) Sin - the barrier which remains in unbelief.
- ii) Righteousness - God is totally righteous, man is only relatively righteous and needs God's righteousness for salvation.
- iii) Judgment - Satan and all unbelievers are judged.

c) REGENERATION (John 3:5)

Man without the spirit cannot understand spiritual things. The Gospel is spiritual, the Holy Spirit makes the gospel a reality to the unbeliever when one believes and is "born again" or regenerated. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

2. TO THE BELIEVER AT SALVATION

a) Regeneration (John 3:1-16, Titus 3:5)

b) Baptism (Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:5) We are baptized into union with Jesus Christ and become part of the body of Christ. This is not to be confused with the Filling of the Holy Spirit.

c) Indwelling (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20) From salvation on the believer is indwelt by the Spirit.

d) Sealing (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30). This ministry relates to your future with God, the guarantee of eternal security.

e) Distribution of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11) Each believer receives a spiritual gift at the point of salvation in order to function in the body of Christ.

3. TO THE BELIEVER AFTER SALVATION (Spirituality)

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit after salvation is the means by which we live the Christian life ordained by God

(Ephesians 2:10, 5:18)

a) The Filling of the Holy Spirit (spirituality through confession of sin and surrender of the life). (1 John 1:9 Ephesians 5:18)

b) The character of Jesus Christ is produced by the believer when he is filled with the Spirit. (Galatians 4:19, 5:22, 23)

c) Glorification of Christ (John 7:39, 16:14, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20)

d) Fulfilment of the Law. (Romans 8:2-4)

HOLY SPIRIT: FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. We are commanded to allow Him to fill (or fully control) our lives (Ephesians 5:18).

2. The filling (controlling) of the Spirit can be broken by:

a) Grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) - sin, doing something you shouldn't.

b) Quenching the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) - not doing something you should (like quenching a fire, allowing the flame to go out).

3. The filling (controlling) of the Spirit can be restored by confession of sin and full surrender to do the will of God (1 John 1:9)

4. The Spirit produces the very character of the Christ in the believer: (Galatians 4:19, 5:22, 23, Ephesians 3:16, 17, Philippians 1:20, 21, 2 Corinthians 3:3)

a) The fruit of the Spirit:

- i) Galatians 5:22-23 - Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control.
- ii) Romans 14:17 - Righteousness, Peace, Joy.
- iii) Colossians 3:12-15 - Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Peace, Thankfulness.
- iv) 1 Thessalonians 1:3 - Faith, Love, Endurance, Hope.

b) Rejoicing in Christ (Philippians 3:1, 4:4).

c) Loving one another (John 15:12, Romans 12:10, Ephesians 5:2).

d) Striving for the faith (Philippians 1:27, Jude 3).

e) Putting away all sin (1 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 12:1).

- f) Abstaining from all appearances of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
- g) Submitting to injuries (1 Corinthians 6:7).
- h) Subduing the temper (Ephesians 4:26, James 1:19).
- i) Shunning the wicked (2 Thessalonians 3:6).
- j) Abounding in the works of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58 1 Thessalonians 4:1).
- k) Showing a good example (1 Timothy 4:12, 1 Peter 2:12).
- l) Following after that which is good (Philippians 4:8, 1 Timothy 6:11).
- m) Perfecting holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1, 2 Timothy 3:17).
- n) Hating defilement (Jude 23).
- o) Overcoming the world. (1 John 5:4-5)
- p) Adorning the gospel. (Philippians 1:27, Titus 2:10)
- q) Forgiving injuries. (Romans 12:20)
- r) Living peaceably with all. (Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14)
- s) Visiting the afflicted. (James 1:27)
- t) Sympathising with others. (Romans 12:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- u) Honouring others. (Romans 12:10)
- v) Submitting to authorities. (Romans 13:1-7)
- w) Being content. (Philippians 4:11, Hebrews 13:5)
- x) Walking worthy of the Lord. (Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12)
- y) Walking in the newness of life. (Romans 6:4)
- z) Walking as children of light. (Ephesians 5:8)
- aa) Glorifies Christ in his body. (Philippians 1:20, 21)
- bb) Christ is at home in his body. (Ephesians 3:16,17)
- cc) A lifestyle which honours God in the presence of men. (2 Corinthians 3:3)

5. The filling of the Holy Spirit in every believer only occurs in two dispensations:

- a) Church age Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22,23
- b) Millennium - Joel 2:28, 29 (characterized by ecstasies)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MENTAL ATTITUDE

1. Definition: Attitude or Mental attitude is the state of mind where the mind is set on a course of action on the basis of the whole function and thinking of the soul.
2. Every believer faces the inner conflict of divine versus human viewpoint. These two attitudes are at war in humanity in human history from the time of the fall. (Isaiah 55:7-9)
3. We are commanded to have divine viewpoint in our souls not the viewpoint of Satan (worldliness). 2 Corinthians 1:7, 10:5. (via Doctrine in the Soul).
3. Attitude determines both the life and character of a person - what you think is what you are (Proverbs 23:7)
4. As Christians we are commanded to have our thinking in tune with the mind of Christ. Gods plan for our lives calls for a new attitude in our souls, a new viewpoint, without any human viewpoint or mental attitude sin (1 Corinthians 2:16, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:5, 2 Timothy 1:7)
5. Fellowship within a church is based on believers all being in tune with what the Bible teaches. Philippians 2:2.
6. Knowledge of the Bible (the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:16) and control by the Holy Spirit renews the mind of the believer, giving divine viewpoint. (Romans 12:2)
7. The right mental attitude produces joy (Philippians 2:2), confidence (2 Corinthians 5:1,6,8), stability (Isaiah 26:3-4, Philippians 4:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:2), true giving (2 Corinthians 9:7), love (1 Corinthians 13:5)
8. Human viewpoint is called worldliness. (Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:2)
9. Evil is what you think as you are following Satan's policy. Matthew 9:4, Galatians 6:3. Mental attitude sins produce self induced misery. (Proverbs 15:13)
10. Without clear thinking there is conflict in the mind of the believer. Isaiah 55:6-9, James 1:7-8.
11. True stability of Character comes only this way. Philippians 4:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:2.
12. Giving is a mental attitude. 2 Corinthians 9:7. Love is a mental attitude. 1 Corinthians 13: Deuteronomy 6:5,10:12.
13. Worldliness is a mental attitude: It is all non-grace thinking i.e. Anti Gods Plan, Colossians 3:2.

14. Confidence in service and living generally flows from having "Divine Viewpoint" which has other advantages such as
- [a] Stability in life - James 1:8
 - [b] Prosperity of soul - Philippians 4:7
 - [c] Giving to the Lord - 2 Corinthians 9:7
 - [d] Spiritual rather than worldly - Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:2
 - [e] Purity rather than evil - Matthew 9:4
 - [f] No arrogance - Galatians 6:1-5.
 - [g] Inner beauty - 1 Timothy 2:9,10,15.

1 JOHN 1:5-10

"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. 6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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. 8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

KEY WORDS

Message	aggelia	"The" message, authority of revelation from source
Heard	akouo	perfect , active, indicative; heard with permanent results
Declare	anagello	present, active, indicative; keep on announcing
Light	phos	God-Light; the two words are bound together.
Darkness	skotia	primal darkness – evil (compared with light-good)
No	ouk+eimi+	present, active, indicative of the verb to be with The strongest negative construction; keeps on being
	oudeis	"No"- not at all, in any way at all.
Lie	pseudomai	present, middle, indicative; keep on lying.
Do not	ouk + poieo	present, active, indicative; not keep on
Truth	aletheia	Practicing the truth (aletheia) purity, certainty, stability of the truth.
Walk	peripateo	present, active, subjunctive; walk about (habit)
Fellowship	koinonia	intimate community of life/belief/joy with.
Cleanseth	katharizo	present, active, indicative; keeps on cleansing, Erasing away all previous signs of the sins.
Have	echo	present, active, indicative; keep on having.
Not	ouk	strong negative – indicating firm deception.
Deceive	planao	present, active, indicative; we keep on deceiving. We lead ourselves off the path by our persistence.
Confess	omologeoo	present, active, subjunctive; if we keep on naming Citing the case of our sins before the Lord.
Faithful	pistis	absolutely faithful to his character and word.
Just	dikaios	righteous, just, in all his actions.
Forgive	aphiemi	aoist, active, subjunctive; at that point in time When we confess, he will forgive, and release us.
Cleanse	katharizo	aoist, active, subjunctive; at that point in time When we confess, he will cleanse us of the stain.
Unrighteousness	adikia	the state of being unable to stand before God.
Sinned	amartano	perfect , active, indicative; absolute declaration We have not ever sinned and changed our status!
Liar	pseustos	a liar, a person who pretends they are something However, the truth is the opposite.
Is not in us	eimi	present, active, indicative; the truth does not Keep on dwelling in us.

REFLECTIONS

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.

In order to have fellowship with God one has to have in one's mind the Character of God. Unless you are clear in your understanding on His character you will not know what it is to have fellowship with God. To have joy in him, and fully and intelligently love him, you must know him. We cannot intelligently communicate to anyone that we do not know well. Refer to the BTB study below for a study of LIGHT and GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD on page 14.

Notice the words of John; "this is the message we have **heard** from him". The message that he is speaking is not a philosophically inspired theology, developed by the apostles as they sat around years after the events. This is the revelation they have received. This is an authoritative message from the one who stepped into history. The tense of the verb "to hear" is once again a **perfect tense**, reminding us that the results of hearing and believing this message go on

forever. Nothing is more important than this message and hearing it correctly, believing it completely, and applying it thoroughly. The alternative is eternal in significance also! Revelation 20:11-15.

Note the heart of the message - God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Immediately we are confronted with an application of the truth that was revealed; if you claim to have fellowship with God you claim to have fellowship with the Holy One, and there ought not to be any darkness in you. Dealing with sin is going to be the first sign of man's relationship with God being real and right. John's theology is very practical as is all true theology, but John will apply all principles immediately and will do so repetitively in each section of the letter.

James says, James 1:22-27, 2:12-26, show me your faith by your works; John says show me your spiritual status by the speed with which you deal with any darkness (sin) in your life. If you claim to have fellowship with the Holy God your life should be Holy. Remember the Lord's words, 'by their fruit you shall know them'. Matthew 7:16. Doctrine that does not work in holy and fruitful living is not doctrine that has transformed the life, and probably is not true doctrine. John's point will be made strongly in this letter; that if the truth is fully known, then it will transform. There is no problem with the truth, only the receiver of it! Truth is known by its life results, as James had identified over 60 years before.

In chapter 4 John is going to talk about people who manifest supernatural signs but have not got a spiritually fruitful/holy life, these people are identified by this principle here as false, and the source of their signs is not God, but the enemy. The presence of apparent gifts of the Holy Spirit is not proof of anything by themselves. Satan can counterfeit everything except holiness. As a pastor teacher you must, in accordance with Matthew 7, be a fruit inspector! Be careful, John will strongly warn us, because not everyone in the church is what they appear to be! **John 2:24-25** applies always!!!

We have heard from Him, John says, from the Lord Jesus Christ - this is what He has said. One of the modern concepts, especially in the New Age movement is that 'all things are God, and all good must come from God', this is false, for Satan can counterfeit good for his own evil purposes. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**. These false teachers preach that both evil and good reside in God. Ying and Yang and other concepts of this kind have come from satanic sources. These views are also coming from German existentialist philosophy, and the Holistic Health, New Age groups.

This is in stark contrast with divine revelation, because John states in this verse that God says that He is light and in Him is no darkness at all. God has no mixture in him, there is no evil, and he is not the source of evil. Refer also to, **Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 2:8, 1 Timothy 6:16-20, 2 Timothy 2:16**. Satan was not "made" to go bad, nor is any person; the core of John's Gospel message is God's answer to Satan's lie; "Choices – Consequences".

The concept taught by the false teachers is 'vain philosophy', or, in other words the satanic world view. This is unsaved creatures speculating about God in order to develop a concept that sits well with their basic arrogance and desire not to be accountable to their Creator – but we all are. Unsaved people want what Satan wanted, a god who makes no moral demands above what the unsaved is comfortable with, who does not demand exclusive worship, and will not eternally judge. God however has revealed in His Word what He wants us to know this side of eternity. He wants us to know Him, His creation and His plan, and to worship Him alone. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26, James 1:17-21**.

Anyone who goes beyond, or ignores, what the Bible has said, has gone into vain philosophy. People get into error often because they are not humble enough to say, 'I do not know'. We are called to share what has been revealed, what we know on the basis of evidence, and not to go beyond it, and not to stop short of it. There is enough of the truth to share without running out of material! We must not run out of courage to stand for it in the midst of a world system that calls out for compromise on all fronts.

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

Our words and our walk should be in agreement. There is no room for play acting Christianity. If we do not walk in fellowship with him in the light he has given through his word, then we are in the darkness and we lie if we claim anything else. John and James are at one here! Walking in darkness; the word for walking is "peripateo", and is in the present active subjunctive. The present tense indicating habitual action, the active voice reminding us that we do the action, and the subjunctive mood is the mood of potential; only if we are obedient to the Lord will we walk in and enjoy his light on his path for us through this world. It is the daily habitual action of putting on the armour of the Spirit, reading the Word of Life, dealing with daily sins, and walking in the Holy Spirit's power, that keeps us on the path that leads to joy and life, rather than sin and death.

Any person who lives like an unbeliever has made their sin a habit and their habit betrays their family; and it is not Gods!!! If a person claiming to be Christian is living persistently in the darkness of sin, she/he is a habitual liar as far as John is concerned; he/she is not a believer at all. Satan is the father of liars, not God! By the fruit is the tree known! By the family likeness is the genuine relationship seen by all. John 8:38-49.

This does not mean that believers do not sin, for we do at times fall short of God's standards, but as believers we heed the conviction of the Holy Spirit and act upon it. John is going to tell us what to do when we sin, so he clearly does not believe we don't sin. But John's point here, is that the habit of sin, without repentant sorrow and change, indicates a heart that does not know God nor has seen his light. Many Christians, like the prodigal son will fall into sin but they will come back, because they have a relationship with their heavenly father and seek his fellowship. Using this story of the Lord's, you have to distinguish between the prodigal son who does not want to live in the pig pen and a pig who talks and smells like the prodigal son on a Sunday after the Saturday night's drinking, but actually does belong in the pig pen. **Luke**

15:17-31. It is dissatisfaction with sin, and desire to please God that marks the believer – even if sin intrudes occasionally.

The test of the reality of Christian faith is that the life is lived in the light of God's Word. Light shows up your sin, and you confront that reality and deal with it quickly when it is seen. **James 1:22-25.** You will fail from time to time, as John will point out, verses 9-11, however the light shows you your sin, and you will clean up your life through the application of the Lord's work on your behalf. If a person lives consistently in the darkness there is in John's mind no doubt; that person does not know the holy Lord, nor does he/she understand the importance of the blood shed for them!

No spiritual fruit = no spiritual root to the plant! **Romans 8:9-11, Galatians 5:16-26.** What characterises our life?

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."

There are two results of walking in the light of the Lord; we will deal with sin and we will discover the fellowship that holiness opens up with other saints. If we walk in the light, as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. The word for walk - "peripateo" - refers to a habitual walk, and we must make it a habit to walk in the light; daily to live in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

This does not mean that you do not sin at times, for you will continue to sin at times until you die, but you will face it quickly if you are walking with the Lord. The result of facing sin in a biblical manner (confession, verse 9 below), is that we are 'cleansed' of the sin. The Greek word here is, the present, active, indicative of katharizo. It means more than forgive, it means to remove totally, even to the removal of the very stain of it on the life. The present tense means we keep on being cleansed by confession of sin. The work of the Lord in cleansing and forgiveness does not stop at any point. He remains faithful, even when we have failed. **2 Timothy 2:12-13.**

1 John 1:8-10 - explains the reality of sin in the life of believers; the light shows up the sin and you have to face it. Walking with the Lord means to be always open to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. **1 John 3:5-6** is often quoted as a passage which contradicts, **1 John 1:5-10**, however it is in fact a parallel passage to 1 John 1:8-10. As in chapter 1 what is in view in chapter 3 is the habitual pattern, a habitual pattern of sinning. Such a pattern of life shows that a person is not related to the Son of God but Satan. John tends to deal with a subject and then come back to it again, and this is what we see in these two chapters. Repetition is John's technique to reinforce the vital truths to keep us safe from satanic false doctrine, from foolish error and distortion. Distortion of thinking about sin is fatal error!

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

The cleansing power for sin is only in the blood of Christ; there is only one sacrifice for sins ever offered on earth, and it is the blood of Christ. All sins, past, present and future, are all covered on the cross. We are cleansed when we confess our sins, for we claim the blood and it covers all our sins. This was the assurance in advance of the Cross by David also. **Psalms 103:8-16.**

What if the believer says she/he has not sinned? They claim to have reached sinless perfection and become sanctified, and that they don't need the blood any more. Note that the Bible calls them 'self deceived', and John records that the truth is not in them. These people cause a lot of problems in the church and need to be corrected or removed before they destroy the faith of others. The "fruit" of false brethren is that they persist in their self deception, and until they are corrected, or receive correction from the Word of God they are a danger to all. Refer to the BTB below for a study of BLOOD SACRIFICE, REPENTANCE, CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS, SIN: OLD SIN NATURE.

We worship the only perfect one; so when a person who claims to be a believer, claims they are sinless, they are seriously deceived and/or confused. We are sinners who have been saved by grace. When you think you have defeated the "big" sins in you life, then the Holy Spirit will turn up the light and convict you of others. Through the entire period of your life the Holy Spirit will focus on different areas requiring attention with a view to gradually purifying you of them all. This is a lifelong process, and this side of eternity it will not be complete – we have God's Word on it here.

It is of interest that by the end of the first century every heresy that we have today had come out, and this is a major one here. This false-hood of 'perfectionism' is still with us, and it is still an error! **Galatians 6:3, 2 Timothy 3:13, James 1:22-26.** We are on a path that ends with being made like Him, for we see Him as He is, and this will occur fully, only when we see Him face to face in heaven, or at His Second Coming. Until then we heed the ministry of the Holy Spirit and confess our sins as He shows them to us, and we keep focused forward and growing more like Him daily in loving care for others.

Verse 9. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".

The word for confess - is the present, active, subjunctive of "homologeō" - It means to say the same thing that God says, or agree with Him about your sin. We are (active voice) to keep on confessing (present tense) our sins, when they crop up, and the subjunctive mood reminds us that there is a potential to obey or not to! Note the important point in the second half of the verse. Deal with the sins you are aware of and the Lord will deal with the sins in your life that you have not seen as sins yet (all the "unrighteousness" that exists but you haven't seen as such yet).

Through the Holy Spirit the Lord shows us our sins and turns the light on for us to see them clearly. If you are dirty with sin God cannot use you. With unconfessed sin in your life the only thing that you can be used for is nuisance value for other; that is, for testing of spiritual believers who are growing. You will not be blessed yourself, nor be able to be a blessing for others; sin in the believer pains God, and the believer with unconfessed sin in their life becomes a pain to others!

The greatest problems we have in our churches is that Christians are often separated from other believers by their sins; the result is they are out of fellowship and the unity of the church breaks down. The answer is to teach the importance of dealing with sin, and opening the heart to the Holy Spirit every day, and urging loving obedience to the Lord's words.

As pastors we have the responsibility to turn the light onto sin by the teaching of the whole counsel of God's Word. Our job is to let the Holy Spirit loose in the lives of God's people through the teaching of God's Word, which the Spirit will always honour. The fruit of biblical teaching is that people will confront and deal with their sins and be then united in the Holy Spirit with one another again. Sin always separates brethren, but confession and restoration renews fellowship and joy. Confession is not about OCD cold obedience, it is about loving the Lord and not wanting any shadow to come between us and our loving fellowship with Him and our brethren.

If a person refuses to deal with sin, and continues to live in a manner bringing disrepute upon the people of God, then the apostolic method was for the local elders to remove them from the congregation (Refer BTB study below - CHURCH DISCIPLINE).

The only value stemming from disobedient people like this, is that they will be a test for the spiritual believers. Their manner of life and their false teaching will challenge all those who are following the Word of God. Satan is able to use such people, and may at times send people like this to upset the walk of the spiritual believer, but as we respond to them in a godly manner, so we are built up by the Spirit. The testing, irritating person becomes a blessing for spiritual growth.

Satan's key strategy is distraction into inessential or wrongful things (carnality), and such persistently carnal believers are a major distraction for all those who desire to press forward. These are the people who most often disrupt the advance of every church, and lead astray the young believers into nonsense that disables their witness, and can cause them to lose their rewards. These carnal believers are always a challenge to our walk in the light of the Word! Just keep walking and preaching, and let the light do the work, and allow the Holy Spirit to do any "sorting out" that needs to be done.

As a pastor you have to preach God's Word diligently and vigorously, and spell out passages like 1 John, Galatians and the Book of James. The enemy will utilize all persistently carnal people to try to neutralize the rest, and only the teaching of the truth can strengthen people against the error of apparently "unimportant carnality". Rebuke carnality in all its forms and encourage spirituality through the teaching of the Word. Do not be concerned about cleaning a church out and losing people, as long as the Holy Spirit through the Holy Word is the means of cleaning out the "make believers", or the persistent and unrepentant carnal ones. When the light comes on it is only the rats that always scamper for cover! Teach God's Word and, "let the chips fall where they may". Let the Word convict, cut and purify. **Ezekiel 3:4-27, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26, Titus 2:14.**

Verse 10. "If we say we have not sinned we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us".

There is nothing worse than calling the Lord Jesus Christ a liar. This goes one step further than verse 8; for it is one thing to deceive yourself, and quite another to say the Lord is deceived! John has given the positive command to confess, and now he balances it with this statement, closing the door to any objection amongst the pseudo-spiritual people. From the strength of the language here, I suspect that John has been called "a liar" by the false teachers. Satan is the liar, and to be in his company is fatal eternally! **John 8:42-47.** He has been abused for teaching things that they claim the Lord didn't say. John is absolutely clear; the Lord did say this, and those who oppose are not calling John a liar, but the Lord himself! They disclose their family likeness by their words here!

Stick with God's Word, and let it dwell richly within you. You will have trouble from the stupidly carnal and the dangerous "make believers", but you also will have the light to live and worship by. Select your company in these matters. The company of John is better than that of the false teachers every time. True spirituality is rooted and grounded in a heart that is open to the Holy Spirit's ministries, and resultant confession of sin, but false spirituality is grounded on the arrogance of those who think they are perfect in themselves. Walk in the light of his word, not the false light of those who think they don't need to deal with sin, or open their hearts to God's gentle correction. **Colossians 3:16.**

False teaching preaches that either sin doesn't matter, or that there is a "secret" way to defeat it totally; nearly always legalistic, and making you feel very "special" (all aspects of this betray its satanic origins). All such teaching is from the enemy, not from the Lord. In this world we will have trouble; trouble from our Old Sin Nature and trouble from the cosmos system of Satan and those who support him. Deal with sin; do not ever deny its power to destroy you if confession is not utilized. Foolishness or deviousness opens you to spiritual uselessness and finally to destruction of your ministry and loss of your life under the "Sin Unto Death" (Chapter 5 below).

APPLICATION PRINCIPLES FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

- 1 What we have heard we need to declare to all of God's people. The message is to be only what we have heard from apostolic teaching. It is God's truth that changes people, not men's ideas and opinions.

2. God is not the author of evil. Satan's deception is powerful here and would have us led away from a holy hatred of evil. We are to stand firm in the truth of the Word and reject compromises with evil.
3. We are to be in the daily habit of walking in the light. This means that daily we open our Bibles and heed the words we read there. We are fortunate today to have multiple media and be able to listen to God's Word as we travel, or relax with radio, CD player, or TV, internet. Let us ensure we take advantage of these things and saturate our days in the light!
4. We are called to confess, and have faith that the Lord will forgive! We agree with God's assessment of our sin, we bring it to him, and he deals with it.
5. Beware of the liars of Christendom, for they are Satan's people, and can be spotted by their "Liar natures"! There are many people out there who prefer darkness to light and who rejoice in leading others into their world of sin and death. Let us be alert, and ensure we warn all we meet of the truth and the need to walk in it daily.

DOCTRINES

LIGHT

1. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)
2. The Lord is the visible manifestation of that light. (John 1:4, 8:12, 12:46)
3. The Lord's coming as the Light of the World was prophesied. (Isaiah 49:6)
4. The light was seen in the darkness of the world. (Matthew 4:16, Luke 2:32)
5. The Lord brought light and immortality through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:10)
6. Believers are said to be light bearers. (Matthew 5:14-16, John 12:36)
7. We are said to be the children of the light. (John 11:9-10, Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:5, 1 Peter 2:9)
8. Light is necessary for man's existence on the earth. (Ecclesiastes 11:7; Jeremiah 31:35)
9. Divine guidance of Israel was provided by God through light. (Exodus 14:20)
10. Bible doctrine in the soul is portrayed by light. (Psalm 119, 105,130)
11. The gospel is called light. (2 Corinthians 4:3,4; 2 Timothy 1:10)
12. Salvation brings the believer out of darkness into light just as the planet Earth was brought out of darkness into light by God. (Luke 1:79; 1 Peter 2:9).
13. Satan is the distorter, the angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14)
14. Satan's strategy is to outshine the true light with his own false gospel. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

BLOOD SACRIFICE

1. Ever since the earliest recorded time God has required a blood sacrifice for sin. It is implied by the coats of skin provided by the Lord in the garden after Adam and Eve had attempted to clothe their nakedness with leaves. Abel brought an acceptable animal sacrifice, unlike Cain's who brought an unacceptable bloodless offering.
2. The requirement for blood sacrifices was continued with Noah after the flood; (cf. the near sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham); and was established as a requirement not only by the Passover lamb but also in the Levitical offerings.
3. When recording the will of God for Israel in the matter of food and the abstinence from eating "any manner of blood" Moses states "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
4. It is clear from the above that the life of an innocent victim (the animal sacrifice) acted as a shadow until the once and for all payment was paid with the true sacrifice of Christ.
5. There is an absolute necessity of the unique sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ as indicated by the phrase "the blood of Christ". (Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:22)

6. Up to the time of the once and for all sacrifice the sins of believers were set aside adjacent to them (gk. para) but since the cross they have been taken fully away.
7. The twelve elements of grace which involve the blood of Christ:-
 - a) The New Covenant. (Hebrews 8:8, 9:20-21)
 - b) The blood is the life. (John 6:53)
 - c) Purchase and Redemption. (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19)
 - d) Propitiation. (Romans 3:25)
 - e) Justification. (Romans 5:9)
 - f) Sanctification. (Hebrews 13:12)
 - g) Cleansing. (Hebrews 9:14, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 7:14)
 - h) Victory. (Revelation 12:11)
 - i) The blood of sprinkling. (Hebrews 10:22, 1 Peter 1:2)
 - j) Made nigh. (Ephesians 2:13)
 - k) Peace. (Colossians 1:20)
 - l) Boldness to enter. (Hebrews 10:19)
8. It is of interest that the resurrection body consists of flesh and bone but apparently no blood.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: REPENTANCE

1. Two words are translated repentance in the New Testament:-
 - a) Metanoia - META - to change , NOIA - the mind, which means to change one's opinion or mind about something or someone.
 - b) Meta Melamai - to feel sorry for - an emotional reaction because of acts undertaken.
2. Repentance in salvation is to change one's attitude toward the person and work of Christ. (Luke 13:3,5, 15:7, 10, 16:30, 3 1, Acts 17:30, 31, 20:2 1, Romans 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)
3. Repentance is used in salvation mainly for the Jews. The Jews had seen Christ as a great teacher, a wise man, a prophet. They repented and now recognised him as the Son of God. In the case of the Gentiles, the word believe is used. (Acts 16:3 1) as they had no previous ideas about the person of Christ.
4. The Fruit of Meta Melamai, such as penance and sorrow does not save. e.g. Judas repented of his actions and went to eternal damnation.
5. However, Godly sorrow works repentance. (2 Corinthians 7:8-11)
6. The Holy Spirit is responsible for repentance in salvation. (1 Corinthians 2:14, John 16:8-11) It convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment.
7. The Believer is told to repent from dead works or human good.
8. When God repents it is symbolic (Genesis 6:6, Exodus 32:14, Judges 2:18, 1 Samuel 15:35, Jeremiah 15:6, Amos 7:3, 6, Hebrews 7:21)

CHRISTIAN LIFE: CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

1. Forgiveness is by the death of Christ (Matthew 26:28, Revelation 1 :5)
2. Divine forgiveness is to all who believe in Christ (Acts 10:43, Acts 16:31)
3. The penalty of sin was paid by Christ on the cross. (Hebrews 9:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

4. When a believer sins his fellowship with God is disrupted. God forgives these sins upon confession and cleanses from the unknown sins in the believer's life as well as known sins. (1 John 1: 9).
5. Jesus Christ is our propitiation. (1 John 2:1,2)
6. In human forgiveness we are told to forgive others even as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). This can only be accomplished by the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22,23)
7. Steps towards restoration of fellowship
 - [a] Examine yourself for genuineness of motivation. [2 Corinthians 14:5]
 - [b] Act on what you see [Romans 4:7-8]
 - [c] Deal with any sin by confession. [1 John 1:9, Psalm 66:18]
 - [d] Forget the sin which you have confessed. Do not proceed into a pattern of guilt.[Philippians 3:13-14, Psalm 103:10-12]
 - [e] Resume your active spiritual walk. Avoid areas where you might be tempted by the sin which so easily besets us. [Hebrews 12:12-13]
 - [f] Be reconciled to others once you have been reconciled to God. [James 5:16]
 - [g] Get moving and grow up. [2 Peter 2:17-18]

CHURCH: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. Those who will not heed the Word of God within the church are to be first warned and then rebuked (privately if the error is private, or publicly if their error is public). 2 Thessalonians 3:14, Titus 1:13, 14.
2. If they still will not listen to the truth then the individuals are to be isolated from the fellowship and others are to separate themselves from them. 1 Timothy 6:3-5.
3. If they still refuse to change they are to be expelled from the fellowship. Titus 3:10 Galatians 1:6 -10.
4. Paul warns about false doctrine 1 Timothy 1: 4, 11. Then he expels the two false teachers, Hymeneus, and Alexander, that they might learn the truth and stop blaspheming. 1 Timothy 1:18-20.
5. Any expulsion is only temporary, it applies only so long as the person is unrepentant. When they repent they are to be received back again as was the prodigal son, Luke 15:11-32, and the man in adultery. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

SIN: OLD SIN NATURE

1. We are born with a nature, inherited from Adam, which is against God and prone to sin (Ephesians 2:1, Romans 5:12).
2. The old sin nature is perpetuated in the human race by physical birth (Psalm 51:5, 1 Timothy 2:13, 14).
3. We are therefore considered spiritually dead at the point of physical birth (Romans 5:12).
4. Names for the old sin nature:
 - a) Flesh - Galatians 5:16
 - b) Old Man - Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9
 - c) Carnal - Romans 7:14
 - d) Sin - Romans 5:12
 - e) Heart - Jeremiah 17:9
 - f) Member - Colossians 3:5.
5. The believer continues to have an old sin nature after salvation (1 John 1:8, 1 Corinthians 3:1).
6. The believer under the control of the old sin nature is called carnal (Romans 7:14, 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).
7. The old sin nature frustrates true production of the Christian life (Romans 7:15).
8. The old sin nature has two tendencies (Romans 6:6)

- a) Area of weakness - pushes us towards lawlessness and sins (Hebrews 12:1)
 b) Area of strength - pushes us towards asceticism and self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6).

9. The old sin nature is not found in the resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:56, Philippians 3:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

10. Victory over the old sin nature is by achieved by considering your old life dead, surrendering to God, confessing sin and relying upon the filling of the Spirit (Romans 6:6,11, Colossians 3:9-10).

NOTES

CHAPTER TWO

1 JOHN 2 : 1-5

“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 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”

KEY WORDS

Children	teknion	little child, learner, affectionate address.
Write	grapho	present, active, indicative; I keep on writing.
Sin not	amartano	aorist, active, subjunctive; “in order that” – John’s purpose is that they might stop sinning.
Sin	amartano	aorist, active, subjunctive; if they sin.
Advocate	paracletos	a representative, advocate, counsel, alongside.
Propitiation	ilasmos	the atoning sacrifice that removes sin.
Whole world	olou tou kosmou	the entire created world.
Know	ginosko	present, active, indicative; we keep on knowing.
Know	ginosko	perfect , active, indicative; we are absolutely Certain of knowledge – lasting results.
Keep	tereo	present, active, subjunctive; if we have and hold. We keep on guarding, obeying with our very lives.
I know him	ginosko	perfect , active, indicative; I perfectly know him.
Keepeth not	tereo	present, active, participle; is not keeping, and Obeying his commandments on a regular basis.
Liar	pseustos	a liar, pretending something to be true that isn’t
Not in him	eimi	present, active, indicative; truth is not in him.
Keepeth	tereo	present, active, subjunctive; who regularly keeps
Perfected	teleioo	perfect , passive, indicative; they are brought by God to the goal of life – lasting results.
We know	ginomai	present, active, indicative; we keep on knowing.
We are	eimi	present, active, indicative; we keep on being.

REFLECTION

Remember, the first two verses of 1 John 2 should in fact be at the end of 1 John 1 as they complete the thoughts of that chapter. The verses and chapter divisions in the Bible were put in when the Bible was first printed to help the printers, which was in the 1430-40s, not long before the KJV in 1611. They should therefore not be thought of as inspired.

It was therefore not possible to quote chapter and verse for many hundreds of years when quoting from the Bible; indeed only after around 1440 of our era. This chapter break is certainly not inspired, neither is the break between Hebrews chapters 3&4. The section, to be considered in context, should therefore be from 1 John 1:8 - 2:2, which is all part of the subject of dealing with sin.

In this section John continues to tell us of the responsibilities, privileges, and means of fellowship with Christ. In this section 1:8 - 2:2, we see three statements looking at sin-related areas, but from different viewpoints that give us binocular vision on the two problem areas of sin. The three statements are 1:8, 1:10, 2:2. These give us the two key points on, firstly the universality of sin, and secondly the universality of available forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ's blood sacrifice on the cross.

Everybody has sinned and everybody is covered by the blood sacrifice through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 9 we have the statement of confession whilst in verse 1 of chapter two we are told that if we sin we have an advocate at the right hand of the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The form of this section of the letter is called Hebrew parallelism as we have items stated twice, but from a slightly different viewpoint the second time, to give a deeper understanding.

At the Cross the Lord paid the price to deal with the sins of the world. This was phase one of the plan's activation. We are now in phase two, with the Lord at the right hand of the Father, where he intercedes for His children, saying, "this is my blood bought brother, this is my blood bought sister". **Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25**. We confess our sins in the privacy of our own hearts and the Lord stands for us at the Father's right hand and intercedes on our behalf claiming the blood shed for us. This is the most powerful picture of the reality and certainty of forgiveness. Refer to the BTB study below CHRIST – ASCENSION AND SESSION, MINISTRY AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

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:

The purpose of the passage is now given - these things are written that we might not have a habit of sin destroy our life witness. John silences those who argue that grace encourages sinning, by clearly stating that the purpose of his work is that the believers might deal with and eliminate sins from their lives as soon that they are aware of them. He writes to, "my little children", "teknia" which is a note of affection that can only be legitimately used by an aged pastor to his spiritual children. We are included in this greeting as John's spiritual descendants, through faith in the words he wrote.

Remember, that in the eternal Royal Family of God, John had love for us all as he wrote these words. He was aware, as was Paul, that many people would read his words after his death, and he expresses his love for us all, in the family, just as he loved those he knew personally. He saw that the family would be together only in heaven, but he rejoiced in us, his spiritual children, even as he wrote. **1 Corinthians 4:14-16, Galatians 4:19, 1 John 2:12-13, 3:7, 18, 4:4, 5:21**.

"These things write I unto you that" - the word for that is, "hina" - this is the preposition of purpose, this is the purpose that John has written the letter, "in order that ye sin not". Sin, "hamartano", is the standard word for sin, and means to miss the mark; to fall short of God's standards. It is the aorist, active, subjunctive. The aorist tense indicates every point of time that we sin, the active voice reminds us that we do the sinning, the subjunctive mood - this is the mood of potential and reminds that we have free will, and that sinning (and confession) is an act we are responsible for.

Our job as pastors is to warn the flock of God in truth, with urgency, that they stop any sinful living pattern and live righteously. **Psalms 4:4, Ezekiel 3:21, John 8:3-12**. Notice this last passage especially; the Lord convicts all the hypocritical accusers of their sin, and then also does not excuse the woman of hers, but his message is focused forward, that she stop the pattern that has brought her to this point. We are likewise to be focused forward to the righteous life God intends, rather than dwelling on past, now forgiven, sins. **Psalms 103:8-16**.

Every time you sin you fall short of God's perfect standard. John's great desire for all of us reading this is that we fall into sin less and less; that we win the moment by moment battle each day, and live as God intends each and every moment of every day. The apostolic desire, and ours like theirs, is that people grow in righteousness, growing away from their old sinful life patterns. **Romans 6:1-7, 1 Corinthians 15:32-34, Ephesians 4:26, 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Titus 2:11-14**.

Sins come in two categories; sins of omission and sins of commission. Things that you are not doing that you should be doing is also within the definition of "missing the mark". **Romans 14:23**. God's view of sin is far wider than fallen people's viewpoint. While we are on the earth it is up to us to press on towards the mark of the high calling of God. The 'stature of the fullness of Christ' is our divinely appointed standard, which is the Character and Behaviour of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 4:13**. Refer to the BTB CHRISTIAN LIFE – CHRIST FORMED IN YOU, MATURITY.

Our aim is, step by step, to be more like Him, who called us. John then records that we have a "parakletos", an advocate, in heaven for us, and it is the Lord himself. The Holy Spirit within convicts, we confess, and the Lord in heaven advocates. HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

When we do sin, we have to deal with it by **1 John 1:9**. Knowing God's will and not doing it in relation to past sin is just as bad as keeping on sinning. **James 4:17**. Everything you do, or when you do not do what the Lord Jesus Christ would have you do in the circumstances, is sin. The Holy Spirit therefore has His time busy dealing with and convicting believers of sin. This is why we have the Holy Spirit, the comforter, the "parakletos" - the one who stands with you in time, just as this verse tells us we have the Lord as our 'parakletos' in heaven, standing for us. Notice that both the Spirit and the Lord are both referred to as paracletes – advocates and encouragers. **Romans 8:34, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 7:24-25, 9:23-28**.

The Holy Spirit lives in us and convicts us, so that we might be pure vessels fit for the Lord's service, and the Lord stands for us in heaven to support this. He supports our confession of sin, and ensure our full forgiveness and acceptance before the Father. This is the creator's demand, that we live Christ like lives, as well as having the assurance that we have an advocate and a helper within, as well as in heaven. Thus whilst the standard is high, through the Holy Spirit we are able to attain the standard. As we are, "in Christ", we share His righteousness so that in obedience when we confess our sins it is the Lord Jesus Christ's righteousness that we display. **2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 7:26-27, 1 Peter 2:21-24**.

He was righteous, but He suffered for us and took the penalty. His life was perfect and our sin was poured upon Him. Sinners in Christ, covered by the blood of Christ, are therefore acceptable to God; the one who paid the price for our sin is the one who stands for us in Heaven. At the point of salvation we have eternal security because of the nature of the one who paid the price for our salvation. **Colossians 3:3** - our lives are in Christ with God. In time we have fellowship with the Father through relationship with Jesus Christ as we deal with sin in the power that the indwelling Holy Spirit gives us. So Verse one has taken us to heaven, to see the Lord's work for us there. We are members of a family where the head of the family stands up for his own and fights for us. Let us claim the promises of God, and utilize the provisions of God here on earth. Let us deal with our sins and walk through each day in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

"And He is the propitiation of our sins and not for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world. "Hilasterion" is a Greek word that is translated mercy seat or propitiation. Most of the people at the time used the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and would have immediately thought of the Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat above it as this is the Greek word used for it. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled over the Mercy Seat, between the two cherubim, which spoke of God's righteousness and justice. The Lord Jesus Christ is the meeting place between every woman and every man's sins and God's righteousness and justice. Seeing this image before us, there is no doubt about the reality of the sacrifice being accepted, and the sin problem of mankind being solved, in and through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Two angels (cherubim) looked down on the mercy seat, which was in the form of one piece of solid beaten gold, representing the righteousness and justice of God being combined in one essence. The beaten gold of the mercy seat speaks therefore of the perfect and unified Character of God directly facing our sin. Here at the mercy seat the perfect character of God was met with the blood of an innocent sacrifice, and is satisfied. The image of the Old Testament Ark was therefore a powerful metaphor for both the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

God did not let us off from the penalty of sin, as He is Absolute Righteousness, and is not going to lower the standard so that we can hit the target, but He provided the way for us to be accepted, without compromise of his character. John is tying the Old and New Testaments together and showing that Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the concept contained in the very structure of the Ark's Mercy Seat. In his perfect sacrifice for sin, the demands of a holy God are fully met, and we are fully accepted in the beloved through his perfect sacrifice made on our behalf. Refer to the BTB for the study – SALVATION - EXPIATION AND PROPITIATION.

The scope of the atonement is spelt out clearly here; it is unlimited. Christ died for all. **John 1:29, 4:42, 11:51-52, Acts 16:31**. We should have the mental attitude, drawn from these verses, that all are capable of being saved, and that all are capable, through the Holy Spirit's conviction, of responding to the gospel message. This was the evangelistic thrust of the early church, and it should empower and enliven us also. The blood covers all, let us go out and tell the good news to all, that they might avail themselves of so great an offer of salvation. Refer to **Hebrews 2:9, 2 Corinthians 5:19 - 21**. The only limiting factor is each person's freewill choice, to accept, or ignore/reject the Lord's work for them. Refer to the BTB studies on GOD – DIVINE DECREES, also DIVINE INSTITUTIONS-FREE WILL.

As believers the greatness of our salvation should also have an impact upon each of us in the daily details of living. Having made the big decision to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, we ought to ask, are we going to make the series of daily small decisions to accept God's Word and apply it to our lives as the Holy Spirit leads us? Are we living in the assurance of forgiveness? We can know that we are forgiven by the Word of God, but we must open it often and take it into our hearts and minds. Have we taken this message to all who will hear it? **Romans 3:25-26, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Titus 1:13-14, 1 Peter 2:24-25, 3:18**.

We will note in Church History (Refer to the Diploma of Theology Course notes on the CD or the website – Church History) that in the 4-5th century the Church ignored these verses, resulting in very bad consequences for many believers, and for church growth generally. This occurred when some churches started teaching that once you were

saved you never sinned again. This passage states that you will, but that there is a remedy, provided as part of the plan of God since eternity past and completed by the Lord's perfect work on the Cross. Remember Satan destroys many churches by false teaching that destroys evangelism, and builds a cultic social club, instead of a genuine church.

Around this time they also lost a great deal of their zeal about the scope of the Atonement, and so evangelism ground to a halt. This result was the satanic fruit of their false theology. The Roman Empire fell as the unsaved and sadly cultic semi-Christian barbarians swept in, rather than the Christians having gone out to deliver the message of genuine salvation to them. Satan has deceived the whole world since the beginning, and these doctrines are central to his attacks upon truth, dealing with sin, evangelism, and personal certainty of salvation. **Revelation 12:9**. The Lord has redeemed the whole world. Let us keep the fire of genuine evangelism, that is lighted here, burning brightly in our churches today.

Verses 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.

John is very blunt in these two verses. He calls us liars if we do not acknowledge the things he has just said, and then personally deal with our specific problem sins. He also calls us liars if we do not obey in love God's Commandments. He is saying, 'Do not tell me you are a believer if you do not deal with personal sin and obey God's commandments'. Remember these commands of the Lord for us, are more than the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20. There are 20 Commandments in 1 Thessalonians 5 alone. There are hundreds of direct commands from the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel accounts, and John is saying, 'know them and obey them if you claim to know and love Him!'

If people want to really have security in their knowledge of their relationship with the Lord, then this is the way to have it. If we know him we will have a desire to keep his commandments, and that presupposes that we will have taken the time to get to know them first. If a person says that they love the Lord but do not know his words, how can it be true that they love him? They clearly do not love him, for they haven't taken the time to get to know his words! **Isaiah 53:1ff, John 14:15-17, 21-24, 15:10, 14, 17:2-5, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2, Hebrews 5:9**.

The word for 'keep' is the present, active, subjunctive of the Greek verb, tereo. John is saying 'keep on keeping, or guarding with your life', and reminds us with the subjunctive mood (his favourite in this letter!), that our obedience is a matter of daily choice to do the right thing. The verb "tereo" has a strong military usage; meaning "guard with your life", and this is the passionate commitment to truth that is being referred to here. We are to see the commands of the Lord from his Word as things worth guarding with all our being. We are to have passion for the truth.

The word for 'know', is the perfect, active, indicative of the Greek verb, ginosko. The perfect tense reminds us of the everlasting results of knowing God, the indicative mood, underlines the reality of the results of fellowship. The Gnostic heretics claimed special, deep, secret knowledge of God through their doctrines; John challenges the believers to demonstrate their genuine faith and true knowledge through their obedience to what they know.

John counters the Gnostic's claims by urging all believers to enter freely into the open teaching of the "word of life"; that will give them eternal reward as they hear, believe, and obey it.

In verse 4, John underlines the hypocrisy of those who stand piously in meetings and talk about how they 'know Jesus', and yet their lives are full of sin. Such people are self-deceived 'liars'. There is no such thing as academic, cultic or mystic Christianity, built as they are, upon mystical contemplation of secretly revealed truths! Such things are Satanic nonsense; deceptions of the great father of liars. Turn to and read **John 8:44**.

Our true identity is known by our family likeness; thoughts and deeds united to proclaim the truth we claim to believe. If we resemble Satan in our thoughts and actions constantly, it is because he is in control of our life! As believers we are to resemble Christ; this is possible only as we open ourselves to the life-changing doctrines of the Word of God, and the ministries of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. **Titus 1:16**. What keeps us from sin? John discusses that in the next verse.

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

The love of God is perfected, "teleioo", in you if you not only obey His commandments but also follow the spirit and intention of all the Lord's words. If we want real assurance of salvation and our status as believers, this is how we get it. The **perfect passive indicative** of teleioo is used here, and means that there is a point in time that is perpetuated forever. The passive voice means that it is received by us, whilst the indicative mood is the emphasis of the reality of what God has given us at the point of salvation which lasts forever. This means that God's love is going to be completed and perfected in us, with permanent results, when we are obedient to God's Word. When we keep His Word we will know Him and will be drawing nearer by the day to the standard of living that God has for us. **Psalms 105:45, 106:1-3, 119:1-6, Proverbs 8:32-36, Ezekiel 36:26-27, Luke 11:28, John 14:21-24**.

There is a difference between the person who just obeys the commands, and the one who goes even further, who obeys, or follows the spirit of the words of the Lord. This difference is that between a young and mature believer. Turn to and read, **John 14:15-24**. Note the words of the Lord directly to us here, "If you love me keep my commandments"; if you love me you will keep my Word and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. The 'words' are what God desires you to apply into your daily life, out of love for Him – the results are eternal.

It is not simple orthodoxy of our belief in even true doctrines that really matters; it is our application of them, in love, into the details of our daily lives. This is what the Lord looks for from us – real and passionate loving faith relationship with Him, not theological “box ticking”. **James 2:19-24**. Satan has excellent understanding of doctrines; he believes the truth about the “one God”, and he trembles at the thought, for he knows what it means for him. Our challenge is to have more thorough application of doctrinal truth than Satan has! Reflect upon these three passages in light of this verse from John’s letter. **John 15:4-11, Romans 8:1-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**.

As believers we should be so in love with the Lord that we feed on every word he speaks and our hearts are full of desire to apply everything he says. That is what love will do within us. That is the standard John is calling us to. We should know God through his Word, and our rejoicing should be daily in his glorious revelation to us. **1 Corinthians 1:30, 2:14-16**. If we love His Word we know that we love Him. There is no such thing as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who does not love every word in the bible! There is no such thing as a believer who does not desire the “Word of Life”, and seeks daily opportunity for application of it!

APPLICATIONS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. There is a daily battle against temptation to sin, and the believer shows their love for the Lord by battling against temptation, and utilizing confession whenever they fall into a sin.
2. We have two advocates for our spiritual life and witness; the Holy Spirit within and the Lord of glory at the Father’s right hand in heaven. On earth, and in heaven, we are secure in God’s plan and his provisions for us. The challenge is to take advantage of the things God has already provided.
3. The sacrifice of the Lord was God’s perfect provision for our sins, and those of every person who has ever lived. We have a message of hope and forgiveness for all mankind. Passion for evangelism is a hallmark of the believer walking close to the Lord. Let us light this fire daily through prayer for each person we are to meet, that we might share whatever it is the Lord wants shared with them this day. Our desire is that they might meet the one who gave his all for them.
4. If we truly love the Lord, then we love his word with a passion. Let us ensure we open the Word as often, or more often, than we open any magazine, newspaper, or television channel.
5. God wants to complete his work within us while we remain upon the earth. While perfection is for heaven, the believer is to “fill up” their part in the plan, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit on a daily basis. We are to see each and every day as an opportunity to find and fulfil the plan for us this day! Let us commit ourselves daily to putting on our spiritual armour and walking in the power of the Spirit, in order to fulfil our part of the plan today! This may be our last day, so let us make it our best yet! Let this be our prayer daily!

DOCTRINES

CHRIST: ASCENSION AND SESSION

1. The resurrection body of Christ was capable of 'space travel', The humanity of Christ in resurrection travelled through all three heavens. (John 20:17). (1st Heaven - the atmosphere, 2nd Heaven - Stellar Space, 3rd Heaven - the Throne Room of God).
2. The purpose of this space travel was to arrive in a human body at the throne room of God the Father. Although covered with no protective space suit, the resurrection body did not burn up as it travelled through the universe, it did not suffer fatigue but arrived in perfect condition (Romans 8:34, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2).

Upon his arrival, the Father said "sit down at my right hand" (Psalm 110:1, Hebrews 1:13). Deity does not sit, only Christ’s humanity sat down. This indicated the acceptability of the humanity of Christ (Ephesians 1:20) and guarantees the acceptability of regenerate mankind (Ephesians 2:6)-

The seating or session of Christ declared Him superior to all angels, elect or fallen (1 Peter 3:22). Today believers are positionally higher than angels but in the resurrection body believers will be physically superior to angels.

This is why God gives every believer at least one angelic servant - to some many more - a down payment that we will be one day superior to them (Hebrews 1:14). Who made this possible? Jesus Christ through ascension and session.

3. The ascension and session of the humanity of Christ produced victory in the angelic conflict. (Hebrews 1:3-13).
4. The ascension begins a new stage of the angelic conflict (Ephesians 1:20-22, 4:7-10). Hence the believer of the Church age is involved in the intensification of the angelic conflict.

5. The ascension and session begins the subjection of his enemies (Psalm 110:1) as quoted in (Luke 20:42-43, Acts 2:33-34, Hebrews 1:13).
6. The second advent of Christ will conclude the subjection process (Daniel 7:13, 14, Zechariah 13:2, Colossians 2:15, Revelation 20:1-3)
7. The ascension and session also completes the glorification of Christ. (Acts 2:33, Philippians 2:9, 1 Peter 3:22)
8. The ascension explains the uniqueness of the Church Age. (John 7:37-39)
9. With Jesus Christ now in heaven, He has given His Spirit to indwell us on earth. (John 7:37-39)
10. Seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus now ministers as our great high priest (Hebrews 7:23-25)

CHRIST: MINISTRY AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

As Christians we never have to face the enemy alone as the Lord Jesus Christ is at the right hand of the Father in the place of commendation. As such:

1. Jesus Christ as our Advocate defends us -1 John 2:1, Romans 8:1, 32-34
2. Jesus Christ as our Intercessor prays for us - Romans 8:34, John 17, Ephesians 1:3, 20
3. Jesus Christ as our Great Shepherd supplies us. - Psalm 23:1, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 13:20-21
4. Jesus Christ as our Forerunner open the path to God for us. Hebrews 6:20, 10:20, Romans 5:2
5. Jesus Christ as our High Priest sets us apart for service to God Hebrews 5:5-10, 7:17-27, 10:5-18
6. We have a defender who has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us. Hebrews 13:5
7. He who keeps us never sleeps. Psalm 121
8. God's great power is shown towards us. He is at every moment watching over us for protection and provision.
9. Because of the ascension the Lord has received the promise of the Holy Spirit and poured it forth upon His obedient and believing disciples.
10. He has gone to prepare a place for us. John 14:1-3
11. The power of the glorified Christ is available through the power of the Holy Spirit.
12. Jesus Christ has been exalted above the angels and received a name which is above every name, everything is subject to Him and has become His footstool.

CHRIST: SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross had many affects. It was

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|-------------------|--|
| 1. Penal | Galatians 3:13 2 Corinthians 5:21 |
| 2. Substitutional | Leviticus 1:4 Isaiah 53:5-6 2 Corinthians 5:21 1 Peter 2:24 |
| 3. Voluntary | Genesis 22:9 John 10:18 |
| 4. Redemptive | Galatians 3:13 Ephesians 1:7 1 Corinthians 6:20 |
| 5. Propitiatory | Romans 3:25 1 John 2:2 |
| 6. Reconciling | 2 Corinthians 5:18,19 Colossians 1:21,22 |
| 7. Efficacious | John 12:3 20-23 Romans 5:9,10 2 Corinthians 5:21 Ephesians 2:13 Hebrews 9:12 |
| 8. Revelatory | John 3:16 1 John 4:9,10 |

SALVATION - ATONEMENT: UNLIMITED ATONEMENT

1. Definition:
 - a) The totally effective work of Christ on the cross to pay the penalty of sin on behalf of mankind.
 - b) Atonement as a noun means reconciliation after enmity and includes reparation made for wrong or injury.
 - c) The verb has several related meanings such as to be at one, to be in accordance, to make reparation or amends, to make up for errors or deficiencies, to reconcile.
 - d) In the Old Testament, the true meaning of atonement is related to the Hebrew verb "to pass over, to cover" - it is also the word for 'pitch' used to seal Noah's Ark.
2. In Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were used to cover sin.
 - a) God forgave and restored where sin was covered by the blood of animal sacrifices.
 - b) However, the true basis for atonement was not found in these animal sacrifices. This is why the sacrifices needed to be repeated time and time again.
 - c) Animal sacrifices were used as a cover for sin until the true sacrifice, Jesus Christ, could be offered on the cross.
 - d) Atonement in the Old Testament refers to the use of animal sacrifices to picture the saving work of Christ.
 - e) The two concepts of atonement (Old and New Testament) are brought together in Romans 3:23-26)
3. Atonement is unlimited
 - a) When Jesus Christ was judged on the cross for sins he paid for the sins of the entire human race, not just the elect. (Romans 5:6, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 1 Timothy 2:6, 4:10, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 2:2)
 - b) "Limited Atonement", the concept that Christ died for believers only is incorrect.
4. Unlimited Atonement eliminates sin in the unbelievers' indictment at the Last Judgment.
 - a) When Christ died on the cross, He was judged for all sins of the human race.
 - b) Therefore the issue in salvation is not sin, but faith in Christ. People choose either to accept the work of Christ (John 3:18,36), or their own "good" works to gain the approval of God.
 - c) Therefore, human good will be the basis of the unbelievers' indictment at the Last Judgment. (Revelation 20:12)

SALVATION: EXPIATION AND PROPITIATION

1. Expiation and Propitiation are two sides of the same coin with propitiation being in relation to God while expiation looks at the problem from man's side.
2. By expiation the offence which renders the person guilty in the sight of God is covered from the eyes of God by the effective dealing with the problem by propitiation.
3. The Mercy Seat (the top of the Ark of the Covenant) in the Tabernacle was the place of propitiation.
4. The concept of the Mercy Seat must be understood in the light of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22, 37:1-9).
5. The Ark of the Covenant was a wooden box (45" x 27" x 27") constructed of acacia wood (the humanity of Christ) overlaid with gold (the Deity of Christ).
6. Contents of the Ark: the golden pot of manna, the tablets of stone and Aaron's rod that budded (Hebrews 9:4). The tablets of stone represented man's transgressions against God's perfect standard, the rod that budded stood for man's rebellion against established authority, the pot of manna showed man's rejection of divine provision.
7. The content of the Ark is a picture of Christ bearing our sins in His body on the tree (2 Corinthians 5:21).
8. The Mercy Seat was a solid gold lid which fitted over the ark and bore two golden cherubs, one on each end representing God's holiness (Hebrews 9:5).
9. Once every year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered twice into the Holy of Holies with a bowl of blood (once for his own sins and once for the sins of the people) (Hebrews 9:7). He sprinkled the blood on the Mercy Seat. God's righteousness and justice were satisfied.
10. Because of propitiation, or satisfaction of His holy character, God is free to love the believer.
11. The Mercy Seat represented propitiation with emphasis on the person of Jesus Christ, our own great High Priest.

12. "Mercy Seat" in Hebrews 9:5 has the same concept as the word propitiation (Gk. hilasterion) in Romans 3:25.
13. Propitiation is used to express the true and perfect love of God for all believers regardless of their status (1 John 4:10).
14. Propitiation is used to relate the person of Christ and the "covering" of God's character (Romans 3:25).

CHRISTIAN LIFE: CHRIST FORMED IN YOU

1. SCRIPTURE (Galatians 4:19) "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. "
2. Evaluation
My little children - the Galatians were brought to the Lord through Paul's ministry "travail in birth". Paul is in much anguish and pain over the attitude of the Galatians. "until" - future - this has not happened yet, Christ be formed in you. (Ephesians 3:16,17; Philippians 1:20). Here we are talking about the character of Christ being formed in the believer.
3. Principle of Christ being formed in you
 - a) Christ fulfilled the Law. (Matthew. 5:17)
 - b) Christ is the end of the law to them that believe (Romans 10:4, Galatians 5:18, 23)
 - c) We have however a higher law, the law of spirituality (Romans 8:2-4)
 - d) This new law is accompanied by a commandment to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).
 - e) The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is to produce the character of Christ and to glorify Christ. (Galatians 4:19)
 - f) The Holy Spirit is the person who glorifies Christ in the Christian walk. (John 16:14, 7:39)
 - g) The glorification of Christ takes place within the believer. (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19,20).

CHRISTIAN LIFE: MATURITY

Categories of Believers

1. Standpoint of Spirituality:
 - a) Spiritual believer - the Holy Spirit controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6b).
 - b) Carnal believer - the sinful nature controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6a).
2. Standpoint of Growth:
 - a) Baby - one who has just received Christ as Saviour.
 - b) Adolescent - one who has learned some doctrine but is not yet in the application state.
 - c) Mature - one who knows and applies doctrine and spends a maximum amount of time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.
3. Relationship of Maturity and Spirituality:
 - a) Spirituality is an absolute. The Holy Spirit either controls or He does not. One cannot be a little bit carnal. If he is carnal he is NOT spiritual.
 - b) Maturity is speeded up by spirituality, but a baby believer can be either carnal or spiritual, and a mature believer can be carnal or spiritual.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: MATURITY: CROSS TO THE CROWN

1. Salvation is only the beginning of the plan for man. After salvation the believer's objective is to advance in stages of spiritual growth on the path from the Cross to the Crown.
2. At each stage the believer faces increasing intense tests that can only be passed by faith. Paul in Romans 1:17 says believers progress from faith to faith. The five Hebrew words for faith illustrate the five stages of growth described in the New Testament.
 - a) The Babe - 1 Peter 2:2 - AMEN - the leaning faith of Genesis 15:6

All believers enter the family of God as infants when they exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After the tremendous stress of birth, of coming from darkness into the light the infant's impulse is to nurse. The objective is nourishment but the baby also receives great comfort in feeding. God's objective for the spiritual infant is for growth, but He commences this with comfort. Not much is expected of a baby in his first few years, he cannot feed or change himself. Spiritual infants are just as helpless and need a great deal of nurturing, encouragement and patient encouragement and patient instruction.

- b) The Adolescent - 1 John 2:13-14 - BATACH - the wrestling faith of Psalm 37:3

Adolescents young, strong and eager believers. This is the stage where people have grown to the point at which they understand some of the principles of truth and are beginning to apply them to their lives. But like most adolescents, they have the growing pains of arrogance and rebellion against authority; they are sometimes too eager to act on their own, and this often gets them into trouble. They have knowledge which they mistake for wisdom, but they lack the experience. Their tendency is to want to apply the truth to other people's lives. Adolescents may be troublesome, but at least they are not apathetic. They must be patiently trained and encouraged to channel their energies. No one makes it to maturity without passing through adolescence.

c) The Mature - Hebrews 5:14, 6:1 - CHASAH - the confident faith that takes refuge in the Lord - Psalm 57:1

The mature believer is able to take meat, the advance doctrine of the Word. A believer who has arrived at spiritual maturity knows enough about the Bible to take responsibility for his own life. He knows how to apply the Word of God to himself so rather than airing all his problems he knows how to solve them. He is not ready to take on every one else's problems but he can take control of his own life. He understands that God has a plan for his life and sets about fulfilling that plan. He gives himself to training and discipline, exercising himself and building spiritual muscle.

d) The Hero of Faith - Isaiah 53:12, Hebrews 11 - YACHAL - the healing faith of Job 13:15

Heroes of faith are men and women who have gone beyond maturity and have learned to fight the good fight. They have advanced beyond simply taking responsibility for their own lives to becoming responsible for the lives of other people. They are always willing to pick up fallen comrades, to treat their wounds, to encourage them and supply their needs. Heroes of the faith still make mistakes, they still fail but they always stand back up and go back into battle.

e) The Friend of God - James 2:23-25 - QAWAH - the enduring faith of Isaiah 40:31

The highest of all possible achievements in life is to become a friend of God. Every believer has the potential and the assets necessary to reach this point, but very few Christians do. It takes persistency and tenacity. The only people who make it this far are those who absolutely refuse to quit.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: MATURITY - SIGNS OF MATURITY (ROMANS 15:1-15)

1. Helping others (v 1-3) The mature believer should bear the infirmities of the weak (v 1; cf. Galatians 6:2). Paul includes himself as a believer of mature strength.

a) A mature believer is characterised by:

- i) Knowing doctrine.
- ii) Knowing promises.
- iii) Spending a maximum amount of time by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

b) A weak or immature believer may be:

- i) A new believer.
- ii) An ignorant believer who does not know the Word.

c) A mature believer bears the infirmities of the weak believer by:

- i) Giving information about the Word (doctrine, promises, procedures). This may be in private conversation.
- ii) Giving advice based on the Word.
- iii) Exercising grace; listening to and helping others with problems.

d) The mature believer is not to "please himself" (v 1,2):

- i) He is not to feed his ego or brag about helping others. It should never be done for self-glory or self-stimulation, but for God's glory.
- ii) Christ as the supreme example (v 3):

He did not please Himself; but as a man He received more pressure than we will ever have. The Old Testament says, "the reproaches of Israel ('them') that reproached the Father ('Thee') fell on the Son ('Me') on the cross." Paul quotes a Messianic Psalm (Psalm 69:9). Christ was under maximum pressure when He bore our sins on the cross.

2. Knowledge of the Word of God (v 4)

a) The Old Testament ("things written aforetime") was the only scripture existing at the time Romans was written. The canon is now completed.

b) the purpose of the Word:

- i) Learning - doctrine God wants us to know.
- ii) Patience - faith in the long distance race. Believing moment by moment.
- iii) Comfort - in trials and difficulties of life.
- iv) Hope - for the future. Believers know where they are going.

3. Attitudes (v 5-6)

Believers are to see others from the divine viewpoint and be "like-minded one toward another". Their one purpose in life, after salvation, is "with one mind and one mouth, glorify God" (v 6). This is only possible from the divine viewpoint.

- i) We are all saved by grace. Christ died for us when we were His enemies (Romans 5:8).
- ii) We all have the same spiritual privileges and responsibilities (except spiritual gifts).
- iii) Every believer has a sinful nature but have different ways of expressing it.
- iv) We all get spirituality the same way (filling of the Holy Spirit) and all grow the same way, by the Word.
- v) God loves each believer with the same amount of love, whether we are in or out of temporal fellowship.

4. Fellowship as the basis of grace (v 7)

- a) Believers are to receive one another as Christ received them.
- b) He received them in GRACE to the glory of God.

5. Ability to distinguish between Israel and the Church (v 8-12)

- a) Christ was a minister under the Law (v 8).
 - i) He was born, ministered, died, arose and ascended under the dispensation of the Law.
 - ii) Therefore all He said (except Matthew 16 and John 14-17) amplified the Mosaic Law, confirmed the four unconditional covenants to Israel and the future of Israel with Him as their King. Some principles He gave are re-stated in the Epistles as the Christian way of life.

b) Before the Law was given (v 9) the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants promised blessing to the Jews, that the Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy.

c) Paul quotes (Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117; Isaiah 11:1-10). (Jesus Christ as the root of David and Jesse, is to reign over the Gentiles too.)

6. Faith that appropriates (v 13)

- a) The God of hope is to fill the believer with joy and peace in the sphere of believing. Faith is the means.
- b) Faith appropriates salvation, restoration to fellowship, filling of the Holy Spirit, doctrine, promises.

7. Knowing the operation of grace (v 14,15)

a) A mature believer realises all he has is because of God's grace and he operates his life on the basis of grace.

b) Grace is manifested in the believer in:

- i) Salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9)
- ii) Prayer (Hebrews 4:16)
- iii) Suffering (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- iv) Releasing power (2 Timothy 2:1)
- v) Growth and stability (2 Peter 3:18)
- vi) Restoration and fellowship (Hebrews 12:15; 1 John 1:9)
- vii) Producing works (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 9:9)
- viii) Christian way of life (2 Corinthians 1:12; Hebrews 12:28).

GOD: DIVINE DECREES

1. This is the term in theology that refers to the plan of God coming to us from eternity past. It means that the Lord God, our heavenly Father, has had a plan from eternity past (before time and space were made) and that plan has been "decreed" to be the plan for this universe, and that this plan is as certain as there was a beginning to this universe, and that there will be an end. Though the universe will end, the plan of God, as it came from before the universe, continues on in its effect after this universe is ended and has been replaced by the new one. 2 Peter 3:10-13, Revelation 21:18.

2. The plan centres on the person and work of the second person of the Trinity; it centres around the person of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:4-6, 1 John 3:23.

3. Entrance into the plan of God is dependent upon grace. The sovereignty of God expressed in the divine decrees he has made about the plan, meet man's free will at the Cross. Grace + faith = salvation. By saving people by grace, God's perfect holy character is not compromised by the transaction. No-one is saved by works, for there is nothing that a creature of space and time can do to impress the creator of space and time, nor is there anything that sin can do to impress or pressure holiness. John 3:16-36, Ephesians 2:8-9.

4. God's plan for this universe is designed in such a way that every event is "decreed"; his plan includes all causes, conditions, and outcomes, there is no real contingency that has not been foreseen and planned for from before time. All this has been achieved in accordance with the holy purposes of God, yet without violating human volition, man's free will. The universe is one of both freewill and determinism. Such a contradiction exists only in our minds, limited as they are by space and time. This plan is far greater than our minds can comprehend, for it was made by the creator of

space and time, who lives and moves and has his being beyond such limitations of thoughts and realities. When we consider this doctrine of decrees, we enter a realm beyond our dimension, and far above and beyond any space travel fantasies of man. Acts 2:23, Romans 8:29, 1 Peter 1:2.

5. God's plan comes from his entire character, not just foreknowledge. It has been drawn up with no violation of man's free will choices, for which each is held responsible. The outcomes are certain because of the divine decrees that make them so, yet the people within the plan have the freedom to choose and no-one before the throne of the creator will be able to say, "I had to fall; you predestined me to!" Each will be judged by their works, freely chosen, and by their rejection of the Lord, freely done. Revelation 20:11 – 21:1.

6. Neither Calvinism nor Arminianism in their theologies capture the full magnitude of the divine decrees, for both try to explain in the human terms of, sovereignty, foreknowledge and free will, yet the reality of the Plan of God comes from beyond all such time and space limited concepts. This doctrine is bigger than our limited minds and languages, and it behoves all who discuss this to recognize their limits as they speak of such things as this. How can a thing be certain and yet also freely done? A moment's reflection gives us the answer once we think about different perspectives on an event; from time and non-time. The only reason people have difficulty with such things is because most have not been trained in philosophy of science or physics.

7. Whenever Paul discussed these things he sang of them; if we understand the truth about the greatness of the character and plan of God we will still be baffled over this, while we live in time, but we will go on our way rejoicing. Acts 8:39, Galatians 6:4, Hebrews 3:6.

GOD: DIVINE INSTITUTIONS - FREEWILL

1. Definition :- Volition or free will is the responsibility before God to choose different ends and means in life.
2. The above definition does not say that one has the power to do what you choose but it does give the opportunity to choose.
3. God gave Adam a choice in the garden in (Genesis 2:16,17) where God told the man "thou shalt not eat" in the imperative mood which is a command.
4. Free will gives you the opportunity to want to accomplish things in conformity with God's will without having the natural ability to do so. (1 Kings 3:5-10) Solomon in this case wanted to judge but could not because of his own limitations.
5. In (Psalm 13) David's free will continued to be positive even though he had not been successful.
6. One of the reasons for the delay in the answering of prayer requests is to allow the strengthening of free will to desire to do God's will.
7. Free will in both believer and unbeliever. (John 7:17)
8. Free will in giving. (2 Corinthians 8:12)
9. Free will cannot be coerced or compromised thus Christianity is a matter of obedience. (2 Corinthians 5:10)
10. As God is to judge all men it means that man is responsible for his actions and that all normal members of the human race have free will. (Revelation 20:11-15)
11. Relationship of free will is vertical, between man and God not man and man. (Ephesians 6:5-9)
12. Because man is subject to judgment there is an age of accountability as portrayed by the "rich young ruler".
13. Animals and plants are not judged.
14. Free will also puts the responsibility on both ends and means. An example of the right end but wrong means is the sin unto death of Moses. (Numbers 20)
15. By application just because God is blessing a ministry, in the case of Moses by providing water it does not mean that the person is necessarily in God's will. God blesses through his grace and not necessarily because they are doing things by God's way.
16. Human viewpoint attack on free will - Determinism.
 - (a) The concept is that if one starts out with any physical item and I know everything there is regarding it and the laws that control it then I can dogmatically predict the future state of that item.
 - (b) This concept is incorrect as shown by the power of prayer (James 5:17).
 - (c) It is possible for God to manipulate His universe. (Acts 16:26).

17. Types of miracles in the bible
- (a) natural - a variation of a natural law
- (i) Elijah and the drought
- (ii) Paul and the earthquake
- (iii) Moses at the Red Sea with the east wind
- (b) supernatural - a direct violation of a natural law
- (i) The resurrection of Christ
- (ii) Being born again

18. In physics this concept is called "Heisenburg's Uncertainty Principle" after the German Nobel prize winner who postulated it. Modern science now views a lot of the formulae of physics as occurring the vast majority of times but on odd occasions not complying with observed laws. Such non compliance would include miracles or manipulation by God.

19. Evolution is an attack on free will as it states that man is evolved from animals and is a higher form of animal. This is often reinforced in text books which state "men and the other animals" indicating that man differs in degree only and not in "kind".

- (a) "Difference in degree" - hot and cold is a matter of relative heat; ice, water and steam are all water and of the same kind.
- (b) "Difference in kind" - a square and a triangle.
- (c) Solomon in (Ecclesiastes 3:21), a believer out of fellowship assesses man as different only in degree from animals.
- (d) Based on evolutionary principles abortion can be justified and atrocities condoned against other races such as the Nazi reaction to Jews, gipsies and the Slavs. From this comes the concept that if we knew everything about animal behaviour we could then describe man.
- (e) The Biblical view however is that we do vary in kind, not in degree (Genesis 2:16) with the thing that sets man apart from the animals being volition.
- (f) By implication man is never totally determined by his environment.
- (g) Hell is a monument to the fact of free will because if you do not have a choice you cannot be judged.

20. Three problems which the Bible solves regarding free will -

- (a) What about babies who die before they hear the gospel or those who are mentally not able to decide ?
 Solution - (2 Samuel 12:18) where a child born to David and Bathsheba dies on the 7th day, the day before circumcision which would have brought the child into a covenant relationship.
 David says that he will go to be with the child indicating the child has been automatically saved without a covenant requirement.
 This is the principle of "unlimited atonement". (1 John 2:2)

- (b) What about the physical damage which hinders the person causing a restriction of free will ?
 Solution - (John 9:1-7) where a man blind from birth is healed. Jesus did not bypass the free will but made up for the blindness. He breaks down the barriers for a person to do God's will but the free will of the person is not manipulated.

- (c) What about spiritual damage to free will ?
 Solution - (Genesis 3:8) where after the fall God sought out Adam and Eve in the garden where they had hidden from him. God who is all knowing asked the question "Where are you ?"
 The principle of the "total depravity of man" is seen here in the fact that man will not of his own free will seek God.
 In (Deuteronomy 5) Moses and all the Israelites heard a public address by God which the Israelites shrank back from.

God speaks to man in three areas:-

- (a) He speaks to all men. (Matthew 5:45, Acts 14:17)
- (b) He has a more intense form of calling. (Genesis 6:3, Romans 13:1)
- (c) He calls through the gospel of Jesus Christ. (John 16:8-11)

It is however possible to so damage the free will regarding spiritual matters that it becomes impossible to believe or repent.

Examples

- (a) the Amorites and Canaanites of Joshua's day. (Genesis 15:16)
- (b) the Pharaoh of the Exodus. (Exodus 7- 11)
- (c) those who accept the mark of the beast. (Revelation 13:8)
- (d) the reaction of unbelievers at the second advent. (Revelation 6:16)

21. However there are many areas over which even those who have had limited free will have control and the person who searches will find. (John 7:17)

22. If God is truly sovereign how can man have genuine free choice? God has absolute sovereignty as shown by a study of His character. It is also clear that man has free will.
 God uses his free will as creator whilst man uses his as a part of creation.

23. One way of looking at this is fatalism which is the basis of most eastern religions which state that man's destiny is set and certain.

24. Another way is autonomy which says that all things are uncertain and therefore history goes on chaotically.

25. True biblical sovereignty is based on the creator/creation concept with the creator outside the universe and the created beings within.

Three non salvation examples:-

(a) Paul as a prisoner on a ship bound for Rome predicts, having received advice from the angel of God, that there will be no loss of life but the ship will become a wreck. The guarantee is a sovereign guarantee and therefore absolute. Paul however tells the soldiers that they must stay on the boat to be saved. They do and they are saved. Sovereign decrees by God therefore contain free will decisions by man. (Acts 27)

(b) The sovereign decree is that all things work together for good towards the goal of predestination and eventual glorification. We have a guarantee that we will be in heaven. We need to be actively involved in the chain of events. (Romans 8:28)

(c) Daniel understood the time of "desolations" as seventy years as prophesied by Jeremiah and knew that it would end on time. He now seeks by supplication with sackcloth and ashes forgiveness for Israel's sin on the basis that no discipline is going to be removed without the sin having been forgiven. (Daniel 9:2)
God promises certain things but they are contingent on our prayer Using the principle of the sovereignty of God we can be confident in prayer if we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. (James 4:2)

26. Can free will be neutral ? The answer is no, one is either positive or negative towards God. For instance if a young man is keen on a girl and is asked if he is going to marry her and he answers he does not know. As long as he debates the question he will not marry her and is therefore negative to marriage.

27. Every attack in the Christian life has one common feature, the denial of the Word of God as shown in the temptation of our Lord. Each of them therefore is an attack on the character of God.

28. The act of negative free will to the plan of God is given in (Romans 1:18-32.)

In this passage:-

- (a) the unbeliever hold the truth in unrighteousness. (v18)
- (b) the power of God is clearly seen by all men. (v19-20)
- (c) they became vain in their imaginations and worshipped part of the creation rather than the creator. (v21-23)
- (d) the result is sexual and other perversions. (v24-31)
- (e) they end up encouraging others to defy God. (v32)

29. Are the majority always right ? A scriptural example of this was Elijah and the prophets of Baal in (1 Kings 18) where on a public opinion basis Elijah would have been considered wrong.
The concept that public opinion is always correct comes from the French philosopher Rousseau who stated "the most general will is always the most just also, the voice of the people is in fact the voice of God".
Another good example of this would be the public opinion that happened at the crucifixion of Christ.

30. There are therefore two classes in the Christian life, positive or negative to God's will.

31. In Old Testament times physical idols were common. The idols nowadays are commonly abstract in the form of ideas and concepts. It is up to the Christian to challenge these concepts where they occur.

1 JOHN 2:6-14

"6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 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. 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. 9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 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. 12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 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."

KEY WORDS

Abideth	meno	present, active, infinitive; to remain in.
Walk	peripateo	aorist, active, indicative; conduct life.
Brethren	agapetoi/adelphoi	the two MSS traditions have alternatives "dearly loved ones", or "dear brothers".
New	kainos	new or novel, unusual.
Old	palaios	old, traditional, ancient.
Heard	akouo	aorist, active, indicative; have really heard.
True	alethes	true, genuine, able to be rested upon.
Darkness	skotia	deep spiritual darkness – no true sight/reality.
Past	parago	present, middle, indicative; is passing away.
Shineth	phaino	present, active, indicative; already giving light.
Saith	lego	present, active, participle; always saying.
Hateth	miseo	present, active, participle; is hating/detesting.
Is (in darkness)	eimi	present, active, indicative; keeps on being in.
Loveth	agapao	present, active, participle; the one loving.
Abideth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
Occasion of	skandalos	cause of any offence to others.
Hates	miseo	present, active, participle; the one hating.
Walketh	peripateo	present, active, indicative; keeps on walking.
<u>Knoweth not</u>	<u>oida + ouk</u>	perfect , active, indicative; does not have perfect Knowledge of the truth.
Goeth	upago	present, active, indicative; is going away to.
Blinded	tuphloo	aorist, active, indicative; caused to become blind
<u>Forgiven</u>	<u>aphiemi</u>	perfect, passive, indicative ; released from bonds. Forgiven with permanent results.
His name's sake		a construction of dia plus the accusative. It means "because of his name"; person + power.
<u>Known</u>	<u>ginosko</u>	perfect , active, indicative; have perfectly and Completely known him.
Young men	neaniskos	young man, in years or spiritual faith.
<u>Overcome</u>	<u>nikao</u>	perfect , active, indicative; achieved victory. Permanent results of this are stressed.
Wicked one	poneros	wicked, evil, depraved, malignant.
<u>Known</u>	<u>ginosko</u>	perfect , active, indicative; have known. Their knowledge has lasting results within them.
Strong	ischuros	strong, valiant, powerful to fight.

REFLECTION

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

'He who says he abides in Him should walk even as He walked'. There is no way around this verse is there? Are you like Christ? Are you His disciple? If you love Him you want to be like Him. What do you desire above anything else in your life? Are you on your way to fulfilling this verse?

The tenses of the verbs in this verse make it clear that it is the regular habit of walking (or living) that is in view here. We are called to the habit of holiness, and that is the Lord's requirement of us. The aorist tense of the verb "to walk" reminds us that each day is a series of isolated, minute by minute decisions, each of which is to be bound together by our positive volition towards God's will, and against the temptations to walk off God's path for our life. **John 13:12-17, 15:4-8.**

There is no room for "make-believers" here. This is a call to regular application of the Word of truth into daily life. What will drive the individual believer to this motivated application? Love for the Lord will drive us and empower our energies from within. If this drive is not within us, then the Holy Spirit is not active within us! If this is the case, then we are out of fellowship and need to deal with the sin in our life. **Revelation 3:20.** Let us open the door of our heart by confession of any sin that has brought a cloud between the Lord and ourselves. **1 Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Peter 2:21-25.**

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.

Here we have John strongly note, that he is not saying anything new here; this is old policy for the church, it is from the Lord himself. The "old commandment" may be found in many places, one is in **Mark 12:28-32**, which refers us back to the Mosaic Law, reminding us that God is one God and we must love the Lord our God above all else. **Leviticus 18:1-3, 19:1-2, Deuteronomy 6:1-9.** Secondly we are reminded that love for our neighbours is the "normal" outflow of loving God. We should love our neighbours as ourselves. **Leviticus 19:18, 34.**

There are no other commandments greater than these. The Lord strongly went back to the Mosaic Law, to these oldest commandments. **Matthew 5:43, 19:19, 22:39, Mark 12:31-33, Luke 10:27-36, Romans 13:9-10.** If you love God it will

be automatic that you will "agape" love others, you will honour and respect and consider what is best for that person. To love, in the Christian sense, is to be concerned for their eternal destiny with everything you do being out of consideration for their ultimate blessing.

If you keep the first commandment you will be honouring God and respecting other people. A person claiming to be a believer and not doing this is not a believer in John's or the Lord's definition. **Galatians 5:13-14, James 2:8-12**. The definition of "Christian", centres in the person so called, having the same sort of love the Lord had for the lost, and their saved brethren. No love and care = not a genuine believer! **Matthew 7:13-23** always applies!

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.

Because the light has been turned on in its full brightness in Christ's life, words and work, we are not in the dark at all about what the bible means and how it is meant to apply into our lives. We simply look at how the Lord lived, or how he applied a scripture and that gives us the information about how we ought to apply things. In the Age of Israel the rule was the same but now in Christ, God's policy is even more clearly seen.

Some things have changed in the spiritual realm because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the policy of God towards sin is constant. Through the Incarnation light came into the world. The Mosaic Law held up a candle to sin and showed it for what it was, but on the Cross, sin is shown up brightly for what it is, and it is fully and finally dealt with. We are to live in the light of the fullness of God's revelation in Christ Jesus.

The old things take on a new meaning; as we look back and see their significance in pointing to the Saviour. We are now in a new relationship with God through Christ, something far better than anything the Old Testament saints enjoyed. What was old is now new; it is a deeper and more fulfilling way that we are to walk now in Christ Jesus. We should therefore have an even higher spiritual standard of living than Moses. As we have more light we should have an even higher standard. Moses and the angels themselves, it is said, longed to see our time. **1 Peter 1:10-13, 2 Peter 1:19**.

All believers now have the completed canon of Scripture before them, as well as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who can instruct us about the truths of God's Word. We are blessed above measure. John calls us to celebrate our great position in Christ by loving obedience and service. **2 Corinthians 4:1-7, Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Peter 4:1-7**. These three passages are excellent follow ups for a small study group to explore verse eight further.

Now turn to and read, **John 3:16-20**. This is the application passage in the Gospel that verse eight comments upon. The light has shone in the darkness but unsaved and sinful men and women do not like to look at the light, because they are dark in their souls, and they prefer to stay there. God convicts and shines the light of conviction, but then free will is expressed, and that is John's point – Choices = Consequences – and they are eternal in their scope!

Whilst the darkness applies pre-eminently to the unbeliever it can also apply to the believer who refuses to look at the truth of God's Word, turns away from the light and fails to deal with sin. A new day has dawned on resurrection morning for all mankind. We have new light, and all people have new hope through the empty cross and empty tomb; sin and death are defeated positionally for all, but each must respond and accept the person and work of the Lord. Our responsibility is to share this with all who will hear, and live in a manner appropriate to those who are light bearers. Refer to the BTB doctrinal study on LIGHT on page 37. **Psalms 27:1, 36:9, 84:11, 2 Timothy 1:10**.

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

He who says he is living in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness even until now. If you are walking in the light and in the sphere of God's love, you must be loving your brother. "Agape" love is a respect and concern for them as a person. You are concerned about their ultimate wellbeing, their eternal life. No concern = no Christian connection!

John has been very repetitive about this point, hasn't he? If we are in Christ Jesus there will be fruit in our life, and the key fruit of the Holy Spirit is love. You will meet many people in the church who are hated by, or hate another Christian. The Christian who hates is not dealing with his/her sin. If another Christian hates you, do not take it personally, do not get upset, just leave it with the Lord to whom you both report, and He will sort the offending sister/brother out. The only offence that you are allowed to give them is the offence of the truth of the gospel. You should not react, for the light in your soul should be kept on. Our Holy Spirit empowered love for that other person, will be expressed in prayer for them, in order that they might repent of their malice, just clear away any malice that has taken root in your own life. **John 16:8-11, 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 2 Peter 1:5-11**.

When the believer rejects the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit in their life they become hateful and vicious. You may be, as a Spirit filled believer, on the receiving end of meaningless and unfathomable hatred at times. This may be due to your spiritual growth which shames them, or your moral life which is, without you realizing it, an affront to their sin, so that when you preach the Word, or simply stand for the truth, they will hate you. As a minister of the Word you are holding up the light and you will be hated by those who have come to love the darkness. **John 15:18-27**. However their only hope is the light, so Christ like love keeps it shining, that the hate filled unbeliever might be transformed by it's power.

Remember the principle; hatred consistently abiding in a person's soul, means Jesus is not there! We must be ready to keep the light shining in adversity, even unto our own death. **Hebrews 11:32-40**. We should hate sin and the impact of it

on the lives of the young and innocent, but abiding hatred of a sinful brother indicates a lack of Christ like love in our heart. This is a hard one for all of us who have seen church members found guilty of paedophile activities against children. Such people were, when convicted of such acts, instantly executed in the biblical world, and so the demand to love them ended quite quickly! Remember Jesus words in **Matthew 18:2-7**. Those who commit evil against children are not only beyond the definition of “Christian”, they are under the most severe divine judgment.

Today we have church members in jails for evils (murder, spousal violence, child abuse, fraud...) that the Bible condemns. In a previous age they would have been executed immediately, so we are the first generation to face this issue of maintaining love towards them. What is to be our response to them in jail – for they have brought disgrace upon the name of Christ? All generations however, have faced the general issue of the challenge to confront our anger or hatred towards an obnoxious believer. John makes it clear that we are to maintain a Christian love towards them, and not let hatred of them get hold of our soul, but we are to exercise agape love towards them in a way that does not insult their victims.

Now remember, agape love means a desire for the ultimate well being of the other; which must mean, in the case of an evil brother or sister, prayer for total life change on their part. Our love is expressed in gospel preaching of repentance only, not in covering their sins or excusing them in any way. They are evil and they are possibly false brethren, and they need to meet the Only Saviour in truth, not continue their previous hypocrisy. The Lord gives very specific orders on this matter! “Pray for those who despitefully use/abuse you!” **Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:28**. Refer to the BTB studies on CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISAGREEMENTS, and also LOVE.

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

Here is the contrast between those who habitually walk in the light and those who habitually walk in the darkness (verse 9). The word for offence here is the Greek word, skandalon. We get our English word scandal from it. Sin in the heart leads to open scandal in the church, and disgrace in the community. The word means, to cause offence to others; to put up a stumbling block or trap for another that they fall into. Unresolved sin in a life disables the spiritual life and energy, and so destroys witness and evangelism.

The person with unresolved sin in their life will be offensive and cause, or provoke others to fall into sins of their own. Refer to **Matthew 13:41, 16:23, 18:7**, for uses of the word skandalon. The spiritual believer does not create scandals in their behaviours; they do not bring the Lord’s name or work into disgrace by their words or actions. The spirit filled believer abides in love, they do not “abide” (make themselves at home) in hatred or scandalous behaviours.

You can often feel the presence of such a sin problem in a church. Whenever you have the deep inner unease about the presence of unconfessed sin in the congregation, you are wise to call the whole church to prayer. Your job as a pastor is to teach the Word and be prepared to act quickly on anything that is revealed by the Holy Spirit. Our task as pastors is to be the servants of the Holy Spirit in dealing with sins that will, if ignored, destroy a church’s ministry in a local community.

The old saying, “Misery loves company”, is all too true, and there is nothing more miserable than a Christian out of fellowship through sin, or a “make believer” (false brethren), trying to pretend they are God’s, while filled with evil. Such people delight in getting the young or foolish believer to join them in questionable activities for then they feel justified in their own sinful life patterns. In all cases of so called “hidden sins” on the part of carnal believers, or fake “make believers”, the young believers of the church are in great danger.

The danger from these sinful people is from their straight bad example, the young believer being directly led astray, or provocative actions or words leading the young believer away from safety through good Bible preaching. Sin must be faced or it will erode the church! The Lord’s harshest words were directed at such deceivers. **Luke 17:1-2**. The command is to walk in the Spirit and deal with sin quickly, for as we walk in the love and truth that is Christ’s we walk safely and securely before our God and the world. Falsehood that leads the young believer away from clear biblical teaching is fatal to all who are deceived by it, and the result will be discipline and disaster in time, and potential loss of eternal rewards.

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.

John doubles up his warnings and repeats his principles again and again in different ways throughout this letter. It is a measure of just how serious God takes these things that the repetitions are so powerful. **John 12:35-36**.

God has a remedy for those who turn the light off or ignore the light. Hebrews 12 talks about the subject of divine discipline and also **John 15:1-6** (read these verses now), is a relevant passage to open at this point. Note the sombre message of this verse and the two companion passages. Sin in any person’s life, if left long enough, blinds that person to the truth, and they walk more and more deeply into darkness. **Proverbs 4:19, John 12:40**.

John identifies here the spiritual principle of the **second law of thermodynamics**; all things tend to entropy, “go downhill”, unless propelled upwards by a greater force! Sin or Spirituality does not hold us in a stationary position; we will either grow in grace, or fall further and further away from God if sin is left unchallenged in our life. This is why it is so important to deal with sin quickly and get back into the filling of the Holy Spirit. Without Holy Spirit power active within we will tend to lose momentum and fall backwards into old sinful patterns of behaviour. No mystery here – just basic spiritual physics!

Remember this letter is a commentary on John's Gospel, and John, as we can see, points out strongly, that if we are 'in the Lord (vine)' we will be fruit bearers. John 15:1ff. If we truly are part of the true vine then there will also be the pruning of all branches for more fruit, and pruning away of unfruitful or dead branches. God wants us all to bear spiritual fruit. We either bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit or the carnal fruit of our Old Sin Nature. If we continuously turn our back on the light we will be taken home; our life on earth will end. Refer to the study on the SIN UNTO DEATH at the end of this section.

When David was due for discipline, because of his disobedience, God asked him, 'who do you want to discipline you David?' David replied, that he wanted God to do it. **2 Samuel 24:10-14**. If you are constantly negative towards the Lord then he will hand you over to severe discipline, and possibly to the sin unto death. It is a shocking way to go from this life. Such a believer loses their testimony and has no peace. They also have no dying grace, unless they repent. So John is very blunt, asking us, are we going to be fruitful or are we going to be pruned off the Lord's vine? **John 15:1-16**.

God is not mocked and He hasn't abolished capital punishment. You cannot know how far you can tempt God before He takes you home. It is so unnecessary, as God has provided a remedy for sin, our challenge is to take God's remedy and so avoid the necessity of judgment upon us. God is gracious and waits a long time before acting in most situations but he does act if a believer stays in darkness rather than walking in light. We are members of his body, soldiers in his army, and as such he disciplines his own. **Acts 4:36-5:11**. Let us walk in appreciative obedience to his Word.

Verses 12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 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.

In these three verses John addresses three groups of believers; little children, young men, and fathers. In effect these are the three stages of maturity for believers. In verse 12 he writes to the young believers confirming that their sins have been forgiven forever. Young believers need to feel this assurance. Their tender stage of spiritual life means they are beset by worries and anxieties about their salvation status, and are often overwhelmed by their past sins. They need assurance and the Lord's Word to them is, "Be assured in the perfection of the sacrifice and person of Christ with whom you are now united!" **Isaiah 40:31**. Forgiven is in the perfect tense – the results of God's work for us go on forever....

We all need to remind ourselves daily that all our sin has been forgiven, even the sins that so easily beset us; do not despair, John urges them and ourselves. He tells the baby believers that their sins are forgiven them for the Lord's name's sake. The application of that principle is, claim the forgiveness of the Lord with assurance, and pray for on-going strength to keep walking in righteousness. Victory over our old sinful tendencies takes time, but we are on the right path with regular confession of all recognized sins. Use 1 John 1:9 whenever required, and live for His glory. He died and rose again so that we might be able to live for righteousness each and every day. This means to walk with constant prayer and daily Bible study. **Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 4:2**.

As a pastor you have the responsibility to ensure that your congregation has the opportunity to go through all three stages - babyhood, adolescence and maturity. Refer to the BTB study on MATURITY on page 46 ff. He says to the babies that he has written this to the babies because they have known the Father. These are those who have just accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. The important thing is that they know they have a heavenly Father, and that whatever your own earthly father has been, that you know you are loved by a real heavenly father who loves you with an everlasting love. Under us all are the everlasting arms of a Father who has made us, and loves us forever. **Deuteronomy 33:27, Psalms 41:13, 100:5, 103:17, Isaiah 45:17, 60:19-20, Romans 4:6-7, Ephesians 4:32**.

It is the Stable and Dependable Holy Character of God, which the baby believer needs to know they can rely on. It is this foundation also that is the basis of all true worship. When you understand the perfection of the character of God, you can praise God for his stability and his security upon which you can rest. This should be the first thing that is told to the new believer. We are stabilized in our position in the Lord; we rest in his perfect character, not our own.

The second group mentioned are the young warriors; the adolescent believers. This is a group that is trying to gain mastery over sin in their lives, in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a vigorous group who are strong because the Word of God abides in them, and they are keen to abide in fellowship with the Lord. It is only this abiding of the Word of God, with the Holy Spirit's presence in the soul, that is able to make us strong and powerful, and provides the tools and techniques whereby we are able, in the Spirit's power, to defeat the evil one. Notice the perfect tense of the verb – "overcome". This is the reminder that there are permanent results of walking in the Spirit and winning daily victory in the battle against the Old Sin Nature. To the victor over the Old Sin Nature there is the Crown of victory. Refer to the BTB study on REWARDS AND CROWNS below. **Ephesians 6:10-17, Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-27, 3:5-6, 12, 21**.

Finally the mature believers are referred to as the group that have known Him that is from the beginning. They have come to really know God in a deep and personal way. This is the mature status that you have when you have been through the battles of life, and seen God triumph in your life, and have learned of Him and from Him, and you realize that God is able to keep you in all things. This is true Christian maturity; it is the close walk with the Lord in intimate fellowship through the day's challenges.

Paul's testimony is that he is persuaded that God is able to keep him. **2 Timothy 1:12, 4:1-8**. Paul had been through the pressures of life, in many ways. He knew when he came to write his last letter that he would die, that he would walk behind the man carrying the axe until they got to a certain milestone and there he would be beheaded. Paul, like John, had learnt to trust Christ and His Plan for their lives. Jude also reinforces this message to us all, and we all need to rest upon these verses as we press on towards Christian maturity – God's way, not our way. **Jude 24-25**.

If you are not aiming at that level of maturity in this life, you will not last the distance the Lord has called you to. Walk in the light, deal with sin, love God, love your fellow believers and be motivated to do God's will. That is the standard that John is giving us here. What is God's will for you? There is no debate about that. 'Be ye holy as I am holy!' It is very obvious, but is missed by so many. Do not miss it, because the stakes are so high, but the means of achievement is freely available through God's amazing grace and love towards us.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Christ like behaviour is demanded of all believers. This is our standard, and this is required of us all. Are we growing in the "Grace and Knowledge" of the Lord Jesus Christ? Let us test ourselves in this matter, for this is the right question to ask each day. Let us ensure the Holy Spirit is active each day within us, for he will perform this work within us.
2. Love of fellow believers is a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit within us. Hatred of another believer, for whatever reason, is a sign that our Old Sin Nature is ruling our soul! Let us confess our sin before God if we harbour hatred towards any believer, and let us replace that hatred today with a prayer for the Lord to bless them! Such a prayer is answered by the Lord through the work of the Holy Spirit in their life, for to bless them the Spirit must deal with any sin within them. To achieve this we first deal with our sin of hatred towards them! Confession leads to blessing for all!
3. Growth comes in phases; from childhood to adolescence, to maturity. Just so we are meant to grow in the spiritual realm. Let us audit ourselves in this matter on a regular basis. Do we behave and feel things like children, like teenagers, or with the quiet confidence of maturity? Let us all press onwards in spiritual growth! Of course the method the Lord calls us to follow, is exactly like that, which leads to physical growth. We are to feed daily upon his Word, apply his Word into the fabric of our daily life, walk daily in his strength, and speak daily with him, in order that we might grow in our knowledge and love of him.

DOCTRINES

EVIL

1. Evil is anything which is against the plan of God.
2. Evil is not necessarily "nasty" - it is merely anything that will take us away from the path that God has for us. False religion may be very moral (and therefore look "holy"), but it is evil.
3. People who believe that their "good works" can satisfy God's holy demands are deceived by evil. Romans 7:19-20
4. Only God's Word protects from and negates evil. Psalms 54:5, Romans 12:21, Isaiah 45.
5. The company of evil people will destroy the effective witness of the believer. Isaiah 5:20, 1 Corinthians 15:23.
6. There is no evil in God at all. Psalm 5:4, 1 John 1:5, 4:4.
7. God judges evil and will condemn it to the lake of fire Psalm 34:16, Isaiah 13:11, Revelation 20:11ff
8. The Lord is always in control; Satan only does things by "permission". Job 1:6-12, Proverbs 16:3, 4, Isaiah 45:6, 7.

SIN: SIN UNTO DEATH

1. There is a sin unto death (1 John 5:16, 17, 1 Corinthians 11 :31,32)
2. The sin unto death is the physical death of a believer, where ultimate discipline is administered to the Christian due to unconfessed sin of a serious nature.
3. Confession of sin under the concept of 1 John 1:9 is the way to forgiveness.
4. Examples of sin unto death:-
 - (a) The Corinthian Pervert - (1 Corinthians 5)
 - (b) The Corinthians who habitually came to the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)
 - (c) Moses (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)
 - (d) Achan (Joshua 7:16-26)
 - (e) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1 -1 1)
5. Whilst there is a sin unto death there is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus - all believers (Romans 8:1).

6. The effect of the sin unto death is to reduce the time which a believer can spend on earth accumulating good of eternal worth. The gold, silver and precious stones of I Corinthians 3:11-15.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: DISAGREEMENTS

1. In Paul's last words to the church, he records the danger of distracting arguments that lead believers away from Christ centeredness. The challenge for believers is to remain focused on the study of God's Word in the filling and teaching of the Holy Spirit. We are not to be prophecy "nuts" or have any other pet doctrines, but rather we are to grow in Christ likeness. 2 Timothy 2:14-19, 23-25, 3:10-17. Refer, HOLY SPIRIT (Ministries), MATURITY, FRUIT, SPIRITUALITY.

2. Good men and women differ in their opinions on some doctrines, due to their different interpretation of a passage of the Word of God. The possibility is that either or both are wrong. There are some things that we will only be sure of when we get to heaven, and we must operate on earth upon "best practice" in exegesis and life. Major differences on minor doctrines in today's churches centre around prophetic interpretation; with pre, mid and post tribulational views regarding the Rapture. There is also great difference regarding the manner of baptism, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3. Spirituality is determined not by correctness of doctrine, but by holiness and Christ likeness of the person's life. Refer HOLINESS. A great saint of the past identified several tests for truth regarding interpretations of scripture. They are useful to consider before arguing – which is, by the way, always a sign you have it wrong!

- A. Does my interpretation make me more practical and loving towards others?
- B. Does my interpretation make me more evangelistic for the lost?
- C. Does my interpretation make me more keen to serve in the local church?
- D. Does my interpretation make me focus on others rather than myself?

4. If you discover that these questions are not true for your viewpoint, then on the basis of scripture you are 100% likely to be wrong in your interpretation and application of the text you have just "twisted". 2 Peter 3:14-18. Refer Love, Sanctification, Servanthood. Matthew 12:15-21, 20:27, Mark 9:35, 10:44, John 15:4-10, 16-17.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: LOVE

1. Love for God is total appreciation for all He is and has done.

2. Words for love in Greek language

a) eros (sexual love) not used in the New Testament

b) storge (comradeship) not used in New Testament

c) agape (concerned love for others, great esteem for the loved one, reverence, a love that springs from adoration and veneration, and is a love of the will that chooses the loved one and devotes self to them to the exclusion of lesser objects. It may mean a self denying and compassionate devotion to the loved one)

d) phile (a love that embraces and kisses. This love is that of the affections and speaks of friendship and all one will do for a friend).

3. Our Lord makes it clear to Peter in John 21: 15-19 that he wants Peter to love him with agape love that flows from a deep occupation with the Lord. Agape, as a love of the will, must work out in service of the Lord, and this will express the believers love (agape) for other believers also.

4. Do not love of the things the world has to offer 1 John 2:15-17.

5. True love of God will always lead to love of the brethren. 1 John 1:3 -11, 1 John 3:1-3, 10, 4:7 -12, 19,

6. Love is expressed in worship and in service. 1 John 5:1-5.

7. Love for God will flow and grow from knowledge of his word. 1 Corinthians 2:9.

8. This deep love will be expressed in witness for the Lord to others, 2 Corinthians 5:14.

9. God loves every believer with perfect and unchanging love because we are united with His beloved Son.

10. It is also noted that the unbeliever has "agape" love for darkness rather than light John 3:19

11. Love for others is an important feature of the Christian life.

12. There are three types of love:-

- (a) love for God.
- (b) love for your spouse.
- (c) love for other members of the human race.

13. It should be noted that only in type (b) is the body involved. The rest involve the soul or soul and spirit only.

14. Love For God

(a) Love for God is a response to the love of God. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

(b) The capacity for this love depends on your maturity. (Philippians 1:20,21; Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 John 4:17-18)

(c) For the Church age believer love for God occurs first through the filling of the Spirit. Confession of sin is therefore critically important. (Ephesians 5:2, c/f 5:18)

(d) Jesus Christ is the initiator of love of God through grace. (Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 John 4:8-10; 4:19)

(e) The believer loves God using his free will.

(f) The believer who does not love Christ is under a special curse and perpetual discipline. (1 Corinthians 16:22)

(g) Love for God is the true motivator for working for God such as witnessing. (2 Corinthians 5:14)

(h) This love is initiated by grace and increased in the believer who has a gracious attitude towards God and mankind. (Daniel 9:4; Psalm 31:23; 119:132; 1 Corinthians 2:9)

(i) Love for God was commanded to all Old Testament saints. (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 11:1; 11:13)

(j)] Love for God is the basis of all true happiness as well as capacity for loving members of the human race. (Deuteronomy 30:16)

(k) Love for God provides courage in battle. (Joshua 23:10-11)

(l) As we see God through his Word it is impossible to love God except through his Word. (Psalm 119:165-167, 1 Peter 1:8)

15. Love For Your Spouse

(a) This is love for a member of the opposite sex designed by God for you in eternity past unless you have the gift of celibacy. (Song of Solomon 8:6-7)

(b) It is as strong as death and is a provision from God.

(c) Death does not destroy this love. (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6)

(d) This type of love is exclusive to one person. (Proverbs 5:18-19)

(e) This type of love is protective both in absence (Song of Solomon 1:13, 4:6) and in presence. (Song of Solomon 2:4) The man is a banner of protection to the woman.

(f) Love for your spouse illustrates relationships with the Lord. (Ezekiel 16:8, Ephesians 5:23-33)

(g) Mental sins attack all forms of love. (1 John 5:18)

(h) God has set aside time in each life for love. (Ecclesiastes 3:8)

16. Love For Others

(a) Love for others has great stability and power. (2 Samuel 1:26, Proverbs 27:9,10, John 15:13, Galatians 5:4)

(b) Love for others provides pleasant and relaxing environment. (Romans 13:10, Proverbs 10:12)

(c) Love for others is free from hypocrisy. (Romans 12:9)

(d) Love for others is outgoing and objective. (Galatians 5:13, 2 Samuel 1:26)

- (e) Love for others promotes orientation to grace. (Philemon 9-12)
- (f) Love for others has enemies and can be destroyed by:-
 (i) Mental attitude sins. (Job 19:19, Proverbs 16:28)
 (ii) Sins of the tongue. (Proverbs 17:9)
 (iii) National catastrophe. (Jeremiah 6:21-23, 20:4-6)
- (g) Love for others can be counterfeited. (Proverbs 19:6-7)
- (h) Love for others can be removed because of divine discipline. (Psalm 38:11, 88:18)
17. We are recipients of Gods love (AGAPE=ultimate concern) through the cross. 1 John 4:10,19, John 3:16.
18. We must give out the gospel to all that they might see Gods love towards them Matthew 28:18-20.
19. Our attitudes to one another should show Gods love in action. 1 John 4:12, John 13:35.
20. Love is commanded of all believers towards other believers, John 13:34, 1John 4:7,8, Philippians 2:2-8.
21. This only becomes possible as we grow in Christ, as his word changes our minds giving us the capacity for love. 1Peter 3:18. Love is a fruit of the Spirit.
22. Agape love in the believer puts the eternal issues of the other persons life ahead of all else, so that all is done to them with their eternal state in mind. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8.
23. We show our love towards believers by our practical concern for their spiritual growth and physical welfare. 2 Thessalonians 3:15, James 5:13-16, 1 Timothy 5:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 5:11-24.
24. We have strength to love others through the word in which we see that we are under the much more love of God: We are in the beloved and the beloved is in us, we are always recipients of His love. Romans 8:37, John 13:1, 20:2, 21:7,20, 15:9, Ephesians 2:4, 5:2, 25, Revelation 1:5.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: REWARDS AND CROWNS

1. Rewards and Salvation are carefully separated in the scriptures. Salvation is a free gift from God, rewards are for meritorious service in the power of the Spirit.
2. Salvation - a free gift to the lost. (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23, John 4:10) - an everlasting possession. (John 3:36, John 5:24, John 6:47)
3. Rewards - to the saved who faithfully work for the Lord. (1 Corinthians 9:24, 25, Revelation 22:12) - distributed at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10) which takes place after the Rapture of the Church Revelation 19:7,8
4. Rewards are often pictured in the form of crowns:-
 a) The incorruptible crown - for faithfulness in exercising self control. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
 b) The crown of glory - for faithfulness in suffering. (1 Peter 5:4)
 c) The crown of life - for faithfulness under trial. (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10)
 d) The crown of righteousness - for faithful testimony. (2 Timothy 4:8)
 e) The crown of rejoicing - for faithful service. (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20, Philippians 4:1)
5. Rewards come after you have entered into the Plan of God through regeneration
6. Rewards are based on the use of divine operating assets including the filling of the Holy Spirit
7. You can lose rewards but never salvation 1 Corinthians 3:14-15, 2 Timothy 2:12,13

1 JOHN 2:15-19

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

KEY WORDS

Love	agapao	present, active, imperative; keep on not loving.
World	kosmos	the world system of belief in opposition to God.
Lust	epithumia	strong passionate desire, emotional power.
Pride	alazoneia	boasting arrogance – pride that swells into words.
Passeth	parago	present, middle, indicative; it is passing away.
Doeth	poieo	present, active, participle; the person doing.
Abideth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
Last time	eschate ora	the last hour – the end period of time.
Heard	akouo	aorist, active, indicative; have heard in past.
Antichrist	antichristos	the one who opposes, is opposite to Christ.
Shall come	erchomai	present, middle, indicative; is coming. Middle voice here reminds us that he is in a plan.
Know	ginosko	perfect , active, indicative; we have come to know. Absolute certainty, stability and lasting results.
Went out	exerchomai	aorist, active, indicative; they went out from us.
Continued	meno	pluperfect, active, indicative; have remained.
Manifest	phaneroo	aorist, passive, subjunctive; at a point of time. The truth has been revealed – by their actions.

REFLECTION

As we have seen so far in this letter, advance (or maturity) in the Christian life depends upon obedience to the revealed will of God through his Holy Word.

- [a] We must walk in the light of His Word.
- [b] We must respond to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in our life.
- [c] We must confess our sins and walk in love for our brethren.
- [d] We must go beyond obedience to God's commands and respond to the Lord's desires for us.

This will lead to a growth of understanding of the character and plan of the Lord, and will develop within us a deeper and deeper love for the Lord that will overflow to his people also. To know him more is to love him more and desire his will for your life. His will is that we love the brethren and reach the lost with his message of forgiveness. The alternative to spiritual growth is the slow death of carnality; whereby sin gets more and more a hold over the life, and the believer slips steadily away from the path of life and blessing into the path of the sin unto death. Refer to the BTB study of SPIRITUALITY/CARNALITY on page 16.

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.

This verse introduces another factor to consider, and it is the need for thorough rejection of Satan's system, or way of doing things. As you grow as a Christian you should be able to discern more and more of Satan's system and his tactics to thwart believer's growth. The sooner you can get smart about Satan the better. We must not be 'ignorant' of his devices. **2 Corinthians 2:11**. This section comments upon the Lord's Prayer for us in **John 17:14-19**. We are challenged here to reflect upon our love/attachment to the things of this world, especially for us today let us reflect on this as the days darken, speeding now towards the Lord's Return.

The word for 'world' in the Bible is the Greek word, "kosmos". This does not mean the beautiful world with its created scenery. Kosmos refers to a world system of government which is organized in rebellion against God. Kosmos is the word used by the New Testament writers to refer to, mankind organized by Satan against God; it is the word for Satan's "evil policy", as the philosophy that underpins Satan's strategy to distract humanity from the need for salvation.

This reality is reflected where politics is about holding power, and business is about seizing all the money that can be seized. It is the preoccupation with the lusts that is at the heart of "kosmos thinking", and even the social fabric of a society can be involved in this evil, because Satan is involved. The driving force of Satan's people and system is lust; lust for power, money, prestige, position, material goods, toys, approbation or sexual lust. This is the motivating force behind the "kosmos" system. This produces what the Bible defines as evil. Evil is defined as Satan's policy of control over his people, in opposition to God's policy. Refer to the BTB studies, WORLD, WORLDLINESS on page 15.

Satan is able to organize things to his benefit by using the old sin nature (OSN) of each woman and man. In our life we will have to decide what we are going to do within the business, social and political systems, as they exist in our country. Do we get involved or not, and if we do, how far do we go? We should always support those things that are standing for righteousness, but each believer must seek the Lord's leading as to their part in the plan. It is difficult to know in advance how close you can get to a political system without becoming tainted yourself by the evil of many of those involved, so

believers must be Holy Spirit led only, and involvement in politics requires walking in God's plan and power, or you will be a shipwreck very fast.... **Matthew 4:8-11, 1 Tim 1:19.**

Notice that the kingdoms and their "glory" were Satan's to offer, and they probably still are! The answer for each person, as to what they are safe to do in this world is going to be very individual, and we are called to heed the Holy Spirit's leading only, and that will always lead us into places where we can stand for truth without compromise. Refer to the BTB study, SIN – OLD SIN NATURE on page 39, and FRUITS OF THE OLD SIN NATURE below.

If you are involved with a political system be involved for a spiritual reason and be sure of the Spirit's leading there. Do not love the system because the system is basically evil; with men and women involved in power for their own reasons. You are not going to put a good apple in a barrel of rotten apples and cause the rotten apples to become good. The bad apples will always make the good apple bad! There is a dangerous myth about, that it is possible to change the Devil's world by social action; it is as false today as it was in Lot's day; it cannot be done with any godly results flowing from it. Our job is to guide people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to save out of the fire. **Jude 20-23.**

Even with the best intentions it is easy for the believer to forget that the motivation and philosophy behind many of our political and social improvement institutions is evil. You are not to get involved with loving any system of man, because it can wound your love for Christ. You are an ambassador and witness in the devil's world. Do not forget it is still (by his deceit) the devil's world. Satan is the "Prince of this world" for the unsaved, but the Lord's Second Advent will see this usurper defeated and the Lord making himself king of this world fully and finally. **John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11.** Refer to the BTB study CHRISTIAN LIFE – AMBASSADORSHIP, CHRIST – SECOND ADVENT.

The liberals, most of whom accept Amillennialism or Postmillennialism, get involved in social action to bring in, what they call, the "kingdom of God" on earth, as they do not believe that Christ will come back to establish the Millennium. The result of social action is nearly always greater evil. Study Church History and see this writ large! If you change the Devil's world into a nicer place, you have simply made it a nicer place from which the unbeliever still goes to hell. No social action program, especially backed by the State's power has ever produced anything Christ-like; rather it has always produced tyranny.

We are not to love money, (**James 1:9-11**), nor anything else associated with this present world. **2 Peter 3:10-13** states that this world will disappear; all we see is temporary, and must be seen as such. The Lord looked over Jerusalem and wept because He knew what was certainly going to happen in 70 AD. We have no continuing city here! **Hebrews 13:14.** We should not concentrate our attention or interest upon physical things such as land, big storehouses, palatial houses, businesses and great buildings, but rather on spiritual things. **Luke 12:16-21, 16:19-23.** We must look past the scenery, the buildings, vehicles and the institutions of society and concentrate on the Lord, and his will, to save the lost, in the midst of this evil world. Prophetic trends over the last two years have accelerated so much that we must "get this" now!

Biblically speaking, 'Society' is simply a large number of people in rebellion against God, sinners needing salvation, sinners organized in rejection of their Saviour. This sort of viewpoint will then allow you to be correctly involved in the things of the world. We must be thoughtful, prayerful and hesitant in matters of our inter-face with the world and its systems. For many in today's world, patriotism is intertwined with our faith. The national flag is in the church, in a prominent place at the front of the main auditorium, and even politics is preached from the pulpit. This present practice is a legacy of the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, and the wars for national independence in the centuries following. The flags of the nations have been brought into the church since these days.

This was not the case in first three centuries of the early church. They would never have thought of having a Roman Eagle in their services, for all the banners of the nations and armies in John's day were associated with pagan deities. It was easy for believers of John's day to exclude all that was associated with nationalism, for it was intertwined with paganism. Prophetic trends over 2020-2022 make it clear we are heading rapidly back to this place – paganism is back in countries that until these last years still kidded themselves they were "Christian" – we cannot say that now – let's see it clearly, and understand what it means when a pagan priest opens a new motorway and invokes the old gods/demons!

In most nations today the old paganism is still there and has grown stronger; it is just more subtle and runs deeper, and is beneath a surface/appearance that has been modified by several hundred years of Christendom. This process actually begins with the Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, who brings a Christianized political and military system into the Empire, and parades in the great basilicas the new banners of his legions, now with Christian symbols upon them. We have seen obvious paganism openly re-emerge in the last decade, but it's a tsunami now in 2022.

A study of Church History will reveal that the impact of such mixing of politics and faith led to a dilution of both church and state! Within a hundred years the Empire had gone, except for a rump in the east, and the church had lost its evangelistic fire, and its commitment for truth, and so was ready to be swept away by the Moslem armies. If we wanted a motto for the re-application of the separation of Church and State it would be, "remember Constantine". This is a major debate in the field of Systematic Theology and Church History. Refer to the EBCWA Diploma Course for the systematic teaching of the doctrines that surround this subject.

Now I want to be clear on this point, lest I be misquoted. It is not wrong to love your country for all that you have been free to do there, and as the place of your birth, family, and friendships, but you must love the Lord first. You should then have a good attitude to your involvement in things of the State because of your faith, and eternal life perspective. Be guided by God the Holy Spirit alone in what you do in the politics and social life of your nation – only God's path is safe.

In **2 Peter 3:10-13**, Peter says that all visible things are going to be destroyed, totally destroyed. A fisherman may love their fishing spot but what they are ultimately there for is the fish. If the fish disappear the true “fisherman” will lose their love for the spot. We are “fishers of men”. **Matthew 4:19**; we are here to fish for souls not clean up, or worship the fishpond. Refer below to the BTB doctrinal study on NATIONS AND RACES, DESTINY OF NATIONS, NEBUCHADNEZZAR – PRIDE, NIMROD – INTERNATIONALISM.

In verse 15, John says, 'stop the habit of loving the world' (present, active, imperative of agapao). This indicates that the believers are as a daily habit, 'loving' the system that is this “kosmos-world” and they must stop or they will lose their perspective on the task the Lord has for them to do here. How many of us are still, to all extents and purposes, loving our world? How many of us are loving, or better, devoting our time to, the acquisition of money, power, influence and approbation? The way we see if we are ruled by “love of this present world”, is by assessing how much time we devote to these things, and how strongly we are influenced by the mental attitude associated with acquiring these things.

We can love the beauty of nature and praise God for it but we must beware that we do not get seduced by the material things and institutions of the world, and the “rewards” they provide here and now. This present world provides instant blessing now, in money, sex, power, influence and fame. Many chase these things, and Satan ensures they get them! Remember, Satan’s “devices” don't change, because they work against all who have rejected or ignored the Word.

If we follow after these things, and are “ruled by our lust” for them, then we will become more and more self centered, more and more a victim of our own pride-centered thinking. Pride was Satan’s sin, and it remains his main “access tool” to the hearts of any fool who values the temporary pleasures of this world rather than the eternal rewards of God. **Isaiah 14:9-15, Ezekiel 28:1-10**. The result of pride is that we open ourselves to be ensnared by the enemy, and the result will be we will fall for the flattery of this world, and be side-tracked from our ambassadorship into actions that destroy witness, health and lead to loss of eternal rewards. **2 Timothy 2:4, James 4:4, 2 Peter 2:20**. This appears to have been the sin of Demas in the end. **2 Timothy 4:9**.

If you are seduced into loving this temporary world system and what it can give you (power, money, praise, sex, position), then you have lost your “first love” for the Lord. **Revelation 2:4-7**. The Lord Jesus, and the apostles, make it absolutely clear that you cannot serve God and the kosmos system! We cannot serve God and Mammon! **Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13**. It is no accident that the Lord moves to talk about the dangers of false teachers right after his comments on finding the “narrow way” that leads to eternal life, and turning away from the “broad way”, that most follow, that leads to all Satan can give you in this present world. **Matthew 7:13-14, 15-25**. Open your eyes wide believer – see this kosmos world system for what it is now being revealed to be – read the UN 2030 and other agendas, and understand all the policies of the system that seeks to replace the biblical God. You will soon be “free” to worship anything, except the Biblical God.

Many people follow after the “things of this world”, but all such success and prosperity is “built on sand”, and the Lord’s picture of judgment is powerful in verse twenty seven of Matthew Seven. This is how many of us lived as adult unbelievers before meeting the Lord. That fact alone should indicate that such an attitude is of the enemy, not of God. Worldliness is the enemy of truth, morality, and evangelism. Anything that makes us look like unbelievers is to be avoided like the plague! **Ephesians 2:1-10, Colossians 3:1-13**. These two passages from Paul are good reflections upon this subject for any small group you are leading in a discussion on this matter.

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

Worldliness is founded on the Old Sin Nature’s desires to satisfy carnal/fleshly/bodily desires. This is the definition of “Lust”. These two verses build on the principles of the previous verses, by introducing the trinity of Satan; the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. This is not of the Father, for God has nothing to do with these things, but is of the world. These three are the fruit of the Old Sin Nature, as Love, Joy, and Peace are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:15-26**.

The world is in the process of passing away and the lusts that are part of it's temporary nature will pass away with it. We are challenged to make our choice. We are called to choose God and his way, over Satan and his way; we are called to live for things that last eternally, rather than the things that are as temporary as this world system is. We are not to love the world, as believers, because it is controlled by Satan, and run by lust, and as such is not compatible with God. God calls us to be “run by” the motivating Holy Spirit filled power of agape love, not the self centered power of Old Sin Nature desire for personal gratification. The challenge is an absolute one. **Philippians 3:13-21**.

In both John's time, and earlier in the days of James, we see a situation where a church has become dominated by lust based thinking, and sinful actions flowing from this satanic mental attitude. Sadly, the OSN (Old Sin Nature) of man has not changed, and churches today face the same reality of people doing things to satisfy their lusts rather than fulfill the will of God for them. The particular lust of the flesh could be sexual, gluttony, drinking, drugs, power, approval, or simply having the modern philosophy of, "if it feels good do it". Refer to the study on SIN – OLD SIN NATURE on page 39 and, FRUITS OF THE OLD SIN NATURE below.

The lusts from the OSN are evil and satanic but they motivate much of our society. The basis of advertising is, for example, to cultivate the lusts of the flesh. Let us look closely at this satanic trinity for its values and desires are at the heart of all society's power structure.

1. The Lust of the Flesh. The Greek word for lust is *epithumia*. It is used to refer to overwhelming desire. John identifies that it is a desire based in the body (the flesh), but it overwhelms the reason at times. There is, for most, a daily battle against passionate desires for things to make us 'feel good'. These desires come like waves, and must be met or we will do things that will make our witness shipwrecked. **Numbers 11:4, 33-35, 2 Peter 2:9-17.**

Such powerful OSN emotions can only be met by equally or more powerful spiritual forces. Only when our spirit is saturated in God's Word and we are in moment by moment fellowship with the Holy Spirit, can we withstand such 'temptation waves', from the OSN. **Mark 4:19, Galatians 5:17.**

2. The lust of the eyes is envy and jealousy. We can become blinded to spiritual truths by being so involved in sin and evil that lust is all we see. Preoccupation with self-centered pleasure or gratification, means that all we 'see' as we move through each day, is the temptation to further evil, and we are seduced into destructive paths, not seeing their dangers.

Turn to **John 12:37 - 40**. If Satan can get a person so blinded to the truth that they do not see the Lord, nor His Word, and will for them, he has won a great victory over that person. Also look at **2 Corinthians 3:12-18**. The Holy Spirit takes the veil (blindness) away, so we can see again. Look also at **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**. If we are blinded by our sins, we are like the people of this present world, perishing! John urges us in his letter to be obedient to the Holy Spirit and so avoid the fate of the world.

3. The pride of life is the Greek word, "alazon", which means the boastful pride of a person who thinks they are like a god. It is an, 'I am the king of the castle', type of pride. If you do not worship God in the end you are going to worship yourself and your own "success"! If a believer gets into a system that is based on pride they are in danger of worshipping at the shrine of self-absorption, and that is Satan's shrine! Beware any system of works or rewards in this life that appeals to pride. Each of the three "prides" is answered by the three fold message of this Letter. God is LIGHT to show the reality of all flesh, God is LOVE not lust, and God is LIFE; not delusion that comes from blindness, lust and pride!

Within the churches such things existed in John's day, and without vigilance on these matters can keep on existing in our own day! Churches that run their programs on any point scoring system, or public applause each week for the 'best' teacher, or evangelist, or worker, are in danger of this. Pride based rewards for service appeal to the Old Sin Nature and develop its strength. We are called to "walk in the Spirit" and not meet the "lusts of the flesh".

You cannot be a true ambassador for Christ and be involved with any system that gives you pride based 'rewards' here in this world. To be an ambassador for the Lord means, we are focused on heaven and the rewards the Lord will give; anything else is of no consequence! Any system that appeals to pride to encourage service for the Lord is out of the Lord's will. Believer's service is to be motivated by heavenly reward only, and the Lord's 'well done' rather than Man's. Look at **Matthew 25: 21-23**. Note the psalmist's prayer in **Psalms 119:33-40**. This is the prayer to be delivered from the "lust of the eyes, and the pride of this life".

Note closely again John's observation at the end of verse sixteen. Anything that appeals to pride or lust is not of the Father. God will have nothing to do with man's pride or man's lust. Our service and obedience to God must be motivated by love for God, or it is not an acceptable offering. What is well-pleasing to God is the service of a believer motivated by love. Refer to **Philippians 4:17-20, Hebrews 13:20-21**.

Verse 17. This portrays the difference between those who follow the worldly system and those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He who does the will of God abides forever but everything that Satan does will pass away. What sort of people should we be, having truly known this? Surely we should put our emphasis in what is going to last. Calvin said, "I would sooner lose now and win later than win the praise of man now and lose eternal rewards forever". The psalmist grapples with this issue, for he sees that Satan does truly reward his people with all they lust for. **Psalms 73:1-28**. Also refer to **Isaiah 40:6-8, Matthew 6:28-34, 24:35**.

Ask yourself, how do you spend your time? How much time is spent in "lust type" activity, to simply meet your own desires, with no real reference to the plan of God for your life path? You should pray to the Lord to protect you from the seduction of the world system of Satan today.

Our prayer should be daily, 'Lord, keep me back from concentrating on things that do not matter, and let me spend my time on preparation for, or actual service for you, for that alone will reap reward eternally'. Turn to and read, **2 Peter 3:8 - 14**. We alone, in the midst of the temporary things of life, we alone who do the will of the Lord, will live forever with Him. Surely this is a purifying hope! **John 17:8-19, 1 John 3:3**.

The contrast is a stark one. Those who keep on doing the things associated with the lust of this world will perish with it! Those who keep on abiding in the love of God, and fellowshiping with the Lord Jesus Christ, keeping themselves safe from temptation, will live eternally with the one they have chosen above this world! This is the heart of the choice here;

love of the Lord being greater than love of this world and all it has to offer. God will not share us with another! We cannot love Him and the world without being spiritual adulterers!

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.

Here we have the third reason why we should be following these instructions. John is strongly pointing out to us that the time is short, Satan is active, the Antichrist is coming, but there are many antichrists already, John says. John's point is that the battle for mankind's souls is hot around him, and will steadily get hotter as the age draws to its certain end.

Remember, from a prophecy viewpoint, it has been the 'last days' since the Resurrection/Ascension/Pentecost. The church exists in the period which is called the "Church Age" or the "Age of Grace", but may also be called "the last days". The last days started at the time of the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost, but the Lord gave us clear signs of his near return in the Olivet Discourse, and so we say in 2021, "He appears to be at the door...."

We have been living in the last days as long as the Church has existed; for over 1900 years so far, and should live as if every minute was critical and potentially the last one. Irrespective of how long we might have, we should consider every day our last. This urgency is something we can forget in the heady days of a new century, over 2000 years since the Lord's birth, but the message of the scriptures is, "be active and be focused on your task". Given the events of the last two Covid years we are no longer thinking, "we may have decades", all thinkers can see we have a few years only now.

There are many people who are trying to replace or oppose Jesus Christ in our day, as there have been throughout the whole period of church history. Was John wrong when he said it was the 'last hour'? The answer is a strong, "NO", for his desire, with the Lord's was that we live every day as if it was the last one we were to have on earth. The church age is referred to by some as the, "Intensified stage of the angelic conflict", and so it is. The message of Paul, and Peter also, was the same, 'see every hour as if it is your last and redeem each and every day, transforming time into opportunity for the completion of the Lord's work upon the earth!' **Ephesians 5:16, 1 Timothy 4:1-11, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 1 Peter 1:5, 20, 2 Peter 3:1-4.** Refer to BTB study of TIME below

It is the last period of history before the Lord's return. This period began at the Cross-Resurrection-Ascension, or the day of Pentecost; there would be some that would argue for either, but I tend to group all these as a single long "event" that changes the character of the Age, from Israel to the Church. This new period has run now for nearly two thousand years. If we compare this age to others we see that this has not been the longest to date, with the period Adam to Abraham being approximately 2000-2100 years, the Patriarchal period being approximately 450 years, the period of the Mosaic Law being approximately 1550 years, giving a joint Age of Israel of around 2000 years also, and then our own period. The last period before the entire universe is remade/replaced is exactly 1000 years, hence its name, the Millennial Kingdom. We are therefore, in the "Church Age", in the last days of the angelic conflict, before the Lord's return, and that is John's point here. Refer to the BTB doctrinal study of PROPHECY – SEQUENCE OF END TIME EVENTS.

Satan's time clock is ticking now, for well over two thirds of his time to deceive man is over, and he knows it. The next prophetic event awaited is a negative one; it is the invasion of the Middle East described in **Ezekiel 38-39**, as the scene setter for the later coming of the Anti-Christ. Satan is working hard, as he knows that this age is going to end with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and so Satan's plan is to launch his alternative Saviour just before he believes the Lord's return is near. He still arrogantly believes that he can win, destroy all believers and so rob the Lord of victory!

No-one knows exactly when the Lord is due, but the signs of His Coming are well presented in the Scriptures and Satan is a student of the Bible, even though most believers are not. He is ready and is working very hard to try to destroy the church and then Israel through his last years of activity. The major thrust of his attack is using fake spirituality and false teachers to spread confusion amongst God's people, and ensure that unbelievers are kept in the dark thoroughly. John will spend many verses later in the letter ensuring the believers of his day and our own, know even more ways as to how to spot the phony teacher quickly. Refer to the BTB study on CHRIST – RETURN OF OUR LORD, ANTI-CHRIST – WORLD RULER, CHRIST TYPES - ANTICHRIST AND CHRIST CONTRASTED. Refer Diploma File – 14 "Post-Grad".

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.

John describes some of the antichrists of his day. He says that they went out from us but were not of us. Some of Satan's most useful troops, in John's day, had been church members and his most dangerous troops today still are ex-church members. We are involved in a guerrilla war, and ambush is Satan's desired attack tactic. Judas sat at a table as a traitor, and many still do. Remember - None of the disciples saw Judas as a fake. John was on the right hand side of the Lord whilst Judas was on the left at the Last Supper with only John hearing what Jesus said to Judas, and even John was shocked to discover Judas was the traitor. Satan has been devious in his recruitment program since the beginning, and he seeks those who have been close to the centre of the Lord's work as his key operatives. **Deuteronomy 13:13, Psalms 41:9, John 13:18, 2 Peter 2:10-22.**

When Judas went out with the others on a preaching tour through the three years of ministry with the Lord, he preached the gospel and was not seen as a phony. If you are to be a pastor of a church you have to be discerning, for not all who say, "praise the Lord", are in fact genuine. **Matthew 7:21-22.** The more "holy" the language often the more evil and fake the heart. Remember Jesus words, by their "fruit" you know them, not their words alone.

No pastor who is doing something for the Lord will be without satanic opposition from the inside, as well as from the enemy outside. Do not get upset when it happens, as falsehood and betrayal is the enemy's tactic. Satanic opposition is to be seen as a compliment, for it means you are dangerous to the enemy. So when attacked, rejoice in the opposition, for it means you are effective. John identifies the times, however, where we find it hard to rejoice in the opposition, and it is when the enemy is a person we looked upon as an old friend.

John says that had they been true believers they would have stayed with us. We, like John, believe in the eternal security of the believer and in the eternal condemnation of the unbeliever, and the make believer. We must maintain our vigilance in the matter of "fruit inspecting" of all church leadership, and be very discerning about the people we are dealing with within the churches in positions where they might influence others. You as a pastor need to deal with the "make believers" before they rip apart the Lord's sheep. See things as God sees them and react as He would – preach the Word with power and let the LIGHT of the Word scatter the rats. Remember Matthew 7, and do not shrink from condemnation of the fake make-believer, for they will show no mercy to the Lord's little lambs.

APPLICATION FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. We cannot love God and equally love the things of this present world. God demands our love and obedience, and he will not share us with another. To love things is to lose perspective on what matters and what doesn't.
2. Lust is the opposite of agape love. Lust seeks to take, whereas love seeks opportunity to give to assist others. We are called to love others and fight the temptation to abuse and use people to meet our lusts. Let us remain focused on loving and serving others, rather than meeting our own selfish lusts.
3. Anti-Christ is coming one day, but before he arrives there are many "pee-wee anti-Christ" figures, each standing for Satanic policy against God. These will be people who have experience in church, but have rejected all we stand for and seek only to serve their own lusts, and lead people away from the truth of the Gospel message. Let us focus our energy on preaching the truth and standing against all who would distract the lambs from the path of life.
4. By their fruit you will know them! Let us keep doing our fruit inspecting and ensure that no-one holds any position in a church who does not pass the fruit test. We cannot allow any wolves into the flock by our slack vigilance in this matter! Let us be alert, for we know the enemy's plans and he seeks to send his own into the church to deceive and destroy from within.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE: AMBASSADORSHIP

1. An Ambassador does not appoint himself, he is appointed by the nation he represents, the king he represents, the person he represents. We are appointed by God. (2 Corinthians 5:20).
2. An Ambassador does not support himself. We are sustained and protected by God. (Philippians 4:19).
3. An Ambassador does not represent himself. We represent God on earth. (Matthew 28:19-20).
4. An Ambassador does not belong to the nation to which he is sent. Positionally we are in heaven, experientially we are in the world. (Philippians 3:20, John 15:19).
5. All Ambassadors have instructions in written form. We have the Word of God. (1 Thessalonians 4:1-2).
6. An Ambassador representing his country does not treat any insult as personal. (Matthew 5:11-12).
7. When an Ambassador is recalled from a country it is tantamount to declaration of war. After the Rapture there will be massive warfare on earth. All Christians will be recalled at the Rapture. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

ANTICHRIST

1. SCRIPTURE - Daniel 7:8,21-26; 8:23-25; 9:26,27; 11:36-45; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Revelation 13:1-18; 17:16,17; 19:19,20.

2. BIOGRAPHY

The Antichrist is the world ruler who will emerge as a violently anti-God despot, who will emerge after the removal of God's church. He comes from the gentile nations (the sea) in the last times. His power base will be a ten nation empire closely related to the old Roman Empire known as the Revived Roman Empire.

The Antichrist is very clever and infiltrates by means of a peace campaign. He is, however, very hungry for power and once he wrests power from his subjects, he destroys the apostate religious system which has been working closely with

him until then. He makes a covenant with Israel, allowing them to sacrifice in the temple, but eventually sets himself up to be worshipped as God in the temple. His reign of almost seven years duration becomes increasingly and openly anti-God, involving signs and wonders. He has a close relationship with the false prophet, the leader of Israel at that time. At the end of his empire he moves on Jerusalem, which is being held by believers. Jesus Christ returns at the second advent to deliver those in Jerusalem and capture the Antichrist and false prophet, throwing them into the lake of fire.

3. EVALUATION

- a) The Antichrist arises out of the Gentile nations with the final empire of ten nations (Revelation 13:1).
- b) The seven heads are seven mountains which speaks of Rome (Revelation 17:9).
- c) There are seven kings: five are fallen, one is, and one is to come (Revelation 17:10). These are empires - the five that are fallen are Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Persia and Greece. The one in existence in 96 AD (when John wrote Revelation) was Rome, and the one to come is the Revived Roman Empire.
- d) The ten horns are ten future kingdoms which receive power for a short time. (Revelation 17:12).
- e) He rules empires (Revelation 13:2; cf. Daniel 7:4-6).
- f) His power is from Satan (Revelation 13:2; cf. Revelation 20:2).
- g) Satan gives Antichrist the world empire (Revelation 13:2).
- h) Satanic worship is a key part of Antichrist's regime (Revelation 13:4,8).
- i) He is a great orator. He is anti-God and has power for 3 1/2 years (Revelation 13:5).
- j) His empire becomes a world empire (Revelation 13:7).

- k) The dictator of Palestine who is demon possessed ("the false prophet") promotes him (Revelation 13:11).
- l) Great wonders and miracles are a feature of this empire (Revelation 13:13).
- m) A statue of the Antichrist is constructed. It has the ability to speak. Worship of it is compulsory on the pain of death (Revelation 13:14,15).
- n) The Antichrist controls the world economy by marking members of the human race on the forehead or on the right hand (Revelation 13:16,17; cf. Revelation 14:9-11).
- o) His number is 666, a number which represents "perfect man" or "perfect sin" (Revelation 13:18).
- p) He will not be revealed until the restrainer is removed (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7)
- q) The Antichrist's rule features power, signs and lying wonders from Satan himself (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
- r) He deceives the unbeliever (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).
- s) The Antichrist is destroyed and thrown into the lake of fire at the second advent (Revelation 19:19,20).

4. PRINCIPLES

- a) Satan is the ruler of this world (John 16:11).
- b) World domination and internationalism is Satanic in origin (Genesis 11:6-9).
- c) Miracles, signs and lying wonders are strategies employed by Satan to deceive (John 8:44).
- d) Economic control of the individual enslaves that individual (Proverbs 22:7).
- e) Ultimately vast power creates the delusion that the person in control is God (Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 14:13,14).
- f) The antichrist will not be revealed until after the Rapture of the Church when the Holy Spirit who restrains him (and indwells all Christians) will be removed from the world (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7)
- g) A few years of power is not worth an eternity of suffering.
- h) Eventually man must account to Jesus Christ as his judge if he does not accept Jesus Christ as Saviour (Revelation 20:12-15).
- i) At a point, people become so hardened to God that God gives them over to their own delusions (2 Thessalonians 2:11, Romans 1:28).
- j) The Antichrist is a person, not to be confused with the many antichrists of (1 John 2:18) or the "spirit of antichrist" of (1 John 4:3)

5. In the Tribulation there will be a counterfeit trinity with Satan (father), the Antichrist (son) and False Prophet (spirit).

6. Names given to the Antichrist:-

- a) The seed of Satan (Genesis 3:15)
- b) The little horn (Daniel 7:8)
- c) The king of fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23)
- d) The prince that shall come (Daniel 9:26)
- e) The desolater (Daniel 9:27)
- f) The wilful king (Daniel 11:36)
- g) The man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- h) The son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- i) The lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- j) The Antichrist (1 John 2:22)
- k) The beast (Revelation 11:7)

7. Characteristics

- a) He is called the seed of Satan (Genesis 3:15). Just as Jesus Christ had a supernatural birth being born of a virgin, it may be that there will be something supernatural about the birth of the Antichrist. It is likely that Satan will impregnate a human woman and thus be the father of the Antichrist in a similar way to the angelic infiltration of (Genesis 6:2)
- b) In (Daniel 9:26) he is said to be of the people who destroyed the Temple. The Roman Empire destroyed the Temple in 70 AD. The Antichrist may therefore be of Roman origin.

- c) The identity of the man of sin will not be clear until the start of the Tribulation, although he may be fairly prominent in politics prior to that period. He will not be revealed until after the Rapture of the Church when the Holy Spirit who restrains him (and indwells all Christians) will be removed from the world (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7). In the middle of the Tribulation, he sets himself in the Temple calling himself God (v4-8).
- d) In (Daniel 9:27) the start of the Tribulation is marked by the signing of a seven year covenant between the Antichrist and the nation of Israel. When Israel signs the covenant, God issues a decree of destruction against the whole earth (Isaiah 28:14-22) - the judgments of the book of Revelation. The Antichrist is shown as the rider on the white horse of (Revelation 6:1) who brings the promise of (false) peace.
- e) The rise of the Antichrist to power:-
- i) In (Daniel 8:23-25) he is seen as a skilful leader, involved in the occult power (v23), will war against the Jews (v24), and will rise to power through deceit (v25).
- ii) In (Daniel 11:36-39) he shall do what he wants, claiming to be God and exalting himself (v36), he will repudiate all religious practices from his ancestors (v37). He however will honour a god whom his ancestors did not know (v38) who assists him to power (v39), this god being Satan. He will accept the offer of the kingdoms of the world which our Lord refused in the wilderness.
- iii) In (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9) we are told that his coming is according to the energising of Satan accompanied by miracles, signs and wonders.
- iv) During the first half of the Tribulation, he gains political control of the ten groups that make up a One World Government. This includes the removal of three of the ten leaders (Daniel 7:23-24, Revelation 17:12-17)
- v) He also destroys the One World Church ("Mystery Babylon") that has operated in the first half of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:5,16.) In (Revelation 11) he is able to kill the two witnesses who have been causing him major problems. They however will be resurrected much to his dismay.
- f) The death and resurrection of the Antichrist .In (Daniel 11:40-45) he kills the Kings of the North, South and East. and in (v 45) he will come to his end and none shall help him. However in (Revelation 13:3) he receives a fatal wound but the fatal wound is healed. This suggests that the Antichrist dies and is resurrected by the power of Satan. This miracle deceives the world that the Antichrist is god and the world now worships him.

CHRIST: FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

1. Old Testament saints had difficulty in distinguishing between the two advents of Christ. (1 Peter 1:10,11)
2. Old Testament prophecy has Christ coming as a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. (Isaiah 53:7)
3. Old Testament prophecy has Christ coming as the conquering King and Lion of the tribe of Judah. (Isaiah 11:1-12)
4. Jesus commenced his ministry announcing the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17) This connects the first and second advents.
5. Old Testament Prophecy showed that the Messiah would:-
 - a) be born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14)
 - b) be of the tribe of Judah. (Genesis 49:10)
 - c) be of the house of David. (Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 33:21)
 - d) die as a sacrifice. (Isaiah 53:1-12)
 - e) be crucified. (Psalm 22:1-21)
 - f) be resurrected from the dead. (Psalm 16:8-11)
 - g) return to earth at his second advent. (Zechariah 8:3)
 - h) be seated at the right hand of God. (Psalm 110:1)
6. It should be noted that the return of Christ for the Church (the Rapture) as given in (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18) was not revealed in the Old Testament - it is a mystery doctrine of the Church (Colossians 3:4-6)
7. The day of the Second Advent is characterised by supernatural darkness
 - a) When Christ returns every eye shall see him (Matthew 24:29-30) Christ is the light of the world and he will return to a world covered in darkness (symbolic of sin).
 - b) The darkness is similar to the darkness of the day of our Lord's crucifixion which hid the Lord Jesus Christ from man's sight whilst he was bearing our sins. (Mark 15:33)
 - c) The Second Advent delivers the Jewish believers besieged in Jerusalem by the King of the North. (Daniel 11, Zechariah 12:1-3, 14:1-4)
 - d) Other passages indicating that the day of the Second Advent is a day of total darkness on the earth. (Isaiah 13:9-10, Ezekiel 32:7-8, Joel 2:10-11, Joel 3:14-15, Amos 5:18, Zechariah 14:6, Matthew 24:29-30, Luke 21:25-27, Revelation 6:12-17)
8. Heralds of the Two Advents of Christ
A herald is a person who preceded a King in ancient times to announce his arrival. The King that we study is the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a) First Advent
 - i) Human herald - John the Baptist (Matthew 3)

- ii) Angelic heralds - Angels (Luke 2:1-15)
- b) Second Advent
- i) Human heralds - Moses, Elijah (Revelation 11)
- ii) Angelic herald - The mighty angel (Revelation 10)

CHRIST TYPES: ANTICHRIST AND CHRIST CONTRASTED

1. Christ came from above. (John 6:38)
2. Antichrist will ascend from the pit. (Revelation 11:7)
3. Christ came in his Father's name. (John 5:43)
4. Antichrist will come in his own name. (John 5:43)
5. Christ humbled himself. (Philippians 2:8)
6. Antichrist will exalt himself. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
7. Christ was despised. (Luke 23:18)
8. Antichrist will be admired. (Revelation 13:3,4)
9. Christ will be exalted. (Philippians 2:9)
10. Antichrist will be cast down to hell. (Revelation 19:20)
11. Christ came to do his Father's will. (John 6:38)
12. Antichrist will come to do his own will. (Daniel 11:36)
13. Christ came to save. (Luke 19:10)
14. Antichrist will come to destroy. (Daniel 8:24)
15. Christ is the good shepherd. (John 10:1-5)
16. Antichrist is the evil shepherd. (Zechariah 11:16,17)
17. Christ is the true vine. (John 10:1)
18. Antichrist is the vine of the earth. (Revelation 14:18)
19. Christ is the truth. (John 14:6)
20. Antichrist is the lie. (2 Thessalonians 2:11)
21. Christ is the Holy One. (Mark 1:24)
22. Antichrist is the lawless one. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
23. Christ is the man of sorrows. (Isaiah 53:3)
24. Antichrist is the man of sin. (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
25. Christ is the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)
26. Antichrist is the son of perdition. (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
27. Christ is the mystery of godliness. (1 Timothy 3:16)
28. Antichrist is the mystery of iniquity. (2 Thessalonians 2:7)

DISPENSATION OF THE CHURCH

1. Limits: Pentecost to Rapture

2. Divided into Two Sections

- a) Pre Canon to 100 AD Period of temporary and permanent gifts. (1 Corinthians 13:10)
- b) Post Canon - period of permanent gifts only where the whole Bible is complete.

3. Characteristics

- a) Length of Age - Unknown - but possibly about 2,000 years.
- b) Means of Salvation - Faith in Christ. (Acts 16:31)
- c) Written Scripture - Old Testament - Pre Canon; Whole Bible - Post Canon.
- d) Evangelists - all believers (Matthew 28:18-20 2 Corinthians 5:20)
- e) Major Judgment -- Nil
- f) At death (believers) - Heaven, face to face with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8)
- g) At death (unbelievers) - Torments, Hades.
- h) Priesthood - all believers as priests (1 Peter 2:9)
- i) The Law - grace, the law having been fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17)
- j) Holy Spirit - indwells all believers (John 7:39, 1 Corinthians 6:19)
- k) Environment - sinful.
- l) Satan - in Heaven or on earth
- m) Rebellion - Apostasy (2 Timothy 3:1-6)
- n) Many languages - (Genesis 11:9)
- o) Many races of people - (Genesis 11:9)
- p) Spirituality - filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)
- q) Every believer in union with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- r) Every believer indwelt by Christ. (John 14:20)

4. The Church Age is not mentioned in the Old Testament.

- a) The Church was a mystery to Old Testament writers.(Colossians 1:25-26)
- b) The Old Testament Scriptures include everything such as the Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection, Ascension and Session of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament Scriptures then skip over the Church Age to the Tribulation, Second Advent and Millennium.
- c) Examples of scriptures in the Old Testament where the great parenthesis occurs are Daniel 2:40,41, 7:23,24, 9:26a,26b, 11:35,36, Hosea 3:4,5 , Isaiah 61:2a,2b

NATIONS AND RACES

- 1. God has set the geographical and historical boundaries for nations (Acts 17:26, Genesis 10:25; Deuteronomy 32:8).

Three Categories of Nations

- Geographical
- Racial
- Linguistic

You can also have a combination of any of the three.

- 2. All nations and races are descended from Noah's three sons Ham, Shem and Japheth (Genesis 9:19).
- 3. The nations were dispersed after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:9).
- 4. Internationalism and one-worldism is therefore against the will of God (cf. Genesis 11:4,9). Satan is attempting to unite the world as a counterfeit to the Millennium, when Christ will reign as King.

God has ordained nationalism rather than internationalism. Internationalism has two systems: a) Religion, b) Political – World Brotherhood.

- 5. Nations are established by God to protect the freedoms and rights of people so that they may serve God peacefully (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
- 6. The importance of free will - a government should not force people to accept or reject Christianity.
- 7. Freedoms in a nation are to be protected:
 - a) Externally by military forces. Believers should defend their own country.
 - b) Internally by police forces and courts (Romans 13:4). Capital punishment is an integral part of law enforcement (Genesis 9:6).

8. The effectiveness of believers within a nation determines its blessing or cursing (Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Genesis 18:17-33, Matthew 5:13).

- 9. When nations become evil, God must destroy them. Examples include:
 - a) Amorites (Genesis 15:16, Deuteronomy 7:2)

b) Chaldea (Daniel 5).

10. Jews were forbidden to intermarry with other nations, so that the Jewish religion would not be defiled by heathen practices (Deuteronomy 7:1-3, Ezra 10:2,14)

a) Solomon's union with foreign women was evil (Nehemiah 13:23-27)

b) Abraham forbade Isaac to marry outside his people (Genesis 28:1)

c) Esau's marriage to Hittites brought grief (Genesis 26:34,35)

d) Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian caused trouble (Numbers 12:1).

11. The threefold split of humanity appears in the book of Acts as examples of salvation:

a) An Ethiopian (Hamitic) is saved in (Acts 10:1 -48)

b) Saul (Semitic) is saved in (Acts 9:1-16)

c) Cornelius (Japhetic) is saved in (Acts 10:1-48)

12. Divine institutions must be established to protect the national entity, to give stability. Three other divine institutions are Free will, Marriage and Family. [See God: Divine Institutions]

13. The importance of human freedom: freedom is based on privacy, hence the right of the individual to privacy as long as he does not contravene common law. Children should have limited freedom.

14. The national entity should allow people to own property and run business, free from government interference.

15. The national entity should provide a system of free enterprise for advancement through human energy and merit.

16. There must be a fair system of taxation.

17. A person must be free to accept or reject Christ as Saviour and the government should not penalize them whether they accept or reject the cross.

NATIONS: DESTINY OF NATIONS

1. In the Scriptures there are four words used for the non-Jewish, non-church groups. They are nations, gentiles, people and heathen. They are distinguished from the Jews and Church (1 Corinthians 10:32).

2. There is a time of history called the times of the Gentiles.

a) It began when God gave them world rulership (Daniel 2:38; Jeremiah 27:6,7).

b) It is fulfilled when Christ returns (Luke 21:24).

c) It ends when Christ sets up His kingdom (Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:15).

It should not be confused with the Gentile or Family dispensation.

3. The destiny of nations is determined by their relationship:-

a) their relationship to God (Psalm 33:12).

b) to the law (Proverbs 14:34)

c) to Satan (Isaiah 14:12,16)

d) to God's programme (Acts 15:14)

e) to the Jews (Genesis 12:3).

4. Prophetically, the destiny of nations is given as:

a) Distress will come to them (Matthew 24:12; Luke 21:25).

b) Many will be saved during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:9,14).

c) War, famine and disease will affect them (Matthew 24:7,22).

d) A world ruler will rule all nations (Revelation 13:7).

e) All nations gather at Armageddon (Zechariah 14:2; Revelation 16:13-16).

f) Christ will return in judgment (Revelation 19:11-21).

g) Righteous Gentiles will enter His kingdom (Matthew 25:31-34).

h) Nations will serve Him (Daniel 7:14).

i) They continue into eternity (Revelation 21:24-26).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR - PRIDE

1. SCRIPTURE 2 Kings 24,25; Jeremiah 22:21-39,43-52; 2 Chronicles 36; Daniel 1-4; Ezra.

2. BIOGRAPHY

Nebuchadnezzar was the eldest son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Chaldean Empire. He married Nitocris whose son-in-law Nabonidus and grandson Belshazzar were the last co-rulers of the empire. Nebuchadnezzar, as the crown prince, led the Babylonian forces that defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish in 605 BC. At this time he brought Daniel

and others of the Judean nobility as hostages back to Babylon. On the death of his father he ascended the throne on September 6, 605 BC. Jehoiakim of Judah submitted to him (2 Kings 24:1). He captured Jerusalem on March 16, 597 BC, taking Jehoiakim captive and replacing him with Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:11-20). Zedekiah eventually revolted and he was taken into captivity with the remnant of Judea in 586 BC. Nebuchadnezzar had much contact with Daniel. The Jewish captive with God's help interpreted the visions of the arrogant man in Daniel 2 and of the Tree in Daniel 4. Late in life he suffered from zoanthropy and was in the fields for seven years. He rebelled against God's plan of history by erecting a huge statue of gold on the plain of Dura. Because they would not worship the idol, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the furnace (Daniel 3). There is some evidence that late in life Nebuchadnezzar became a believer (Daniel 4:34-37). He died in 562 BC.

3. EVALUATION

Using the Daniel passages in chapters 1 - 4 we see Pride and its result. The main cause of Nebuchadnezzar's pride was his position:

- a) As conqueror (Daniel 1:1,2).
- b) As the taker of hostages (Daniel 1:3-6).
- c) As the judge with power of life or death (Daniel 1:10, 2:5).
- d) As King of Kings (Daniel 2:37).
- e) As the recipient of power, strength and glory (Daniel 2:37).
- f) As world ruler (Daniel 2:38).
- g) As the controller of religion (Daniel 3:3-6).
- h) As a great builder (Daniel 4:30).

4. However, he failed to see that his position was not of his own making but of God, and that God can demote as well as promote:

- a) God caused Jehoiakim to fall (Daniel 1:1,2).
- b) God gave Nebuchadnezzar his position (Daniel 2:37,38).
- c) God gave Nebuchadnezzar the dream of his fall (Daniel 4:13-18).
- d) God provided an interpreter (Daniel 4:19-27).
- e) He ignored God's direction (Daniel 4:30).
- f) God brought Nebuchadnezzar to act as an animal and demoted him (Daniel 4:31-33).
- g) Nebuchadnezzar believed and recognised God (Daniel 4:34-37).

5. PRINCIPLES

- a) Pride is the worst of all sins (Proverbs 6:16,17).
- b) Leaders of men often suffer from pride (2 Chronicles 32:25,26; 1 Timothy 3:6).
- c) Pride leads to abuse of power (Isaiah 3:13-16).
- d) God controls the destiny of man (Job 1:21).
- e) Those who oppress believers will be disciplined by God (1 Kings 21:19).
- f) God controls the individual and will not allow continual abuse of power (Amos 4:1-3).
- g) Great rulers can be brought down to the dust (Psalm 135:10).
- h) The choice is between pride (own will) and the Scriptures (God's will) (Proverbs 8:13).
- i) God will respond to the penitent soul (Psalm 51:17).
- j) God will have no other gods before Him (Exodus 20:3) - the first commandment.

NIMROD - INTERNATIONALISM

1. SCRIPTURE Genesis 10:8,9; 1 Chronicles 1:10.

2. BIOGRAPHY

Great grandson of Noah through Ham and Cush. He was probably very dark in complexion as the Cushites were the original Ethiopians. Nimrod is said to be a great warrior before the Lord (Genesis 10:8,9). Nimrod had an extensive kingdom, including the great cities of Babel (Babylon), Erech (Warka), Accad (Agade), Calneh and all the land of Shinar. This was the location of the tower of Babel. Hamurabbi, the great law-giver who lived about the time of Abraham, rebuilt the tower of Babel. He dedicated it to Nimrod (Marduk), the original builder. The tower was one of the wonders of the ancient world at this time and a focal point for internationalism. Nimrod's extensive empire and strength combined to make him a formidable leader and conceivably the first world ruler after the flood. Nimrod's land also included inner Assyria, called the land of Nimrod in Micah 5:6, between Nineveh and Calah.

3. EVALUATION: Genesis 11.

- a) The whole world after the Ark landed on Ararat was of one language and speech (verse 1).
- b) After wandering for some while, they came to the plain of Shinar and dwelt there (verse 2).
- c) God had told them to multiply and inhabit the earth (Genesis 9:7).
- d) Man, however, remained centralised in the plain of Shinar where they constructed a tower (verses 3,4).
- e) The purpose of the tower was to reach heaven from the earth and to rebel against God's orders (verse 4).
- f) God recognised that the whole of mankind had concentrated, and such concentration would cause severe problems for their future (verses 5,6).
- g) He causes a myriad of languages to come upon man to force them into national units (verse 7).

- h) With the various languages, the people on the plain of Shinar disperse and migrate to fill the earth (verse 8).
- i) The name of the place was called Babel because of the confusion of languages (verse 9).

4. PRINCIPLES

- a) Concentration of power causes oppression and degeneracy (Revelation 13:16-18).
- b) God promotes nationalism and judges internationalism. There is no such thing as the brotherhood of man. Man is divided into two groups: believers who are children of God (Romans 8:14-17), and unbelievers who are children of the devil (John 8:44).
- c) God confused tongues (languages) at the Tower of Babel. God gave the gift of tongues in the early church to give the gospel in foreign languages (1 Corinthians 12-14).
- d) Man is always attempting by his own works to pull God down from heaven. God judges man's works and will not allow man to operate outside His plan (Numbers 22-24).
- e) Babel and the Church:
 - i) Started in unity - the church started in unity being in one place in one accord (Acts 2:1).
 - ii) Ambition for power - a power struggle commenced in the church with several bishoprics attempting to gain supreme power (1 Peter 5:3).
 - iii) Man-made unity - under the medieval papacy the church was one over a large area of the known world with one language, LATIN. Religious internationalism.
 - iv) Confusion of languages - the reformation caused each country to worship and have the Bible in their own languages. Christian nationalism.

PROPHECY: LIKELY SEQUENCE OF END TIME EVENTS

1. Note: Some of the events in the Tribulation may occur in a slightly different sequence.

2. CHURCH AGE

- a) Rapture of the Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-58, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- b) Judgment Seat of Christ (believers only - purpose is rewards) (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

3. TRIBULATION (first 3 1/2 years)

- a) Revival of Roman Empire, Ten Nation Confederacy (Daniel 7:7, 24, Revelation 13:1, 17:3, 12, 13).
- b) Rise of Middle East Dictator (Daniel 7:8, Revelation 13:1-8).
- c) Temple rebuilt in Jerusalem
- d) Seven seals judgments (Revelation 6:1ff) and seven trumpets judgments (Revelation 8:7ff).
- e) Two witnesses preach from Jerusalem until killed.
- f) Peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27).
- g) World church established (Revelation 17:1-15).
- h) Russia attacks Israel about four years before the second coming of Christ (Ezekiel 38, 39).

4. GREAT TRIBULATION (second 3 1/2 years)

- a) Peace treaty with Israel broken
- b) Antichrist sets up Abomination of Desolation and demands worship (Matthew 24:15,21).
- c) World government, world economic system, world religion begins (Daniel 7:23, Revelation 13:5-8, 17:16, 17).
- d) Seven bowl judgments (Revelation 16:2ff).
- e) Martyrdom of many Tribulation Saints and Jews (Revelation 7:9-17, 13:15).
- f) Catastrophic divine judgments poured out on the earth (Revelation 6:17).
- g) World war breaks out in Middle East; battle of Armageddon (Daniel 11:40-45, Revelation 9:13-21, 16:12-16).

5. SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

- a) Second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:27-31, Revelation 19:11).
- b) Tribulation surviving believers proceed into the Millennium (Matthew 3:12).
- c) Unbelievers cast off the earth (Ezekiel 20:33-38, Matthew 3,12, 25:31-46, Jude 14, 15, Revelation 19:15-21, 20:1-4).
- d) Satan bound (Revelation 20:1-3).
- e) Resurrection of Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs (Revelation 20:4).

6. MILLENNIUM

- a) Millennial kingdom begins (Revelation 20:5, 6).
- b) Christ reigns on earth for 1,000 years in perfect environment and peace (Revelation 20:4-6).
- c) Satan released at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-9).
- d) Rebellion of Gog and Magog at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-10).
- e) Resurrection of all unbelievers (Revelation 20:5a).
- f) Great White Throne Judgment (unbelievers only - purpose is judgment) (Revelation 20:11-15).

7. ETERNITY

- a) New heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem (Revelation 21, 22).
- b) Believers blessed forever with Christ (Revelation 21 - 22:5).
- c) Unbelievers punished forever with Satan (Matthew 25:41).

SIN: OLD SIN NATURE – THE FRUIT OF

1. The fruit of the old sin nature falls under four categories:

- a) Sensual
- b) Religious
- c) Social
- d) Personal

2. SENSUAL

- a) fornication – porneia – illicit sexual activity or any sexual activity other than with your partner.
- b) uncleanness - akatharsia - all acts of indecency and uncleanness that shock people, this includes abnormal sexual acts
- c) lasciviousness - aselgeia - unrestrained lust - people who are having sex for their own personal gratification, treating other people as sexual objects for their pleasure. Paul recognises that we are tempted in all these areas. Matthew points out that it is not only the doing of these acts but the thinking of these acts which are sins.

3. RELIGIOUS

- a) idolatry - eidoltria - worship of things other than God
- b) witchcraft - pharmakeia - this involved magic, astrology, séances and sorcery.
- c) hatred - echthros - this is unrestrained rage without a reason. You get so angry that no one can talk to you at all.
- iv) strife - eris - contentiousness - this is argumentation in regard to Bible teaching and spiritual matters.

4 SOCIAL

- a) jealousy - zelos - a bitter hatred towards another person who has something that you want. This is the father of all the other sins.
- b) wrath - theros - this is getting hot headed or flaring up. If the person does not control the power of a hot temper they are under the power of the old sin nature and not the Holy Spirit. If you get this type of trouble at a church meeting you turn to the Word of God.
- c) seditions - - this is faction forming
- d) heresies - this is one step forward from seditions and is a person who wishes to build on the factions. An example would be the KJV group. By separating on the basis of the KJV alone you have fallen into far more evil than is present in variations in the versions.
- e) evil - this is tied into jealousy eating away at the souls of people who harbour resentment.

5. PERSONAL

- a) drunkenness - methai - drinking alcohol to excess is not a sickness it is a sin. It is an inherited weakness, if your father is an alcoholic you should not touch alcohol at all because it is a weakness in the family. Avoid places where you could be tempted. If you have a weakness towards alcoholism you must deal with it.
- b) revellings - jomoi - which means hell raising, a person who cannot bear silence but has to be drowned in noise all the time. Their life is empty and has no purpose but as long as they party vigorously and run from function to function they do not have to worry about their sin and the pointlessness of their life. When you are tempted to sin think about the Lord. Paul now adds and such like which means that if he has not hit their particular weakness they should fill in the blanks.

6. We all have weaknesses and unless you are on guard you fall every time. You have to ascertain your weakness and set your guard against it. God's way is to walk in the Spirit that is the way to deal with it.

TIME

- 1. As God is eternal He is not constrained with time "A thousand years are a day and a day as a thousand years
- 2. Man requires time

3. There is a principle of planned time (James 4:13-17).
4. We are to redeem the time - not to waste time in vain pursuits (Ephesians 5:16-18).
5. The principle of utilised time (1 Corinthians 7:29-31). In order to maximise the effectiveness of your Christian life you have to utilise time and time has to be planned.

I JOHN 2:20-29

“20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. 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. 25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 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. 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

KEY WORDS

Have	echo	present, active, indicative; keep on having.
Uction	chrisma	anointing of the believer binding them to Christ.
<u>Know</u>	<u>oida</u>	perfect , active, indicative; permanence of knowing
Liar	pseustes	false speaker, deceiver, untruthful.
Denieth	arneomai	present, middle, participle; keeps on saying 'no'.
Aknowledgeth		this half of the verse is not in the earliest manuscripts.
Abide	meno	aoist, active, subjunctive; let it abide(3 rd)
Heard	akouo	aoist, active, indicative; heard at times.
Remain	meno	aoist, active, subjunctive; let it abide then 3 rd
Continue	meno	future, active, indicative; you will keep abiding.
Promise	epaggelia	promise, announcement, God's pledge to you.
Promised	epaggello	aoist, middle, indicative; has promised/pledged
Eternal	aionion	to the end of the ages – beyond time itself.
Seduce	planao	present, active, participle; seducing, deceiving
Anointing	chrisma	anointing of the Holy Spirit binding to Christ.
Received	lambano	aoist, active, indicative; have actively received
Abideth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
Teach	didasko	present, active, subjunctive; should teach.
Teacheth	didasko	present, active, indicative; keeps on teaching you
Taught	didasko	aoist, active, indicative; has taught.
Abide	meno	present, active, imperative; you shall abide!
Appear	phaneroo	aoist, passive, subjunctive; at the point in time He will receive appearing (appear) at that time.
Confidence	paressia	openness, boldness, confidence, with freedom.
Ashamed	aischuno	aoist, passive, subjunctive; might not be ashamed
Coming	parousia	the Lord's second advent.
<u>If you know</u>	<u>oida</u>	perfect , active, subjunctive; (if) have knowledge
Doeth	poieo	present, active, participle; keeps on practicing.
<u>Born</u>	<u>gennaio</u>	perfect , passive, indicative; permanent results of the birthing process, you are permanently in the family of God.

REFLECTION

We have to be able to quickly identify those who are false brethren within the Church, for those people are enemies of Christ. IF WE DO NOT SPOT THE PHONY THEY WILL DESTROY THE CHURCH FROM WITHIN. Sometimes these people are “too good to be true” in their behaviour, and act so holy, that you spot them as fakes quickly, but other times they are more subtle in their behaviours. Whatever way they act, there will be things in their behaviours that betray their origins with Satan.

Those who serve Satan have the signs that go with Narcissism (self centeredness) and as long as we heed the Holy Spirit's intuitions within we will spot them quickly. As pastors of the Lord's flock we must be alert however, at all times, for the day we let our guard down and do not check out people spiritually will be the day one slips past us and kills a little lamb. Spotting the fake believer is a matter of survival for the young and weak amongst us.

The Lord gives us the way to spot them, and John has already emphasized this. Those who do not live in love are not alive in Christ! The lack of the fruit of the Holy Spirit means the people lack the Holy Spirit! We should be alert to evil of all forms. We must be known as those who stand against pride and lust based systems, and stand for the power of the Holy Spirit alone. Believers should not be naive; we are troops in an angelic conflict, and the enemy is trying to do us serious harm. Be alert, be strong in the Lord, be the soldier the Lord called you to be. Read, **1 Corinthians 16:13, 14, also of course Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Timothy 2:1**. Refer to the BTB study on HERESY

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

We are the anointed ones, in Christ Jesus. Unction here means an anointing. It is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit being referred to here, but the abiding results of what happened when we were baptized by the Holy Spirit, and entered into union with Christ. We keep on having this anointing, this inner indwelling power to guide and be the people we need to be. The Holy Spirit is within us, guiding us, showing us the truth, as our inner teacher. **2 Corinthians 1:21-22**. This is in contrast to the position of the unbeliever, who is blinded, not anointed; they are willfully deceived into believing the false hood of Satan. **John 10:1-15**.

John says, "Ye know all things", but most say, 'I do not know all things!' The more one knows, the more one realizes that one does not know a lot. You however do know all things, 'in Christ Jesus', because in you is the Holy Spirit, who does know all things, and will teach you all things, as you listen to his inner voice. As the Holy Spirit teaches you from God's Word you get to know all things, but you have to be a disciple, a learner. There are no shortcuts, as the Lord teaches us in many ways, through many events and situations. This learning is not academic; it is growth throughout your life. Positionally, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, we know all things, and practically we must grow into that knowledge. Refer to the BTB study on CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONSECRATION, MATURITY, PRIORITIES, THINKING BIBLICALLY.

Turn to and read, **John 16:12-15**. Here the Lord speaks about the Spirit coming for believers. Now read, **John 17:14-19**. These passages teach us that the Holy Spirit enlightens the Word to us. This is what gives you spiritual growth and discernment as you apply it in your life. "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth". **2 Timothy 2:15**.

We should not be lazy or distracted, but study the Word daily, and as teachers we are challenged by these things to work through our messages so that what we preach is clear, sound, and challenging all believers to apply the word into their daily life. You can use commentaries in your study, but sift them through your own soul, letting the Holy Spirit change you before you stand up and urge others to be changed. The Holy Spirit will also be your discernor as you read the words of the many commentators about the Word of God, and will show you who can be trusted and who cannot amongst the commentators. **1 Corinthians 2:12-16**.

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

Here John is encouraging the people, as believers they must know what is going on. Even if you know God's Word, there will be many things you will need to be reminded of. **Isaiah 28:7-16**. Do not despise the repetition of teaching by a faithful teacher, for we need reminding of things we know, but have 'forgotten'. The truth alone will defend our hearts from lies and deception that will lead us into false paths and destructive habits. **Proverbs 1:5-7, 9:6-12**. There is no lie in God's truth, it is the antidote to lies, and John reminds them that they need the truth to counter the deception of the devil, and to keep them selves from fools and liars. He now moves on to one sure way to spot the deceiving teachers in their lies.

Verse 22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also"

"Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ, He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son". This is the sign of a false teacher, a person who is an antichrist in their theology and life practice. The person who rejects the unique claims of the Lord Jesus Christ is a follower of the enemy. The **uniqueness of the Lord** is a central tenant of Christianity. The 'liars' are known first by their rejection of the Lord's uniqueness, and the unique nature of his relationship with the Father. **John 8:31-58**.

If you hear a person saying the Lord is like all the other great teachers of history you know the source of their words; Satan! The cults will reject the true humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, or reject His deity, or His hypostatic union, or that He was the anointed one, the only Saviour. When we look at the cults in our day, you will find that Satan has not had new ideas in a long time, since he doesn't need to! All the concepts of today's cults were present in the antichrists of the first century AD. The father behind the cults is Satan, in exactly a similar way as it was in the ancient world.

The cultic groups of John's day were later called by the term "Gnostics", a word from the Greek word, "gnosis" for knowledge, because these fakes believed they had special knowledge. They were the Hollywood "trendy" group who mixed the ancient eastern pagan religions with Judaism, Persian and Greek philosophy combined with a smattering of magical incantations and rituals. They were synchronistic and eclectic, taking what was pleasant and sounded well in each religion and adding them together. Religion has always been Satan's ace trump card. He delights in synchronistic religions and philosophies that do **not** teach sin, judgment, or hell, but do teach that individuals can save themselves by

good works and mystical understanding of so called "eternal truths". Satan is truly the "father of lies", and his followers prefer the pleasant lie to the hard truth that demands life change and real worship of the Creator-Saviour.

The satanic systems therefore either deny the deity, humanity or the hypostatic union of the Lord Jesus Christ. They deny that Jesus is the Christ (or anointed one), and they reject that he is the only way to salvation. In this you spot the cult or cultic person who works for Satan, and it is often the mild mannered person who is lovely in all other ways. Do not be misled, such a denial of the uniqueness of Christ and necessity of relationship with him for salvation, indicates they are followers of the enemy, no matter how 'nice' they are. Note John's language, "HE IS THE ANTI-CHRIST", if he denies the Father and the Son. What does this mean? Once again it refers to the uniqueness of the Christian gospel, the only true message of salvation. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**. Note Satan is the "angel of (false) light".

Turn to and read, **John 5:22-23, 6:27-29, 8:19, 10:24-30, 14:8-15, 15:22-25, 20:28,31**. The Lord Jesus Christ makes the same points as John does in **1 John 2:23**. The view that John teaches here is, that whoever denies the Lord Jesus Christ, denies the Father. You cannot deny the uniqueness of the Lord without denying the Father. If you deny Christ you are not able to worship the Father, neither can you have a relationship with Him unless you come through the Son. The Christian message is unique in having a doctrine of a Father-Son relationship within the godhead, and with the creation. **2 John 7-11**. We call God our Father, and that is only because of the uniqueness of the incarnation and the work on the Cross. Refer to the BTB study on GOD – FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

To reject the Lord Jesus Christ is to reject your only hope of salvation. Christianity is an absolute religion; there is room for no other way to God if you are a Christian! Christianity is not tolerant in this sense; it is absolutist! This is not the viewpoint of theology; it is the viewpoint of the Lord himself. While Christ made absolute claims he did so recognizing the right of man to freedom of choice in this matter, and the privilege to reject him. As Christians we proclaim an absolute standard, but we do not enter into any persecution, insulting behaviour, nor do we discriminate against any who reject our message, for that is their right and privilege under God. They are accountable to him, not to us, for their rejection of the message. Refer to the BTB study on GOSPEL OF SALVATION.

Verse 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.

This is a challenge to believers as to whether we will keep on with what we have heard in the beginning or will wander off after false teachers. Will you be consistent or will you move on to something else? John urges us to stand like the great saints of old, to keep on abiding in the truth of God's Word, and say, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" **Joshua 24:14-24**.

The key is to keep on abiding in the Word of God, (present active imperative of the Greek word, "meno"), to keep on believing and applying the Word to life. To live in the Word is to live in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Refer to the BTB studies, GOD – ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS. God has no other way to stabilize us, than through the Lord's and the Holy Spirit's work within us as we exercise our volition and open his Word daily. This is his chosen method and we are urged to apply it daily. **John 1:4-5, 12-18, 15:9-10, 17:21-24, Hebrews 3:12-4:5**.

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

John urges us all, 'do not pass away the riches of eternity for some fleeting pleasure of time!' The riches of eternity are ours in Christ Jesus. Opportunities, pressures, persecution, studying, suffering, whatever the Lord gives or allows, take everything that comes, as unto the Lord because eternal rewards are waiting for you, if you walk with him. **1 Timothy 1:16, 6:12-19, Jude 21**.

Only God can give real life, for there is eternal life in and through relationship with no other. We have the greatest possession in the world. We should live to glorify the One who has given us eternal life. John encourages us to rest upon the clear promises of the Lord Jesus Christ in this matter. **John 1:47-51, 3:16-18, 36, 6:36-40, 46-51, 68, 12:50, 17:1-5**.

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

The ever present danger is seduction. Seduction does not only happen with sex but also through false teaching leading to false actions, beliefs and thinking, and all compromises with true doctrine. If truth is compromised, it is only with lies! Many believers are seduced in one or other area of doctrine, and so they are made useless. Many are perverted from the path of truth and obedience in apparently very "little things", and stray into compromises that lead them down a slippery immoral path until they have declined to such an extent that they are no longer of any use to the Lord by way of earthly ministry.

Satan's system is an all encompassing, "total package", kosmos system, which has false views of the person and work of the Lord, false "lords", and a false view of the correct response of mankind to our creator. If you accept any of his teachings, your Christian faith will become null and void over time. He is the "angel of light", bringing false light in to blind those who seek alternatives to a genuinely life changing relationship with their Saviour God.

Many Christians make small compromises to get along with other believers, or even with unbelievers. If they stay there in the long term their compromise will end their witness; they will be like Lot. Turn to and read, **Acts 20:28-31**, then look at

Peter's passage that warns of similar things to John in this letter. **2 Peter 2:1-22**. Lot was "vexed" by the evils of Sodom, but he stayed in Sodom, and so his family shared the fate of their neighbours, for they had all lost their witness. Only his two daughters went out from the city, and that is only because they were under his authority and could be ordered. They proved by their incestuous plan later that they too had been corrupted by the evil they were surrounded by.

This family failed to stand for truth and grow in the grace and knowledge of the true God, and so they became casualties in the Angelic Conflict. **Genesis 30:30-38**. Refer to the BTB study on ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT. Lot and his family failed to bear the fruit of righteousness and so failed to perform as God's true witnesses, and lost everything they thought they had. **John 15:7-10**. They were focused on the large mansion they had, not eternity. **John 14:1ff**.

We are to stand for the truth. You can be seduced by a false teacher anywhere; a church, a Bible College, a university, or over the back fence! All it takes is a lack of alertness to evil. We must be careful not to place ourselves in danger, in a place of temptation, or a place where the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not present.

Hebrews 12:13, tells us to make straight paths for our feet, thus we should not go to places where we are likely to be seduced by false teachers, as our eternal reward and status in eternity is at stake. John would not even stay in the public baths when a heretical teacher entered the complex. One story records him fleeing the public baths in Ephesus when a heretic entered. He would not stay in the same building as evil men. John had no fellowship with false teachers at all. He would speak to pagans, so he could give them the gospel, but he would not fellowship with false teachers at all! Once a person rejected the truth John moved on, and he would fellowship with them only if they sought the truth later. We often agonize over such people, but John just separated himself from them and moved on to teach the real flock of God.

The Gnostics came along and appealed to pride, promising more knowledge, stating that the person they approached could understand more or believe more if they believed them. People who desire to be special or above others, will follow such false teachers and become seduced with the concept of receiving a special place of power, acceptance and influence which they will not get if they are a fundamentalist, where they will be classified as the lunatic fringe, or just a simple church member. We must have the slave or servant attitude as John the Baptist had, who said, "He must increase I must decrease". Jesus set the standard as he washed the disciple's feet, and servant leadership that turns away from pride is his standard. Anything that moves you away from that is evil.

Remember the principle that we are to resemble the person we follow; the more like Christ we are, the closer we are to the truth. The more like Paul, James and John we are the more close we are to the standard for true faith. Every twenty or so years Satan will bring out a repackaged version of Gnosticism, be it pagan Jewish Kabala, New Age, or something with a new name, it will always have the old satanic religious elements to it. Hollywood "stars" lead the way in these newly packaged, but actually ancient heresies, just as in the past, the celebrities of their days led people to their moral and spiritual destruction. Refer to the BTB, RELIGION - Satan's Policy, and CHRISTIAN LIFE - SERVICE.

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

The Holy Spirit remains active within you; he keeps on teaching us all things. You do not need people coming along and giving you, so called, 'hidden truths'. The false teachers and cultists do this. It is an evil. We should rely on the Bible alone and not have anything added by man as we have God living in us in the form of the Holy Spirit who will convict, teach, lead and guide you into all the truth. Always beware of any teacher who does not encourage you to check out his/her words in the Scriptures, and urge you to audit his/her life for spiritual fruit. Those who demand obedience to themselves, rather than the Word, show the signs of Satan upon them, not the Lord. Narcissism = satanic.

If you have the all knowing Holy Spirit to rely on what else can you obtain, other than error from man? Any addition is blasphemy and error. It is not what man thinks of you, nor what man thinks is true, but what God says that matters. What we ought to desire is meeting the Lord and Him saying, "Well done good and faithful servant". Do not compromise your fundamentalist principles. **2 Peter 3:14-18**. If you are going to cleave to the Lord today you cannot fraternize with those pastors who do not hold the Word of God as truth.

You will be classified as a separatist and be unpopular but you will retain your integrity, and not lose your eternal reward. We must maintain the "visible difference" so that people who seek the truth will see that they have somewhere to go to find the truth. John's message here is similar to **John 15:4-11**. (Turn to and read this passage again). We have the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and we are to walk in the Filling of the Holy Spirit, serving the Lord in spirit and in truth.

What is the pastor's responsibility if the Spirit does everything? Well of course the Holy Spirit is the one who gives the gift of pastor-teacher, so he works through the called servant. What are our jobs as the pastor? To stay out of the Holy Spirit's way! To ensure we do not interfere in his teaching. To ensure we preach only the Word of God, for only that is used by the Holy Spirit. There is one celebrity, the Lord Jesus Christ, and our role is to be his herald, to uplift him and his Word alone. The Holy Spirit will do the rest within the life of the believers who come to hear us preach. **2 Peter 1:16-18**.

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

John sums up his points so far now. These are excellent verses when you are under pressure. This is John speaking to his spiritual children, and that includes us in the 21st century. We should cling to Christ, abide with him, and reject the company and applause of mere men who lead people away from our Lord and his Word. The reason is given in verse 28, the conjunction, "hina" - literally, 'in order that', when he shall appear we may have confidence or boldness, and not be embarrassed or ashamed before Him at His Coming.

Jesus told parables about his going and placing his vineyard or his talents, in the care of his people, and they had the order, to care for his work until he returns. **Matthew 21:33-44**. We are to care for his work so that we are not ashamed when he returns, for we have done the best we could do. Be prepared to be embarrassed in the presence of man now, but live spiritually now, and throughout this short life, so that you are not embarrassed in the presence of the Lord.

John wants us to get a real spirit of boldness. This means to become confident in Christ, as we fellowship daily with him. The only way to avoid shame, when we see the Lord, is to know him so well before he comes, that we are comfortable in his presence now, and it is no shock when we are with him after his return to earth. Shame here is a word that means, personally to feel ashamed of oneself, that you have let yourself down, and not done what you know ought to have been done. How can we avoid that feeling? We avoid this by simply walking with the Holy Spirit now in obedience to the revealed Word of God.

Paul makes a similar point in **Colossians 3:1-17**. Read these verses, and see how closely John and Paul's points are. By their fruits you shall know them. We are back to the principles covered in Matthew 7 and James 1 and 2. He that is righteous will do righteousness. Look for the fruit of righteousness in the lives of those who claim to be Christ's. It is a safe conclusion that people are probably seducers if there is no fruit of righteousness in their lives. God's Word is clear. 'Be holy as I am holy', the Lord says, 'abide in Me'. To be born again, **John 3:3 - 8**, means that you will live a different life to the pagans around you. Our lives are to be characterized by righteousness and truth, not immorality and lies. Let us chose our company and guard our lives against the influence of evil men who come speaking of a lord they do not truly know!

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. **Be alert for fakes in the spiritual area.** Satan's main tool to destroy churches is to bring in false brethren, who do not share the doctrinal truth, or the moral code of the genuine believer. How alert are you to the false brother or sister? How often have you been caught by a fake? If a few times, then you need to be taking this passage far more seriously, and be far more alert to danger.
2. We are provided with spiritual power within to enable us to learn and know all things needful in this life. If we are short of knowledge, then we need to devote ourselves to gaining it. Apply yourself daily to the serious study of the Word of God.
3. Genuine teachers of truth will never require obedience to them. Genuine truth stands by and of itself, and needs no shouting on the part of the teacher. Beware those who shout about holiness too much, and demand standards that are beyond or below the Lord's standard. Satan loves legalism, indeed it is his main religious tool, so beware those who provide neat lists of requirements for spiritual power. God seeks our love first, then our obedience to his commands, not the commands of men. Discern the spiritual status of those you move amongst. Be careful brother and sister, for the enemy is still a lion amongst us. 1 Peter 5:8-9.
4. Any system that denies the Lord's unique nature, and the permanent results of his unique work upon the earth is of the enemy. The incarnation, the miracles, the sacrifice for sin on the Cross, and the physical bodily resurrection are basics, and attacked only by the enemy's forces. By their attacks they are known.
5. In Christ Jesus we have eternal life. This assurance is ours and to be guarded from the attacks of the enemy. Beware of all who attack the young believer's confidence in their salvation.
6. No compromise with truth! Any compromise with truth must lead to error; it can lead no other place. Abide in Him and his truth only and always.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT

1. There is an angelic conflict and it is intimately related to our presence in this world.

2. ETERNITY PAST

[a] Initially God created angels. At creation we are told that there was unity as all the angels sang in unison.

[b] Satan as Lucifer with the title Son of the Morning was the head of the angels. Isaiah 14. Ezekiel 28:12-15

[c] It is noted that the Lord Jesus Christ is now called Son of the Morning in 2 Peter 1 showing that the Lord replaced Satan as a result of His victory at the Cross.

3. FALL OF SATAN

[a] Satan became proud and attempted a coup d'etat against God in Isaiah 14:12-17

[b] When Satan fell he took one third of the angels with him. Revelation 12:9.

[c] The angels who exist forever therefore fall into two permanent groups

- (i) Elect Angels who remained faithful to God (1 Timothy 5:21)
- (ii) Fallen angels who chose to follow Satan who fall into two categories:-
 - (1) Imprisoned ones who were made inoperative at the time of the Flood (Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4)
 - (2) Demons who are currently operative (1 Corinthians 10:20,21, Mark 5:1-20)

[d] There is therefore a spiritual warfare between elect and fallen angels, which affects the human race. (Ephesians, 6:12, Revelation 12)

4. SENTENCE ON THE FALLEN ANGELS

[a] In eternity past Satan and the fallen angels were judged and sentenced to the Lake of Fire - Matthew 24:51

[b] It would appear that Satan appealed against his sentence and said "how can a God of Love sentence any of his creatures to the lake of fire?"

[c] The answer is in the character of God who is HOLY as well as LOVE. His holiness can only judge sin and rebellion.

[d] The lake of fire therefore was not created for man. Man ends up in the lake of fire due to his own negative attitude towards God.

5. MAN'S ROLE IN THE ANGELIC CONFLICT

[a] This sentence which was given before man existed has not yet executed and will not be so until the end of the Millennium in Revelation 20:10.

[b] There must be a long lapse of time before the sentence is executed with this period being taken up with the whole of human history. Therefore the purpose of the existence of the human race and its relation to God can only be explained as a testimony to the angels.

[c] Through the creation of man God provides a clear legal witness to Satan and his angels of their sin. The whole of human history is to prove certain points to the angels. Things can happen in your life as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and these can only be explained as a testimony to the angels.

6. FALL OF MAN AND VICTORY OF THE GOD MAN

[a] Man starts off lower than the angels. Hebrews 2:9 tells us that Jesus Christ made Himself a little lower than the angels.

[b] Although Adam failed to be victorious the Lord Jesus Christ replaces Adam in history and won the battle in His humanity. 1 Corinthians 15:22 tells us that in Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive.

[c] A new form of creature judges come into existence and will judge the angels 1 Corinthians 6:1-3

7. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ANGELS AND MAN

[a] Angels and mankind have a number of parallels with human free will being tested in exactly the same way as angelic free will.

[b] Angels began in innocence and full obedience to God (Job 38:7 Ezekiel 28:14-15)
 Man began in innocence (Genesis 2:25)
 Angels sinned - rebellion of Satan (Isaiah 14:12-14)
 Man sinned - rebellion of Adam (Genesis 3:1-7)
 Angels are divided into two categories - elect or fallen.
 Man is divided into two categories - believers and unbelievers. (John 3:36)

8. ADAM AND FREEWILL

[a] God created Adam and Eve, to show Satan that mankind, created lower than angels (Hebrews 2:6-7), would choose to obey God. Mankind therefore, by a choice of freewill, would decide whether to obey God and be blessed, or to disobey God and be judged (the same choice that Satan had).

[b] A test was instituted for man's freewill - obedience to God or disobedience. (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam - and therefore all mankind - sinned and thereby rebelled against God. All of mankind, therefore, is in the same condition of sinful rebellion as Satan.

[c] However, God instituted another test of freewill for mankind - will they choose to return to God through Jesus Christ, or will they choose to continue in sin and rebellion (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9).

[d] Anyone who chooses to return to God will be saved; anyone who chooses to remain in rebellion to God will be judged in the lake of fire, the same fate as Satan (Matthew 25:41)

[e] Therefore, by the work of Christ on the cross, and man's freewill faith in Christ, God has vindicated His love to save and His justice to judge.

9. RESOLUTION OF THE ANGELIC CONFLICT

Stage 1 - Salvation - by faith, man is saved and made positionally superior to angels (Hebrews 2:6-7)

Stage 2 - Christian Walk - by faith, the believer overcomes Satan (Ephesians 6:10-17)

Stage 3 - Eternity - in Christ, the believer will judge Satan and his fallen angels (Hebrews 2:8, 1 Corinthians 6:3)

10. THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Angels watch the human race. (1 Corinthians 4:9, Ephesians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:21, 1 Peter 1:12). Elect angels rejoice every time someone is saved (Luke 15:10)

11. THREE BASIC QUESTIONS

The angelic conflict answers three basic questions:-

[a] Why man? Inside man is a soul with mentality and freewill which when linked together resolves the angelic conflict, (Colossians 2:14-15, Hebrews 2). The cross is the real victory in the angelic conflict.

[b] Why sin? Sin resolves stage 1 of the plan of God (see paragraph 9). At the cross sin was judged and the barrier between man and God was removed so that man's relationship with God depends on his free will. Every time a person accepts Christ, elect angels rejoice. In the garden man was innocent and all he had to do was stay away from one tree. Now man is guilty he has to come to a tree (the cross). (Genesis 2:17, 1 Peter 2:24).

[c] Why suffering? Suffering resolves the issue in Stage 2. Suffering involves the promise principle. (1 Peter 1:7-8, Romans 5:2-4). Suffering is designed for blessing and is a further blow to Satan. It is to demonstrate the love of God in a way that cannot be done in eternity as in eternity there is no more sorrow, pain or death. (Revelation 21:4)

12. STAGES IN THE CONFLICT [SEE SATANIC ATTACK ON THE PLAN OF GOD]

[a] From the fall of man to the ascension of Christ the line of Christ and Jesus Christ himself were the target of attack. Once the ascension was a fact in history Satan was unable to attack the line of the Saviour.

[b] The resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ caused intensification in the angelic conflict.

[c] Once Christ is glorified at the right hand of the Father the angelic conflict becomes intensified in the Church age.

[d] Every Church Age believer is now a target and because of this every believer has had special provisions made for him:

- (i) Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 14:17)
- (ii) Indwelling of Jesus Christ (John 14:23)
- (iii) Completed canon of Scripture (1 Corinthians 13:10)

13. PROGRESSION TO THE LAKE OF FIRE

This explains the actions of the Lord Jesus Christ from the time he sat down at the right hand of the Father until the Last Judgment. Psalm 110:1 says "The Lord [God the Father] said to my Lord [God the Son], Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

[a] The first stage – Insurgency warfare – Pentecost - Rapture

During this time He calls out the personnel who will replace the angelic council members who have been condemned 1 Corinthians 4:8, 6:1-3, 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 3:21

The angelic council comprises God and all the angels as seen in 1 Kings 22:19-23 and 2 Chronicles 18:18-23

[b] The second Stage – Rapture to Second Advent - Confrontation

During this time the new members of the angelic council are evaluated in relation to their divine and human good, rewarded [1 Corinthians 3:11-15], they lose their old sin nature and have a resurrection body. The rebellious members, Satan and his followers are cast out of heaven Revelation 12:4

[c] The third stage – Second Advent – Victory Stage

Christ casts Satan and the fallen angels into hell for a thousand years and rightfully asserts His authority.

[d] The fourth stage – The Last Judgment. The Lake of Fire was created for Satan and his angels Matthew 25:41

Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire with the demons and the unbelievers. Unbelievers join them in the Lake of Fire because they have not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The old creation is destroyed and a new heavens and a new earth provided by God. At that point all knees shall bow and the promise of making His enemies His footstool will have been fulfilled.

14. THE BELIEVERS AND RESULT OF THE ANGELIC CONFLICT

The result of the angelic conflict:

Stage 1 - Salvation - saved mankind is positionally superior to angels;

Stage 2 - Christian Walk - through suffering the believer develops his faith towards Christ to such an extent that he thereby shows the fallen angels the certainty of their doom;

Stage 3 - Heaven - In eternity the believer in his resurrection body will be physically superior to angels.

15. CONCLUSION

Through the fall of man Satan obtained control of the world though not necessarily control of mankind.

What makes it possible for man to live in the Devil's world and not be under his control? - free will.

By using The Word of God you can make decisions that are completely against Satan and his concepts.

Satan is the ruler of this world. (2 Corinthians 4:4, John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, Ephesians 2:2)

However we have the Bible - the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) We should know it and use it.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: CONSECRATION

1. Consecration means full surrender of self to God. (Romans 6:13)
2. This is the attitude of "denying self" and "not my will, but yours be done" (Matthew 16:24, 26:39, Galatians 2:20).
3. This is the only acceptable gift to God. (Romans 12:1,2)
4. The consecration of the Temple is a picture of the believer's life: the Outer Court (the body), the Holy Place (the soul) and the Holy of Holies (spirit)
5. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and therefore must be set apart as a holy vessel (Romans 12:1-2 cf 1 Kings 8:1-11)

CHRISTIAN LIFE - PRIORITIES

1. The First Person - Jesus Christ has ultimate priority - Colossians 1:16-18
2. The First Possessions - The kingdom of God, the greatest gift - Matthew 6:33
3. The First Offering - the giving of oneself - 2 Corinthians 8:5

4. The First Denial - the denial of self - Matthew 7:5
5. The First Discipline - the discipline of prayer - 1 Timothy 2:1-4
6. The First Commandment - to love God supremely - Matthew 22:37-38
7. The First Excuse - too busy to have time for God - Matthew 8:21-22

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SERVICE

1. Our duty is to surrender our entire lives to God. (Romans 12:1)
2. Willingness is essential. (Judges 5:2, 8:25, Isaiah 1:19, 2 Corinthians 8:3)
3. Service in the big things requires by faithfulness in the small things.
4. Monotony and difficulties are transformed into the opportunities with the correct attitude (Matthew 6:33)
5. Everything we do should be "as unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:17)
6. Service to Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men (Romans 14:18)
7. Our work should be completed. (John 4:34, 17:4, Acts 20:24, 2 Timothy 4:7)
8. The example of Christ. (Matthew 20:28, Luke 22:27, Philippians 2:7)
9. Qualities of our service:-
 - a) It is demanded. (Hebrews 12:28)
 - b) It should be immediate. (Matthew 21:28)
 - c) It is abundant. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
 - d) It is according to ability. (Matthew 25:22, Luke 12:48)
 - e) It is in co-operation with God. (2 Corinthians 6:1)
 - f) Must be exclusive (Luke 16:13)
 - g) In the power of the spirit (Romans 1:9)
 - h) Undertaken in Godly fear (Hebrews 12:28)
 - i) Motivated by love (Galatians 5:13)
10. It is :-
 - a) Following Christ (John 12:26)
 - b) For him whom all Christians serve (Colossians 3:24)
 - c) Service to God (Acts 27:23).
11. It requires:-
 - a) Turning from idols (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
 - b) Fasting and prayer (Luke 2:37)
 - c) Ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-4).
12. Benefits of Service:-
 - a) It glorifies God. (Matthew 5:16, John 15:8)
 - b) It enriches life. (1 Timothy 6:18-19)
 - c) It gives a pattern for imitation. (Titus 2:7)
 - d) It encourages others in their tasks. (Hebrews 10:24)
 - e) It shows neighbourliness. (Luke 10:36-37)
 - f) It lightens life's burdens. (Galatians 6:2,16)
 - g) It demonstrates love. (John 21:15-17)
 - h) It demonstrates faith. (James 2:17-18, 1 Peter 2:12)
 - i) It is Christ like. (John 13:12-15)

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SERVICE – MODEL SERVANT

1. The unnamed servant in (Genesis 24) is the picture of the model servant as well as a type of the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. The model servant does not pre-empt his master (v2-9). We should wait upon the Lord and not run ahead of time.

3. The model servant goes where he is sent (v4,10). We should be in the geographical will of God.
4. The model servant does nothing else. God has specific tasks for every believer to perform. We should concentrate on our own area and not get sidetracked.
5. The model servant is prayerful and thankful. We should always realise where our power comes from and not get proud when we have spiritual blessings and prosperity.
6. The model servant is keen to succeed (v 17-18, 21). We should be keen to evangelise (Romans 1:14-16).
7. The model servant speaks not of himself but of his master. Who and what we are is not important, who and what Christ is of the greatest importance (v 22, 34-36).
8. The model servant presents the true issue and requires a clear decision. [v49] We should present the gospel and other doctrine clearly and expect results.

GOD: ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

1. The only anchor for the soul in the storms of life is the certainty, stability and dependability of the character of God, upon which our salvation, sanctification and eternal life rests. Refer CHARACTER OF GOD.
2. The Lord's character is sure and steadfast, and upon his character his plan is built. We are part of the plan of God for eternity. Refer DIVINE DECREES, ELECTION, PLAN OF GOD.
3. The anchor is sure and certain because it is grounded in the heart of God's love for us, and his holy commitment to his plan of salvation. All these things depend upon our study, and application of the living Word of God; for without the knowledge of scripture we do not have the certainty we ought to have. Refer GROWTH, SALVATION.

GOD: COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS

1. God is in control. Nothing will ever happen to you as a Christian that you have not had the opportunity to develop resources to deal with. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
2. God's character is stable.
 - (a) if God is for you who can be against you. (Romans 8:31-34)
 - (b) no matter what happens God's love is stable. (Romans 8:35-39)
3. God's promises are secure for he is always with us. (Matthew 28:19-20, Jeremiah 1:19)
4. God's power is always the same:-
 - (a) He will always keep us. (John 10:29, 2 Timothy 1:12,)
 - (b) God does not forget us or lose His power to keep. (Jude 24)
 - (c) Even if we fall away from fellowship we still are saved. (2 Timothy 2:13)
5. God knew before time what we would need in time and has provided for the supply of all our needs. (Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12,)
6. God has the power to bless us. (2 Corinthians 9:8)
7. God is able to make all grace abound towards us. (Ephesians 3:20)
8. We should grow to the place of real confidence and blessing. (2 Peter 3:18)
9. We do this by feeding on His Word. (John 6:29, 33, 63)

GOD - FATHERHOOD OF GOD

Fatherhood comes in various concepts:-

1. The Fatherhood over creation - Ephesians 3:14-15 - all beings have their origin in God. We get our life and very existence from God. There is therefore a brotherhood in the creation. The liberals however take this a step further and talk about the brotherhood of man and the universal Fatherhood of God which is a lie which is exposed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ said that all men are not brothers but only become such in Christ. Even Satan was given his life by God. There is no relationship in the Father creatorship combination.

2. Fatherhood by intimate relationship which is the concept of the relationship between God and Israel. In Exodus 4:22 Israel is my son - this is my firstborn. This is more than God saying that He is their creator but it is less than saying that they are regenerated. In the New Testament it says that all Israel is not Israel. There is however a relationship between the Father and Israel, a care for Israel. He preserves the nation. In the Bible the word father is used a large number of times in relation to the relationship between God and Israel. However only a few Jews were regenerated.
3. A specific relationship between the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ - Ephesians 1:3. The first specific revelation of the New Testament is that God the Father is the father of the Lord Jesus Christ. It also shows without any doubt the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ by His attributes and His works. The words father and son are used in the New Testament to show the intimacy of the relationship between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ with out fulfilling all the relationships which would be true of a human relationship of Father and Son. This was the error of the Arian theologians who said that he was a son of God but not equal with God.
4. The second person has been the Son from eternity past. For eternity there has been this close relationship between the Father and the Son. In Isaiah 9:6 it shows that a child is born but a son is given. The baby was born but the Son was given as the Son had existed forever. What they are saying is that you think of the most noble father and the best possible son and the love between those two and you get a small glimpse of the relationship between the Father and the Son.
5. The Father of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6-7)
 - a) Only in Christ do we become brothers. (Galatians 3:27-29) This is the result of the Holy Spirit who baptizes us into the body of Christ and makes us a new creation in Him. (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:5)
 - b) God is not the spiritual father of the unregenerate man, they are His children. (John 14:6) Before salvation we were sons of our sinful nature. (John 8:42-47, Ephesians 2:19)
6. In summary therefore
 - [a] The Son of God is said to have been begotten of the Father - Psalm 2:7, John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18 1 John 4:9
 - [b] The Father acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ as His Son - Matthew 3:17, 17:5, Luke 9:35
 - [c] The Father is acknowledged by the Son - Matthew 11:27, 26:63-64, Luke 22:29, John 8:16-29, 33-44, 17:1 The Son is subject to the Father's plan but it should be remembered that the plan had been a joint plan when it was conceived with its recognition of role and responsibility.
 - [d] The fact that God the Father is acknowledged by men to be the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ - Matthew 16:16, Mark 15:39, John 1:34, 49, Acts 3:13
 - [e] The Son acknowledges the Father by being subject to Him - John 8:29,49
 - [f] Even the demons recognise this relationship between the Father and the Son - Matthew 8:29 Satan's eternal damnation relies on this relationship and its permanency
7. Before salvation all members of the human race were "sold under sin", we were strangers before God, not sons. Romans 7:14, Ephesians 2:19. Spiritually we were dead, we had no relationship with God other than creatures to the creator we did not recognize Ephesians 2:1
8. Before salvation we were all of different races, the only brotherhood we can ever have is in Christ. Galatians 3:27-29.
9. Salvation alone makes us children of God. Before we were slaves of sin, sons of our old sin nature, children of rebellion. Ephesians 2:19, John 8:42-47, 1John 3:10-15.
10. Only God can make us his children, for only God has that power. John 1:12,13. We are either 'born-again', born from above or we remain spiritually dead, children of Satan, John 3:3,6,36.
11. Unbelievers cannot and will not see this unique relationship. 1John 3:1, 1 Corinthians 1:18. As sons of rebellion they believe their father's lie i.e. the universal fatherhood of God and universal brotherhood of man (both of which are false concepts). John 8:44. This lie perpetrates the idea that God is a "soft-touch" and will not judge man for their sin, but all will be well in the end. This is declared false by God in his word.
12. Believers sonship guarantees heirship, eternal life and fellowship for them. 1 John 3:2,3, Romans 8:16-18.
13. The Holy Spirit is God's down payment on the believer's inheritance - the assurance of more to come, Ephesians 1:14.
14. Believers are heirs of eternal life through relationship with God in Christ John 8:35, 51.
 - a. receiving rewards: Colossians 3:24,25, 2 John 8, 1 Corinthians 3:8 and,
 - b. receiving a resurrection body. 1 Corinthians 15:50-54.
15. The source of our confidence is based in the Lords resurrection. He is therefore our "lively hope", 1 Peter 1:3-5. He can be depended upon to meet all needs for we will be with him forever. John 14:1-4.

GOSPEL OF SALVATION

1. Gospel means "good news" - there are four gospels are found in the New Testament.
2. Gospel of the Kingdom.
 - a) Preached by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1, 2) the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:23) and his disciples (Matthew 10:7) Thy Kingdom come (Matthew 6:10).
 - b) It consists of the setting up on earth of Christ's 1,000 year Kingdom thus fulfilling the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:16)
 - c) There will be another preaching of the gospel by the Jewish remnant in the days of the Great Tribulation before the 2nd Advent. (Matthew 24:14, Revelation 7) After the 2nd Advent the 1,000 year reign commences. (Revelation 20:1-6)
3. Gospel of Grace - the gospel of personal salvation by grace through faith. This gospel appears under many names and is the means of salvation throughout the history of mankind.
 - a) Gospel of God (Romans 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:2)
 - b) Gospel of Christ - (Mark 1:1, Romans 1:16)
 - c) Gospel of the Grace of God - (Acts 20:24)
 - d) Gospel of Peace - (Ephesians 6:15)
 - e) Gospel of your salvation - (Ephesians 1:13)
 - f) Glorious Gospel - (2 Corinthians 4:4)
4. The Everlasting Gospel - (Revelation 14:6) -the good news is everlasting. This gospel will be preached on earth just before Christ's return in glory. (Matthew 25:31, 32). This gospel is the means of salvation to countless thousands both Jews and Gentiles. (Revelation 7:9-14)
5. Paul's "My Gospel" - (Romans 2:16) This is the same gospel of salvation by grace through faith but includes the mystery doctrines of the church age not previously revealed. The gospel in the Old Testament was revealed by the Tabernacle, Feasts, Levitical Offerings etc.
6. "Another Gospel" which is not another (Galatians 1:6, 7, 2 Corinthians 11:4) This is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:8, 9) The curse is proclaimed on any who preach it. There have been many perversions - legalism in Galatia, angel worship in Colossae (Colossians 2:18) among others.

RELIGION

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgment, no Saviour and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:13-19,26)
2. Many pastors in the churches are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly. (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10)
3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the gospel. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)
4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:-
 - a) To confuse by false teaching. (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
 - b) To appeal to pride. (2 Corinthians 10:12)
 - c) To promote idolatry. (Habakkuk 2:18,19)
 - d) To promote legalism. (1 Timothy 1:7-8)
5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:-
 - a) Counterfeit gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
 - b) Counterfeit pastors. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - c) Counterfeit communion. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)
 - d) Counterfeit doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1)
 - e) Counterfeit righteousness. (Matthew 19:16-28)
 - f) Counterfeit way of life. (Matthew 23)
 - g) Counterfeit power. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
 - h) Counterfeit gods. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

FUNDAMENTALISM

1. Fundamentalism requires belief in the following "fundamentals of the apostolic faith":-
 - a) The deity of Christ and the virgin birth
 - b) The miracles of Christ
 - c) The cross of Christ on which He paid for the sins of the world as God's efficacious substitutionary sacrifice
 - d) The bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - e) The certainty of the yet to come Second Coming of the Lord for His church and to judge the lost

f) The inerrancy of the Bible as the Word of God

2. False teachers and liberal theologians will distort all or some of these principles.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: OBEDIENCE

1. Obedience is better than offerings (1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:3; 28:9). If we are not in God's will, any "worship" we offer is unacceptable.

2. Obedience is something you have to learn. The basic training in obedience has to start in childhood. As it says in (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16) "Honour your father and your mother. " (Proverbs 4:3,4; 22:6; 29:15-17; Hebrews 5:8)

3. Teaching your child obedience is an act of love (Proverbs 3:12; 19:18; 23:13-14).

4. We have to obey those who are in authority over us (Exodus 20:12; 22:28; Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:16; Romans 13:1-5; Ephesians 6:1-5; Colossians 3:18-22; Titus 3:1).

5. Those in authority have been put in that position by God (Romans 13:1).

6. Obedience to those in authority is obedience to God (Proverbs 24:21; Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23-24; Romans 13:5).

7. Disobedience to those in authority is disobedience to God (Romans 1:30; 13:2).

8. But when we are ordered to do something that is against God's Will we have to disobey (Acts 4:19; 5:40-42).

9. The fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) is the only commandment with a promise (Proverbs 10:17; Ephesians 6:1-3). Social life in a society is only possible when the people in it have learned to obey.

10. If this commandment is ignored, if the authority of the family is denied or not exercised, society will quickly slide into anarchy (Isaiah 3:12; Proverbs 29:21; 30:21-23; Romans 1:30).

HERESY

The procedure for dealing with heresy is clearly set out in the letters of the New Testament:

1. If people will not listen to the Word they are to be warned and rebuked. Titus 1:13, 14, 2 Thessalonians 3:14.

2. If they still will not listen, they should be isolated and all spiritual believers should separate themselves from those who are persistently carnal in behaviour. Romans 16:17, 18, 1 Timothy 6:3-5. This means that we are not even to invite the carnal believer to dinner at our house. 2 John 10, 11, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

3. If at this point the person persists in their wrong teaching and/or behaviour they are to be thrown out of the church for discipline. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Titus 3:10. Persistent perversion of the Word of God is most serious. Titus 3:10,11, Galatians 1:6-10.

4. Paul illustrates this process in the treatment of the Corinthian brother who lived in immorality, and also with the false teachers in 1 Timothy 1:4, 11, 18 - 20. We also see him warning the church of this ever present danger in Acts 20:29, 30. Expulsion is always for repentance and when a person repents they are to be accepted back into fellowship. This does not mean they are able to take leadership however! 1 Corinthians 5:1 - 13, 2 Corinthians 2:5 - 11.

Pastors who fail to discipline false teachers and carnal believers living immoral lives violate their role as the under shepherds of the flock. We are to be protectors of the flock from wolves and lions. These are words for the ministers of Satan who will always attack from within the church and the pastor is to stop this. 1 Peter 5:8, Matthew 7:15, 10:16, Luke 10:3, Acts 20:29.

CHAPTER THREE

1 JOHN 3:1-8

“1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. 4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 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.”

KEY WORDS

Behold	orao	aorist, active, imperative; right now, see!
Manner of	potapos	what noble sort, what amazing manner of.
Bestowed	didomi	perfect , active, indicative; has given perfectly.
Knoweth	ginosko	present, active, indicative; does not know.
Knew	ginosko+ouk	aorist, active, indicative; did not know him.
Beloved	agapetoi	beloved ones – ones who are defined in being loved
Children	teknia	children as learners.
Appear	phaneroo	aorist, passive, indicative; be revealed clearly
Shall be	eimi	future, active, indicative; what we will be!
Like him	omoioi	in like manner, appearance.
See him	optano	future, middle, indicative; we shall see him!
He is	eimi	present, active, indicative; as he keeps on being.
Hath	echo	present, active, participle; all having.
Hope	elpis	confidence, hope based upon doctrinal reality.
Purifies	agnizo	present, active, indicative; keeps on purifying.
		On going regular activity to maintain cleanliness.
Pure	agnes	ceremonial and moral purity; clean as a sacrifice.
Committeth	poieo	present, active, participle; continues practicing.
Transgresseth	poieo	present, active, indicative; keeps on doing.
Transgression	anomia	against law, in opposition to the moral standards.
Know	oida	perfect , active, indicative; we have complete and
		Sure knowledge, with lasting results for us.
Manifested	phaneroo	aorist, passive, indicative; received revealing.
Take away	airo	aorist, active, subjunctive; lifting up, removal.
		Compete taking away of.
Is not	eimi + ouk	present, active, indicative; keeps on not being
Abideth	meno	present, active, participle; keeps on abiding.
Sinneth	amartano	present, active, participle; keeps on abiding.
Seen	orao	perfect , active, indicative; has not seen.
Known	ginosko	perfect , active, indicative; has not known.
		No permanent transformation through doctrine.
Deceive	planao	present, active, imperative; Do not be led astray
Doeth	poieo	present, active, participle; keeps on doing.
Righteousness	dikaiosune	the noblest word for character of righteousness
Committeth	poieo	present, active, participle; keeps on doing.
Is	eimi	present, active, indicative; keeps on being of.
Devil	diabolos	the devil – the opposer of all that is godly.
Sinneth	amartano	present, active, indicative; keeps on sinning.
Destroy	luo	aorist, active, subjunctive; loosen, unravel.
		The devil has tied man up – God loosens bonds.
Works	ergon	works – production. Galatians 5:19-26.

REFLECTIONS

Living the life that reveals the righteousness of Christ in you is the true Christian life and a sign that you are a child of God. A crucial difference between the true believer and the make believer is characterized here in this section of John's letter. Sadly the local church, all too often, is a battleground. Now, note I say, "sadly", yet the things we have already seen in this letter, indicate that the local church is the centre of the angelic conflict! Conflict is often more normal than peace, for Satan concentrates his energies on destroying any active local church. Only a Holy Spirit filled church will be protected and will be peaceful, although targeted; the more "fakes" in the church the more chaos there will be.

When an individual believer does not keep vigilant watch against personal sin or the attacks of fake teachers, then they will fall into error and disaster. That believer's life will become a mess, and over time, if things are not faced, the local church will become a mess, and so that place becomes a very poor testimony to the unbelieving world and a wonderful piece of propaganda for the enemy. It ought not to be. What is the remedy? Let us listen to John.

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

No one who is truly aware of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for them, will be short of motivation for Christian work or witness. If you are filled with the love of Christ you do not need a set of rules, nor rewards in time, nor any system of legalism to work. You know what the Lord has done for you and you want, with all your being, to serve Him. The world may despise us but we are in a position that is far higher than anything they can conceive of. There should be no shame or embarrassment because of our position with Christ. It is only when we forget what the Lord has done for us that we slip into patterns of behaviour that put us into despair, disgrace, or sin. Refer to **John 15:18-25**.

If we are hated for the right reasons, (not any obnoxiousness on our part), we are in good company, for the Lord was hated for good reasons. Do you have a holy horror of sin? Do you feel agony when you fall into temptation and desire with all your being to be holy and fit for the Lord's service? This deep revulsion at sin is the work of the Holy Spirit within and is an evidence of your being a true child of God. Sin is an insult against the love of God, and true believers feel it that strongly. We not only have a good relationship in time with the Lord, but we will have it throughout all eternity.

Everything we think, do, or say, should relate to this relationship. The word 'beloved' is used for us. We are loved, we are his beloved ones; deeply loved by God. We are called to live in thankful praise for that position of beloved ones. Let us sing like the psalmist of these things. **Psalms 31:19-24, 36:5-10, 89:1-2**.

We are members of the Royal Family of God. Let us rejoice in this every day, and live in a manner befitting the eternal position the Lord has purchased for us with his blood. Refer to the BTB study on ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD, and CHRISTIAN LIFE-FAMILY- RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXAMPLE.

We are recipients of such great love, but it is a love that separates us also from the pagans and make-believers around us. We are called by God, "the children of God", but the world did not understand and rejected him and so it will not understand us, and will reject us. This can be hard for believers to accept. We have nothing but concern for the unbelievers around us, but we are mocked by them for our faith, and our love for the Lord is not even understood a little. John 3:16, 36, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:1-5.

Do not try to be understood by unbelievers, nor understand their evil motivations; simply do the work the Lord has called you to; give them the truth in love, and mentor all who respond to the truth and are saved by the Holy Spirit's power. **Ephesians 2:6-12, 4:15**. Begin by reflecting on the truth of the perfect tense of the verb for "bestowed" – you have received God's love with eternal results – so share that love in God's power. **2 Timothy 1:7**.

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.

We are the children of God but we do not always act like it. We are his now but we do not realize what we are going to be like in the future. We are not aware of the greatness of our destiny in Christ Jesus. We are saved, are being saved, and will be saved. At one point of time we accepted the Lord Jesus Christ and we were saved once and for all, but the glory we received then does not stop; there is more and more of God's grace to receive forever.

We should now be living in the power of the Lord and in obedience to him. As we do we are being saved daily from our sins, or in other words, delivered from our Old Sin Nature's power. In the future we are going to be saved into eternal life, and given resurrection bodies like the Lord's own body. 1 Corinthians 15.

These three stages may be listed as follows.

[a] Stage 1 - **We were saved** from the penalty of sin. John 3:16, 5:24.

[b] Stage 2 - **We are being saved** from sin's power. John 15, Philippians 2:2-13,

[c] Stage 3 - **We will be saved** from death. 1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 15.

God has a new body prepared for us and we are going to live with him forever. God has everything planned, and in Christ, we are a part of that plan. Why are so many within the church so spiritually dead today? Could it be, that those who are spiritually dead have lost sight of these great truths? Let us renew our confidence in these truths daily through study and meditation upon the Word. **Romans 8:14-23, 2 Corinthians 5:6-9, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Peter 2:21-25, 2 Peter 1:3-4**.

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

We all keep on having the hope, or confidence that we have eternal life through our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and this hope will, if real, work out into our daily life, in a focused purity of life, and dedication of each minute of every day to the Lord's work. **James 2:14-26.** God's eternal love for us moves us to share our hope, even if we are hated for so doing. John 15:18ff.

Awareness of this eternal reality should cause us, to purify our self and pursue the Christian life with focus and holiness of life in time. All who have this hope, John says, they are to purify themselves. This word is the Greek word to purify. It is the present, active, indicative, meaning that we keep on purifying ourselves. The word refers to being 'clean' for spiritual or religious duty; ready to be used by God. Remember the word 'holy', means 'set apart for God's use'. Our daily focus ought to be, to ensure we are ready for the Lord's use at any second opportunity arrives. **Romans 5:1-5, Colossians 1:5, Hebrews 6:16-20.**

We should not continue to walk and live like our pagan neighbours; there should be a visible difference between us and them. Any and all sin defiles us, so that we must use **1 John 1:9** when-ever a shadow of sin crosses between us and fellowship with God. As we walk along the road we will get splattered by the mire of the road, and we should be dealing with any sins that stick to us. Note John's point at the end of the verse; it is almost like an equation. God is pure, so must we be if we wish to serve him! God is Holy – and so be holy (set apart for service) believer!

Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Hebrews 12:12-17, 2 Peter 1:3-8, 3:14-18. Each of these passages are good readings for any home group to follow up on this verse and reinforce its application. Refer to the BTB for the studies on CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION, SERVICE, UNION WITH CHRIST.

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

God has an absolute standard. Sin is not only an insult to the love of God, but an affront to God's holy law and character. God's standard has not changed through time, for it comes from before time was; sin is thought or action against God's absolute love and holiness. We see God's holy standard in his law, which is not just the Law of Moses, but the words of the Lord also. In this passage John is dealing with the Gnostics who played down, and minimized the effect of sin on man's relationship with God. **Psalms 66:16-20, Isaiah 53:3-8, James 2:8-13.**

In fact there was one group who said that the more you sinned and confessed them, the more grace you received, and therefore the more blessings you received. It was in their mind, good to sin a lot, to receive maximum blessing. This concept has been brought forward into last century with the most famous exponent of this theory being the thoroughly evil demon possessed false prophet Rasputin of Russia. Such a doctrine is a perversion of Grace, and is from the pit of hell. Refer to the BTB study on SALVATION – SIN-MAN'S NEED FOR SALVATION.

John counters this evil viewpoint by pointing out that sin in the body, either by word or deed defiles the person, rendering them unfit for service until cleansed. Confession of sin should not be taken flippantly, for then sin is being taken flippantly, and it is so serious God cannot use you when it is present within you! John's point here is vital for every believer to understand, and apply, or else they will be useless in the Lord's service, for unconfessed sin in the life makes them unfit for his service!

The word for sinning in this verse is in the form of the present, active, participle in the Greek, indicating the habit of sinning. John's point is that those who are in the habit of sinning, are in fact insulting God and abusing his holy standard, his law. Such a mental attitude towards both sin and God's holy character, indicates one who does not know, or belong to God. Our attitudes and behavior betray our family likeness. **Matthew 7:13-23.**

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

John reminds us of the whole point of the first advent. **John 1:29-31.** It was not only to provide eternal life, and salvation from the penalty of sin, but also to open up a way for mankind to be holy, and be delivered from the power of sin. **John 10:7-11.** The Holy Spirit gives us the power over sin when we walk in obedience to him. We are therefore without excuse, if we do not resist temptation. God has provided all we need to resist sin and live triumphantly. Refer to the BTB study CHRIST – I AM.

This side of eternal life however we are not going to be perfect, (as we have seen in chapter one, we need to confess sin, for we will sin), but we should be advancing along the road of holiness and usefulness, and not be camped by the wayside of casual sinfulness. God wants us to live in a way that is honouring to Him, not an embarrassment to Him. We must grasp onto the concept that by dying on the cross the Lord gave us opportunity to live his way and that the demand for holiness is not unreasonable, and that we have the power to do this through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

This verse also boldly states a major doctrine of Christology; the doctrine of impeccability. This term refers to the fact of the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry. He was tempted, but he did not ever succumb to temptation and sin. He was therefore the perfect sacrifice for our sins, for he alone was worthy to bear our sins, for he had none of his own. Refer to the BTB studies, CHRIST – IMPECCABILITY, KENOSIS, MEDIATORSHIP, SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, WORK ON THE CROSS.

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

This is a tough verse, and John bluntly underlines the point he has been making all through. If you are the Lord's, then you will have the family likeness, and sin is not in him, and should not habitually be in us either! Taken out of context, this verse, and some following, appear to state that a person who is saved does not sin again. This is not the case, and illustrates what happens when the context is not paid attention to! Refer back to **1 John 1:9-10**, and remind yourself that John has equally bluntly stated that we will at times sin, and we need to confess such slip ups quickly. This verse before us now says however, that whosoever lives in Christ does not **habitually** practice sin. This passage talks about habits of sin and habits of righteousness.

We should ensure that our dominant practice is righteousness not sin. We should not walk in the mud. The prodigal son is an excellent example of the true son who sins. He went off and lived like a pig and even though he was living like one, he remained a son and did not become a pig. He came to his senses one day, went back to his true home, confessed his sins, and was accepted again by his father as a son. By living as a pig (like all who sin), he had been insulting his father's love and righteousness, but he was still a son and proved his real nature finally by his confession. **Luke 15:11-32**.

Occasionally we will fall into sin, but we need to be aware of the concept that we are sons and daughters of God, once and for all, and that time away from our father is wasted time in an already short life. True believers are 'hungry' for service opportunities, ever seeking ways to show their love for the Lord who saved them. By this mental attitude we can see the genuine believer, and by the regular habit of sin we see the children of disobedience. **Ephesians 2:1-3, 5:1-12, Colossians 3:1-13**.

In the third and fourth century AD the Roman Empire Church took this verse and said that if you sinned at all after baptism you lost your salvation. Because of this the early Roman Church brought in the doctrine of what they called "extreme unction" so that just before you died the priest would stand by and at the last possible moment would try and give the dying person communion in order that the person would return to spiritual life and salvation before they died. It was a well meaning attempt to get around a problem that is not a problem if **1 John 1:9** is used whenever required.

Others tried to get around this problem by delaying their baptism to the last moment of their life. An example of this is the Emperor Constantine himself, who delayed his baptism until he was on his death bed, and then remained in his baptism robes until he died. This however is not what the text is saying. Literally the verse may be translated, 'he who keeps on abiding in him is not continuously sinning'. This is in the present continuous tense. If a person is habitually sinning without regrets, nor has desire for confession, then that person is not a genuine child of God.

What happens when we sin? We sin because we fall away from fellowship with the Lord, and follow our Old Sin Nature rather than the Holy Spirit. For the true believer the Holy Spirit will convict us of the presence of sin and the believer who is in sin will have misery in their soul. Confession restores fellowship and the joy of walking with God again. We will find that we can resist the temptation to sin more easily the closer and more continuously we walk with the Lord in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Saturation of the Word and prayerful fellowship defeats temptations.

The cure for sin is salvation if we are unsaved, and confession if we are saved. John urges us here and throughout his letter to live in such close fellowship with the Lord that we use confession less and less, for we fall into sin less and less. Occupy yourself with Christ every moment of the day and the joy of that fellowship will keep you from sinning. Abiding is a key word for John. For other words, refer to, "walking" in the light, "living" in the power of the Holy Spirit. When we walk away from him we get into difficulties. John 15 is the passage that John is commenting on at this point in the letter. If a person is continuously falling into sin their eyes are not on the Lord, and all true believers have their eyes on him. Refer to the BTB studies, CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING, LIGHT.

If a person has not got their eyes on Jesus often, they are not a believer at all. To know the Lord is to know the awfulness of sin, for it placed him on the cross. For anyone to play with sin and habitually live in it, means only one thing, that person does not know the Lord in spirit and in truth! They are not purifying themselves for service. **John 15:4-8**.

Verses 7-8. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 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.

There is an area where you can be seriously deceived. Remember, John is talking to believers here. God's plan is designed to allow us (give us the Holy Spirit power), to get out of the enemy's camp and live as we should outside the camp, that we might win others from that place of death and sin. This is another blunt couple of verses. John is very strongly stating doctrinal truth here. Don't be deceived by those who claim to be great Christians, and are in sin habitually/constantly. The pattern of righteousness is the hallmark of the believer, the pattern of sin the hallmark of the devil's children. What we do shows outwardly what we truly are within! **Romans 2:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, 6:7-8**.

The person regularly practicing sin is, 'of the devil!' How do we know? It's a family likeness, the devil sinned from the beginning, and so do his followers. The purpose of the incarnation was that the Lord might undo the work of the devil in the hearts of mankind. Those who have met the Lord have the devil's work undone within them; they do not want to sin at all! The devil's children think sin is of no concern, the children of God are worried and saddened by any sin in their life. **Isaiah 14:12-16, John 8:41-51**. Attitudes, Values, Priorities, and Behaviour all indicate/reflect whose family we are! John says, it is almost as if you are entering the enemy's camp when you sin. Do not live like a child of the enemy.

Do not be fooled by the people who say that sin is not important. This is one of the signs that tell you a person is of the devil, for they down play the seriousness of sin. Sin is very serious, for it violates the holiness of God. If we fall into sin, let us get out of it quickly and be the type of people that the Lord intends us to be. Let us not be fooled by those who claim to be spiritual yet down play the seriousness of sin; they are Satan's people not God's! They are under God's condemnation, whereas, in Christ Jesus, we are under his grace and blessing. Let us live as people of blessing, not as people under the curse of sin. **John 16:8-11, Romans 16:20, 2 Peter 2:4-9.**

APPLICATIONS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. We are meant to have a tender conscience regarding sin. If you have a holy horror of sin, then rejoice in the work of the Spirit within you. If your conscience regarding sin is becoming hardened, then draw closer to the Lord through study of His Word, and so release the Holy Spirit's power within to convict and restore your spiritual sensitivity.
2. The love of the Lord for us will separate us from the unbelievers around us. This is a sad fact of the Angelic Conflict, and when it occurs, we are encouraged to be settled in Christ and not disturbed by such hatred as we may receive.
3. Are you enjoying God's Eternal Life now? Are you seeing his power work through the pressures of each day? Are you rejoicing in your salvation today as you read these words? Pause and give thanks right now for your eternal life, that has already begun in the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit right now!
4. Purify your life of any sin that separates you from fellowship with the Lord, and makes you unfit to serve the Lord. Utilize **1 John 1:9**, for it is required most days, often several times a day....
5. Beware of those who are flippant about sin. All sin separates us from the Lord's person and his work. If we would be close to God and active in His work, then we must take sin seriously and deal with it quickly, lest we be knocked off the path for us in this short life we have upon this earth. We have limited time here, so let us not waste it out of fellowship with the one who gave his all for us.

DOCTRINES

SALVATION: SIN – MAN'S NEED FOR SALVATION

1. Sin means to fall short (like an arrow falling short of the target) of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)
2. Therefore, anything which does not meet God's standard of righteousness and holiness is sin.
3. It is clear to see, then, that mankind, in his own strength, cannot achieve the righteousness of God. (Romans 3:9-10)
4. The sin of Adam
 - a) Sin entered the world with Adam. (Genesis 3:1-5, Romans 5:12)
 - b) The penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23)
 - i) spiritual death - separation from God in time (Genesis 3:8)
 - ii) physical death - separation of the soul from the body (Genesis 3:19, 5:5)
 - iii) eternal death - separation from God in the Lake of Fire Revelation 20:13-14)
 - c) The man, Adam, as head over the woman, was therefore held responsible for sin (Romans 5:12)
 - d) The penalty of sin is imputed to all people, and, apparently, passed down through the male in birth.
 - e) Because Jesus was born of a virgin, He did not inherit the sin nature from Adam.
 - f) As a sinless man, He was therefore qualified to offer Himself as a sacrifice to pay the penalty of sin (death - spiritual and physical).
 - g) Because Christ has paid the penalty for sin for us, those who trust in Him are no longer condemned (Romans 5:19, 8:1)
5. All of creation is corrupted as a result of sin (Genesis 3:16-19, Romans 8:20-22)
6. Three types of sin:-
 - a) Adam's sin is imputed to all mankind
 - b) As a result, we all inherit a sinful nature
 - c) As a result, we therefore commit personal sins
7. Sin manifests itself in three categories:
 - a) Sins of action/deed
 - i) Examples include murder, adultery, stealing
 - b) Sins of the tongue/spoken
 - i) Examples include lying, slander, gossip, blasphemy
 - ii) Out of the seven "worst" sins, three are sins of the tongue. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

- iii) Can result in the sin unto death. (Psalm 12:3)
 - iv) God protects and blesses the believer who is victimised by the sins of the tongue. (Matthew 5:11-12)
 - v) Troublemakers are always characterised by sins of the tongue. (Psalm 52:2)
- c) Sins of the mind
- i) Examples include pride, coveting, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, vindictiveness.
8. Recovery from sin
- a) When a believer sins his fellowship with God is disrupted. The Holy Spirit is grieved, and can no longer control your life.
 - b) Confess the known sin. (1 John 1:9, Psalm 66:18) God forgives these sins upon confession and cleanses from the unknown sins in the believer's life as well as known sins.
 - c) Examine your motivation - this involves full surrender to God. (Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 13:5)
 - d) Move on from the sin which you have confessed. Don't get tied up with guilt - this is another sin. (Philippians 3:13-14, Psalm 103:10-12)
 - e) Resume your active spiritual walk. Avoid areas where you might be tempted. (Hebrews 12:12-13)
 - f) Be reconciled to others once you have been reconciled to God. (James 5:16)
 - g) In human forgiveness we are told to forgive others even as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32).
9. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples John 13:10
- a) The body is clean - we were eternally forgiven once and for all at the cross. (Hebrews 10:1-12).
 - b) The feet need regular washing - we must confess our sins to the Father to restore fellowship (1 John 1:9)
10. Satan constantly accuses us of our sins before God (Revelation 12:10). However, the Lord Jesus Christ is our Advocate/Lawyer in heaven (1 John 2:1). He pleads for us by saying that the penalty for that sin has been paid in full.
11. Names for sin include:-
- a) Unbelief - denial of the truth. (John 16:9, Hebrews 3:12)
 - b) Lawlessness - rejection of rules of life. (1 Timothy 1:9)
 - c) Iniquity - evil acts. (Acts 8:22, 23)
 - d) Trespass - encroachment on God's authority. (Ephesians 2:1)
 - e) Disobedience - refusal to obey. (Hebrews 2:2)
 - f) Transgression - violation of law. (Luke 15:29, Galatians 3:19)
12. The sin unto death is the physical death of a believer, due to habitual unconfessed sin or rebellion against God. (1 John 5:16, 17, 1 Corinthians 11:31, 32) Examples
- a) The Corinthian Pervert - (1 Corinthians 5)
 - b) The Corinthians who habitually came to the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)
 - c) Moses (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)
 - d) Achan (Joshua 7:16-26)
 - e) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
13. There is only one sin which can't be forgiven - the unpardonable sin - rejection of Jesus Christ.
- a) It is based upon rejection of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. Genesis 6:3, John 16:7-11, Hebrews 10:29.
 - b) Synonyms for the unpardonable sin are: wilful sin Hebrews 10:26-31, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit Matthew 12:31, resisting the Holy Spirit Acts 7:51, insulting the Holy Spirit Hebrews 10:29
14. The first recorded sin was that of Satan - pride (Isaiah 14:12-14)
15. God is not the author of sin nor the author of temptation. It is incompatible with the nature of God for Him to create sin because of His divine character. (James 1:13).
16. Temptation comes from the world, the flesh (sin nature within man), or Satan. If he entertains the sin, man then chooses to sin - sin is therefore a result of man's own free will. (James 1:14)

CHRIST: IMPECCABILITY OF CHRIST

1. The Bible declares that Christ was tempted yet did not sin. Matthew 4, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15.
2. The key to understanding Christ's impeccability is found in the uniqueness of the hypostatic union.
 - [a]. Two natures united without mixture or transfer of attributes, or loss of identity being both personal and eternal. John 1:1-14; Romans 1:2-5, 9:5, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Timothy 3:16
 - [b]. Christ is eternal God and perfect man, not humanity indwelt by God, not man having "harmony and sympathy" with God.
 - [c]. The hypostatic union is necessary:
 - i. For him to be Saviour - Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 2:14-15
 - ii. For him to be Mediator - Job 9:32-33, 1 Timothy 2:5-6
 - iii. For him to be High-Priest - Hebrews 7:4-5, 10:5-14

- iv. For him to be King - 2 Samuel 7:8-16, Psalm 89:20-37
- 3. Being man, Christ was tempted and temptable (Matthew 4, Hebrews 4:15) being God, He could not sin or be tempted with evil. 1 John 1:5, James 1:13
- 4. Christ's humanity was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 2:16
- 5. Christ had no Old Sin Nature due to his virgin birth. Luke 1:35, John 8:46, 14:30, 1 John 3:5
- 6. Christ is a true mediator in that He is holy and not temptable in deity - having been tempted in humanity – yet never would or could sin.

CHRIST - KENOSIS OF CHRIST

- 1. Kenosis is an expression which means to "empty oneself" or "to make himself of no reputation."
- 2. Principle of Kenosis:- (Philippians 2:5-8)
- 3. Jesus Christ from eternity past always has been God. As such he is all knowing, he is all powerful, has everlasting life and many other absolute qualities. He was not created because he is eternal.
- 4. Jesus Christ chose to become a little lower than the angels and took on the form of man.
- 5. Adam the first man aspired to be God, the second Adam who is God divested himself of his deity (Kenosis) and became man in order to save mankind.
- 6. During his earthly ministry, rather than using his own absolute power he used the power of the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST: MEDIATORSHIP

- 1. Greek word is mesites which has as its root meaning, to have a neutral group/nation to stand between two warring nations to arbitrate and judge between them. The two concepts are judgement and peacemaking.
- 2. The mediator had to be equal to both parties and acceptable to each.
- 3. Old Testament usage of this concept is found in Job 9:9, 32, 33. Job calls for an umpire between man and God.
- 4. The Hypostatic Union of the Lord Jesus Christ qualifies the Lord to be the mediator between man and God as he alone is equal with both parties. 1 Timothy 2:5.
- 5. The Lord's work on the cross forms the basis of his mediatorship as he removes the sin barrier between man and God. Hebrews 9:12 1-5.
- 6. The Mosaic Law pre-figured the Lord's mediatorship. Hebrews 8:6, 12:24, Galatians 3:19, 20.

CHRIST – WORK ON THE CROSS

The work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross is:

- 1. Punitive - It was a payment, a judgment Jesus took on Himself, the judgment of all sin Galatians 3:13, 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 2. Substitutionary - Jesus Christ died in our place. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our transgressions. Isaiah 53:5,6, Leviticus 1:4, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24
- 3. Voluntary - Jesus knew the plan of the Father and He went willingly to the Cross [John 10:18] Isaiah says that He set His face as flint Isaiah 50:7
- 4. Redemptive - "Redeem is exagorazo. Agorazo means "to buy in a slave market" Ek means "out". When Jesus Christ entered this world we were in the slave market of sin. He walked in, paid the price for all of us, and opened the gate so all who wanted to could go free. Galatians 3:13, 4:15
- 5. Propitiatory - It satisfied God's righteous demand for a perfect sacrifice for sin; Christ was the perfect sacrifice. Romans 3:25, 1 John 3:2
- 6. Reconciling - By it we are restored to a relationship of peace with God. Romans 5:1

7. Efficacious - It is effective. When anyone puts faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, that work accomplishes the salvation. Romans 5:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 9:11-12

CHRISTIAN LIFE: FAMILY - RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXAMPLE

1. In Titus 1:5-6, we read of the importance of a holy and spiritually active family behind all who wish to lead in Christian work. The principle here is important; for the first area of witness for a man is his family, and if they are not right he can have no greater ministry. If a man cannot run his family properly then he cannot run the church. 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

2. The father must take the responsibility for setting the standard of godliness and love in the home. To fail at this point is to fall short of God's standards that we see in Christ's love for the church. Ephesians 5:21-29.

3. The man must be worthy of the loving, respectful, and responsive love of his wife. When children see this sort of love they will learn about love, about God and about respect themselves. Ephesians 5:31, 1 Peter 3:1-12.

4. Children respond to consistency of discipline from loving, stable and respectful parents. Yelling and screaming, and other disgraceful behaviours only guarantee that the children will follow the parent in disgraceful behaviours. Proverbs 13:24, 23:14, Ephesians 6:1-4, Colossians 3:20-21.

5. Sexual life between the husband and wife should be healthy, robust and regular, with no frustrations for either that might open the door to the enemy's temptations. 1 Corinthians 7:1ff. [Refer study of Corinthians, and BTB topic Marriage]

CHRISTIAN LIFE – UNION WITH CHRIST

1. At the point of salvation, every believer in the Church Age is entered into the Body of Christ, and is therefore united with Christ. Our position is now, "in Christ".

2. The baptism of the Spirit is how we are united with Christ. (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5) The Holy Spirit places the believer in union with Christ.

3. Union with Christ belongs to the carnal as well as the spiritual believer, to the apostate believer as well as to the mature believer. (1 Corinthians 1:2,30)

4. Union with Christ protects the believer from divine judgment in eternity. (Romans 8:1)

5. Union with Christ qualifies the believer to live with God forever: Eternal life (1 John 5:11,12) Imputation of God's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

6. Union with Christ is the key to both election and predestination (Ephesians 1:3-6).

7. Union with Christ creates a new creature. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10) based on who and what Christ is, therefore what grace accomplishes - not what changes we make - at salvation or thereafter.

8. Union with Christ guarantees the eternal security of the believer (Romans 8:38,39).

9. Union with Christ has two aspects:
 [a] Past - identification with Christ in His death (Romans 6; Colossians 2:12; 3:3)
 [b] Present (and Future) - identification with Christ in His "new resurrection life".

10. Union with Christ implies that the believer shares certain things with Christ:

- Eternal life (1 John 5:11,12)
- Righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Election (Ephesians 1:4)
- Destiny (Ephesians 1:5)
- Sonship (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1,2)
- Heirship (Romans 8:16,17)
- Sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:2,30)
- Kingdom (2 Peter 1:11)
- Priesthood (Hebrews 10:10-14; 1 Peter 2:5,9).

11. Our new position in Christ means we are and must be separated from the world (Ephesians 2:6).

12. As new creatures in Christ, we have a new ministry as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-21, 1 Corinthians 3:6, 6:4).

13. In Christ, we are never alone. (Colossians 3:4, John 17) we have communion with Him, and with His body (other Christians).
14. We are united with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit forever- we are in the Father, He is in us - Ephesians 4:6, we are in Christ, He is in us - John 14:20, Colossians 1:26, we are in the Spirit, He is in us - Romans 8:9.
15. We are members of His body, branches of His vine, living stones of His building, sheep of His fold, part of his Bride, priests in his kingdom, saints set apart for his glory.
16. The characteristics of positional truth are six-fold:
- It is not an experience - neither emotional nor ecstatic.
 It is not progressive - cannot be improved in time or eternity.
 It is not related to human merit, ability, or human good. Here are the implications of retroactive positional truth. There is no place in the plan of God for human good.
 It is eternal in nature, it cannot be changed by God, angels or mankind.
 It is known only through the Word of God.
 It is obtained in total at the point of salvation.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING

1. Physical walking is analogous to the faith rest life: step by step. Romans 14:5,6, Ephesians 5:16-18, James 4:13-15.
2. Being regularly filled with the Spirit and feeding on the Word are similar to walking.
3. Attacks on believers occur when they are caught off balance. Romans 13:13.
4. Walking depicts the pattern and function of the believers life in time. Philippians 3:18, Ephesians 4:17.
5. It can also represent a backsliding believer who are said to be walking backwards. Ephesians 4:17.
6. We are all told to:
 - a) Walk in the spirit. Galatians 5:16, 25
 - b) Walk in the faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 2:6, 4:5
 - c) Walk in doctrine 3 John 3.
 - d) Walk in the truth 2 John 4
7. Walking is an analogy for spirituality
 - a) Walk not after the flesh (Romans 8:4)
 - b) Walking in Love. (Ephesians 5:2)
 - c) Walking in newness of Life. (Romans 6:4)
 - d) Walking worthy of our vocation. (Ephesians 4:1)
 - e) Walking worthy of the Lord. (Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12)
 - f) Walking honestly as in the day. (Romans 13:13)
 - g) Walking in good works. (Ephesians 2:10)
 - h) Walking in light. (Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:7)
 - i) Walking in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 2:6)
 - j) Walking circumspectly. (Ephesians 5:15,16)
 - k) Walking as ye ought. (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

CHRISTIAN LIFE: WALKING AND LIVING IN THE LIGHT

1. Light is a metaphor of God's manifestation in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and his work. John 1:4, 8:12, 9:5, 12:46
2. The Lord's coming was prophesied in Isaiah 49:6 cf Acts 13:47
3. Light was seen in the darkness of the world. Matthew 4:16, Luke 2:32
4. The Lord brought life and light to the gospel. 2 Timothy 1:10
5. We as believers are light bearers Matthew 5:14-16, or sons of the light . John 12:36. The Lord is to be seen in us.
6. We are children of the light 1 Thessalonians 5:5, 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 5:8, John 11:9,10

7. Doctrine is the light of the soul 1 Peter 1:19.
8. Satan is an angel of light and the distorter of the truth. 2 Corinthians 11:14.
9. Satan's strategy is to outshine the true light with his own false gospel 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
10. The Lord's resurrection body was composed of light Matthew 17:2.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD

1. Definition.

All believers of the Church Age belong to a unique system of royalty. Revelation 1:6. This royalty is based on spiritual principles of Bible doctrine. While regeneration has occurred in every generation since the beginning of time, it is only the believers of the Church Age who form this eternal nobility.

2. Basis of royalty in the Church Age.

- a. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the basis of royalty. Acts 1:5; Romans 6:3,4
- b. No believer before or after the Church Age receives at salvation the baptism of the Holy Spirit; it is peculiar to this Age of history. Colossians 1:25,26
- c. In every dispensation, the believer is regenerated by the Holy Spirit at the moment he believes in Christ; but in the Church Age the Holy Spirit also baptises the believer into the Body of Christ. I Corinthians 12:13

3. Precedent for Royalty.

- a. The order or battalion of Melchizedek provides both the pattern and precedent. Hebrews 5:6,10
- b. However, Melchizedek acquired his royalty by becoming king of Salem, while Jesus Christ was born Royalty in the line of David. Matthew 1
- c. Through the baptism of the Spirit, every believer is entered into union with Christ; hence, believers are known as the Body of Christ. Colossians 1:18
- d. As a member of the Body of Christ, every believer of the Church Age is eternally and personally related to the King of Kings. Galatians 3:26-29
- d. When the Body of Christ is completed, the Church Age terminates with the resurrection or the Rapture, at which time the Body of Christ becomes the Bride of Christ. Matthew 25:1-13; I Thessalonians 4:16-18
- e. During the Tribulation, the Bride is prepared for, "Operation Footstool", the second phase of Christ's strategic victory, when all enemies are put under His feet. Heb 1:13

4. Sign of Royalty.

- a. The sign of royalty is the unprecedented universal indwelling, of the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 6:19-20
- b. The purpose of this indwelling is to glorify Jesus Christ. John 7:37-39

5. Security of Royalty.

- a. The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit guarantees the eternal security of the believer. Ephesians 1:13,14
- b. Positional sanctification places every believer in the "palace" (heaven) forever. Ephesians 1:3,4,11

6. Function of Royalty

- a. The believer must advance toward the objective of spiritual maturity, at which time he receives the accoutrements of royalty as well as the tactical victory of the angelic conflict.
- b. The believer fulfils the status of royalty in the modus operandi of the new priesthood. Hebrews 7-13

7. Future of Royalty.

As members of the Body of Christ and the Royal Priesthood (I Peter 2:9) all Church Age believers will return with Christ at the Second Advent to participate in the strategic victory of the overthrow of Satan and the Millennial reign of Christ. I Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 5:10

1 JOHN 3:9-14

"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. 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. 11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 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. 13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. 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."

KEY WORDS

Whosoever	pas	the whole, every kind of, who ever.
Born	gennao	perfect , passive, indicative; has been born (again), with lasting results. A strong statement of eternal security here.
Commit	poieo	present, active, indicative; keep on practicing.
Seed	sperma	the "seed" of eternal life, the gift of God, being a member of the family of God, through second birth, the new nature emphasized here we have a new genetic nature(seed).
Remaineth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
Cannot sin	dunamai +ouk	present, middle, indicative; strong negative used. Does not have the power to habitually sin; to keep on sinning.
Born of	gennao +ek	perfect , passive, indicative; another strong statement of eternal security, the believer being "born out of", genitive of source, the power and person of God.
Manifest	phaneros	clear to be seen (it is).
Doeth	poieo	present, active, participle; keeps on doing.
Loveth	agapao	present, active, participle; keeps on loving. Agape love = respect, care for ultimate things.
Heard	akouo	aoist, active, indicative; have heard – from
Beginning	en arche	from the very time of the beginning of the church.
Love	agapao	present, active, subjunctive; that you might love Not a direct order, but a request on basis of love
Wicked	poneros	actively evil, bad, depraved, self serving.
Marvel	thaumazo	present, active, imperative; do not stand amazed
World	cosmos	satanic system of belief and practice.
Hates	miseo	present, active, indicative; keeps on hating you.
Passed	metabaino	perfect , active, indicative; migrated, passed over with lasting results From one place to a totally different one. Permanence here – indicates eternal security again
Love	agapao	present, active, indicative; we keep on loving.
Brethren	adelphoi	fellow believers – note – not unbelievers.
Abides	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
Death	thanatos	in the sphere of "Cosmos" thinking – in the world Dominated by sin and death.

REFLECTIONS

It was noted in the last section that the believer does sin at times after salvation. Sin comes into our life when the Old Sin Nature takes control and our new spiritual nature is darkened, for all sin will steadily and systematically turn us away from the light. In this section this process is explained a little further. In the early church there were people who used verse 9 to try and prove that after salvation you do not sin, and if you did you lost your salvation. This caused great distress in the churches at that time, and still does, for we need to be sure of such things as we approach our own death. Those who get this verse wrong will be in doubt and distress, and this state of mind is incompatible with our status as children of God.

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 close analysis of the words in this verse, and reading them as they are written, makes the meaning clear. Those who misused this text were able to read it in the original and yet still distorted it. Their error was in reading into the text their viewpoints; they did not take these words literally, but read into them some of their own concepts. This is a danger for us all, and is one to be avoided, for by reading into the text our theology, we are telling God what to say! It is a foolish and dangerous thing. God's Word sets us free of fear – false theology uses fear to control people! **John 8:32-36.**

The word for, "born", is the Greek word, "gennao", from where we get our medical term, gynaecology. The first usage of the word, is in the perfect, passive, participle whilst the second "born" in verse 9 is in the perfect, passive, indicative, of the same word. The word and its tense reminds us that once we are born again by the power of God the results go on forever.

The very words here teach the doctrine of eternal security. The result, John says here, of being genuinely born again, is that you do not make a habit of sin, for your new spiritual 'genetic nature' (the seed within you), will have nothing to do with sin. Let us get this verse very clear. Refer to the BTB study on ETERNAL SECURITY.

The first word for 'born again', then, means that anyone who is a genuine believer has been begotten or born from the source of God. The perfect tense means that it is an action that occurred in the past at a specific point of time, and has had results that go on forever. The tense which John chooses here teaches eternal security because the effect of the second birth goes on forever. The passive voice is the voice of grace; we receive this new birth from God.

You did nothing to be born physically, for it was the act of your parents, just so with your second birth; it was God's work that saved you, you received new birth by his grace. The participle form of the verb and also the indicative voice emphasize the reality of the new birth that is brought about by God's work on your behalf. Between the two "borns", is the so called "problem passage". Let us go slowly and get it right. Refer to the BTB study, SALVATION – REGENERATION – BORN AGAIN.

When we are born again we have God's seed placed in us. The word translated seed is "sperma". John pictures new birth as God giving us a new nature, a new genetic nature, whereby we now resemble our new parent, as in our first birth we resembled our first parents.

The word "sperma" not only deals with the human male reproductive function, but also is used in the animal and plant kingdom. It is best to look at it as a seed with certain in built characteristics (genetic inheritance) placed in the ground. John is saying that at salvation you had a seed planted inside of you with eternal results. Once you have that seed planted in you, you are a child of God forever. That seed will grow within you and that new nature cannot sin as the seed was from God and of God and God can have nothing to do with sin. In your new nature, as a believer, you cannot sin! So where does sin come from? Our OSN!!! Remember, John has spent a lot of time in the first chapter telling us we do sin, and then what to do about it, so there is no debate – we all will sin – but its our fixed habits that are the focus.

When you do sin, it is not coming from your new nature, which cannot sin, but from your "old nature", your Old Sin Nature (OSN). John put the perfect tense at the beginning and end of this verse so that people would not misunderstand his meaning, but for hundreds of years they did. Deliberate misunderstanding of this text gave power to corrupt clergy!

The next clue to the true meaning of this verse is in the word "sin", which is "harmatano", which is in the present, active, infinitive. The present tense being a continuous present, active voice that means, you are doing it, and the infinitive form which indicates the person is continuing to live in sin. From the analysis so far let us see what we have. No one who is born again (has the new nature within them), and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit can, 'continue to live in sin' and be happy.

Why is this so? Because it will just tear them apart, for their new nature will be violated by every thought of sin or evil, for it is against its nature. The inner conflict between the New Nature and the Old Sin Nature (OSN) will create great distress. This is exactly what Paul felt and expressed forty plus years before in **Romans 7:14-8:2**.

If you are habitually living in sin, and are comfortable in your sins, it is probable that you have not got the new nature within you at all. This is the state of the "make believers", the false brethren that have troubled the church since the beginning, and are indeed Satan's people. On the other hand, as a genuine believer, the inner turmoil you feel, if you get into sin, is a good indication that you are a child of God, a prodigal child, but still a genuine child, **Luke 15:11-32**, **Revelation 3:20-23**. Sadly by the days after Constantine, with persecution over, the "make believers" were the majority, and remain so in most churches today. Only where the Holy Spirit is active in the lives of the members is a church safe and powerful and real. Without the Holy Spirit "we are none of His". **Romans 8:9**.

We sin because we lose a battle against our OSN, but sin makes the true believer/child of God miserable, for by sinning they have violated their true new nature, and gone back to their old dead nature. The genuine believer still sins at times, feels misery in that state, confesses their sin, and moves on in the Holy Spirit's power in holiness.

You will lose your O.S.N. at death, but throughout life you will have a constant battle between your two natures. The question for each of us in time is which will we follow, the teaching of the Holy Spirit that is appealing to our new nature in Christ or temptations, which will come up through our old sinful nature? Paul covers this same problem in Romans 6&7. Remember his heart felt words, 'Oh wretched man that I am'. This is the cry of the true believer as they face the sin in their life, and feel awful, and desire victory over their OSN. This turmoil is evidence that you are a true child of God.

The principles here are:-

- [a] **All believers sin** from time to time. **1 John 1:8-10**.
- [b] **They do so when they walk away** from the Lord's Word and will for their life.
- [c] **The source of sin is not their new nature but their old sinful nature (OSN)**.
- [d] **No true believer can continue to habitually live in sin** because his new nature will be in revulsion, and the turmoil will bring them to their knees.

In the story of the prodigal son (**Luke 15:11-32** - turn there again) the son goes to the pigs which is the lowest of the low as far as the Jews were concerned, with the pig being an unclean animal. The keeper of the unclean animals was not even fed by the owner of the animals that he had to feed and therefore had to eat what the pigs were given to eat. In verse 17-18, it says that, 'when he came to himself', he realized how the hired servants at his father's house were at least fed well. He therefore returns to his father as he had come to the realization, that he was living like a pig, but was not a pig. His real nature came out and he said to himself that he was living as a fool, and he would return to his father. Occasionally a believer may fall into gross sin; they will live like pigs and fools. There is nothing that an unbeliever can do that a believer cannot do in the area of sin. This however tears them apart within, and one day they come back to their true selves, and by confession return to fellowship with their heavenly father.

The prodigal son realizes that he has sinned, deals with the separation between him and his father, and he is restored to his father. God's nature will not allow you to live like a pig and all true sons and daughters are restored after confession of sin. If you sin habitually it is quite possible that "a pig" is what you are, for true children of God cannot be happy for long in sin, but I suspect if you are reading this you desire God's will, so you are not a "pig" but a daughter or son of God. **Matthew 7:13-27, Galatians 5:14-26.**

Verse 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.

Here we have two means of spotting the unbeliever, or rather the "make believer" (false or fake/pretend brother/sister), in the church. If you as a pastor do not spot these make believers in the congregation you and the Lord's people are in deep trouble. If you do spot them by using the information John gives here, then you should give them the gospel, for John makes it clear that they are not saved. The giving of the gospel will result in the unbelievers being scattered, driven out, or being converted. The person who is masquerading as a believer is not a 'neutral' in the angelic conflict, but are children of the devil. They are there in the church as the enemy's agents to deceive and destroy the sheep. They are to be saved or cast out! Refer to the BTB study – CHURCH – CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

The word "does" in Greek is "poieo", and it means to practice. It is in the present, active participle, form and means therefore, 'the one who is not practicing righteousness'. If a person does not make a habit of righteousness in their life it is probable that they do not have the new nature; they are **not** a child of God! **Romans 8:9.** A genuine believer will practice righteousness, which will be a habit in their life. The other habit they have, John notes, is the habit of loving the brethren. This does not mean that the true believer will not sin at times; they may fall embarrassingly into sin, and get angry at their brethren at times, but they will not wallow in the mud of sin, they will be convicted of their wrong, and will deal with it.

Turn to and read, **John 8:41-47.** The Lord turns on the hypocrites who have accused the Lord Jesus Christ of being illegitimate and tells them that they are of their father the Devil who has been a liar from the beginning. He that is of God hears the Word of God but the unbeliever does not hear it because they are not of God. You are either in God's or Satan's family; there is no third option in Space-Time, or in Eternity! Our choices in space-time have eternal consequences for each of us.

Jesus said, **Matthew 7:20-23,** "you shall know them by their fruits". The sign that a person is not a believer is that she/he sins by habit, it is their settled nature, and they don't even notice it or care about it, and also, he/she does not love their fellow believers. Now of course, they do not love other believers, because they are not one themselves! This second point is a theme that John is going to develop throughout the rest of the epistle.

The "agape" love referred to in this verse is the relaxed mental attitude love. It is the desire that others may have the blessings that you have. As a believer you also have this sort of love towards unbelievers; it involves the deep desire that they may come to know the Lord, and this love for them will motivate you to give the gospel to them. Agape love will lead you to pray for your fellow workers in the church, and also for unbelievers. It leads you to prayer first, then to encouraging, to visitation, to counseling, worship, and to giving, and provides inner motivation to service in the church. Refer to the BTB study CHRISTIAN LIFE – LOVE.

Satan is in the business of sending people into churches to stir up the brethren. When you do not see the fruit of the Spirit in key people's lives you should ask these people their testimony, and challenge them to prove their true identity, just in case they are a false sister/brother. If they are just confused believers you will be able to help them by sorting them out, if they are false they will be either saved or exposed as wolves. You will sort out their true nature by their reaction to the power of the preached Word of God. Remember the best public test for a fake brother is to get them to pray aloud, for by their hesitancy, their platitudes, or their flat, or incoherent prayer, they show their lack of relationship with the Lord.

When you take over a church invite the elders and deacons to give their testimony, and publicly pray aloud; by this you check out whether there are any false brethren in the leadership. If anyone is not prepared to pray aloud to the one who saved them, and talk freely about the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done for and with them, then ask for their resignation. They are, at best unfit to lead, at worst, they are Satan's people there to destroy the local church.

In summary then the **ways to detect the false sister or brother** are:-

- [a] They claim to be without sin, or do not recognize personal sin as being important.
- [b] They fail to walk in the light of the Word of God.
- [c] They have no fruit of righteousness in their lives.
- [d] They have no agape love for other believers.

Agape love is not emotional but is always practical, and holy. If it is not present, then the Holy Spirit is quenched by unconfessed sin, or is absent from that person.

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

John is going back to **John 13:34 – 35, 15:12**. Turn back there and read those verses again. If you have not got the love “one for another” - (test yourself, in accordance with **2 Corinthians 13:5**) – then there is sin in your life. Unbelievers enjoy watching the church and seeing so called Christians at each other’s throats with open hatred. What John has pointed out is that such hate and anger filled people in the church are often not believers at all – they are a real danger and may be enemy agents.

They are Satan's people, there to keep other unbelievers away from the message of salvation. Look at the verse again. There is no escape from the teaching here. From the beginning the Lord made the point clear; love for the saints is the hallmark of the believer. If there is no love, there is no family resemblance, and so it is logical to conclude, there is therefore no salvation! In the following verse he draws on the family resemblance and free will principles and explains these things further. **Romans 8:9** again – it’s a key verse to understand in this battle for the heart of the local church!

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.

Here John identifies the motive behind Cain's murder of his brother Abel, which is jealousy of his brother who had done a righteous thing. **Genesis 4:4-25, Hebrews 11:4, Jude 11**. Envy, hatred and jealousy will always lead to character assassination or murder. In Matthew Jesus says that if you hate your brother you have killed him. Turn to and read the words of the Lord, **Matthew 5:21-24**. We should stick to His Word, and apply it into church life, and so save ourselves years of misery. When a believer holds to the holy standard of God's Word, they will be convicted of any sin in their life, and confess it. When you test the make believer on this standard, they will always be exposed, and so the church will be protected from them.

Verse twelve reminds us that the false brothers, like Cain, will hate the truly righteous brethren. We will find ourselves hated by the people like Cain in this world, for they are Satan's men and women, but we must not be known for our hatred of them. People who hate, are people who are doing Satan's work, and probably belong to him. Only very confused believers, or make believers do Satan's work! We must recognize the evil ones, expose them, convict them by teaching, and drive them out by exposing their hatred of the truth, through preaching it strongly. But we must not fall into error ourselves by hating them; for we owe them the Gospel message. Refer to the BTB study, HOLY SPIRIT – SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT. **John 15:17-25**.

Verses 13-14. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

The second “fruit” of genuine relationship with The Lord is now given. This is how we know we have passed from death to life; that we have “agape” concern for our fellow Christians. Secondly, we will be hated by Satan's people, for we rebuke them by everything we are and do, and say. The hatred of the world is a badge of honour for believers; our Lord was hated and killed, so will those who are truly his, be hated. **Mark 13:13, Luke 21:17**. Turn to and read, **John 15:18-25**.

Are we willing to do anything to ensure that the brethren love him more and more, and that the unbeliever hears of his love for them? In life, your love for the Lord is tested and demonstrated by your love for your fellow believer. Note the tenses of the last two verbs. The person who does not keep on loving the brethren, keeps on abiding in death – they are unsaved at this point! Such a person has not been set free from sin and death; they are still living in Satan’s realm.

APPLICATION TO LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Are you remaining in fellowship with the Lord through each day? Are you quickly dealing with sin as it crops into your mind, so that it does not foul your daily life? By these things we “tend the seed” placed within us by the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. We cannot advance into sinful behaviours if we keep on remembering our born again status before God.
2. It is the regular habit of righteousness that gives evidence of a person’s relationship to the righteous God. Let us build our habits in godliness, and ensure that we do not let sin grow to dominate in any shape or form.
3. Do you have love for your fellow believers, or has hatred or envy or bitterness entered in? Is there any concern other than their well being in your heart towards a brother or sister? Deal with anything there that is negative, lest it grows.
4. Being hated for the right reasons is not a problem, but hating for any reason is one. Let us be like the Lord, not like Cain! In salvation we have passed from sin and death into life, and so let us celebrate that with our daily living in the sphere of life and the love of God.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE: ETERNAL SECURITY

1. When a person truly trusts Jesus Christ for salvation, he is saved forever. He cannot lose his salvation.
2. **POSITIONAL APPROACH** (Romans 8:38-39)
We are united with Christ ("in Christ"). Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.
3. **LOGICAL APPROACH** (Romans 8:32, Romans 5)
As unbelievers we are enemies of God (Romans 5), as believers we are his children. If he did the most for his enemies what will he do for his children? This excludes loss of salvation for he saved us while we were his enemies.
4. **GOD'S HANDS APPROACH** (John 10:28, Psalm 37:24)
Neither shall anyone seize them out of my hand. God is all powerful.
5. **EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH** (2 Timothy 2:12-13)
If we deny Christ He is going to deny us rewards (context=suffering and rewards). If we renounce Him, HE REMAINS FAITHFUL. The believer is in Christ and Christ indwells the believer. He cannot deny Himself.
6. **THE FAMILY APPROACH** (Galatians 3:26, John 1:12)
When you believe in Christ you are born again as a child of God. You cannot be unborn, once a child always a child.
7. **THE INHERITANCE APPROACH** (1 Peter 1:4-5)
We have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God. Perfect tense - it will always be reserved, since it is kept by God, not us.
8. **THE SOVEREIGNTY APPROACH** (2 Peter 3:9, Jude 24)
He is not willing that any should perish - refers to the whole human race (2 Peter 3:9) Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling (from perishing). Once you are saved, it is His will that you don't perish.
9. **THE BODY APPROACH** (1 Corinthians 12:21, Colossians 1:18)
Christ is the head, we are the members of the body. If any are lost, the body of Christ is incomplete.
10. **THE GREEK TENSE APPROACH** (Ephesians 2:8-9)
"For by Grace are ye saved". Perfect tense of the verb "sozo". For by Grace have you been saved in the past so that you go on being saved forever.
11. **THE SEALING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT APPROACH** (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30)
In the ancient world the seal was a guarantee for protection. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit guarantees our security.

HOLY SPIRIT: SINS AGAINST THE SPIRIT

1. **RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT** (Unbelievers only) (Acts 7:51, John 16:8-11) This is hardening to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.
2. **BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT** (Unbelievers only) (Matthew 12:31) The purpose of the Holy Spirit was to reveal the person of Jesus Christ. The Pharisees rejected this by claiming He was demon possessed.
3. **LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT** (Believers only) (Acts 5:1-3) A sin of false motivation. - Ananias and Sapphira.
4. **GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT** (Believers only) (Ephesians 4:30) Any sin which the believer commits.
5. **QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT** (Believers only) (1 Thessalonians 5:19) A believer who is not allowing the Holy Spirit to exert His full influence.
6. **UNPARDONABLE SIN** (Matthew 12:22-32)
 - a) Rejection of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour is the only sin which cannot be forgiven. This unbelief is shown in Matthew 12:24, denying the person and power of Jesus.
 - b) It is impossible for a believer to commit the unpardonable sin. (Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 44:22, 1 John 1:7)

SALVATION: REGENERATION: BORN AGAIN

1. **General Scripture** - (John 3:5-8) 'Ye must be born again [born from above] (v7). You are born of the Spirit. (v8) We then become new creatures in Christ.
2. **Natural man cannot understand spiritual phenomenon** (1 Corinthians 2:14). He lacks the ability to enter the Kingdom of God. (John 3:5). They are unable to please God. (Romans 8:7, 8)

3. New birth is a creation of the Holy Spirit. (John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10, 4:24). Through the Holy Spirit we become aware that we are joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:16, 17)
4. The requirement for the new birth is belief on Christ, that He is crucified and risen. (John 1:12, 3:16-18,36). New birth occurs at the instant of belief.
5. Through new birth (Regeneration) the believer lives in Christ, and Christ in the believer. (Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:10, 4:24, 1 Peter 1:23-25, 1 John 5:10-12).
6. Once you are born you cannot be unborn.

SALVATION: SANCTIFICATION

1. Sanctification means to be made holy - to be set apart unto God. One who is sanctified is called a saint.
2. We are sanctified (made holy) in Christ Jesus (1Corinthians 1:2).
3. Sanctification is in three stages:
 - a) Stage 1: At salvation - union with Christ - positional sanctification (1Corinthians 12:13, Romans 1:1-7).
 - b) Stage 2: Christian way of life - filling of the Holy Spirit - spirituality (Romans 16:2; 1Corinthians 1-2).
 - c) Stage 3: Resurrection body - In heaven - Ultimate sanctification (1John 3:2).
4. Our position in Christ entitles us to share Christ's righteousness. It therefore:
 - a) protects us from divine judgment (Romans 8:1)
 - b) qualifies us to live with God forever
 - c) makes us a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - d) guarantees eternal security for every believer (Romans 8:38, 39).
5. However, because we still have the old sin nature, we will still sin during this life (Romans 7:21). When controlled by his carnal nature however, the believer is positionally sanctified but experientially carnal.
6. When we receive the resurrection body, we no longer sin - our sanctification will be complete (1Corinthians 15:56, Philippians 3:21, 1Thessalonians 5:23).

1 JOHN 3:15-24

“15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 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. 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? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 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.”

KEY WORDS

Hateth	miseo	present, active, participle; keeping on hating.
Murderer	anthropoktonos	one who kills another person without just cause
Abiding	meno	present, active, participle; keeps on abiding.
Perceive	oida	perfect , active, indicative; we really know with lasting results!
Laid down	tithemi	aorist, active, indicative; at one point laid down
Ought	opheilo	present, active, indicative; keep on being under Moral obligation to; we owe this to the Lord.
Lay down	tithemi	aorist, active, infinitive; at any point required. We are to lay down our lives.
Hath	echo	present, active, subjunctive; if any have and hold
World’s good	bios+kosmos	the details of life – good things the world offers
Seeth	theoreo	present, active, subjunctive; if they see/reflect
Need	kreia	a need for life – a necessity for living.
Shutteth	kleio	aorist, active, subjunctive; if they lock up, shut
Bowels	splagchnos	the seat of emotion – close down their compassion
Dwelleth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.

Let us love	agapao	present, active, subjunctive; let us love.
Deed/truth	ergon/aletheia	in deeds and in true doctrine.
Know	ginosko	future, middle, indicative; we will know clearly. Will be sure on basis of evidence seen.
Assure	peitho	future, active, indicative; persuade, convince. Re-assure, set mind at rest, appease in truth.
Condemn	kataginosko	present, active, subjunctive; if we are condemned
Knoweth	ginosko	present, active, indicative; keeps on knowing all.
Confidence	parresia	openness, confidence, assurance.
Ask	aiteo	present, active, subjunctive; if we request/ask.
Receive	lambano	present, active, indicative; we keep on receiving.
Keep	tereo	present, active, indicative; we regularly keep.
Pleasing	arestos	well pleasing – the things pleasing to God.
Believe	pisteuo	aorist, active, subjunctive; we ought to believe.
Love	agapao	aorist, active, subjunctive; love the brethren. The aorist indicates – at any point in time we can
Gave us	didomi	aorist, active, indicative; we gave us.
Keepeth	tereo	present, active, participle; the one keeping.
Dwelleth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
Know	ginosko	present, active, indicative; keep on knowing.
Abideth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
Given	didomi	aorist, active, indicative; he gave in the past.

REFLECTIONS

In this section John gives us the doctrine that allows us to face evil when we see it in our life or in the church. John says that you cannot be in fellowship with the Lord and at the same time harbour hatred, or be envious/jealous. The Lord cannot have fellowship with those who cherish/cling to these types of attitudes.

Turn to and read, **Revelation 3:19-20**, and note John's words. If the believer is actively hating he/she is allowing the Lord Jesus Christ to be pushed out of their life by their sinful mental attitude. The Lord will not stay if we choose hatred over his love; he will quietly leave and wait for us to respond to spiritual reason and seek His/others fellowship again.

Such a person who hates, has locked the Lord out of her/his life. The Lord is saying that as a believer, if you allow sin to rule your life, then you have locked him out of your life. We have the promise of the Lord that if we repent the Lord is waiting to recommence fellowship with us.

If we confess, "metanoeo", **1 John 1:9**, or in other words, turn around from our sin to face the light, the Lord will return and fellowship with us again. By studying the Word of God you are having a meal with the Lord. If you have hatred abiding in you, it is because you have chosen that state above the state of living in the Lord's love, and it means that the Lord is not abiding in you.

You must confess your sin before your anger becomes murder. Christians can commit murder. Sin will come into your life, and we all will find hatred there at times, but John says, do not invite sin for dinner, do not harbour it and encourage it. Face your sin and deal with it. Do not abide in it, as there is no evil that you are not capable of, if you harbour sin for long enough. **Genesis 27:41, Leviticus 19:16-18**. We fellowship with the Lord or we fellowship with sin, there are no third options in the spiritual area!

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

Many believers are shocked by John's words here, for they would never murder, they think! Remember Jesus words in **Matthew 5:21-26**, for the Lord makes it clear that to hate is to murder in your heart, and if you sit on such evil long enough you will express that evil in overt action. To hate your brother is to be like Cain the unbeliever. Hatred opens the door for murderous thoughts, and such thoughts if fed often enough will burst out to murderous actions. If hatred, the spirit that leads to murder, 'abides' in you, then you can be sure, that the spirit of God does not abide in you! While a person has the indwelling and persistent spirit of hatred they are most likely without eternal life!

This would indicate that such a spirit within (be it OSN based or demonic), indicates that such a person is without salvation, and that any "salvation experience" they have had may be a phony one. We need to remember however, that if they confess their sins we face a different reality, for it is confession that shows they are genuine sons or daughters of God. It is our response to the Holy Spirit's ministries that finally shows whose family we will belong to eternally.

This letter is full of absolute statements isn't it! These are the words of John, and they are the words of the Lord. We must pay attention to these and be challenged, and challenge others to be obedient to the command of the Lord to all believers; deal with your sins quickly or they will deepen! John challenges us to take personal responsibility for our sins and any sinful patterns that have created problems in our life. **James 1:14-15, 4:1-5**. Face it - deal with it – His way!

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.

We have here the definition of God's love for us; we see it on the cross as he gave himself for us. Turn back again to **John 3:16, 10:11-18, 15:12-13**, and read these verses. Our mature love for the Lord is real and powerful as believers, for we see and give praise for the fact that, He first loved us and gave himself for us. **Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21**.

This is the love of God for us; it is love that is willing to do anything and everything for those whom he loves. We are beloved! The Lord's love for us means that we have a standard set for ourselves. We are to be like him. That means we are to be prepared to lay down our lives for the brethren, as the Lord died for us. The word, 'ought', is used, indicating an obligation here. We are obliged to die for our brethren if it is required. There is no way around this command. We must confront this in our marriages also; ready to do anything to save/help/bless our marriage partner. **Ephesians 5:25**.

To be a Christian at the time of John was really quite dangerous with Domitian on the throne. Previously Nero had persecuted the Jews around Rome, and killed some Christians in Rome, whereas Domitian was persecuting Christians Empire wide. As a result of this first great persecution John was sent to the island of Patmos, where he suffered great torture and privation as an already old man (he was in his eighties by this time). He returned to Ephesus after his release but never recovered from his injuries and died within a year or so of his return, but writes vigorously in that time.

Many Christians would have to face the reality of dying themselves rather than betraying other Christians. They would be dragged from their houses and asked if they were Christians. If they confirmed they were, the father would be run through with a sword, leaving the widow and children to be looked after by the other Christians, who would themselves be subject to death if discovered. The Romans used the very agape caring of the church to "flush out" other Christians.

Those who first read this letter first had a very practical situation for application of this point of doctrine. John says that if the Lord is your Saviour, and you are true to him, then you must be prepared to die for your brothers and sisters in Christ. **Romans 16:3-4, Philipians 2:14-18, 30**. As the days darken today, that threat is very real for many.

Verses 17-19. 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? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

This passage shows that the love spoken of is always very practical. As in **James 2:15-16**, John urges us to be really practical in our love. Do not ask for the Lord to bless the brethren, for the Lord has put you there, so you can bless them by doing what you can! Having done all you can for your fellow believers, then make your prayers for them. Give them provisions; give them a coat, for if it is a brother in Christ in need you cannot deny them. The first century church practiced this very significantly and they impressed even the pagans. The church of the 21st century does not do this as well as our spiritual ancestors did. We should look after our own. **1 Timothy 5:8**. Refer to the BTB study WELFARE.

Do you want assurance of your faith, then let love have her perfect way with you, and show the love that is in your heart for your spiritual relatives. If you know of Christians in need and you can help, do so. You take the gospel to unbelievers but take aid to believers. The pagans of the first century did not expect the Christians to look after them, but when they saw them looking after their own they were impressed. Many people were led to a position of listening to the gospel because they saw Christians caring for each other, and being ready to die for each other.

The same thing should be happening today worldwide. It is still happening in places where the believers are walking close to the Lord, but in the affluent churches it is rare. This ought not to be! What we see in the Western world is pagans coming to the churches for free handouts, and despising the believers and the Lord. This is no more right than churches not assisting their own! It is not the apostolic faith! John challenges us to get these things right.

If Christians are hungry, they may be distracted from their prayers and their work, thus it is important that if your brother is hungry you should feed him if you can. Many churches today are working on the basis of human gimmicks and systems, and not on the basis of God's Word as far as true charity is concerned. We must work from apostolic faith principles, rather than working from a state social welfare program. Many churches have an efficient social organization, often sidetracked into giving aid to pagans, rather than supporting the 'poor brethren', and giving the gospel alone to pagans. Pause and reflect on the strategic victory Satan gains when a church operates this way!

Our task is not to make pagans more comfortable on their way to hell, but to challenge them to stop their progress to destruction. Our priority, if we follow the pattern of the early church, must be to support our brethren (where-ever they are), and only give the gospel to unbelievers. "Agape" love is to be the centre of the church's programs, and this will only occur if the message of the empty Cross, and empty tomb, is the centre of the church. **Deuteronomy 15:7-11, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Hebrews 13:13-16**.

In summary, note in verse 17, John says to us directly, that if we stop our feelings of compassion for our brethren, we do not have the love of God within us. Literally we could translate the verse, do not close the door of compassion towards your needy brethren. Verse 18 reinforces the words of James that love must not be in word only but in deeds and reality.

Verse 19, speaks of the assurance of our spiritual status which comes only as we know that we love the Lord because of our practical love for the brethren. Neither John nor James are speaking of works salvation or of works sanctification, they are identifying the simple truth, that a person knows a truth only when they see it working out in their life. Every deed done for a fellow believer is a deed that encourages and strengthens our faith. **James 2:14-17.**

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

God knows the very secrets of our hearts. God knows what we desire, and what we think and what we do. If we are not walking in the truth of these verses the Lord condemns us! Our conscience/heart simply catches up with God! This verse reminds us that when we feel great condemnation it is, always, after the fact, and we should not have got to that point. We must walk closer to the Lord, so that we are not 'condemned' by our conscience. But, once we feel this condemnation, let us act quickly upon it.

Notice how powerfully John urges us to hold to our eternal life perspective; seeing the things of eternity, as of more value and importance than the things of time. Read **Hebrews 11:13-16.** This passage reminds us that we have heaven to gain, and that all we can gain here is passing away as we enjoy it, and are distracted by it! **Hebrews 12:1-3, 12-15.**

Does your conscience convict you? Are you convicted that you are not living in "agape" love? If the answer is, 'yes', do not despair, but also do not delay to act. **Psalms 44:20-26, 139:1-24.** Confess your sin and get back into fellowship with God and get moving again, and apply the Word of God to your daily life. Be praying for and looking for opportunities to apply practical love towards your fellow believers. They will come, so take them and express your faith practically. Refer to the BTB study on CONSCIENCE.

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

If your conscience does not condemn you continue to grow, rejoice in the light of God's Word. As we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit we know the peace and joy that the believer is meant to know every day. The main result is 'boldness' (Greek word porch), or openness, confidence and assurance.

The relaxed love of the Lord, and assurance of our salvation and security with the Lord forever provides the peace of mind we seek above all things. This peace of mind is ours, as we let his love fill us and overflow to our brethren in their needs. The Lord knows what is in man. **John 2:24-25.** We cannot fool our Lord, nor move away from his love towards us. Let us walk with him in joy, rather than walk with him in discipline and judgment. **John 10:10.**

Verses 22-24. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 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.

Assurance in your prayer life comes from living fellowship with the Lord as you obey God's commands and live in accordance with God's Word. You can then pray in accordance with the will of God and really think about what God wants you to do. John says if you are doing this you are walking with Him. There is then real growth and real assurance. Read these Psalms and be encouraged that this is the truth, and has been since the beginning. **Psalms 10:17, 34:1-5, 15-17, 50:14-15, 66:18-19, 145:17-19.**

Verse 22. Whatever we ask in prayer, we receive, because we keep his commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in God's sight, and therefore our prayer requests are fully in accordance with the will of the Lord, and it is his pleasure to answer. **John 9:31, 14:13, 15:7, 16:23-24.** These verses give us the pathway to powerfully effective prayer; closely walking with God so that every thought is in captivity to Christ, and every prayer is the expression of the heart of God in the matter addressed. Turn to and read, **Romans 12:1-2, then, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.** This work is God's work, as the Holy Spirit is given free rein within us to bring us daily more and more close to the Lord Jesus Christ. **Hebrews 13:20-21.**

Verse 23. The two commandments that John reminds us are at the heart of Christianity are those given by the Lord; love the Lord and love one another in the Lord. The pathway to relationship with God has two stages; the first is total belief on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, which means we accept who he is and what he did for us. To "believe on the name" means to acknowledge the power and position of the one believed in.

The second stage is to go on in relationship with the Lord of glory, and that involves loving one another. Without this love for the brethren it is impossible to please God, and it is impossible for any prayer, other than that of confession of sin, to be heard. **Psalms 66:18, Isaiah 1:15-20, 59:1-2, Jeremiah 5:25, Joel 2:12-13, Acts 8:22-23.** Notice how many Old Testament references there are here, and the consistency of God's message to believers down the centuries.

Turn to and read, **John 11:22,** which states that whatever you ask of God He will give it to you. Also turn to and read again, **John 14:13-15,** which indicates that if you are asking things in His name you must be living in accordance with His command. You cannot expect answers to prayers from a life that is disobedient, as the Holy God will not answer prayers from an unholy life. Turn to and read again also, **John 15:7,** which shows why prayer is alive for some and not for others. Our only question is are we abiding in Him, speaking to Him and listening for His directions?

Now turn to, and read again, in **John 15:16-17** where the whole concept of obedient and abiding prayer is brought together. It shows that certain principles are brought together in effective prayer; precision in requests, spiritual fellowship, and personal obedience. Remember, **Psalm 66:18** says, that if I have unfaced sin in my life the Lord will not hear my prayers, with the exception of course of the prayer of confession. This is because God will not violate his own character. Refer to the BTB study on GOD – CHARACTER OF GOD.

Verse 24. How do we know we are children of God and truly saved? John tells us that it is because we desire to keep, and truly do keep, his commandments. Such obedience is not done out of duty, or grudgingly, or reluctantly, but joyfully with love in our heart for him. We know he lives within us by the witness of his Holy Spirit within us, as we are convicted, encouraged, taught, and strengthened in our obedience to his Holy Word.

Our assurance of salvation is in direct relationship to our walking in the truth of God's Word. It is the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit that is the key to the reality of the Christian life. As we walk in the Spirit, so we fellowship with the Lord, and rejoice in his love and care for us. Reality of faith is experienced through daily walking in that faith, not any ability to recite by rote learning creeds and statements of faith.

APPLICATIONS TO LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Hatred will deepen into murder over time. Let us place the guard up against these evils by dealing with sin quickly in our hearts, well before it is expressed in our body. Let us keep short accounts with our God and Saviour, and walk closely to him.
2. Love cannot be in word and not in deed. Such love is phoney, if it lacks action to express it. Let us seek ways to show love to those in genuine need, and tell the truth to those who game play. We are not here to be abused by "game players" who love drama and simply abuse our good natures, for such people need to be confronted with truth, not given handouts. Such phoney people however must not stop us from assisting those in genuine need.
3. How tender is our conscience? We need our conscience to be tender, and we need to value a sensitive nature regarding sin. We should be pleased when we feel condemned within for what to others may be a minor transgression. The more sensitive to sin we are the closer to the Lord we will walk.
4. Powerful prayer is rooted and grounded in abiding obedience to the will and plan of God for the believer's life. We are powerful when we are connected, and we are connected when we have dealt with sin. The closer we are in our walk with the Lord, the more powerfully certain we can be about answers to prayer.

DOCTRINES

CONSCIENCE

1. Conscience is awareness of what is right and what is wrong, the ability to discern between good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14)
2. Conscience is imperfect, since it is based on human knowledge and ability.
3. Conscience is found in both saved and unsaved.
4. In the believer
 - a) it testifies (2 Corinthians 1:12).
 - b) it bears witness in the Holy Spirit (Romans 9:1).
 - c) it should be good (1 Timothy 1:5);
 - d) it leads to submission (1 Peter 2:19).
 - e) it is pure (1 Timothy 3:9).
5. In the unbeliever
 - a) it justified Paul's actions (Acts 23:1);
 - b) it convicted the scribes (John 8:9);
 - c) it bears witness (Romans 2:15);
 - d) it may be defiled (Titus 1:15);
 - e) it can be seared (1 Timothy 4:2).
6. A believer with a weak conscience has no right to evaluate any other believer (1 Corinthians 10:27-30).
7. The conscience in (1 Corinthians 8:1,13) causes Christians to act in a compassionate and thoughtful way in relation to weaker brothers.
8. The conscience works in conjunction with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. (Romans 9:1)

- a) People who refuse to heed the conviction of God in the conscience "harden their hearts" and their conscience becomes less receptive (Ephesians 4:17-19, 1 Timothy 4:2).
- b) When the conscience is completely blinded, God delivers people over to their own delusions. (Romans 1:18-32, Revelation 17:8, 1 Timothy 4:1,2).

WELFARE

1. God has always been concerned for the needy poor, the weak and the oppressed. Exodus 22:21-27, Deuteronomy 15:11, 24:14,15.
2. Orphans and widows were especially concerns of the Lord from the beginning. Deuteronomy 10:18, Ezekiel 22:7.
3. Any violation of the trust of others with money was also a concern of the Lord. Exodus 22:26, Amos 2:8,
4. The needy poor of the land were to be cared for. Only the needy were to be cared for, as those who were able to work should, and those with ability were expected to use it. Isaiah 1:23, 10:2, 3:14,15, Amos 4:1, 5:11, 8:4,6, Micah 2:2,8,9, Zephaniah 3:1, Habakkuk 1:4, 2:10-15, Jeremiah 5:28, 7:6, Ezekiel 18:12,16, 22:29, Zechariah 7:10, Malachi 3:5.
5. The Lord addressed the poor and needy directly and met their needs, for food but more than that for focus on their purpose in life. Matthew 11:28-30, Luke 4:18, 6:20.

The Lord recognised that there will always be people who are poor, that need will always exist within a fallen world and that no attempt of man will change this. Matthew 26:11, Mark 14:7.

6. The early church during the time of greatest growth in Jerusalem adopted a dramatic welfare policy to deal with the numbers being saved and the numbers of martyrs and their dependents who needed the church to care for them.

In Acts 4:32-37 tells us that many (not all or they would not have had a home to meet in) the church sold their worldly wealth to ensure the work was not halted for lack of funds, or time to devote. It was a temporary measure and restricted to Jerusalem but it helped the church get established and made sure that no-one starved at a time when there was great expansion but also great persecution.

Because of the church's needs they were permanently poor and other churches had to help the Jerusalem church throughout its history until 70AD. 1 Corinthians 16 : 3.

7. The churches cared for the poor and needy by regular giving, and through the office of the deacons who were the social welfare officers for the assemblies. Romans 15:26, Galatians 2:10, James 2:2-7,

Relatives were expected to look after their own first. 1 Timothy 5:8,

If people could work they were expected to; such were not needy poor! 1 Thessalonians 2:9 -12, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12.

NOTES

CHAPTER 4

In this chapter three times John uses the word 'beloved', and each time, the word introduces the next point in his message about the importance of love, as a way of identifying the true children of God.

In verse 1 "beloved" is used to remind us all that we are supported and loved in our particular part of the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict, and the enemy are always active against those who are 'beloved' of the Lord, but we remain God's.

In verse 7, John introduces the next point, explaining the dynamic of agape love, as an integral part of God's plan. In verse 11, he uses the same word to reinforce the importance of Holy Spirit powered good works; the production of love.

Reflect back on the "hard" subjects of chapters one through three, and see the loving leadership of John. He has challenged them hard about the need to deal with hatred, and replace it with love for the brethren, and he has challenged some to renew their faith, or be assured of it, because of their mental attitudes. Having strongly challenged them, he now encourages them, reminding them, that all who are convicted of their sins, and deal with them, are indeed sons and daughters of God, and are beloved of the Lord. Genuine believers "sit with" and act on the truth about sin in their lives.

Once we are sure of our spiritual status as "beloved" of the Lord, we need to then address our specific personal role in the Angelic Conflict, in order to be rightly oriented to the battles around us. We are not here to fight other people's wars, but to stand where the Lord calls us to stand and do exactly what the Eternal Plan calls for us to do! Spiritual warfare is our subject in this chapter, but it is not as many discuss it today. Let us be corrected as we advance into this subject.

1 JOHN 4:1-6

"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 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 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 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. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 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."

KEY WORDS

Believe	pisteuo present,	active, imperative; keep on not believing
Try	dokimazo	present, active, imperative; prove by testing. Prove that it is real, not a fake.
False	pseudoprophetai	false/fake prophets – at their core false.
Know	ginosko present,	active, indicative; surely keep knowing
Confesseth	omologeoo	present, active, indicative; keeps on agreeing.
Come	erchomai	perfect , active, participle; has come once 4 all
In flesh	en sarki	in a fleshly (real human) body
Heard	akouo	perfect , active, indicative; heard once - lasting
Already	eimi+ede	present, active, indicative; already keeps on being
Overcome	nikau	perfect , active, indicative; have conquered.
Greater	megas	greater than another.
Speak	laleo	present, active, indicative; continue speaking.
Hearth	akouo	present, active, indicative; continue being heard.
We are of God	eimi	present, active, indicative; we keep on being of God.
Knoweth	ginosko	present, active, participle; we keep on knowing.
Hearth	akouo	present, active, indicative; he keeps on hearing
Know	ginosko	present, active, indicative; we keep on knowing.

REFLECTIONS

Notice the number of verbs in the present continuous tense in the Greek verbs above. John repeats certain words and runs parallels with them; contrasting the knowledge and status of the unbeliever with the believers. We have a place that has permanent results for us (perfect tense) and as a result of our position in Christ Jesus, we can keep on knowing (present tense) the certainties of our faith; one of which is that we are heard by God as we talk with Him in prayer. The other certainty we have, is that we will be involved in the Angelic Conflict, and we need to be able to discern the origin of spirits very quickly, lest we be deceived by Satan's forces. Deception and distraction is on the increase post Covid-19.

We have already seen that it is the Holy Spirit who is the one who ministers within us, and shows us deep within our soul, the reality of our faith. Many will claim to have the 'spirit' guiding them from within, so how can we tell who has the genuine Holy Spirit and who is a counterfeiter? Satan is a counterfeiter, a producer of fake spirituality, so this is a vital issue for us all! **2 Corinthians 11:12-15.**

One test has already been given so far; the test of the fruit within the life. A holy, righteous, obedient life is the best overt evidence that a person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and is truly a child of God. The fruit of the spirit in the life of the person gives evidence of the family likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ, and proves their status as God's children. Refer at this point to the BTB study on SATAN – SATAN'S STRATEGY, and SATAN'S WORK.

John moves on to the second way we can tell if a person is genuinely Holy Spirit filled, or demon possessed. This is a subject that is very topical in our own day, where Satan is going on a spiritual offensive, and we are seeing many manifestations of demonic possession and spiritual gifting, but they are not of God. We are seeing things today that have not been witnessed since the ancient world, in that what people are calling "angels" (actually demons) are appearing to men and women more frequently in the last decade than for centuries. The telling fact is that they have the sexualized appearance of the statues of the pagan gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome, not the nonsexual directness of the biblical accounts of real godly angelic messengers. Many are being fooled and chasing after such appearances. Let us hear John clearly, as it appears in these last days that such things are multiplying.

John will give tests of experiences, and tests for people; but at the heart of both is the teaching that flows from the "angel" or the person. This test is that of a doctrinal analysis of the teaching of the person/angel, not a pre-occupation with their visible spiritual gifts. A spirit is clearly working through the person/angel, and there may be signs of power. The only question John asks is, 'what is the source?' There is clearly a super-natural phenomenon, and the test of the life may not be able to be applied in the situation where the 'sign' type gift is manifested, as the person may not be well enough known by the church before they manifest this supernatural power/event. An angel just appears from another dimension and so is unable to be tested in space-time, as it is well beyond such limitations, and can fool us by manifesting itself in any way, but the teaching that flows from them is testable against the infallible Scriptures.

It is vital that this biblical test be applied immediately, to protect the church membership from following the so-called, "spirit filled" prophet or angelic messenger, before the spirit is identified properly. We are to walk a fine line in spiritual matters; not stopping spiritual phenomena, nor hindering the work of the Holy Spirit in any way, but auditing all spiritual phenomena immediately, to ensure it is genuinely Holy Spirit power that is being manifested, and not a subtle enemy. The enemy is, as we have seen, a liar, and so counterfeiting is the main danger whenever spiritual phenomena are manifested. All spiritual "currency" is to be tested/assayed for the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

In this verse John gives a sober warning, that we are not to believe every spirit that manifests itself through a person, no matter what the signs of power that are present. All spirits that speak through people are to be immediately checked out by direct questioning. We are not to be impressed or overawed by any apparent spiritual phenomena, for both sides in the angelic conflict manifest such things. We are to remain calm in the presence of spiritual phenomena, and we must immediately test the spirit, as to whether it is from God, or is from the enemy. The reason for this caution, in the very presence of the supernatural, is because many false prophets are in the world, and as with all 'make-believers', they are powered by Satan's demons. Paul gives the same warning early in his ministry to the Thessalonian church. **1 Thessalonians 5:19-24.**

Many Christians are gullible and will go to listen to dynamic speakers who manifest 'signs and wonders', without checking/testing the person and the fruit of their ministry against the Word of God. We are to beware of false prophets in the church supposedly speaking, or doing 'signs and wonders', apparently under the power of the Holy Spirit. John tells us to test the spirit, as it may well be coming from the wrong source. Never was this warning more important than today, for false prophets and false teachers are on the increase. A true prophet of the Lord will always welcome such a test, and never be insulted by being tested, as to the source or content of their teaching. A sign of a truly Holy Spirit inspired and filled person is their openness and integrity, just as the sign of satanic presence is their arrogance, refusal to be tested, and their deviancy in doctrine and life.

Turn to and read again, **2 Corinthians 11:10-15.** Satan is a great counterfeiter using religion as his vehicle. He can counterfeit everything except **holiness and true humility.** Evil is in the churches in John's day, just as in our own, and Satan has his own empowered ministers and messengers. As a pastor you must protect your flock because if you are not as careful as John directs you to be, then Satan will hit you with his infiltrators. Remember, Satan is religious; he likes people to be religious, in fact he prefers people to be religious, for then they will reject their need for a Saviour. Refer to the BTB study – RELIGION. Don't be misled by an individual's theological precision and brilliance, for without true Christian character/fruit, it is just refined "tinkling cymbal". **1 Corinthians 13:1-8.**

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.

Note the points that John makes here.

Firstly, our status as believers. We are 'beloved' ones. We are the recipients of God's unlimited love towards us in Christ Jesus. Our position in Christ gives us a place of blessing, security and care.

Secondly note the context of the verse; we are being warned that **danger exists** and the threat is real to us. In our great position "in Christ Jesus" we may relax our guard, thinking we can come to no harm. This is foolishness, especially for us today, as we see the days accelerate towards the Lord's Return, for we are in the intensified stage of the angelic conflict, and are told to have our armour on, and to guard ourselves from the wiles of the devil. **1 Peter 5:8-9.** Our great position in Christ Jesus does not excuse us from vigilance, for our great position is as soldiers in the Lord's Army, and we are on

active service! We relax in heaven; until then we are called to be vigilant and active in the Lord's service. **Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Timothy 2:1-7, 4:5-8.** We are on active duty in the devil's deceived and distracted world, but we must not be distracted and relax our guard against the deception that Satan is always ready to use against us.

Thirdly note that the threat comes from 'many false prophets'. Our enemy has many who follow him and will oppose us or try by guile to deceive, and lead us astray from the truth. Just because a man or woman is preaching in the church and others believe them to be good, does not mean you follow them. John's words here may indicate that there are more false teachers/prophets in churches than true ones! This, if it is true, should not surprise us, for all the Old Testament prophets were well outnumbered by false prophets in their own day also! Refer to the BTB study on PROPHET below, and note points 4 and 5 especially. The Lord, from the beginning gave signs to help spot false prophets, for they were always more numerous than true prophets. The same tests can be applied to teachers-preachers.

Fourthly note John's two commands. Literally John's first command is, '**stop believing**' (present, active imperative), indicating that the believers have already been fooled by false prophets and teachers. His second command is '**test the spirits**', which is the present, active, imperative of dokimazo - which means literally to prove by fire. Here it is a strong way of saying, put them to the test to prove their genuineness. We are without excuse if we ignore this and other warnings of the seriousness of this matter. **Matthew 24:4-5, 23-26, Acts 20:28-31, 2 Timothy 3:13, 2 Peter 2:1-3.**

The word dokimazo has an interesting usage in John's day. It was used to refer to the test to prove that an expensive piece of pottery was genuine or fake. The Romans at this time were being fooled by counterfeit "antique" pots brought in from Greece. They were often inferior ones, broken and mended skillfully with coloured wax holding the pot together. The Romans got sick of being conned by these fakes, so they would test them. The suspect pot was lightly fired, and if genuine would come through the fire, but if it was a fake, held together by colored wax, then it would fall apart in the fire.

Because of the presence of so many fakes, we are to put all teachers, prophets and preachers to the test. If they are genuine, they love and obey the Word, and so will welcome such testing, for they have nothing to fear from it. If they are fakes, they will fear the fire of God's Word being applied to them. **A minister's readiness to be tested is a good sign of their spiritual status, any hesitancy is a sure sign of their being a fake, held together by Satan's counterfeit religious hypocritical wax.**

John is saying, "let them prove they are genuinely of God before they are given any serious hearing at all"! What he appears to be demanding, is that when a person stands to deliver a prophetic word, they are to be immediately tested, well before the congregation decides to accept and follow their message.

It appears that what happened was, the prophet would stand and speak, then the elders would call everyone to attention, and formally test the prophet and their words. If they and their words passed the test, the elders would urge the people to heed the words, if not the fake prophet was cast out of the congregation immediately they were discovered as false.

The first way to prove or test them, is to run everything they said up against the Word of God. Do they contradict or undermine any principle of doctrine? John will now specifically identify key doctrines that Satan's people deny. John now gives some doctrinal tests to unmask error.

Verse 2-3. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 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.

What does this person teach? Do they say that Christ came in the flesh? Do they uphold the doctrine of the hypostatic union? Anything that falls short of that is from the pit of hell. Most modern cults, like the Gnostics of the first century AD, were condemned on this basis. You have to be actively discerning, because Satan's crowd will weave a web of words to ensnare you – beware verbal complexity, as it often covers error. Jesus Christ however is God with us - Emmanuel.

Those that say that Christ has not come in the flesh are talking by the spirit of Antichrist. John reminds them that these false concepts are already out there in the world. The enemy does not have to change his approach, and he hasn't since the earliest days of the church, because he trades on the average believer's biblical ignorance, and is able to deceive all who fail to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord. **2 Thessalonians 2:3-15.** The enemy specializes in "strong deception", and only the alert, spiritually mature, and discerning will not be fooled at times.

Turn to and re-read, **Matthew 24:5,10, 23-28** - many will come in Christ's name through the years, and many will be deceived. In the tribulation there will be a supreme example of this in the form of the Antichrist. Do not be fooled by counterfeits! Satan doesn't need to put much energy into drugs and alcohol, for they do their own evil work, but he puts a great deal of effort into false brethren, and especially false teachers/prophets for with them he can do serious harm.

Whatever the popularity of a "teacher/preacher", whatever their manifestations, and signs and wonders, still be obedient to John's words and check what the so called 'prophets or teachers' are saying, and if it does not conform with Bible doctrine, and produce godly fruit in the lives of all who follow it, then be sure, it is from Satan. We are in the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict since the Cross, the Resurrection, and Pentecost, and we must remember daily, that Satan's main weapon against believers is deception and seduction. Remember Jesus words, **Matthew 7:13-23!** Its not an option – we are ordered to be discerning, and spot the false brethren before they become a danger.

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.

In the Angelic Conflict with the Prince of this world (**John 12:31, 14:30**) believers can get over impressed by, and fearful of Satan's power. We should not over-estimate, or under-estimate, our enemy. We are not to be ignorant of his devices. **2 Corinthians 2:10-11**. Note this vital principle; greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world! We have the greater power within us than Satan can muster against us. This is an absolute promise; it is a statement of fact, for God's indwelling Holy Spirit is more powerful than Satan has ever been. If the problem is not power, then it can only be our connection to God's power, broken by distraction or sinfulness. What we need to do is ensure the power supply is always turned on, rather than dimmed or extinguished by our unconfessed sin. **Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19**.

John starts this verse by reminding us of our family position; we are beloved little children. He uses the word, 'technia', for children emphasizing the 'learner' aspect of our status as young members of God's family. We are to grow up in knowledge of God's truth. He reminds us that we, 'are of God'; we are from the ultimate source of God, we belong to him. We are his and we are urged to grow up in the family likeness. We are in danger only if we do not grow up and apply the instruction of our father.

There is no doubt to our status as beloved children. As we have gone through this letter, we have tested ourselves by the verses of this letter, and now all know that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are children of the loving God. In that personal security, we are to advance in the angelic conflict and confront evil forces with the confidence that is grounded in our knowledge that we are, In Christ, the 'winners' in the angelic conflict.

So confident is John that he uses the **perfect, active, indicative** of the verb, 'nikao', meaning to conquer or be victorious. Literally he is saying, 'we have conquered them (in the past, with results that go on forever)'. What does he mean? Think about his subject so far. He has been talking about our position in Christ, in a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ we share his victory at the cross/resurrection, and the results of his victory over sin and death go on forever for us.

As you see more and more activity on the spiritual front, the Holy Spirit will give you joy and peace as the dark clouds get thicker as we draw ever nearer the time of the Lord's Second Advent. Do not fear the fakes and cultists, rather resist Satan by checking out all teachings and only accept those who teach in accordance with God's Word. Do not give an inch to evil men and women, but confront them with the biblical truth, give them the gospel truth, as a victorious general gives the defeated enemy the facts about what their defeat means to them. **Hebrews 9:27, 10:27**.

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

Turn to and read, **John 17:13 - 17**. This is the passage that John has in mind here. In contrast to our position in Christ, or 'of God' - Greek, 'ek tou theou'. They are of the world (ek tou kosmou), and so those who are of the world (kosmos) system of Satan, hear them. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and we know and love the truth, for that is our new nature. But the love of the unbeliever is for false teaching, for that is their nature. Do not be seeking the praise, honour, or success that the world system gives, for the receiving of the praise of the world means you are part of it.

Do not be surprised if the unbeliever hates you and your beliefs, and rejects you and your beliefs. The reason for their rejection is because your doctrines condemn them and upset them, just as the Lord upset and distressed people in his day. When people reject the truth they will accept and cling to error, for it is more comfortable to them in their rebellion against God. However we must remain in the truth if we are to live in the secure and powerful place God has intended for us.

God is still on the throne of heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ will still come. The rejection by the condemned ones of the truth does not change the truth or the outcome of history! We must keep on sowing the seed and not concern ourselves with the short term results in our brief day in the sun. John calls us to have our hearts and minds stabilized in eternal life.

Speak the truth and the Holy Spirit will bring people to you who you can minister to. The Lord holds you responsible for what we say and do, and we must be the children of light and truth and hope, in the midst of a darkening world, where people love the lie better than they love the truth. In the short term we may appear to be losing ground, but the Lord sees the end, and he is victorious. Let us be encouraged by the truth and stand firmly in it. **2 Timothy 4:1-5, 2 Peter 2:1-9**.

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.

There are two forces at work on the earth presently; the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. The spirit of truth is God, and He has already won the angelic conflict, it is just a matter of timing to round things off, and bring an end to this present world. The spirit of error is the spirit, or false doctrinal heart, of Satan – we can expect both his charm and threat offensives to increase in these last days. We have felt this grow in these last Covid years.

People divide themselves into the two camps in this life by their preference for one over the other world viewpoint. By a person's response to the "Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ" they show whose side they are on now and forever. In this verse John uses the phrases 'of God', and, 'of the world', again. He is underlining the point that there is a great divide

between people on this earth, and it is not linguistic, intellectual, cultural, financial, racial, or sexual, but spiritual. He strongly emphasizes that we, as the children of light and truth, must discern those that are not with us, for they are the ones who will oppose our work and attempt to seduce us from the path of truth. They are enemy and must be labeled as such, lest they deceive and disable us. What is the test by which we spot these, 'people of the lie'?

Those who are of the truth keep on hearing the Word of God; they love it, and believe it, and apply it. They show by their love of the truth, their kinship with the one who is truth. **John 14:1-7**. They love doctrinal truth, it is their spiritual food, because they love its author, who is their Creator Saviour God. Those who are of the world 'keep on hating' the truth, and keep on refusing to hear it, because they prefer the company and the life style of the enemies of the truth.

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. The only way not to be deceived is to be discerning of all who try to influence us. We have the Holy Spirit, so we are not short of power to discern, but that power must be used. John's command is a lasting one for the church. We are to put all people and teachings to the test. If they stack up with God's revelation they are true, if not they are to be dismissed.
2. Counterfeit preachers have always outnumbered the true servants of the Lord. We are not to be gullible, or trusting of our fellow man. The Lord knew what was in man, and the Lord did **NOT** trust untested people; neither should we! Re-read **John 2:24-25**, and be convicted of your stupidity if you trust people without first putting them to the test!
3. A true understanding of the person of the Lord is vital for all believers, as it is false views of the Lord's person and work that gives evidence of falseness on the part of a so called "preacher". The doctrine of the Hypostatic Union is not a theological oddity, only to be understood by PhDs, it is a spiritual necessity.
4. Have you grasped the superior power you have in the Holy Spirit? Are you living in that place of power, or in powerlessness? Let us daily let the Spirit's power loose within us by Bible study and prayer!
5. Do not be short sighted as to the outcome of history. In the short term you may appear to be losing, but God's plan is working out, and it will be victorious. Hold to the truth and preach and live it with power and focused energy.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS-SATAN-SATAN'S STRATEGY

ANGELIC CONFLICT

RELIGION

CHRIST-HYPOSTATIC UNION

DISPENSATION OF THE CHURCH

CHRISTIAN LIFE: PRAYER

1. We may know the provision of God but we must communicate with Him in order to obtain this provision.

- a) Prayer is the believer's means of communicating with God.
- b) The Bible is God's way of communicating with man.

2. Promises Involving Prayer

- a) Matthew 21:22 We should ask believing.
- b) Matthew 18:19 The power of corporate prayer.
- c) Psalm 116:1, 2 God is always available to hear our prayer.
- d) Isaiah 65:24 God will answer while we are yet praying.
- e) Matthew 7:7 We are commanded to pray.
- f) John 14:13-14 We can ask for anything in His name.
- g) Philippians 4:6 The prayer should be with thanksgiving.
- h) 1 Thessalonians 5:17 We should pray without ceasing.
- i) Hebrews 4:16 We can come boldly to the throne of Grace.

3. Prayer Divided into 4 Segments

- a) Confession of sins (1 John 1:9)
- b) Thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- c) Intercession for others (Ephesians 6:18)

d) Petitions for one's own needs (Hebrews 4:16)

4. Power of Prayer

- a) Individual - Elijah and the burnt offering (1 Kings 18:36-39)
- b) Corporate - the release of Peter from prison (Acts 12:1-18)

5. One Prayer that could not be Answered The prayer of our Lord on the Cross (Psalm 22:1-18)

6. To Whom are Prayers Addressed?

- a) Directed to the Father - (Matthew 6:5-9)
 - b) In the name of the Son - (Hebrews 7:25)
 - c) In the power of the Spirit - (Romans 8:26-27)
- The Son (Jesus) and Spirit are interceding for us.

7. Prayers can be Divided into Petition and Desire

- a) Petition - What you ask God for (e.g. a new car).
- b) Desire - The desire behind the petition (e.g. happiness because you have a new car).

8. Four Possible Combinations

a) Petition answered - Desire not answered. Psalm 106:15 - The quails of the Exodus generation. 1 Samuel 8:5 - A King to reign over Israel.

b) Petition not answered - Desire answered. Genesis 18:23 - The preservation of Sodom. 2 Corinthians 12:7 - Removal of the thorn in Paul's side.

c) Petition answered - Desire answered. 1 Kings 18:36-37 - Elijah requests fire for the offering. Luke 23:42 -The penitent thief's prayer. Type c) represents the perfect prayer.

d) Petition not answered - Desire not answered. Type d) unanswered prayer has 8 main reasons which are shown in paragraph 9.

9. Reasons for Unanswered Prayer

- a) Lack of belief (Matthew 21:22)
- b) Selfishness (James 4:3)
- c) Unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18)
- d) Lack of compassion (Proverbs 21:13)
- e) Pride and self righteousness (Job 35:12-13)
- f) Lack of filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)
- g) Lack of obedience (1 John 3:22)
- h) Not in the Divine will (1 John 5:14)

Most of the reasons for unanswered prayer, is some form of sin in the life, which can be solved by confession of known sins as per paragraph 3 a) under the concept of 1John 1:9.

10. Intercessory Prayer

a) This is one of the four factors in a prayer, which are:-

- i) Confession of sins
- ii) Thanksgiving
- iii) Intercession
- iv) Own needs.

b) The power of intercessory prayer is taught in (1 Kings 18:42-46) the principle being found in (James 5:16-18)

c) The power of prevailing prayer is shown in (Acts 12)

d) The prayer for the unbeliever (Romans 10:1)

e) Prayer for an unknown believer (Colossians 1:3-11)

f) Prayer for the known believer (Ephesians 1:15-23)

ANGELS: SATAN'S WORK

1. Satan's sphere of operations among mankind. (Psalm 109:6--13)
 - a) Satan blinds mankind to the truth of the Word of God by means of religion. (v.7)
 - b) He has the power to shorten life. (v 8a)
 - c) He can remove persons from a place of authority (v 8b)
 - d) Satan can kill (v 9)
 - e) He can persecute children (v 10)
 - f) He can remove wealth (v 11)
 - g) Satan can turn people against each other (v. 12)
 - h) He can cut off man's posterity to the second generation (v. 13)

2. Satan as a killer
 - a) He has the power of death (Hebrews 2:14, 15)
 - b) Killed Job's children (Job 1:12, 18,19)
 - c) Motivated Cain to murder Abel (John 8:44, cf 1 John 3:12)
 - d) Often administers the sin unto death (1 Corinthians 5:5)

3. Satan as a source of disease
 - a) Was responsible for Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7)
 - b) Produced illness in Job (Job 2:6-8)
 - c) Uses his demons to inflict diseases (Matthew 12:22, Luke 13:16, Acts 10:38)
 - d) Causes certain types of deafness, dumbness, paralysis and crippling effect by means of demon possession (Matthew 4:24, 12:22, Mark 9:17, 18)
 - e) When demon possession causes the affliction, the removal of the demon or demons produces an instant cure (Matthew 10:1, Mark 1:32-34, 6:13, Acts 8:7, 19:12)

4. Satan as an instrument of discipline
 - a) Desired to discipline Peter (Luke 22:31, 32)
 - b) Was authorised to discipline the Corinthian adulterer (1 Corinthians 5:5)
 - c) Was called upon by the Apostle Paul to administer extreme discipline to Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:19,20)
 - d) May become involved in the discipline of ministers and deacons (1 Timothy 3:6, 7)
 - e) Attacks through a believer's lack of forgiveness and orientation to grace (2 Corinthians 2:10, 11)

5. Satan as a healer
 - a) Healing was a temporary spiritual gift before the completion of the Canon of Scripture (Acts 19:11, 12, cf Philippians 2:27, 2 Timothy 4:20)
 - b) God still heals today (Philippians 2:27)
 - c) Since Satan possesses the power of disease he often counterfeits healing by the removal of demons (Matthew 12:24, 24:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 16:14)

6. Characteristics of Demon Possession
 - a) Loss of individuality: the demon-possessed person no longer has control of faculties of the soul (Mark 5:1-13, Luke 8:27, 9:39, 40)
 - b) Abnormal behaviour:
 - i) Convulsions (Mark 1:26, 9:20, Luke 4:35)
 - ii) Violence (Matthew 8:28)
 - iii) Abnormal strength (Mark 5:4, Luke 8:29, Acts 19:16)
 - iv) Raving (Mark 5:5)
 - v) Foaming at the mouth (Mark 9:20)
 - vi) Nakedness (Luke 8:27)
 - c) Loss of health:
 - i) Dumbness (Mark 9:17, Luke 11:14)
 - ii) Deafness and dumbness (Mark 9:25)
 - iii) Blindness and dumbness (Matthew 12:22)
 - iv) Epilepsy (Mark 1:26, 9:20, Luke 4:35)
 - v) Mental illness (Mark 5:15)

7. Demon possession explains:
 - a) So called divine healing
 - b) Alleged speaking in tongues
 - c) Faked contact with the dead (1 Samuel 28)
 - d) Success of self styled exorcists
 - e) Rise of certain world leaders (2 Thessalonians 2.9, Revelation 16:13, 14)
 - f) Cause of some wars (Revelation 20:8)
 - g) Reincarnation
 - h) Fortune telling (Acts 16:16)

PROPHET

1. The gift of prophecy and the office of the prophet are distinguished in scripture. In the Old Testament there were those who had the office of prophet, and served in an official capacity within the worship system of Israel but there were also those who at times were given the gift of prophecy to give a special prophecy even though they were not full time prophets. Elijah was a man with the office and the gift, where-as David had the gift at times but not the office.

2. The roles of the person with the office of prophet were many and varied:

a) Aaron was a preacher (Exodus 7:1).

b) In Nehemiah's time the prophet-preacher had a role to exegete the Word of God clearly so that the people would know the truth (Nehemiah 6:7, Hosea 6:5).

c) As revivalists they were to call people to repentance (Judges 6:7-12, Zechariah 7:7-12).

d) They were to oppose apostasy so that those who were likely to be misled by a false teacher would have no excuse (1 Kings 18:36-39, 40, 2 Chronicles 25:15, Ezekiel 2:5, 2 Kings 20:11).

e) They were encouragers of the people (Ezra 5:2).

f) They were sometimes song/worship leaders for the people (1 Samuel 10:5).

g) They led in prayer at worship (2 Chronicles 32:20).

h) They were the advisors to the kings and they were associated with coronations (1 Samuel 10:1, 1 Kings 11:28, 29, 2 Kings 9:1-6, 2 Chronicles 12:5, 2 Chronicles 12:6, 15:2-7).

i) They were spiritual advisors or seers for the kings; they "saw" the immediate future and so were able to advise the kings of the right decisions (1 Samuel 9:9, 2 Samuel 24:11, 1 Chronicles 21:9, 24:29, 2 Chronicles 19:2, 33: 18, 2 Kings 17:13, Isaiah 29:10).

j) They were fore-tellers of significant future events (2 Samuel 7:5-16, Amos 9:11, Isaiah 9:6,7, Isaiah 53, Ezekiel 34:22ff, Micah 5:2, Daniel 9:26, Zechariah 13:8, Joel, Zechariah 14) and many more.

k) God intended them to be the shepherds and vine-dressers of the nation. As such they were to be the type of Christ, who is referred to in the Old Testament as "the great prophet" (Deuteronomy 18:15-19, Zechariah 13:5-6, Matthew 21:11, Luke 7:16, 8: 18-20, 24:19, 23-26, John 7:40,41).

3. There was no "set" formula for the prophets to follow, but certain things were established as "tests" for the people to be sure the prophet was genuine.

a) The prophet had to have a spiritual life witness that was like Moses (Deuteronomy 34:10 - 12).

b) God spoke to the prophets by dreams and visions. God spoke to Moses face to face but he was an exception (Numbers 12:6-7).

c) The prophet had to be totally confident of his message, as he was judged by God if there was any falsehood in it (1 Kings 22:13, 14, 2 Kings 5:8).

d) There were to be no secret prophecies, everything was to be open and clear, so that all the people might be warned of God (Jeremiah 23:25-29).

e) The prophet had to be specific in his message and had to be obeyed literally (2 Kings 5:10-19, note especially verse 13).

4. There were always false prophets; in fact the great prophets of the Old Testament were always outnumbered by false prophets in their own day (Jeremiah 2:8, Ezekiel 13:1-23). Our Lord warned us that there will always be false prophets about (Matthew 7:15 - 23). NOTE THE LORD'S WORDS here in that the personal walk of the prophet is to be paid attention to. No spiritual fruit in their life = no truth in their words. God allows the false prophets to operate without immediate judgement upon them, so that believers are always presented with an obedience test, to see whether we will obey the scriptures or follow our own lusts to judgement. False prophets will abound at times of poor Bible teaching. Weeds only grow in poorly cared for soil (Hosea 4:5, 6, 9:7, 8).

5. Tests that believers must apply when confronting a person claiming the gift of prophecy:

a) The words of the prophet will never contradict the Word of God (Jeremiah 23:33-36, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 1 Corinthians 14:32).

- b) The prophet will never call people away from genuine worship of God (Deuteronomy 13:1- 5).
- c) The prophet will always be specific and the prophecy will be able to be tested (Deuteronomy 18:20-22, Jeremiah 28:9).
- d) Any prophet who asked for money was to be treated as false (Jeremiah 8:10).
- e) Any prophet who was a drunkard was to be treated as false (Micah 2:11).
- f) Any unconfessed sin of envy, jealousy, strife,.....etc in their life , they were false! (Jeremiah 23:11).
- g) God's prophets were generally men alone, not in groups (1 Kings 22:5-8, 18:22).
- h) Does the prophecy accord with scripture? (1 Corinthians 14:37, 38, 2 Kings 23:2).

1 JOHN 4:7-19

“7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 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. 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. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 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. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 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. 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. 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. 19 We love him, because he first loved us.”

KEY WORDS

Should love	agapao	present, active, subjunctive; let us keep loving
Loves	agapao	present, active, participle; is keeping on loving
<u>Born of</u>	<u>gennaō</u>	perfect, passive, indicative ; has received birth Eternal security here- permanent results.
Knoweth	ginosko	present, active, indicative; keeps on knowing.
Loveth not	agapao+me	present, active, participle; is not loving.
Knoweth not	ginosko+ouk	aorist, active, indicative; does not at that time have any knowledge of God. Strong negative use
Manifested	phaneroō	aorist, passive, indicative; was made clear.
<u>Sent</u>	<u>apostello</u>	perfect, active, indicative ; lasting results. He has been sent out from heaven as the Saviour.
Only begotten	monogenēs	uniquely born one – one of a kind.
Live	zao	aorist, aorist, active, subjunctive; might live.
Through	dia + genitive of autos	through/with/by means of Him.
<u>We Loved</u>	<u>apagao</u>	perfect, active, indicative ; loved with results.
He Loved us	agapao	aorist, active, indicative; at the point of time of the cross – he showed his love for us. We couldn't be perfect in our love, nor can our love have lasting results, but his single act can!
Sent	apostello	aorist, active, indicative; sent at the right time
Propitiation	ilasmos	satisfaction, solution, perfect in every way.
So Loved us	agapao	aorist, active, indicative; at that time he loved. God's demonstration was once for all as a sign.
Love (others)	agapao	present, active, infinitive; infinite of purpose we are meant “to love” one another (believers).
At any time	popote	at any time ever in the history of man.
<u>Seen</u>	<u>theaomai</u>	perfect, middle, indicative ; to fully see/reflect No-one has had the full insight into God.
If we love	agapao	present, active, subjunctive; if we love – choice.
Dwelleth	meno	present, active, indicative; keeps on abiding.
<u>Perfected</u>	<u>teleioō</u>	perfect, passive, participle ; receive perfection. Receive completion, reaching the goal with help.
We know	ginosko	present, active, indicative; we keep on being sure
We dwell	meno	present, active, indicative; we keep on abiding
<u>Given us</u>	<u>didomi</u>	perfect, active, indicative ; has been given to us.

Seen	<u>theaomai</u>	Lasting results are indicated here also.
Testify	martureo	perfect, middle, indicative ; we have received the Working of the Holy Spirit to fully see the truth.
Sent	<u>apostello</u>	present, active, indicative; keep on testifying
Confess	omologeoo	perfect, active, indicative ; at a point in time With lasting results the father sent the Son.
Dwelleth	meno	aorist, active, subjunctive; may confess truth
Known	<u>ginosko</u>	It is a moment by moment choice to confess truth.
Believed	<u>pisteuo</u>	present, active, indicative; keeps on dwelling.
Dwelleth in	meno	perfect, active, indicative ; with eternal results
Made perfect	<u>teleiwoo</u>	perfect, active, indicative ; with eternal results
Boldness	parresia	Our knowledge and belief has eternal results.
As he is	kathos + eimi	present, active, participle; keeps on abiding in.
So we are	eimi	perfect, passive, indicative ; has received working
Fear	phobos	The Spirit has transformed the life to completion.
Casteth	exo+ballo	confidence, assurance, courage from knowledge.
Torment	kolasis	present, active, indicative; just as he remains
Perfect	<u>teleiwoo</u>	present, active, indicative; we keep on being also
First	protos	fear of a force or consequence, or unknown thing.
Loved us	agapao	present, active, indicative; throws out totally.
		perfect, passive, indicative ; receive completion.
		before all else, first in order.
		aorist, active, indicative; loved us at a point in time,
		in the incarnation, ministry and cross.

REFLECTIONS

The subject of these verses moves from testing the spirit of the potentially fake ministers, to the working out of the believer's faith in love. Once the enemy's people are identified and dealt with, the believer's task is to return quickly to the central task we have in the church; loving one another with the love Christ has for us. There is a relationship between the two sections, because the fake ministers and false brethren will fall short of the requirement of showing love consistently to the brethren.

John is an example of true love. When John became old and frail after the privations of Patmos and he became so weak that he could not walk, so he was carried down through the house whenever the church met. As he was carried on the litter he would return to the theme of this letter, saying quietly to all, 'little children love one another'. Love in the life, is the outworking of a genuine believer, you cannot walk in the light of His Word without agape love being shown to others. Satan's people cannot fake this for long, for their basic nature, like Satan's, is self centeredness.

Only when love is working in your life, are you truly walking in the light of his word. This love is "agape" love, the deep soul concern of a believer who has the love of God in them, so they are concerned for others; concerned that believers may find confidence in their faith, concerned that unbelievers might know the truth. If you love God, you love those who love God. If there is no love there is either a sin blockage or you are not a believer. You must either become a believer, or get back into fellowship as outlined earlier by John in his Letter or Gospel. Note the many **perfect tenses** above.

Verse 7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

There is no way round these verses. If you do not have practical, outworking love for another believer you are not a believer, you are a liar. Most troublemakers in churches are pious make-believers, and they show their status as Satan's people by their lack of love/respect/care for others in the church. By their lack of spiritual fruit you know them.

This is one of a number of verses you may have to use as a pastor if there is a lack of love portrayed by members of a congregation you may lead. You need to have a damage limitation strategy to cope with troublemakers in the church and the challenge to be renewed in love for others daily is one significant part of that strategy.

The first element of this strategy must be that they all hear the Word of God preached by you, and by this means you identify who loves the truth, and also who loves the brethren. We need to have a list of verses in our bible with which to challenge people at church meetings if they show lack of love. If you have to jump on people to control them at a meeting, you must jump Biblically, and love must be the central point of any challenge.

God is love; it is his nature to love, and it is the nature of all those who are truly his to love others within the family of God. People can be so involved in their own views that the love of God does not flow through them. What is the problem? Self has got in the way of God's work in that person, for that is what the Old Sin Nature does; it blocks, quenches and hinders God's work within. They need to deal with their sin of pride and self centeredness and get back to Christ centeredness.

God does not say you must 'like and enjoy the company of' all believers. Some members of your spiritual family may have little in common with you except salvation, and so you will not feel close to them, as you may not feel close to a member of your own physical family. Even if you do not enjoy the company of a brother or sister in the Lord, you still show your spirituality by your agape love towards them; your care and concern and desire for their spiritual blessing. Refer to the BTB study on CHRISTIAN LIFE – LOVE.

If you are going to teach God's Word you need to be realistic about the old sin natures of each man and women, and must be accurate in your spiritual assessment of the people in your fellowship. If you ignore the Apostle John's warning at this point, you do so at your peril. Lack of love in the life of a person means lack of family likeness to God, and it directly points to either carnality (believer) or evil (unbeliever)! Either way, such people are dangerous.

Verse 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.

God sent His Son that we might live through Him. Turn to and read **John 10:7-10**. Note the Lord's words, which tell us his desire for us, that we might know the fullness of life in Him. Obedience to his plan and words is the key to all these things. Not that we loved God but that He first loved us. He gave Himself for us, to be a propitiation, or mercy seat for us.

Now look at **John 10:11-18**. This is the strength that we can have as imperfect Christians; we know we are loved, and we have been saved by him, and continue to be cared for by him as his beloved children. We know our own weakness and we know God's strength. Turn to and read, **John 3:16-17**. These are the verses John refers to in this passage of the letter. John wants us to see the practical application of Jesus words, and apply them into the fabric of our daily life.

Turn to and read, **Romans 5:1-11**. Note Paul's words, 'therefore being justified' we have now received the blessing associated with the atonement. We have been loved and we are loved! This is the song of Paul, which ties in with the song of John. We should know enough of the Bible to be able to rejoice in whatever state we find ourselves, for whatever our pressure situation we are still recipients of his love and salvation blessings.

We should not get bogged down in things that we do not know about, nor can fully know, from this side of eternity. Often Christians argue about things that they will not know about until they see the Lord face to face, rather than rest on the certainty of God's love and care for us. We can be certain of certain things, and we need to operate on the basis of what we can know, not what we cannot! If you are under pressure turn to and use, 1 John 4, Romans 5, and John 3, for these will encourage you. In the Bible you have a spiritual first aid cabinet, but it is only as good as it is known and applied into the fabric of daily life.

As a pastor you have to visit those who are depressed. Their Bible may be on the shelf and not used. You should teach your flock each week to make sure that they know where to find the antidote to depression or fear. Make your Sunday services systematic Bible teaching, your mid week study, your adult Bible class also systematic. If you do that you will reduce the amount of time looking after those who do not know the truth that will set them free from fear. You could make up a sheet headed up "first aid cabinet", and on it record these wonderful promises from the living Word of God. In this world, we walk in the Spirit with the fruit he gives, or we walk in fear and self centeredness, and all the fruit of that in our life!

Verse 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.

Turn to and read, **Ephesians 2:3-10**. This is the definition of what the love of God is all about; we were recipients of this love before we loved him. God's love is gracious before we were saved, and remains gracious after we are saved. This is why we can be secure in his love, for it is based in his gracious character, and is not dependent on our stability. This is true love! The Lord is our mercy seat; the cross is the place where God's righteousness and justice met in gracious provision of salvation. Do we rejoice enough in this truth?

Love is God's theme to mankind from the beginning. For the Israelites, God's love for them, and their correct response to that, was the central issue in their walk upon the earth. **Deuteronomy 7:7-11**. It was their sins against love that led them into disaster again and again. **Daniel 9:3-8, Romans 1:18-23, 5:8-11**. The Lord's message is love, and obedience, and then more love. **John 15:12-13, 16-17**.

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

John says we should love one another because God loves us. Turn to and read, **Matthew 5:43-48**. If you love those who love you what good is that - do not the pagans also do this? Our standard is higher than the pagans around us. We need to be complete in righteousness, just as God is, and through the work of the Holy Spirit within us this is possible.

If you are no better than the pagans around you, you are not effective in your ministry; you are not using your spiritual resources. We need to ask ourselves, is our church anything more than a hymn singing rotary club, because they look after each other and have great fellowship amongst themselves. We need to stand in the Character of God in all things, but first and last of all the aspects of the character of God, is love. **John 13:34-35, 2 Corinthians 8:7-9, Ephesians 4:30-32, Colossians 3:12-15**. Caring love is the hallmark sign of God's presence in the life; hatred and murderous thought has always been the sign of the presence of the demonic.

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.

No man or woman has seen God at any time, but our role is to show forth Christ through our life of care and love. John 1:18. If we want God to be seen and known by needy mankind, we must have that type of love portrayed to fellow believers because that is the way that he has determined that His love should be known. If the unbeliever sees our love for one another, then they are more likely to listen to our message. If they see us hating our brethren, why would they want our Saviour? You are a light on a hill, you are meant to shine. **Matthew 5:14ff**. We can see the picture of this by the trimming of the wick of the lamp in the Old Testament Tabernacle, so that it burnt pure, and not in a smoky way.

John wishes us to solve the problems that cause us not to burn with a pure light. He wants us to shine with Jesus' love. Anything less than the standard of the character of Christ is inadequate! We are the Lord's ambassadors, and we are meant to show love, for that is his appeal to the unsaved. **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**.

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

By these things, John says, we can be absolutely sure and confident that we dwell in Him and He in us because He has given us His Holy Spirit. Compare this verse with, **2 Corinthians 1:21, 22, 5:5**. The Holy Spirit is the down payment of eternal life within us. His presence gives us assurance. The Holy Spirit only becomes known in our life as we let Him teach us, and as we obey his inner convicting ministry. We also see over time the fruit of the Spirit in our lives as well as experiencing his convicting ministry.

Rejoice in both aspects of his ministry, as they show that you are a true child. This is our comfort in uncertain times. As the Holy Spirit works within us we 'know' that we are the Lord's and as we grow in knowledge and application of the Word of God. It is by this means that we grow in assurance and confidence in Christ. **John 14:18-26, Romans 8:9-17, 1 Corinthians 2:12-14, 3:16-17, 6:19-20, Galatians 5:22-26, Ephesians 2:21-22**. Refer back to the study on the FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Verse 14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Notice how strong and direct John is in these words. 'We have seen! We testify! He is in God and God in Him'. Notice the **perfect tense** of the verb to see. The results of what the apostles saw in Christ Jesus goes on forever, for them and all who believe through their witness. **John 20:30-31, 21:25**. This is the strong and secure apostolic message of the incarnation and the atonement that we must give; that God has become man and HE is the only Saviour that all men and women must respond to – the choice has eternal consequences. This is the essence of the gospel, for it must be made clear, that in Christ alone, we have God's last word for all humanity. **Acts 4:12, 16:31**.

This is also another strong statement of the Unlimited Atonement; that the Lord is the Saviour of the whole world. There is no other Saviour, and this Saviour has done a complete job; all of mankind is covered by his work. The only reason any person will be in the Lake of Fire, is that they have turned away from his perfect provision and opted to be judged on their own works rather than his perfect work for them. **Revelation 20:11-15**. Refer to the BTB studies, CHRIST – KENOSIS, EMMANUEL, VIRGIN BIRTH, and also SALVATION, SALVATION – ATONEMENT – UNLIMITED ATONEMENT.

There is hope and eternal life in no other! Confession of the unique saviourhood of the Lord Jesus Christ is essential for salvation. This is another test for the genuine believer. They accept the doctrine of the trinity, the incarnation, the hypostatic union and the fact that the path of salvation is in the Risen Saviour Lord only. **John 1:29, 3:16, 36, 20:30-31, Acts 2:21, 3:6, 16, 4:12, 16:31, Romans 10:9-17, Philippians 2:9-11**.

Salvation is by faith in the reality of the perfect person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Works/Fruits follow, and are evidence of the genuine nature of the salvation received, but works are not required for salvation, which is by faith alone. The thief on the Cross beside the Lord was assured by the Lord of his place in heaven that very day, and he certainly, other than faith expressed aloud, had no time for any works before his death. **Luke 23:39-43**. Refer to the BTB studies on SALVATION – JUSTIFICATION, REDEMPTION, RECONCILIATION, and REGENERATION.

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.

This again is John's theme, and it is very important to John, and as such repetition is legitimate. Love is central to the Christian life and the believer's assurance of their salvation. This epistle centres around three words "God is love". In 1 John 5 John will return to the statement he made in 1 John 1 that God is light. Sandwiched between these two statements is the equally important fact that God is love, and the application of this to the life of all believers.

The Lord is our "rock", and upon his secure love we can rest, as upon the bed rock of the earth itself. John states that this love is "known" and "believed" by the apostles, as they had plenty of evidence of this reality in their time with the Lord in his earthly ministry. To be united in love is to know as well as can be known this side of eternity, the unity of the creation with the creator. Love unites us and knowing we are loved provides the rest for our souls in the hard places.

Psalms 18:1-3, 31:19-24, 36:5-10. This is the principle of abiding in Him. We should never forget that God is light and love. He is light, pure, holy, and a revealer of all things in the heart, and also God is love and has provided salvation, sanctification and relationships within the church.

We show our spiritual status by abiding in the sphere of God's love; by letting his love for us fill us, and letting this love overflow to others. John uses strong verbal forms here to underline his points. 'We know', is the **perfect, active, indicative of ginosko**. We are absolutely sure of this fact John says. The results of what the Lord said and did in his incarnation demonstrate God's love for mankind forever, and forever his name will be glorified. **Isaiah 64:1-8**.

We are sure of this reality, and the results go on forever! 'We believed', is the same verbal form of the verb pisteuo. At a point in time we believed and the results go on forever! Eternal security is strongly in focus here. What do we know and believe? He is talking of the love of God for us! Nothing is more sure than God's love for us. God is love, present active indicative; God keeps on being and expressing love! The person who keeps on abiding in love, is keeping in fellowship with God, and the person who does not love does not know God, nor have any living relationship with God.

We should not get distracted from these truths; not get tied up, arguing about peripheral matters. Many of the great Christian leaders of the past fell into this error, and so they forgot these basic truths. They became argumentative theologians establishing their own views ahead of showing the love of God. Such a way of living is an abomination to the God of love, who requires us to express our love for him and for those for whom Christ died. Let us live in love for the Lord. How long since you expressed your love today in prayer. Just stop reading right now and do it! Pray and rejoice in what the Lord has done for you, and by so doing you are abiding in his love.

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.

How can we have boldness in the Day of Judgment? The passage of the Gospel of John to read here is **John 3:16-21**. How can we stand before God without fear in time and eternity? Only by abiding in his love daily while we are down here. John identifies that there is an absolute alternative here as to how a believer can live; either in fear and despair, or the light of God's Word, and the love of his presence.

He encourages us to fellowship in prayer with his love and dwell there through each waking moment. When we fear, doubt or have any despair, we are to reflect upon God's love for us, and speak to him of our gratitude for his love. In Romans 8:1 - we are told that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. We can, like Paul, have absolute assurance as to our destination being heaven, with the one who died for us. We may feel that our lives have been "wretched" at times, as Paul does, **Romans 7:14-25**, but we may rejoice in God's "forever" forgiveness of us.

While being excused the Great White Throne judgment of the unbeliever, we are told that we will all stand before Him, at his "Bema" - judgment seat, for assessment of our work here on earth. Now this assessment is for rewards to be given out for service, but the same question may be asked concerning this moment. How can we be "bold" or confident as we face this judgment? How can we relax about any rewards to be received?

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 tells us that at that judgment seat all the works we have done by 'energy of the flesh' (our carnal nature) is removed (burnt away), and all we are left with is the work we have done after our salvation, in the filling of the Holy Spirit. This work of the Holy Spirit in and through us is then rewarded by the Lord. How can we be confident of receiving rewards at that time? The answer is by abiding in his love right here and now, for by living in his love, we are living in the filling of the Holy Spirit, and all we do in such a mental attitude state is rewardable. Refer to the BTB study on REWARDS AND CROWNS

The only things that we will take into heaven will be those things undertaken in the power of the Holy Spirit, so let us ensure we spend most of our time in this spiritual state each day. We must be motivated in everything we do by the love of/for the Lord Jesus Christ, and make sure that the power that is empowering us is the Holy Spirit. We must abide in Him. The closer we walk with him the more secure we will feel about eternity. I would argue, on the basis of my own experience, but more importantly, on the basis of John's Letter, that the closer we walk with the Lord in love, the less we know fear, doubt, despair and distraction. **Romans 8:28-39, Hebrews 12:1-3, 12-15, 1 Peter 3:15-18**.

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.

Fear is cast out by walking closely with Him. Fear and love are incompatible, as are hatred and love. They cannot exist together, for one will drive the other out of the life. The word John uses for 'cast out' is strong, it is the present, active, indicative of ekballo; literally it means, love keeps on throwing out fear whenever it arises.

When we find fear creeps back into our life, John says that we are to let the Love of God for us so fill us, so that the fear is thrown out like the garbage it is. Completed (perfect) love eliminates fear from a life. Love is perfected as it grows and fills every corner of a life, leaving no doubt in the soul. Love, not more knowledge, defeats fear and doubt.

Fear will always bring along it's cousin, 'torment', (kolasin), a word meaning punishment, referring to the internal 'beating up', that doubt does to us. The only way to 'kick' doubt and fear out of life is to abide in the love of God; daily to feed upon his Word and speak with him constantly, and praise him for who he is, and what he has done and will do with you.

Fear and torment “rent space in our head”, and they rent space that should be filled with love! If the mind is occupied with Christ, then there is no spare space to be filled with nonsense like fear! Romans chapter 8 starts with the statement of, 'no condemnation', and ends with a description of our position of great strength in Christ Jesus. Let us get our spiritual armour on daily, and so “keep our head safe” with the helmet of assurance of salvation, and our heart protected by the breastplate of the righteousness of Christ covering us. We rest in relationship with Him, not our self in any way.

If the Holy Spirit is controlling us we need not fear what people say because we know we are in God's will and under his loving care. We are in His hands, and they are guided by his love for us. Refer to the study here of what I call Christian Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). This technique is claimed by psychologists today, but was developed by St Paul. Use this study with a group over a seminar day or weekend camp, and go through the Bible references together and look together at specific applications of the thought stopping technique.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY ACCORDING TO ST PAUL

1. ROMANS 7:14-25 THE “WRETCHED MAN” – FACING OUR SINFUL REALITY

Unless we face the facts about our need of a Saviour and our daily need to deal with our sins (1 John 1:9) we live a lie and are open to deception from all sources; human and angelic.

2. ROMANS 8:1-18 THE GLORY OF KNOWING THE POWER OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST.

There is hope for all who face the facts of their Old Sin Nature and the greater power of the indwelling Lord and Holy Spirit, 1 John 4:4-6, for then we are “plugged into” the power for spiritual victory.

3. EPHESIANS 4:20-32 - PUTTING OFF THE OLD AND PUTTING ON THE NEW

4. COLOSSIANS 3:8-16 - PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON

Our old behaviour patterns are the result of our early childhood and adolescent “programming” and the choices we have made later. All of this has been laid over our genetic strengths and weaknesses (our Old Sin Nature), but in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit's power we can re-program our inner computer and think as the Lord intends. God's challenge is to replace our old patterns of thinking with his way of thinking.

5. EPHESIANS 5:17-29 - THE RELATIONSHIP OVERFLOW OF THIS CBT TOOL

6. COLOSSIANS 3:17—19 RELATIONSHIP OVERFLOW OF CBT

If the Holy Spirit is active in our life there will be evidence of it in our daily walk through life, and especially in our relationships with loved ones and others we meet. No change = no Spirit! Romans 8:9. Love will be the overflow of the Holy Spirit's presence, and we build up the power of love in our life, as we have seen in 1 John 4, by praise and prayer to the Lord reflecting on his love for us.

7. PHILIPPIANS 3:10-17 - FORGETTING THE PAST AND FOCUSING FORWARD

It is not a “one shot decision” to make changes in our life patterns, for the old patterns are tenacious. They must be identified, understood, targeted and replaced. Then we must rebuild new patterns through the Holy Spirit's work upon the Word of God applied into our life, to firmly establish and live and celebrate daily in the new life we now have.

8. PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9 FILLING THE MIND WITH POSITIVE THOUGHT PROCESSES SQUEEZING OUT THE NEGATIVES FROM LIFE

The mind acts like a vacuum; it will suck in all evil around if there is not positive pressure from good working out from the centre of our being. We squeeze evil out by leaving no room within for it to grow. As we fill our waking moments in praise of God's goodness we squeeze evil thoughts out.

9. COLOSSIANS 2:20-22 - SAYING NO TO THE “EASY FIX” OF LEGALISM

The great “cons” of Satan are initially focused on down playing sin and evil so that believers are neutralized by them uncontrolled within their lives, but if that fails he has an even better plan to neutralize the grace of God within us. This plan is the “super-spiritual” plan of legalism, whereby foolish men get to feel really superior because their sins are more refined than their neighbours! Legalism is false spirituality that feeds of the great sin of pride and arrogance, the very opposite of God's grace and mercy, and the complete opposite of the servant heart of the Lord Jesus. Matthew 7:15-20. God's grace, mercy and love are the antidote to all of Satan's lies. Reflect upon them and praise Him.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL TOOL FOR THOUGHT STOPPING

When an annoying person says something, or an unwanted thought occurs, we can allow them or it to “rent space in our head” and not be paying for it, except in misery to ourselves!!! All unwanted mental “clutter” weighs us down and can create great frustration within. It is a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve, and an ever present reminder that we are all fallen creatures, with an easy tendency, from our Old Sin Nature, to worry, doubt, fear and commit other sins.

This simple Cognitive Behavioural technique below may assist you to plan to deal with the specific problems that really irritate you and trip you up. Whatever the challenge, from your OSN dysfunctional thought patterns that you have within yourself coming from early experience, to the annoying people you meet, there is a way to stop these thoughts from controlling you.

The good news is, this tool can be used to deal with our own annoying behaviours also, and is a powerful way to stop yourself doing something that childhood software errors, and poor adult choices on top of the old tendencies, may have programmed you to do! This helps you label such thoughts as something akin to “software errors” (sins), as “not new me” (that is, not my real born again nature, but a reflection of my Old Sin Nature), and enables you to get control over them and re-program your responses into godly pathways. **Hebrews 12:12-13**. There are three steps to do this.

Before we apply the three steps identify the situations where you find yourself responding in an unacceptable or sinful manner. Write these situations out, identifying the precipitating events, the thoughts you have, the feelings associated, and the things you then say or do that make you ashamed or annoyed. Programmed bad reactions waste time and energy – and bluntly, life is just too short to waste on such things. Bad responses also hurt the people we love and need to be eliminated before they eliminate our relationships!!! The Lord wants us to walk closely with him, and bring every thought into captivity to Christ. **2 Corinthians 10:3-6**. Get the things you need to shift from your behaviours onto paper.

Once you have your “hit list” of problem situations, ask the following questions of each.

1. WHAT LABEL CAN I USE TO PUT THE PERSON/SITUATION INTO A FUNNY or SPIRITUAL BOX?

Find a funny label (or at least a neutral one) for the annoying precipitating event, thought or person. Remember, we want to look down upon our old bad habits, not take them seriously (fear them) as if they are more powerful than our new nature in Christ. Fear and evil is best “mocked” – as humour and love are the opposites of anger and fear! A simple smile also relaxed eighty facial muscles and that sends a message directly to the Brain and Adrenals that will lower the stress hormones immediately.

There is nothing funny about sin, but if we mock it we will find that we have more power over it, for in Christ, we have superior power to call upon than our Old Sin Nature can muster. This label can then be used when the event/thought occurs and it will take the heat of your reaction out of it. You label it as a “stupid thing” rather than accepting it as an integral and permanent part of the new person you are in Christ, for in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit’s power, it is not any part of the new you!

2. TELL YOURSELF THE TRUTH.

“The truth is....” Think of a number of statements that powerfully express the reason why you will not let a “twit”, “idiot thought”, or doubting fear rent space in your head, but rather you will walk your genuine life path in Christ! These truth statements may be a verse of scripture to claim, like some we have seen from 1 John. They will affirm God’s Love for us, and the Spirit’s power. “The truth is, this thought does not represent my new path....I reject distraction.....etc.

3. TAKE ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION TO REINFORCE THE TRUTH.

Identify any action to immediately take to reinforce your true path in life rather than your old reaction which reflected your bad programming from childhood. This is an action that reflects a Holy Spirit filled path, rather than an Old Sin Nature dominated one. It may be a praise, song, worship element, or prayer activity that reinforces the doctrinal truth you have used as step 2. It is best to involve physicality – which is why singing or praying aloud is helpful.

EXPERIMENT with these steps and test yourself in all problematic situations. End with celebration and worship in which you acknowledge the truth to the glory of God.

Review your progress regularly with your counsellor, mentor or pastor. Build strength in this by daily feeding upon the doctrines of the Word of God to build your hold on the truth that will always set you free from satanic deception, false priorities, and blindness to consequences of wrongful actions.

Verse 19. We love him, because he first loved us.

Why do we get tied up in knots? It is only because we forget this principle. We can and should relax and trust in the Lord and appreciate the Lord. We need to trust Him in all things and enthusiastically seek out where He is leading us. No one can hurt you as a Christian, for you are loved by the creator of the universe, the author of space and time itself.

Why panic if you can trust and love, and why be anxious if you can relax. Abide in Him. **2 Timothy 1:7**. Rest on these verses as you face anything that disturbs you. **John 3:16, 15:16, 2 Corinthians 5:13-15, Ephesians 2:1-10**. Read these verses and lift up your voice in praise to our Saviour. We will begin the next section with a repeat, second study, of this verse.

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Love will drive away doubt and fear, or doubts and fears will drive away peace of mind. Let us fill our waking moments with meditations upon the love of God and the security we have as beloved children within his plan for us. Praise his holy name right now, and then move on to the next application points.
2. There is no hope for those who sin against love, and that is where the unbeliever finds themselves once they have walked away from the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for them. Let us make the Gospel message clear; it is a message of love and care for man.
3. Have you listed your familiar sins yet? Have you sorted out the best "labels" for your old sin nature's patterns of sin, so as better to target their elimination? Target sin and defeat it each day by replacing sinful thoughts with praise and worship to the one who loves you.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE - LOVE - see index of doctrines

CHRIST – KENOSIS - see index of doctrines

SALVATION – ATONEMENT - see index of doctrines

SALVATION: EXPIATION AND PROPITIATION - see index of doctrines

SALVATION – REGENERATION - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE - SPIRITUALITY – CARNALITY - see index of doctrines

EVIL - see index of doctrines

CHRIST – THE LORD JESUS CHRIST - EMMANUEL

1. SCRIPTURE He is the Word John 1:1-5,14

2. BIOGRAPHY

As God, Jesus Christ has existed eternally with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (John 1:1-5). As the God-man, Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20), born of a Jewish virgin, Mary (Matthew 1:18) in Bethlehem of Judea in 6 BC. His legal father was Joseph. Both Joseph (Matthew 1:16) and Mary (Luke 3:23), were descended from David, through Solomon and Nathan. Circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21-24). He grew in knowledge and grace. He was baptised by his kinsman, John the Baptist, in the Jordan (Matthew 3:13-17) at the commencement of His ministry, and then went into the desert to be tempted by the devil for 40 days and nights (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus spent the next three years in a ministry ranging throughout Palestine, healing the sick, preaching, teaching and encouraging those to whom He ministered that they turn to God. Betrayed by one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, He suffered six trials before Jewish and Roman dignitaries before being condemned to death. He died on the cross on the Passover in AD 32, completing His perfect ministry and life on earth, and securing salvation. God raised Jesus from the dead on the feast of first fruits three days later. He ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives ten days before Pentecost (Acts 1:8-11). In heaven He was given the place of commendation at the right hand of the Father, where He makes intercession for us and waits for His enemies to be made His footstool. Jesus Christ will return with His saints to reign for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-6) and will judge unbelievers at the last judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). Believers will spend eternity with Jesus Christ.

3. EVALUATION

Jesus Christ has absolute characteristics:

- a) Sovereign of the universe. Yet He became subject to human frailty.
- b) Absolutely righteous. Yet He became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- c) Totally fair. He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9).
- d) Complete love. He provided salvation for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8).
- e) Everlasting life. He became subject to death, even the death of the cross.
- f) All knowing. He knows everything from beginning to the end.

- g) All powerful. Yet He allowed Himself to become the perfect sacrifice.
- h) Everywhere. Which means He can assist each believer individually in the Christian life (Matthew 28:19,20)-
- i) Unchangeable. Thus His promises are always true and never change (Hebrews 13:8).
- j) Truth. Thus in a world of half truths and lies we have a person with absolute purity and truth (John 14:6).

4. PRINCIPLES

- a) As a perfect person with no sinful nature, Jesus Christ was able to provide salvation.
- b) Jesus Christ at all times worked in conformity with God's will (John 10:30).
- c) God had to forsake His Son on the cross when He judged the sins of the world in Christ.
- d) In Christ we are seated in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).
- e) Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35).
- f) There is only one way to God, through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).
- g) We will be resurrected as believers to life eternal with Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).
- h) Jesus will return again to reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years (Revelation 20:4).
- i) Satan is a defeated foe (Colossians 2:15).
- j) We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37).

5. His purpose

- a) He came as God's perfect sacrifice for sin. (John 1:29)
- b) He came to be lifted up. (John 3:13-15)
- c) He came as the Bread of Life. (John 6:50-51)
- d) He came as the Good Shepherd. (John 10:10-11)
- e) He came to die for the people. (John 10:49-52)
- f) His cross came before His crown. (John 12:23-24)
- g) On the Cross righteousness and justice met, only then was God free to love man in Christ. (John 15:12-14)

CHRIST - VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Jesus Christ had to be born of a virgin to fulfil prophecy. (Isaiah 7:1 4)
2. Jesus had to be born of a virgin to confirm the curse of Coniah. (Jeremiah 22:28-30)
 - a) Coniah was a believer but an evil king at the time of the Babylonian captivity.
 - b) Coniah is also in the direct line of Christ in Joseph's lineage from David (Matthew 1:6, 1:11, 1:16) through Solomon. This is the Kingly line.
 - c) Mary was also in the direct line of Christ from David (Luke 3:23, Luke 3:31) through Nathan. In Luke 3:23 Joseph is the son-in-law of Heli, Mary's father.
 - d) Both lines, Solomon's and Nathan's meet in the person of Jesus Christ but by the virgin birth Coniah's line is cut off as Joseph is the legal but not natural father of Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus had to be born of a virgin to not have the sin nature of Adam. The sin nature of man comes down through the male. (1 Timothy 2:14)
 - a) Adam, as the head, was responsible for his wife.
 - b) Eve was deceived and sinned.
 - c) Adam made deliberate choice.
4. In order to be the God-Man Jesus had to be conceived of the Holy Spirit to Mary.
5. The virgin birth is therefore critical especially in the doctrine of Redemption, Imputation and Propitiation. NO virgin birth - NO salvation.

ABIDING IN GOD

1. The word "abide" speaks of perfect provision, supply, sustenance and fellowship. - Deuteronomy 33:27-28
2. The key to "abiding" is living in the reality of God's provision - John 13:17
3. "Abiding" means there is total provision for every need for every believer at every point in his life - Psalm 23:1,5, Psalm 91:1-10 John 15:4 James 1:2-4.
4. Abide in John 15:4 is in the aorist imperative ingressive, a command possible at all times because of absolute provisions Psalm 91:1-2
5. There is never a time or condition under which the child of God may not "abide" - Psalm 91:1, 4, 9-10a
6. Earthly problems are temporal and variable but divine solutions are absolute Genesis 50:20, Romans 8:28
7. The only time Jesus Christ is at home in us is when we abide in Him. Ephesians 3:16,17 Colossians 3:15, 16

SALVATION: JUSTIFICATION

1. Justification means "vindication", therefore it is the judicial act of God whereby he imputes His righteousness to the new believer at the point of salvation, thereby justifying him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
2. Salvation justification occurs at the moment of faith in Christ. (Romans 3:28, 5:1, Galatians 3:24)
3. Salvation justification is based on the principle of grace. (Romans 3:24, Titus 3:7)
4. Therefore salvation justification does not occur through the Mosaic Law. (Romans 3:20, 28, Galatians 2:16)
5. Salvation justification is the imputation of divine righteousness to the one believing in Christ. (Genesis 15:6, Romans 3:22, 4:4, 5, 16, 8:30-32)
6. The work of justification was accomplished by Christ on the cross. (Romans 5:8, 9)
7. Because the work for our justification was accomplished on the cross, Christ was resurrected to relate justification to victory. (Romans 4:25)
8. Post salvation or Christian life justification is the production of maturity. (James 2:21-25)

SALVATION: RECONCILIATION

1. Reconciliation is the removal of the barrier between God and man, or peace between God and man. While redemption is sinward and propitiation is Godward, reconciliation is manward. (2 Corinthians 5:18, Ephesians 2:16, Colossians 1:20, 21)
2. Reconciliation and the blood of Christ.
 - a) The blood of Christ is a synonym for the saving work of Christ on the Cross and the basis for reconciliation. (Colossians 1:20)
 - b) Hence the work of the Cross is associated with reconciliation. (Ephesians 2:16)
3. Reconciliation and Mankind: mankind is regarded as the enemy of God, and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:2 1)
4. Peace, a synonym for reconciliation, reconciliation finds man the enemy of God, but the saving work of Christ on the Cross gives peace between God and man. (Ephesians 2:14 cf. 2:16 cf. Colossians 1:20)
5. Reconciliation portrayed in the Levitical Offerings: the peace offering of Leviticus 3 depicts reconciliation or Christ's removing the barrier between God and man. (Leviticus 7:11-38, 8:15)
6. Application of reconciliation to the Church Age believer: every member of the Body of Christ is an ambassador representing Christ on earth. Therefore each member of the Body of Christ has the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)
7. The prophecy of reconciliation. (Isaiah 57:19)
8. The means of reconciliation - the removal of the barrier:
 - a) Sin removed by unlimited atonement. (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 18, 1 Timothy 2:6, 4:10, Titus 2:11, Hebrews 2:9, 1 John 2:2)
 - b) Penalty of Sin removed by expiation. (Psalm 22:1-6, Colossians 2:14)
 - c) Problem of physical birth removed by regeneration. (John 3:1-18, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:23)
 - d) Relative righteousness removed by imputation. (Romans 3:22, 9:30, 10:10, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9, Hebrews 10:14) and justification (Romans 4:1-5, 4:25, 5:1, 8:29, 30, Galatians 2:16, Titus 3:7)
9. The barrier of God's perfect character removed by propitiation. (Romans 3:22-26, 1 John 2:1, 2)
10. Problem of position in Adam removed by positional sanctification. (1 Corinthians 15:22, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 1:3-6)

SALVATION: REDEMPTION

1. Redemption is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ towards sin. The implications of the Greek words (lutron, lutrosis, apolutrosis, antilutrosis) is ransom, redeem, pay money to set a slave free, pay a price, or (exagorazo) purchase from the slave market (of sin).
2. The principle of redemption is found in (John 8:31-36).

3. The Lord paid the price for us, redeeming us from the slave market of sin by his perfect sacrifice for sin on the cross. Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 2:14.
4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only qualified redeemer. Through His virgin birth he has no inherited Old Sin Nature, by His perfect life He had no acquired sin or sin nature, and through His hypostatic union He is equal with both parties: God and man. Isaiah 53:9, John 8:46, 19:4, 2Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 1:3,4:15,7,25,28, 1 Timothy 3:16.
5. In the Old Testament redemption was taught by means of the shed blood of an animal sacrifice. Hebrews 9:22, Job 5:19,25,26.
6. Blood was the purchase price for redemption. Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, 1 Peter 1:18,19. The blood of Christ relates this work of redemption to that which was pictured in these Old Testament sacrifices. 2 Corinthians 5:21.
7. The soul of the believer not the body is redeemed. Psalm 34:22, Matthew 8:17.
8. Redemption removes the demands of the Old Testament Law. Galatians 3:13,10, 4:4-6.
9. Redemption is a doctrine which the believer can apply in times of pressure and catastrophe (Job 19:25,26), thereby finding both blessing and happiness.
10. Redemption results in adoption (Gal 4:4-6).
11. Redemption provides the basis for the believer's eternal inheritance (Heb 9:15).
12. The blood of Christ is the ransom money or the purchase price of redemption (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 1 Peter 1:13,19; 1 John 1:7).
13. Redemption includes forgiveness of sin (Heb 9:22).
14. Redemption provides the basis of justification and immediate cleansing at salvation (Rom 3:24).
15. Redemption is the basis of our cleansing from sin during our Christian walk. (Lev 4:5; 6:1-6; 1 John 1:7,9).

1 JOHN 4:19 – 21

“19. We love him because he first loved us. 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? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

KEY WORDS

Love	agapao	present, active, indicative; I love God, but It has a subjunctive application – let us love
Loved	agapao	aoist, active, indicative; has loved.
Says	lego	aoist, active, subjunctive; if a person says.
Love	agapao	present, active, indicative; keep on loving.
Hateth	miseo	present, active, subjunctive; if he keeps on Hating.
Liar	pseustes	a fake and liar.
Loveth	agapao	present, active, participle; keep on loving.
<u>Seen</u>	<u>orao</u>	perfect, active, indicative ; completely seen.
Love	agapao	present, active, infinitive; purpose-to love.
Commandment	entole	commandment, order we have from the Lord.
Have	echo	present, active, indicative; we have and hold.
Loveth	agapao	present, active, participle; keep on loving.
Love	agapao	present, active, subjunctive; should love.

REFLECTION

John is very astute about our nature and our shortcomings. It is easy to walk as a Christian on Sunday and as a pagan for the rest of the week. This is the sin of hypocrisy. John is the apostle of love but also of bluntness. All of us are guilty of hypocrisy at times and we must face this and deal with it whenever we are aware of this evil. Play acting is a foolish waste of time, and opens the door to the enemy to control our life, and our fake life removes the opportunity for the Lord to sue us as his witness to truth. John repeats many of the points he has made before and tightly argues any who would be hypocrites into silence before the inescapable logic of God's love for us and our daily requirement to live in that love.

Verse 19. We love him because he first loved us.

It is important to remind ourselves of the basics again and again, and sing of them again and again. This is a basic, or better, foundational verse, upon which our stability rests. We love him because he first loved us. God's plan called for the cross and it's provisions for us were perfect, and the results of the Lord's work there go on forever. We are to live and abide in this place of security. **Titus 3:3-7.**

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?

We saw the significance of "agape" love, which is the caring love that is being dealt with here. This love has no emotion involved in it, but involves having a deep, Christ like concern for the ultimate well being of others. You want the best for them, with agape love; both in eternity and in time.

You may dislike them as a person, and never want much to do with them socially, but you can still love them in this manner. If you do not have this sort of love for them, then there is something wrong with your spiritual life at this point. There is a block to the Holy Spirit's work, and such a block will tend to be a sinful pattern of thinking or acting.

You can always express genuine agape love to others, for you can take every opportunity to help them spiritually any time you are able. It is a very practical form of love that will always work out in practical activities that will bless them in their daily life. It is not a social life command to visit with them, or have them round to your house, but to assist them.

If we do not love our fellow believers in practical ways, we cannot argue we love God, for the evidence of God being loved, is that we love what he loves. God loves all believers, and so must we. Remember, it is not emotional love, or a desire to spend every waking hour with these people, rather it is seeking their good, and looking for ways to bless them spiritually in the church family. It requires intelligent thought as to how it is best to work out, for their ultimate blessing.

Agape love may work out in your sharing something at a home group meeting, to encourage a brother or sister, or it may simply work out as you offer to pray for them publicly or privately. It may work out through an act of service; a meal prepared, a gift given, a chore done for them. They may never be your close friends, and you may not invite them home, for you have little in common with them other than the Lord, but you show care and concern for all. We will not share anything other than our love for the Lord with the majority of believers, and so any deep fellowship in other life areas will be limited with most, but as far as we can we are to fellowship in loving care with all. We are always to respond to needs. **James 1:19-27, 2:14-26.**

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

A lot of people calling themselves "Christians" that you will meet will not be nice people, but this shouldn't surprise or upset you, nor stop your practical care and concern for them. This is a standard that is required. We cannot become petty when others are being petty or dangerous to us, but we are to show ultimate concern for their well being. This is a command from the Mosaic Law also. **Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:34-40, Romans 13:10.**

The Lord's command is absolute, and there is no way around it. If we are children of God we will serve him and be his ambassadors in and through our love for others. Follow John's words up here and refer to Paul's discussion of this same foundational theme, in **Romans 12:9-21**, and then **Romans 16:7 - 19.**

APPLICATION POINT FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. There is no room for play acting. Only reality in our walk will encourage us down the paths of this life. Let us walk in love for God and it's outworking in the lives of all we meet. The consequences are eternal!

NOTES

CHAPTER 5

1 JOHN 5:1-5

“1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

KEY WORDS

Believeth	pisteuo	present, active, participle; keeping on believing
Born	gennaō	perfect, passive, indicative ; received birth. Lasting results of the incarnation.
Loveth	agapao	present, active, participle; keeps on loving.
Begat	gennaō	aorist, active, participle; who was bringing life
Begotten	gennaō	perfect, passive, participle ; who has been born
Know	ginosko	present, active, indicative; keep on knowing
Love	agapao	present, active, indicative; keep on loving.
Love	agapao	present, active, subjunctive; if we are loving.
Keep	tereo	present, active, subjunctive; if we keep them. (some Manuscripts) if we do them.
Grievous	barus	heavy and onerous burden, designed to break them.
Born of	gennaō	perfect, passive, participle ; born again from The ultimate source (genitive) of God.
Overcometh	nikao	present, active, indicative/participles; victory To gain victory, overcome, defeat. The god Nike.
Victory	nike	the pagan god of victory – total defeat of enemy.

REFLECTIONS

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

John combines the two principles of love and life here. This verse is a continuation of the last chapter. To believe in the Lord Jesus as the Saviour (the Messiah/Christ) is to enter the Royal Family of God. To love is to show the family likeness, and is to truly live as God intends us to live. **John 10:10** - you only have this life when you are living in obedience to His love and in the light of His Word, walking through life under the control of the Holy Spirit.

We need to be born again as is seen with Nicodemus in John 3, and we need to live in the sphere of God's love for us, and then channel that love to others who have likewise accepted that Christ died for them also. Believing in the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour (Messiah/Christ) enters us into the family and makes us a child of God, and the love of the child for their heavenly father, will always overflow to others who are also born again. There is a fellowship in Christ Jesus that reaches all who love him, and those who do not feel it and live it, are not his!

Note that the verse begins, 'who-so-ever believes'. Once more we are face to face with the doctrine of the unlimited atonement. Also the doctrine of eternal security is underlined by the perfect, passive, indicative, of the verb for 'born', which reminds us of the permanent results of salvation (being born again – with eternal results). The passive voice reminds us that we do not do anything to earn or deserve salvation, for it is the result of grace. **John 1:12-13, 6:69, Acts 8:37, Romans 10:9-11.**

Notice also that the other verbs of the verse are in the present continuous tense. "Who-so-ever keeps on believing that Jesus is the Christ". The pastor of my old church had a saying, that we ought to "believe like Calvinists and be assured of our salvation, but we ought to live like Arminians, and walk daily in conscious commitment to the truths we have believed, lest we fall from God's holy standard for life". While this is an amusing statement, we don't need to go here, for eternal security and the doctrine of rewards and crowns, both ensure we have the right daily emphasis in our walk. Read again **Romans 10:11**, and be assured, that those who believe in him will not be ashamed in the end!

The perfect tenses of this first verse reinforce the eternal security of the believer, and we note that we are called to keep on confessing the truth of the Lord's Saviourhood, but lest we fall into fear about loss of salvation over this matter, let us reflect upon this truth here. Having accepted that the Lord is the only Saviour, are we likely to forget this? Having accepted his Lordship, are we likely to walk away, if we have genuinely been engaged by his love, and been born again into his family? Our eternal security does not depend upon our character but upon the Lord's holy character. Those who have truly met Him do not walk away from him for long, for he is tenacious in his love. **Revelation 3:5, 19-20.**

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

It is important to recognize that we are saved by grace, just like all other believers. Be at peace then with other believers, seek their good in all things, and as far as possible be on friendly terms with all. Whatever problem there may be in a church fellowship, let it not be from you. We should have a family resemblance and be like Christ. We should keep on forgiving others, and giving them the same benefit of the doubt that we wish others would give to us. **Matthew 18:21-22.**

We should not be petty, even when we are wronged. We know we love God when we keep His commandments. Notice the tenses of the Greek verbs again here. The present tense is continuous in its action and the verse may be translated, "we keep on knowing, because we keep on loving!" It is the settled path of the believer that demonstrates their eternal relationship in time.

The desire to please our heavenly father in all things is the surest sign that we are God's children, and that desire to please him will work out in love to all those who he loves. **John 8:28-32, 13:34-35, 15:9-17, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12.**

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

We are asked to keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are not hard to keep if we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us as to how to love the obnoxious person and to empower us in all things. The Holy Spirit will give us opportunities to practice all he requests of us, so be prepared for them. You relax and leave it in the Lord's hands, for the Lord and the Holy Spirit are your "personal trainers", and they will train you well if you let them work upon your behaviours, and within you to sift and sort your priorities and values.

Like all good gym instructors he will make you suffer a little as you go along, but it is for your growth in strength. Just as muscles do not grow stronger unless in training it is broken down and rebuilt, just so with our character; we need to be rebuilt into the fullness of Christ, and that means we have to lose the old self centered Old Sin Nature tendencies. **Matthew 12:46-50, John 14:15, 21-24, 15:9-14.**

You may suffer so that you can help others who suffer, but whatever happens there is a purpose in the grace of God. God's commands are not heavy or burdensome. **Matthew 11:28-30.** The word "barus" translated burden here was a word for a burden that was designed to break the person carrying it. This was a punishment in the ancient world; to crush a person beneath a heavy load.

God does not deal with us as a sadistic, legalistic god of the pagans. He is the God of love and grace, and his commandments are good and healthy, not harsh and designed to hurt. They are a joy to keep, for those who love the Lord, for we know his ways are perfect, although at times they may appear to be past man's knowing this side of eternity. **Psalms 19:7-14, 119:41-50, 103-107, 123-128, 140-143, 174-176, Romans 7:12, 11:33.**

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

This is the means of overcoming the problems in our lives. You believe His Word and apply it to each problem. This positions you in the place of power, and allows you to be used by the Holy Spirit in every situation. If the believer has God's Word in them, and they are listening to the leading of the Holy Spirit, then they are looking for opportunities to apply the Word, and so, they will move and grow. **John 6:27-35, Romans 8:35-39.**

The Christian is like a powerful train that will only progress on the rails that have been provided. Why are Christians not being guided? Why are we not more powerfully effective in our spiritual life? We are too often off the rails. Spurgeon, in his last letter to his church, before his death, exhorted them to, "believe more, pray more, and therefore receive more".

This is the equation of God's love. This is the only channel for divine blessing. We are to abide, to feed, to pray, to love, to utilize the bloodshed to cleanse us, and we are to walk through the enemy's world in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, having daily dealt with the sins that trip us up. **1 John 1:9-10.**

Victory over the devil's world system is ours now if we utilize faith as our weapon. We keep on being victorious over the world system of Satan through our faith; this faith is our confidence in what the Lord has done for us, and the certainty we have in the position he has given us. Our faith enables us to overcome the temptations and fears generated by the world. **1 Corinthians 15:57.**

He is the source and power behind all victory in the Angelic Conflict. If we are rightly connected to him we have the power we need and the victory we seek over the doctrines associated with Satan's world system; we have victory over the temptations of worldliness. **Revelation 2:7-8, 11-12, 17-18, 25-29, 3:5-6, 10-13, 19-22, 12:11-12, 15:2-4.**

It is application of the Lord's words into the fabric of our daily life that delivers us the victory over the temptations that this world has to offer. This victory can be received daily if we walk in obedience to God's holy Word. The doctrines of the Word of God deliver us from the deceptions of the world system of the enemy.

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

The big question for us is, are we going to be an overcomer, or are we going to be overcome by circumstances in this present world? John builds on **1 John 4:15**, and verse one of this chapter here. The "overcomer" is defined now. The overcomer is the one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, as Saviour, as Lord of all, as the one who shows God's unlimited love for us. Do you see it? If Jesus is the Son of God, then God's plan is perfect, his love towards us is total and stable, and the future, and ours, is secure.

It is faith in the truth about who Jesus really is, that is the source of overcoming power in the battle against temptation in this present world. With such a reality in our hearts, should we be anything else, other than an overcomer of difficulties and temptations? As the days darken towards the end we need to draw closer to the Lord, and further away from evil.

Refer to the BTB study CHRISTIAN LIFE- OVERCOMER, and OVERCOMING BY FAITH.

APPLICATION FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. To love the Lord is to love those who love him. If we do not love our brethren, we do not truly love our Lord. John's logic challenges us to get our hearts right towards the Lord and our brethren, and seek opportunities to show love for the Lord in the way we deal with our brethren.
2. Keeping the Lord's commandments is also a sign of being rightly related to him. How long is it since you read through the Gospels and simply saturated yourself with the words of the Lord. We cannot obey the Lord if we have not taken the time to hear his words. If we take time to learn of him we give evidence of our love for him. If we then obey these words, we give more evidence of our relationship with him. If we take neither the time nor the effort to know and obey his words, then it is doubtful that we have a real relationship with him.
3. God's requirements are not a burden to man; they are a joy and a blessing. If a person is living under a burden, then they are not living under the grace, mercy and love of God. Is your faith a burden to you? If it is, there is a challenge here to step back from your religious practices and draw closer to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for you.
4. Have we won victory over the doctrines of "worldliness"? Satan's strategy involves distracting believers from the path of righteousness and faith, and getting us to walk in fear or lust. We have victory when, in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, our faith triumphs over temptations. This victory is gained through taking the Lord's words seriously, knowing them, and applying them into the details of daily life.

DOCTRINES**CHRISTIAN LIFE: OVERCOMER**

1. Definition of an overcomer - "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? (1 John 5:4,5). It is seen that an overcomer is a believer and we become overcomers at the point of salvation.
2. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." - believers will live with God in heaven forever. (Revelation 2:7)
3. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" - believers will not be subject to the lake of fire. (Revelation 2:11)
4. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." - believers are accepted by God on the basis of His provision. (Revelation 2:17)
5. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." - believers will rule over the nations and will be honoured. (Revelation 2:26-28)
6. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." - believers are justified and sanctified by the death of our Lord and their names are permanently in the book of the living. (Revelation 3:5)
7. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." - believers will have access to the Holy Places of God and will eternally be identified with Jesus Christ. (Revelation 3:12)

8. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." - believers will reign with the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 3:21)

CHRISTIAN LIFE - OVERCOMING BY FAITH

1. By faith learn to accept conditions as God's will for life and be thankful - Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 5:18
2. By faith maintain fellowship with God, walking in the light - 1 John 1:7
3. By faith consistently day by day examine your conduct, confessing all known sins - 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31 1 John 1:9
4. By faith receive the Word of God daily as being more necessary than daily food. - Matthew 4:4; 5:6, 2 Peter 3:18
5. By faith approach the throne of grace boldly in every case of need, requesting aid, casting every care on Him. - Hebrews 4:15,16; 1 Peter 5:7
6. By faith resist the attempts of Satan and he will flee from you. - Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8
7. By faith maintain the habit of thinking and meditating on spiritual values and priorities - Philippians 4:6-9
8. Walk by faith and not by sight - 2 Corinthians 5:7

1 JOHN 5:6-11

“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. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

KEY WORDS

Came	erchomai	aorist, active, participle; who came at a set time
Blood	aima	literal blood referred to – but standing for the sacrificial death, as the lamb, with blood shed, upon the cross.
Bear witness	martureo	present, active, participle; is bearing witness
Bear record	martureo	present, active, participle; are bearing record.
Receive	lambano	present, active, indicative; we keep on receiving
Witness	marturia	the legal testimony – evidence given orally.
Greater	meas	John 5:36 – greater in quality and power/authority
Testified	martureo	perfect, active, indicative ; lasting effects of a Testimony that is once for all time.
Believeth	pisteuo	present, active, participle; keeps on believing On going acceptance of the evidence as truth
Witness	marturia	legal, acceptable, testable, falsifiable testimony
Believes not	pisteuo	present, active, indicative; on going rejection
Hath made	poieo	perfect, active, participle ; is in on-going active Rejection of God's actions and words. There are Lasting results in judgment for such an insult.
Liar	pseustes	called God a deceiver, a liar.
Believed	pisteuo	perfect, active, indicative ; permanent results of Rejection of the truth of revelation in unbelief.
Record	marturia	testimony of genuine evidence [as above].
Gave	martureo	perfect, active, indicative ; has witnessed. The once for all, lasting nature of God's work upon the Cross is underlined here
This is	eimi	present, active, indicative; this keeps on being
Given	didomi	aorist, active, indicative; at a point in time
Is	eimi	present, active, indicative; keeps on being.

REFLECTIONS

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.

Here we have the three witnesses on earth to our faith; the water, the blood and the spirit. What we have here on earth as a witness is important, for that is what we rest upon, and is the basis of our present faith and confidence. We do not rest our faith upon “fables” or “old wives tales”, but upon facts. **1 Timothy 1:4, 4:7, 2 Timothy 4:4, Titus 1:14, 2 Peter 1:16-21.**

If these foundational facts of the Christian faith are myth, not reality, then our faith is vain! We are warned against “vain philosophy”; which is simply theology built upon myths and legends. **Ephesians 5:6, 1 Timothy 1:6, 2 Timothy 2:16, Titus 1:10.** Let us be really clear on this point, for John, Paul and Peter were very clear on this; that faith not based upon provable and dependable truth is foolishness. Our faith is built on a secure and stable foundation. **1 Corinthians 15:14-17.** Refer to the BTB for the study on the foundational doctrines of the faith – FUNDAMENTALISM.

The basis of our faith rests upon three testable foundations. Remember that any reality must be falsifiable and testable, or it is not evidential. Christianity is not a “leap into the dark”, that is the loony Swedish Philosopher Kierkegaard; that is philosophical foolishness, it is not apostolic faith. We walk in the light of God’s Word – no leaping into darkness!

[a] The water is the washing of the water of the Word. **Ephesians 5:26.** God’s Word is truth, and may be read, prophecies tested, and the evidences in the scripture examined in a court and a verdict given. Refer to the BTB study, PROPHECY – PROPHECY AND HISTORY FULFILLED.

[b] The blood is that of Christ shed on the Cross, and it is final payment for all sin. The Cross and Resurrection were linked together, and so basic faith in the reality of the sacrifice and it’s success, proved by the resurrection, is a foundational truth. Refer to the study BLOOD SACRIFICE, and also RESURRECTION APPEARANCES.

[c] The spirit is the Holy Spirit, who makes it all clear to us as the paraclete of God. A spirit filled person is visibly different to their past life without Christ, hope and eternal life. Their life is also able to be scrutinized and all can see fruit that demonstrates there is a greater power at work within them than their own simple will power.

John draws attention to each of these grace realities, for they are all of grace, and came from the Lord’s side, not from any work of men. John was there at the Cross, he was there at the empty tomb on the Lord’s Day, and he was there on the Day of Pentecost. He saw God’s gifts to man first hand, and recorded these things faithfully and accurately, that we might be saved. **John 19:30-35, 20:1-9, 26-31, 21:25, Acts 1:2, 13-14, 2:1-8.**

We have John making clear that there are physical realities upon which the faith is based, which are continually made real by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives down the centuries. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth, (**John 14:6**), and makes real to the heart of each believer the truths of historic Christianity. John had all three witnesses, but he wrote to us so that we in our day have the one (the Spirit) to back up the reality of the other two, and he gave us enough factual observation to be sure we are not resting upon fable, but reality.

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

This verse does not appear in the earliest manuscripts, (it occurs in some manuscripts after 500 AD), and was probably inserted into the text in the fifth century, apparently as a side note, or teaching point, by a scribe somewhere in the Eastern Empire. The person who did this, didn’t do something evil, as he reminds us of the work of God in heaven for us as well, but he was very unwise to add something, even though true, into scripture. This unknown scribe of the fifth century opened the door for attacks upon the truth of Scripture, by making it appear that John wrote this verse, when clearly he did not. This is not a verse therefore that we should quote to prove the trinity, as it is not written by John, but it does teach a truth, and reminds us that we are secure upon earth and in heaven. **Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 3:3.** Let us rejoice in the truth that this verse teaches, but remember that John did not write this verse.

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

This should be read in conjunction with verse 6, and when you read it that way it will flow as John intended it to, which shows verse 7 up as an insertion. Read verse 6 then 8 together now. Here is God’s testimony and the basis for our Christian life. The Holy Spirit, the Water of the Word and the Blood of Christ; these are the three powerful entities that empower us. This is a good motto for a church, the Spirit, the Water and the Blood. In Christ only is there salvation, cleansing from all sin, and spiritual growth through sanctification. Let us focus on the spiritual realities, grounded on these earthly facts of the incarnation, and advance in our Christian lives. **Hebrews 12:10-15.** Refer to the BTB studies below, CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY, and also, MATURITY – CROSS TO CROWN.

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

People believe all sorts of things that men tell them, how much greater is the testimony of God. In these three areas God has given His witness. No Christian can powerfully and usefully spend any day on this earth, without those three things active in their life. If we combine verses 6 and 9 we have the most powerful reference to the trinity; the Son comes, the Spirit witnesses, and the Father witnesses. The scribe who added in verse 7 did something unnecessary. Daily we need to be aware of the work of the “Water of the Word” over and through us, the work of the Spirit within us, and the claiming

of the blood to deal with any sins. A day spent without reference to these three, is a day spent out of fellowship with our Lord. **John 3:31-36, 8:17-19, 10:38, Ephesians 5:18-20, 26.**

Verses 10-13 form the next section of the letter. These verses are very close to John 3:16-36 and can be considered to be a paraphrase of it. Turn to and read, **John 3:16 - 36.** There is no other way around these verses that to accept that the Lord is the only Saviour of mankind - there is no other name under heaven whereby human beings must be saved. **Acts 4:12, 5:32.**

Reading these verses one is amazed how any liberal can say what they say in the pulpit. Christianity is factual, historical, and exclusive, and we cannot tolerate anything that is not apostolic biblical Christianity, and still be worthy of the apostles as our spiritual fathers.

We are going to be unpopular with those who love this present world if we stand with John, but we have selected our company when we accepted the Lord as our Saviour, so let us stand robustly for the truth with the apostles and share their fate. **John 15:18-27.**

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

Note how strong this verse is. As believers we have the Holy Spirit within as our comforter and encourager. His work within (be it conviction or blessing through worship) is the evidence of our position in Christ. If a person rejects the gospel, note what the Lord says that person has done; they have called God a liar! This is strong language, and indicates why the penalty for rejection of Christ is eternal damnation. To reject God's witness is to call God a liar. **John 3:36.** The unbeliever must be told this, for their eternal life depends upon understanding this, and responding intelligently to it.

When a person rejects the witness of the Lord God, they by default are insisting that they will stand upon their own righteousness and depend upon their own works rather than what God did for them. **Revelation 20:11-15.** Every knee will bow in that day, for all will recognize that they were wrong, totally and absolutely, but it will be too late, for they have what they choose, and they have it of their own free will. **Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11.** Refer to the BTB for the studies of GOD: DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FREEWILL, and also JUDGMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE.

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

This is the witness that God gives in Christ; the eternal life that is the believer's inheritance in Him. As we enjoy our eternal life (which started at the point of salvation), right now in the filling of the Holy Spirit, we witness by our joy and stability to the power of God, and so make the gospel message even more clear to all who see and hear us. **John 3:16, 31-36, 19:35, 20:30-31, Colossians 3:1-4.** Unbelievers should be coming up to us, saying, 'we want what we see you have'. Refer to the BTB studies on CHRISTIAN LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE, EVANGELISM.

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. How secure do you feel in the evidence of the three witnesses? The Lord intends us to rest securely in the truth of the incarnation and all it led to. Let us advance in the knowledge of our salvation and all it provides for us.
2. To turn away from the message of the Lord is to turn from truth to lies and it is to call God a liar. There is no hope for those who stand against the Lord's truth, for to stand upon a lie is to live and die with absolute insecurity! In Christ alone is temporal and eternal security.
3. Have you rejoiced in your eternal life today? Stop right now and praise God for your eternal life, that is God's gift, already received by all believers, of eternal life in him. Praise his holy name.

DOCTRINES

BLOOD SACRIFICE - see index of doctrines

FUNDAMENTALISM - see index of doctrines

MATURITY - see index of doctrines

MATURITY-CROSS TO CROWN - see index of doctrines

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – FREE WILL - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE: ETERNAL LIFE

1. DEFINITION: Life belonging to the ages (Greek word aionios). This is the life of the believer who had a beginning in time but whose life will continue through the other side of death into the infinite future.

2. Mankind were created for eternity. God's purpose was to create a being to enjoy fellowship with forever. 2 Peter 3: 9.

3. The issue for entry into eternal life is faith in Christ. The choice for man is clearly stated in John 3:36, 5:24, Acts 13:46, Galatians 6:8, Matthew 25:6.

4. Those who are serious about life and concerned about death ask about it. Matthew 13:40-43, 19:16, Mark 10:17, Luke 10:25, 18:18.

5. The Lord's words provide the answer to the questions about eternal life. John 6:68, Romans 5:20, 21, Romans 6:22, 23.

It is the Lord who gives eternal life, John 5:39, 40, 12:50.

6. The Lord gives eternal life to those who believe on him, John 10:28, 17:2,

The door to fellowship and all that goes with it is opened by faith in him as Saviour. John 3:15,16, Acts 13:48, John 6:40, 47.

"To Eat His Flesh and Drink His Blood" is graphic language to picture his work and our need to appropriate it for ourselves. John 6:54, 4:14.

7. While it may only be fully known in heaven the believer may grasp a glimpse of eternal life here and now by way of anticipation and relationship. Knowing God is a glimpse of eternal life now, John 17:3, and fellowship with him is the joy of every believer now and forever. 1 John 1:1-4, 5:10-12, 20, 1 Timothy 6:12, 19.

8. Eternal life is received in full at the resurrection/rapture when we all receive our new bodies from the Lord. Rewards are received then to enjoy with the Lord forever. We are all urged to live each day with the eternal life perspective in mind, thinking of our place with the Lord forever. Matthew 19:29, 30, Mark 10:29-31, John 12:25, John 4:36, Romans 2:6,7.

9. Eternal Life is the believers hope, associated with the Rapture and Resurrection, and should be on our mind through each day, as it sets us apart from the unbelievers who have no such hope. Philippians 3:20, 21, Titus 1:2, 2:13, 3:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 4:13, 1 Peter 1:3,

10. The assurance of eternal life is grounded in the promise of God given through Christ. 1 John 2:24,25, 1 John 5:13-15.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: EVANGELISM

1. All believers are ambassadors for Christ, and are obliged to give the give the gospel to unbelievers. (Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:5)

2. Two forms of witnessing - with the lips (2 Corinthians 5:18-21 and by the life (2 Corinthians 3:3)

3. The gospel is "good news".

4. Sin is not an issue. Jesus died for all sin on the cross. The penalty has been paid. The issue now is "Do you trust that Jesus Christ has died for your sins, and was raised from the dead to give life to all who believe on Him?" People choose to either rely upon Jesus Christ, or upon their own good works, to be saved. (Romans 8:1, 9-30-33)

5. What about the heathen who haven't heard?

- a) God is totally fair, and everyone has the chance to be saved
- b) Unlimited Atonement (Colossians 2:14,15)
- c) God's will - none should perish (2 Peter 3:9)
- d) Man's negative will - God consciousness - Gospel hearing.

6. Witnessing is impossible except through the power of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:8-13) The Holy Spirit convicts of

- a) Sin because of unbelief.
- b) Righteousness.
- c) Judgment because of Satan being judged (Matthew 25:41)

7. The natural man needs the Holy Spirit to understand the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:14)

8. The Bible is the weapon of witnessing. (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4)

9. Biblical Pattern of Witnessing. (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12)

- a) Effective contact (v.1)
- b) The gospel must be given even under opposition. (v.2)
- c) The gospel must never be compromised or watered down - (v.3)
- d) The believer in whom the gospel is deposited is tested by God and should not be for the praise of man. (v.4)
- e) Flattery should never be part of the gospel. (v.5-6)
- f) Whilst the gospel should not be given to get praise from men it should be given in love without cost (v9)
- g) The gospel must be followed up (v 10) with discipleship and teaching (v11) so that the new believer can become spiritually self reliant. (v.10-12)

10. Your obligation to witness (Romans 1:14-16): you are a debtor (v14), you are ready (v15), you are not ashamed (v16)

11. Win souls, not arguments. Stay on the gospel, don't get side-tracked.

PROPHECY: DANIEL - PROPHECY AND HISTORY FULFILLED IN DANIEL

1. Scripture (Daniel 11:5-34). This gives a detailed prophecy of the future history of the Greek kingdom is of Syria (North) under the Seleucid dynasty and Egypt (South) under the Ptolemy Dynasty.

2. In this topic we will compare prophecy with history to show that the scriptures are inspired and that future prophecy can be relied on completely for accuracy.

3. Scripture Verse 5. "And the king of the south shall be strong and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

History

Ptolemy I (King of the South) based in Egypt was a powerful nation but Seleucus I of Syria (King of the North) was even stronger. Up to 302 BC Seleucus I Conquered everything from Syria in the West to the Punjab in India.

4. Scripture Verse 6. "And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the South shall come to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of the arm, neither shall she stand, nor his arm; but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

History

Ptolemy I was the only one of the generals who survived the death of Alexander who died a natural death. He died at the age of 84. He was succeeded by Ptolemy II. Ptolemy II's brother went with his uncle Seleucus on a campaign to Macedonia and assassinated Seleucus, bringing Antiochus I to the throne. Ptolemy II and Antiochus I fought for a number of years over Palestine which formed a buffer state between North and South. After many years, Bernice, the daughter of Ptolemy, married Antiochus II, the King of the North, and had a son. Antiochus had been married to a woman called Laodice who eventually murdered Bernice, her son and Antiochus II. It was therefore Laodice's son who came to the throne in 246 BC as Seleucus II. Ptolemy II was very angry at this and invaded the north but he died in 245 BC

5. Scripture Verse 7. "But out of the branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate which shall come with an army and shall enter into the fortress of the King of the North and shall deal against them and shall prevail.

History

'The branch of her roots' is Ptolemy III who was the brother of Bernice. He succeeded to the throne of Egypt and then invaded the north and conquered it. Ptolemy III represents the zenith of power of the King of the South. He entered Antioch, the capital or fortress of the north, using African elephants.

6. Scripture Verse 8. "And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the King of the North.

History

Ptolemy III Conquered many peoples. He returned to Egypt with many captives, retrieved 2,400 idols which had been taken from Egypt some 300 years previously by Cambyses, came back with precious items and great riches. Ptolemy III also outlived the King of the North by five years. He is reported as having taken 40,000 talents of silver and 4,000 talents of gold back to Egypt.

7. Scripture Verse 9. "So the King of the South shall come into his kingdom and shall return into his own land.

History

Ptolemy III returns in triumph into Egypt. Eventually Seleucus II retrieves most of his empire but the eastern portion of the empire is taken over by the Parthians, commencing in 220 BC

8. Scripture Verse 10. "But his sons shall be stirred up and shall assemble a multitude of great forces and one shall certainly come and overflow and pass through, then shall he return and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

History

His sons are the sons of Seleuchus II, they are Seleuchus III and Antiochus III. Seleuchus III tried to recover the empire of the King of the North, but the King of Pergammum prevented him and, on his way back to Antioch, Seleuchus III was assassinated in Phrygia. Antiochus III then became king. He reigned from 223-187 BC and was known as Antiochus the Great. With strong military training and discipline he was able to mould the army of the north together into a great force. Antiochus III eventually attacked the King of the South. He returned to Antioch in 217 BC, having secured a balance of power.

9. Scripture Verse 11. "And the King of the South shall be moved with choler and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the King of the North, and he shall set forth a great multitude but the multitude shall be given into his band.

History

This deals with the battle of Raphia in 217 BC fought between Antiochus III and Ptolemy IV. The south had degenerated to the extent that the force under Antiochus III had supremacy. Ptolemy IV, however, was given a year in which to train his army. He gave up his drinking bouts and changed his lifestyle in order to lead the army. Ptolemy IV married his sister. Their son became Ptolemy V. Using the Egyptians in battle for the first time in the history of the Greek kingdoms, Ptolemy IV won the battle of Raphia and put the King of the North to flight.

10. Scripture Verse 12. "And when be bath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up and he shall cast down many ten thousands but he shall not be strengthened by it.

History

Ptolemy IV returned to Egypt having saved Egypt from invasion. He has a chance to consolidate the nation by incorporating the Egyptians but instead returns to his heavy drinking and a feudal system. This causes systematic revolts which cost many lives. Ptolemy IV eventually died in 203 BC

11. Scripture Verse 13. "For the King of the North shall return and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with many riches.

History

Antiochus III failed to take his defeat at the battle of Raphia as final. It took him 14 years ('after certain years') to return to do battle against the King of the South, having trained his troops in wars on the eastern boundaries of his empire. He becomes very rich.

12. Scripture Verse 14. "And in those times shall many stand up against the King of the South, also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision, but they shall fall.

History

Antiochus III now attacks Ptolemy V, a child of seven. He was assisted by 'the robbers of thy people' who were Jews who assisted Antiochus III to take Palestine in 199 BC He defeats an Egyptian army under Scopus as well as three other armies sent against him. The vision the Jews had was that this battle would set them free. It in fact brought Antiochus IV, the madman.

13. Scripture Verses 15 and 16. "So the King of the North shall come and cast up a mount and take the most fenced cities and the arms of the south shall not withstand neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But be that cometh against him shall do according to his own will and move shall stand before him and be shall stand in the glorious land which, by his band, shall be consumed.

History

With the defeat of the four Egyptian armies, Antiochus III now invades a defenceless Egypt and meets no real resistance. He also subdues Palestine.

14. Scripture Verse 17. "He shall also set his face to enter into the strength of his whole kingdom and upright oxes with him; thus shall be do, and be shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

History

With the defeat of Ptolemy V, Antiochus III decides to implant a spy right at the heart of the Egyptian kingdom. This he did by marrying his daughter, Cleopatra, a girl of 16, to the nine-year old Ptolemy V. His plan backfired however, as this girl who had been brought up by the women in the family, fell in love with her young husband and refused to betray him.

15. Scripture Verse 18. "After this shall be turn his face toward the isles and shall take many; but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach be shall cause to turn upon him.

History

As part of the settlement with Ptolemy V, areas in Asia Minor and Thrace controlled by the King of the South were ceded to Antiochus III. This allowed Antiochus access into Greece. The expanding Roman presence clashed with him at the battles of Thermopolae and Magnesium where he was defeated. The 'prince' was Scipio Asiaticus, a Roman general.

16. Scripture Verse 19. "Then shall he turn his face toward the fort of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall and not be found.

History

After the battle of Magnesium Antiochus returns to Antioch. Reparations to the Romans are so great that the northern kingdom is made bankrupt. Antiochus remembers rich temples in Bactria and heads east in order to replenish his treasury by plunder. As he attacks one of the temples he is assassinated.

17. Scripture Verse 20. "Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger nor in battle.

History

As a result of the death of Antiochus III, Seluchus IV became the King of the North. He decides to replenish the treasury by means of heavy taxation. His reign was relatively short. It was terminated when his chief minister, Heliodorus, assassinated him and set himself up as leader. His death was neither in anger or battle.

18. Verses 21-34 refer, in the main, to Antiochus IV and his relationship with the Jews and the King of the South under Ptolemy VI and VII. At the time of the assassination of Seluchus IV, Antiochus was an army general in Greece. At the beginning of his reign he was an excellent leader, projecting himself well in the media of the day by flatteries. Ptolemy V is assassinated in a palace plot, bringing to the throne Ptolemy VI as a seven-year-old boy.

Antiochus IV conquers Egypt, Ptolemy VI is deposed in favour of his brother, the crippled Ptolemy VII. He is about to enter Alexandria when he is met by a Roman officer who gives him an ultimatum to retire. This he does, with great riches. v28) However, Memphis, which has been supplying the King of the North, will cut supplies (V 26) and many will starve on their departure out of Egypt. (V 26).

From 168 to 165 BC both Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VII reigned. Both of them went to the Roman Senate asking for islands. Ptolemy VII eventually received the island of Cyprus (Chittim). The two of them try to out manoeuvre each other. This is captured in the picture of them telling lies at one table. (V 27).

Antiochus IV returns to Palestine a very frustrated man. He stops the daily sacrifice (V 31) polluting the temple with pigs' blood and then the blood of Jews. On 25th December, 167 BC the Greeks brought a giant gold-plated statue called Zeus Olympius into the Holy of Holies. The statue was a statue of Antiochus IV with a beard.

The excesses of Antiochus eventually result in the wars under Judas Maccabees which eventually led to Jewish freedom.

19. CONCLUSION

In this passage we have seen many prophecies of Daniel fulfilled in the correct order, in detail. The balance of Daniel 11 deals with a future empire, that of the empire in the tribulation period.

20. PRINCIPLE

- a) With all scripture being inspired by God, the prophetic principles outlined in (Daniel 11:36-45) is as certain as history itself.
- b) If we can trust the word of God with prophetic passages such as (Daniel 11) we can trust the Bible for our every need and requirement.
- c) Acceptance of the word of God as literal by faith, unless there is an obvious analogy indicated in the text, is a major step forward in the Christian life and brings with it peace and confidence in God.

JUDGMENT: GREAT WHITE THRONE

- 1. The judgment of the Great White Throne is the last judgment. (Revelation 20:11, 15)
- 2. Only the unsaved are judged at the last judgment as there is no judgment for Christians. (Romans 8:1)
- 3. The last judgment occurs at the end of the Millennium. (Revelation 20:7-15)
- 4. The unsaved are judged according to their works from the Books of Works (Revelation 20:12)
- 5. The judgment is to show that the Human works of man cannot satisfy the justice of God. God is totally fair and shows that he is only satisfied by "The Good Work". The death of Christ on the Cross.

6. Having shown the unsaved they have failed to satisfy the holiness of God, the condemned are cast into the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 20:15)

CHRIST: RESURRECTION APPEARANCES

Recorded appearances after His resurrection:-

1. Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18)
2. Women returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:8-10)
3. Emmaus couple (Luke 24:13-31)
4. Peter (Luke 24:34)
5. Ten disciples (Luke 24:36-43)
6. Disciples including Thomas (John 20:24-29)
7. Lake Tiberias appearance (John 21:1-23)
8. To the 500 (1 Corinthians 15:6)
9. James (1 Corinthians 15:7)
10. Disciples at the ascension (Acts 1:3-12)
11. Stephen (Acts 7:55)
12. Paul on Damascus Road (Acts 9:3-6)
13. Paul in the Temple (Acts 22:17-21)
14. Paul at night (Acts 23:11)
15. John on Patmos (Revelation 1:10-19).

1 JOHN 5:12-15

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 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. 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

KEY WORDS

Hath	echo	present, active, participle; the one having.
Hath	echo	present, active, indicative; keeps on having. This combination is repeated in the negative.
Written	grapho	present, active, indicative; have written here.
Believe	pisteuo	present, active, participle; keep on believing
Know	oida	perfect, active, subjunctive ; might fully know Eternal results of this faith/knowledge.
Confidence	parresia	boldness, confidence, courage in certainty/truth.
Have	echo	present, active, indicative; we keep on having.
That if	oti ean	that if – third class conditional clause here. Maybe yes, maybe no, depends on our choices.
Ask	aiteo	present, middle, subjunctive; if we request.
According	kata+ accusative	according to the norm or standard.
Will	thelema	will, purpose, plan of God.
Hearth	akouo	present, active, indicative; he keeps on hearing.
If	ean+ indicative	indicative mood of the verb – 1 st class condition = truth.
We know	oida	perfect, active, indicative ; absolute certainty.
Hears us	akouo	present, active, indicative; keeps on hearing us.
We ask	aiteo	present, middle, subjunctive; if we ask 3 rd class
We know	oida	perfect, active, indicative ; we have certainty.

We haveecho		present, active, indicative; keep on having.
Petitions	aitemata	specific requests.
Desired	aiteo	perfect, active, indicative ; we requested/desired Permanent results of our prayer requests in view.

REFLECTIONS

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

To be in this life without Christ, is to not know real life. To be in this life with the Lord Jesus Christ within, is to truly live as we were made to live. Jesus said he came to give life and that more abundantly (John 10:10), and that is what we are to witness by every minute of our life. It is only in vital relationship with our Creator-Saviour that we have real enjoyment of this life and eternity. Choices = eternal consequences.

I sat with a woman last week in my clinic, who said to me that she had felt the terrible emptiness of losing her faith many years ago. What she had meant by that was her loss of a liberal belief system that had collapsed under the weight of reality, as she faced starvation and disease in a third world country. She lost her fake faith, and felt deeply its loss for she felt the total existential vacuum of the loss of all meaning and purpose that she had until that point. Yet all along, she had not known the Son, and so had not known real life in Christ Jesus, she simply had fake liberal Protestantism.

Many lose their faith, but they have not had a real robust one, for they have not known the Son, who alone gives the life and hope that lasts under pressure. Within a few miles of where this woman lost her "faith" was a strong indigenous church where local people, facing the same, or worse realities, had found hope, focus and purpose in Christ Jesus.

Another modern phenomenon is worth reflecting upon at this point also. A recent celebrity's suicide was a sad reality check for many who worship at the shrine of worldliness in the western world. Why do people who have financial security and all that money can buy, kill themselves? What causes people to destroy their very hold on life when they have so much material prosperity to enjoy on each day?

For in this life only Satan delivers them the dividends from their sinful lives, yet they cast it all away, and plunge into death unprepared to face their real maker. Satan is a bad master, for he gives all that money can buy, but ensures his people are jaded and disgusted with their own success and wealth over time. Their food sticks in their teeth, and their money rots in their wallets. Have you noticed that Satan's people cannot consistently enjoy their wealth?

There is enjoyment of life only when a person comes to terms with their end, and what that means. Unsaved, poor people dream of wealth, and wealthy people dream of life that is simple and worry free. Unsaved people cannot have peace, for they deny relationship with the only one who can give lasting joy to them!

There is neither life nor satisfaction without relationship with Christ. Only the Creator can provide meaning for the life he made. There is no other source of reason or purpose that exists outside the plan of the one who made all things! **John 1:1-5, 12-13, 3:36, 5:24**. As the controlling net of the world system tightens around people, they have limited time to respond to the gospel message before the Tribulation begins, and as we reflect upon John's words we can see why so many are saved in that terrible period, for "the gloves are off", and satanic emptiness will overwhelm, and many in desperation will bow their knee to God then, remembering their Christian friend's joy in the Lord. **Nehemiah 8:10**.

In Christ there is hope, purpose and life, but outside of his plan there is nothing except delusion. Satan can package it any way he wishes, but all he provides is but a smoke screen covering hell itself. Thank God that so many people who have bought Satan's lie, realize it and repent of their evil before they die, for they have tested and they see that he is empty of meaning and joy, and they discover with joy that God can deliver what he promises. **Psalms 34:8**.

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.

John's purpose in writing this is to give us assurance of our salvation, and ensure we might obtain a state of mind and soul that is totally secure in our salvation. This highlights again the importance to John of the doctrine of Eternal Security.

You are totally secure once you have been saved, for you are in the hands of the one who gave his all for you. This does not mean you are going to go out and sin, because you know you are saved and you can get away with anything! That is a mental attitude that shows you despise the blood of Christ, and any person espousing such an attitude is clearly without a relationship with the Lord! Eternal Security, when fully understood, will cause you to serve with a 100% commitment the Lord who did these wonderful things for you. John writes that we might, 'know' the truth. **Romans 8:14-18**.

The Greek is the perfect, active, subjunctive, of the verb, 'oida', and it means that we might be absolutely sure, with results that go on forever, but the subjunctive mood reminds us that we have a choice to learn and to accept the truths that John teaches. We can know and be assured or we can refuse to learn and be still abiding in fear. John's purpose is that the people he writes to might be relaxed in their faith and eternally secure position in Christ, and be powerful in their testimony under all the pressures that the enemy can throw at them. **1 Timothy 1:15-17**.

Verses 14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

This repeats the earlier principle of answered prayer. 1 John 3:22. Your assurance in your prayer life comes from your assurance of your salvation, and your membership of the Royal Family of God. We are saved once and for all, and in this gracious security we can come before God in prayer with boldness (paresia, meaning, openness, confidence, 1 John 2:28).

We are able to pray with confidence, knowing (perfect tenses) we are eternally secure; that our security depends on God not on ourselves. We can relax and get on with the business of living in Christ. Prayer is not grappling with God's reluctance, it is tapping into God's benevolence, within a plan that will certainly work out. God wants to bless us. We should make our prayer request specific, for he delights in answering our prayers, and a specific prayer gives us more opportunity to praise him as we are more likely to see the specific answer. It is not possible that the Father's Plan should fail!

The only conditions for prayer being answered are, firstly we must be his children through faith, secondly we must be in fellowship, with no unconfessed sin, and thirdly we must pray in accordance with his revealed will about the matter before us. With these reasonable and logical conditions met we can have confidence that our prayers are answered. Refer to the BTB study of PRAYER.

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Life that is able to be enjoyed is only in Christ Jesus. Any form of life outside of a relationship with the creator is a delusion of the enemy. Let us praise his name for his gift of life and love in Christ.
2. Prayer needs to expect an answer and have one that can be recognized. Many pray in such a way, that they would not recognize the answer if it came to them. Let us pray with focused power and precision, and let us expect the Lord's reply to the requests of his children. We are His in Christ, and the plan is His!

DOCTRINES

PRAYER - see index of doctrines

ETERNAL SECURITY - see index of doctrines

1 JOHN 5:16 - 21

"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. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. 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. 19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

KEY WORDS

If	ean + subjunctive	3 rd class conditional clause of the verb.
See	orao	orist, active, subjunctive; if you see this.
Sin	amartano	present, active, participle; sinning a sin.
Shall ask	aiteo	future, active, indicative; at that time he is to Ask for that person - that they might live.
Give him	didomi	future, active, indicative; they will live.
Pray	erotao	orist, active, subjunctive; question, beseech To seriously request information, understanding.
Unrighteousness	adikia	active opposition to the righteousness of God.
Know	oida	perfect, active, indicative ; absolute certainty.
Born	gennao	perfect, passive, participle ; having been born The permanent results of spiritual birth in view.
Sinneth	amartano	present, active, indicative; does not keep on Sinning – habitual activity in view here.
Begotten	gennao	orist, passive, participle; having received birth
Keepeth	tereo	present, active, indicative; keeps on keeping.
Toucheth	apto	present, middle, indicative; getting hold of. Satan is unable to consistently get hold of.
Lieth	keimai	present, middle, indicative; is lying down under Domination of "the evil one" of the whole world.

Wickedness	poneros	Satan is the prince of this world; subject 2 him.
We know	oida	the evil results of satanic domination.
Is come	eko	perfect, active, indicative ; absolute certainty
Given us	didomi	present, active, indicative; to have come.
		perfect, active, indicative ; has given
Understanding	dianoia	Lasting results of God's gifts to us.
Know	ginosko	understanding of thought/emotion/ intuition.
		present, active, subjunctive; in order that we
True	aletheia	Might know – and keep on knowing.
Keep yourselves	phulasso	absolute truth, the genuine article.
		aorist, active, imperative; keep/guard!

REFLECTIONS

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.**

This is a somber subject, the, 'sin unto death'. This is where a person who is a believer, becomes too dangerous, due to their disobedience, to be left in this world and are therefore called home early under absolute discipline. Ananias and Sapphira are examples of this, as was King Saul in the Old Testament. Refer to the BTB study, SIN – SIN UNTO DEATH.

It is not necessarily final, as indicated by Hezekiah and the man who was having an incestuous relationship with his step-mother in 1 Corinthians 5, who was restored by the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians 2. The great sadness of the penalty of the "Sin unto Death" is used by the Lord only when the person has gone beyond conviction, and persists in their sin.

Note John's point in these verses. He wants us to express love for our fellows first by praying for those we see who are apparently "abiding in" their sins. This is a vital bit of advice, for when we see another in sin, we must resist the temptation to judge, gossip, or condemn. **A spiritual believer is to pray** for them that they might be delivered from the hold that sin has over them. Moses did this for the Exodus generation and interceded on their behalf, and we are called to stand like Moses and pray for our brethren, no matter how stupid they have been. **Exodus 32:11-14, Numbers 10-24, Psalms 106:13-23, 48.**

We are called to pray for our foolish brethren. **Galatians 6:1-2.** Once we have prayed for a person, our heart is in the right place to help them, before that time our self righteousness might have got in the way. God wants our hearts right before him, and towards our brethren, even if their behaviours disgust us while they are in carnality.

The limitation for prayer for a person is if they have committed the "sin unto death". Now we might ask, how can we know if the sin is unto death? The answer is clear, we cannot, until the person tells us, the Holy Spirit tells us within our spirit, or they die. Basically, the order is to pray for all our brethren, until we are sure they have gone too far to be forgiven, or until they die! Paul and Peter faced this in their ministry and wrote certain people off, leaving them with their satanic choices for discipline. **1 Timothy 1:19-20, 2 Timothy 2:17-19, 4:14-15, 2 Peter 2:10-22.**

Some examples from my own life may be useful at this point. I had one clear example of the Sin Unto Death in my early Christian life as a member of the youth group. It involved a lady in our neighbouring Anglican Church, who had got involved in occult practices. She told us as the Baptist Church youth group that she was under the sin unto death, so we would be warned not to follow her bad example. The Lord had made it clear to her that she had gone too far in her behaviours and would not be left upon the earth further, but she was assured of her salvation and eternal destiny. She spoke to our youth group, and to the other church youth groups of the Blockhouse Bay area. She spoke passionately but also very calmly of her sin, and the Lord's clear words to her. She had developed an aggressive cancer that killed her, and it killed her in three months, when the doctors said such a cancer would normally take over five years to get this advanced. All the churches in the area were moved by her testimony, and many young people were saved from the very real temptations of the occult, and the associated drug world.

The other examples I have witnessed were sadly different to this first one. The second example involved a woman who opposed the ministry of the Word of God in a provincial town in New Zealand. I was not even aware of her attacks upon the ministry at all. A church had been planted and was growing, and I visited each month through the first year to strengthen the local people and their leadership. On one visit the people were very subdued and I asked why. They replied and told me of the actions of this woman, and the fact that she had developed a cancer in the weeks before and died suddenly. They all identified that she died under discipline because of her attacks upon a ministry that had the Lord's hand upon it.

The last examples that I have seen, involved two friends, who had walked away from the Lord, having been active in his work previously. The Lord waited for each of them for between twenty to thirty years to repent, and return to the place of service, but they didn't, and so were called home early. I expect each one to greet me in heaven, but they arrived there too soon! I visit the grave of one when I pass the town he was buried in, and I weep for my old and dearest friend, but I know I will see him again. I weep for the loss of fellowship as I get older, and I weep that he did not get the best God had for him. The "Sin Unto Death" is a sad reality in the church, but it can be reversed by repentance. Let us preach the truth to all so that all may repent and be restored if they have walked away from blessing.

Verse 17. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

We are not to pry into others lives, but if we chance to see a brother or sister in sin, we are to act through prayer and any godly counsel that they will quietly receive. Note also we are not to tell others about their sins, for that is gossip! We are not to discuss things with others, we have seen the sinner, so the Lord holds us responsible to do the right thing; we are to pray! If the Lord places a burden to pray upon us, it will be a light burden, and so let us take it up and bring our brother or sister before the Lord in prayer! **Matthew 11:28-30, 16:24-26.**

When we see the person in sin, we do not know if in God's sight this is a sin unto death or not. We therefore pray anyway, and until the Lord has made it clear to us that it is a fatal sin, we are to keep praying for their deliverance, repentance, and return to godly usefulness. Once it is clear that it is a sin unto death we cease praying for their deliverance, but perhaps we continue praying for them to repent and be restored to fellowship before they die.

As I have mentioned above, of the clear cases of the 'sin unto death' that I have witnessed through my life, in each case the person involved died very quickly, and in most cases quite horribly. They were believer's way out of fellowship, before confession is some cases. One died, as King Saul did for a similar sin, but she died in fellowship again and her death warned many of a great evil to be avoided at all costs. In one other case the person died because they opposed the teaching of God's Word at a critical time for a church and community. Their death was a sobering reminder to others that they must take the teaching of the Word seriously and not abuse the Lord's teacher.

God is working his purposes out and we are called to play our part; John's concern is that we always pray for one another **WHATEVER** the obvious sins we see, and keep praying until we are sure it is, or is not the sin unto death. I have referred to the cases in my own ministry experience of the sin unto death, and each one was a genuine believer called home early, but there is another category of person to whom John now refers here and in his other two letters. These are people who are "make believers" from the beginning. Such people have simply pretended they were believers, but their hearts were always far from the Lord and their habits of sin proved it.

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.

The new nature of the believer cannot sin, but as you retain your old sin nature after salvation you will sin from time to time. Note the tense of the verb translated "sinneth" in this verse. It is the present continuous tense indicating habitual action. The person who is born again may sin at times, but if a person is in the permanent habit of sin, then it is likely that they were not born again at all. What we may be facing in such a case is a fake Christian; a "make believer", who has always been in the enemy's camp, but just pretended to be in ours. Paul's attackers, Hymaeneus and Alexander, may have been in this category. **1 Timothy 1:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:17-19.**

John is encouraging us here to guard ourselves, to keep ourselves safe, "tereo", by walking close to the Lord. By this he means safe from sin, but also safe from the strong delusion of the false teacher and fake brethren. The key to Christian victory over the Old Sin Nature, and over deception, is to walk close to God in the light of His Word, and keeping short accounts of sins with Him. **1 John 1:9.**

You feed your new nature by immersing yourself in the Word of God and you starve your old nature by resisting sin. You also build discernment by feeding on God's Word, and so you spot the phony brother or sister faster and avoid them more thoroughly. We are to be "Christ captured" people, and the evidence of that is our Holy Spirit fruit filled lives. The fake brethren are "Satan captured" people and the evidence of their nature and allegiance is the consistent evil fruit of their hypocritical lives. **Galatians 5:19-21.**

This verse states that the believer in their new nature, does not, 'keep on sinning', for he or she guards themselves from temptation. The evil one cannot touch the believer who is walking in the fullness of their new nature, in the filling of the Holy Spirit because the Spirit's power is greater than Satan's. The word for 'touch', is the Greek verb, hapto, which means to grasp, or snatch hold of. Satan is like a street fighter trying to grab the believers as they go past him, so that he can do them mischief. Satan cannot do that if we are walking closely with God. He is powerless to do us harm as we walk in our new nature with the Lord, in the Holy Spirit's power. That is our challenge; to walk closely with the Lord in obedience to his Word, and in the fullness of his Holy Spirit. **John 15:4-10.**

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

We are in an evil world but we have the great Saviour, who is also the creator and Lord of all! We have a new nature received at salvation and the Holy Spirit within us to strengthen us and to guide us. We have therefore greater resources than the enemy; our challenge is to use them. This verse reminds us of the sobering fact that this world is, at this time, in Satan's pocket! The kingdoms of the world were his to offer the Lord in the first century and most of them are still his to offer to lust filled men today. **Matthew 4:8-10.** In the midst of evil we "know" whose we are – perfect tense – with eternal results, and on this solid ground of faith we pray for others. We are to pray for our government's leadership, the reason being, that we want the freedom to evangelize and preach freely. **Matthew 22:21, Romans 13:1-3-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, 1 Peter 2:13.**

We do not pray for the government to bring in the rule of righteousness, for they will not, but we pray for peace to enable us to fulfill the Lord's commands to us here upon the earth, "until He comes". **1 Corinthians 11:26**. Refer to the BTB study at the end of this section on the satanic control of this present world – WORLD.

There are good and bad governments, but the Lord's way to change people's destiny and heart, is not by what any government can do! The only way man is changed is by the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit in the individual's life. As believers we are the Lord's servants to ensure that his message is heard in the enemy's camps. We are ambassadors of the court of heaven upon the earth for a time to save some from the fire. **Ephesians 6:20, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Jude 22-23**.

Don't get distracted from the real task that you have here into playing politics. If a believer is in government, pray for them, for they will be surrounded by all sorts of evil people in the political world. Pray for them that they might be able to take actions that keep believer's freedoms intact and maintain or open up ways for the gospel to be freely preached to all in the nation. Do not underestimate the wickedness of the enemy's people or organizations, or you will be a casualty in the Angelic Conflict.

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.

This verse reminds us that we are to focus our lives upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who came, who died and who rose to defeat the enemies of mankind and open up the way of salvation for us all. Note the doctrines that John summarizes in this verse, for it is indeed a summary of the central message of the entire letter. The divine decrees (the Son), the incarnation, (the Son has come), Christian growth/maturity (understanding), the Holy Character of God (Righteousness and Truth), position in Christ (In him that is true), the Hypostatic Union, and the uniqueness of the person of the Lord (Lord Jesus Christ).

John underlines again that our strength and stability rest upon knowing him alone, and walking closely with him through life. Refer to the index of this volume and re-examine these doctrines in this book. We can rest in faith each day upon the stability of the truth that this is the visited planet, and that the Lord has come and given the message of deliverance for all. We can know the truth that he sets man free from the domination and fear of sin and death. We can know that his plan stretches unto "the heavenlies", and that in him we have eternal life. We can live in his power right now and witness to these truths each day in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We can celebrate eternal life right here and now.

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

Do not worship anything or anyone else in your life, other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Put God as number One in your life, and everything will be in perspective. Guard yourself from any man made or natural idols. All of us have things in our life that we are drawn to. They are not necessarily bad in themselves, but they may take us away from the service of the Lord. That is what an idol is. It is any object that takes our time, when that time ought to go in service of the Lord.

There are things we must give attention and time to, our marriage, our children, care for elderly parents, and earning money to feed and clothe our family. These are things that are commanded, and failure to do these destroys our witness, but there are other activities that have no spiritual or lasting significance and we get distracted from the Lord's service to follow them and so waste time that is the Lord's. Guard yourself from time wasting idols! Check out your life, do an audit of available time, and see what is stopping you from serving him more. Is it legitimate or not?

Walk close to him and you will be secure against fear and doubt and the enemy. Flee from idols for they will lead you away from him. Flee from anything that will draw you away from Him. If you are away from him you will be in fear and doubt and danger. "Little children keep yourself from idols!" Amen.

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. We are to pray from all brethren who we have concerns for regarding their sinful life styles. Our task is to pray, never to gossip. If you have any concerns for a brother or sister, pray for them.
2. If a person has entered into the area where the sin unto death might occur, you are called to pray until it is clear what is going on, and even then there may be a targeted prayer you can make on their behalf. Once it is clear they have died the sin unto death, you are to move on in life, remembering the lessons from their death, but not being distracted by them. Remember the church didn't stop and hold long formal and emotional funeral services for Ananias and Sapphira, they simply buried them, said a prayer, and kept moving onwards. So must we.
3. Keep yourself from any activity that separates you from being useful to the Lord your God. Stop doing anything that has become a time wasting idol in your life. Identify these "idols" and target them for elimination from life.

DOCTRINES

OVERCOMER - see index of doctrines

WORLD - see index of doctrines

SIN: SIN UNTO DEATH

1. There is a sin unto death (1 John 5:16, 17, 1 Corinthians 11 :31,32)
2. The sin unto death is the physical death of a believer, where ultimate discipline is administered to the Christian due to unconfessed sin of a serious nature.
3. Confession of sin under the concept of I John 1:9 is the way to forgiveness.
4. Examples of sin unto death:-
 - (a) The Corinthian Pervert - (1 Corinthians 5)
 - (b) The Corinthians who habitually came to the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)
 - (c) Moses (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)
 - (d) Achan (Joshua 7:16-26)
 - (e) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1 -1 1)
5. Whilst there is a sin unto death there is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus - all believers (Romans 8:1).
6. The effect of the sin unto death is to reduce the time which a believer can spend on earth accumulating good of eternal worth. The gold, silver and precious stones of I Corinthians 3:11-15.

Notes

THE 2ND AND 3RD LETTERS OF JOHN

John has been called by many commentators the “apostle of love”, but by the Lord he is called a “son of thunder”. John was, as an unbeliever, a rough and tough man, who was short tempered and readily exploded. He is, as we have seen, still a blunt man, but his short tempered nature has been transformed by the Lord to one of loving concern for his flock. Love is the theme of this tough character, but it is the “tough love” that speaks and acts in love and truth, without compromising either.

This is the definition of the modern concept of “tough Love”; it is love in action that does not compromise what is true, right and moral. In today’s psychology we have a term called “Reality Therapy”, or “Truth Therapy”. It means the blunt confrontation with the reality of a situation, with no excuses allowed to avoid confrontation with the truth. That is John’s approach here.

As we have seen, love does not mean that you do not tell the truth, it means that you are absolutely truthful in the spirit of loving concern for their absolute well being. For instance in 1 John we have seen him tell people that when they reject God’s word they are calling God a liar. This is blunt, but also loving, as it shocks with the purpose of changing the person’s viewpoint. John has his eyes fixed firmly on worship towards the Lord, and opening up any opportunity to share the truth with the ones for whom Christ died.

In 2 and 3 John we see him deal with the main problem which still besets the church, namely false teachers who appear to be teaching the truth but are not, and are actually leading people into spiritual, relationship, and even financial disaster.

How do you deal with these people? This is overlooked by many people today under the guise of what they call ‘love’. They will say, “let’s just love our enemies and leave things to work out, for they always do”, but John does not do that, at least not in the sense of modern liberalism. If lies are left to work their evil, they work out fully and fatally; they work out into the lives of everyone around who is deceived by them, and the lies destroy them all!

It is not a loving thing, when you let a person mislead the innocent, nor is it love, when you leave a person in potentially fatal error that you can correct. Love cares enough to confront and correct. God’s truth is to be known, for the other persons eternal destiny depends on it. Love confronts error with the truth, in order that the innocent are safe, the confused person is corrected, and the evil person is silenced.

These two little letters illustrate these principles of “tough love” in action, and are vigorously attacked by the liberals. A liberal for instance will not believe that John wrote these epistles at all, for they do not want to accept them as having any authority at all, for they rebuke them and all who are like them. It is true, the author of these two letters does not call himself an apostle in either of these letters. He calls himself, ‘the elder’. However when John wrote these letters, in the closing years of the first century, he was truly the elder; he was in his nineties, and he was the only surviving apostle.

Most conservative scholars agree that the author is the apostle John, as did the earliest churches. These are the letters of ‘the old man’ of the church, at the close of the first century, to us at the beginning of a new one. They are letters that remind us that being sloppy is not being a good Christian. The Lord was not sloppy, nor weak, nor did he avoid confrontation of evil with truth. We are called to stand for truth in love, and that means being like the Lord and the apostles. John sets us his example here. These are the letters that illustrate “Tough Love” towards the fake teachers, and those they have misled, or tried to lead astray.

2 JOHN

2 JOHN 1 – 6

“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; 2 For the truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. 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. 4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 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. 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.”

KEY WORDS

Elder	presbuteros	the older man, the servant and leader.
Elect lady	eklektos	chosen, selected, special in God’s sight.
Love	agapao	present, active, indicative; I keep on loving.
Known	ginosko	perfect, active, participle ; have known
Truth’s	aletheia	The lasting results of true doctrine in view.
Dwelleth	meno	the divinely revealed doctrines of the Word. present, active, participle; keeps on dwelling

Shall be	eimi	future, middle, indicative; will be surely.
Forever	eis ton aiona	“unto the ages” – until time is no more.
Be with	eimi	future, middle, indicative; will be. Middle voice – benefit to all.
Grace	charis	God’s unmerited favour towards us
Mercy	eleos	mercy, kindness, good will to assist helpless
Peace	eirene	tranquility, harmony, unity, peace of mind. Also the concept of prosperity and security.
Truth	aletheia	absolute truth of God’s Word – doctrine.
Love	agape	desire for the ultimate best for the person.
Rejoice	chairo	aorist, passive, indicative; receive a spirit Of rejoicing – Holy Spirit fruit.
Greatly	lian	greatly, exceedingly, above measure.
Found	eurisko	perfect, active, indicative ; discovered Lasting results of the discovery.
Walking	peripateo	present, active, participle; continuing to Conduct ones life in a manner.
Received	lambano	aorist, active, indicative; received in past.
Beseech	erotao	present, active, indicative; I am begging To beg, entreat, request with passion.
Have had	echo	imperfect, active, indicative; have had from the very beginning.
Love	agapao	present, active, subjunctive; we should be in the habit of loving the brethren.
One another	allelous	fellow believers.
Walk	peripateo	present, active, subjunctive; we should live Ought to conduct our lives according to God.

REFLECTIONS

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

Peter uses the same term elder to describe himself in his first letter. **1 Peter 5:1**. Peter uses this term in association with his directions to the leadership of the church, and urges them to feed upon the Word and teach it faithfully. He warns in this section particularly about false teaching from Satan himself, exactly as Peter does. **1 Peter 3:9, 5:2-9**.

John, in calling himself an elder, stands in this Jewish leadership tradition where the elders of a community were tasked with reminding the younger members to hold firm the traditions of the group. It is this very Jewish concept that is behind this letter. It is a basic tenant of leadership within the church also. Refer to the end of this section for the BTB studies on CHURCH – MINISTERS, PASTORAL AUTHORITY, SHEPHERDING THE SHEEP.

The words 'truth' and 'love' are the two linked themes of the letter. Who is the elect lady and her children? We do not know. It may be a phrase for a beloved church, or for a beloved individual who had been a great support for John. We will find out in heaven, let's save time speculating down here. The love of the mature believer is seen here for the church/people who are brethren in the Lord. He loves this person (or house church) 'in the truth', and that means he will tell them the truth about where they are, and the dangers they are walking into.

We are also challenged to remember that we are all, in Christ, “elect” in the Lord. The doctrine of election has been a source of great controversy since the Reformation, and John Calvin’s reading of the subject, following Augustine of Hippo. We are called to return to the apostolic understanding of election, and it involved worship and praise. If any debate over election does not end in mutual worship and praise to God for his great salvation, then the debate was off the apostolic track!

Paul and Peter also referred to the churches they wrote to as “elect”, and we need to understand fully what they meant, not what Calvin meant. **Ephesians 1:3-5, 1 Thessalonians 1:3-4, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, 1 Peter 1:2**. Refer to the end of this section and examine again the doctrine of ELECTION. Note the use of the perfect tenses in Greek again here in this section. We are “known”, with everlasting results, and we are secure in the heart of the Lord Jesus, and that certainty must overflow into our lives as we relate to others. The second perfect relates to John’s discovery of his disciples walking in the Spirit, and his discovery has eternal results for him in praise forever.

This bond of truth and love is the foundation of the relationship that we are to have with all who are in Christ Jesus. It is a relationship of honesty and openness; a relationship that expresses mutual care for each one’s ultimate wellbeing. This is the true expression of agape love. We can love them in the salvation truth we share, and we have a fellowship, not only with them, but with all who through them, love the Lord and his Word. **John 8:32, 10:10, 1 John 2:20-21**.

It is the love of the truth that binds us together, and only disobedience and unconfessed sin in our lives can break that fellowship and love. This is why sin is so awful for the believer? It is awful because it breaks our fellowship with God and also destroys the love we can share with our brethren in Christ. Refer to the BTB study of CHRISTIAN LIFE – LOVE.

Verse 2. For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

He writes to encourage them, for the sake of the truth that abides in us all forever. John is straight into the doctrine of eternal security and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of Truth". He is reminding this person (or church) of the things that give us stability in the midst of pressures. When we face pressure or testing, we must first regroup ourselves in the foundations of our faith; remind ourselves of the stability of our faith, the security of our position and the love of God for us that goes on forever. Then we face the troubles that will inevitably come to all in this world. **1 Corinthians 9:23, 2 Corinthians 4:5.**

In all debate and trouble we will face, we must first regroup ourselves in the truth of the Word of God, and ask, "What does the Word say about this situation?" We then seek the indwelling Holy Spirit's guidance on the matter through the Word and his teaching ministry upon it. We seek to be corrected, if we need to be, so that we stand upon biblical certainties only! The stable truth of the Word of God, and the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit are the two great truths upon which we rest, and from which we move forward to solve any problems. **John 6:36-40, 63-69, 15:7.** Refer to the BTB study HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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.

He has a special problem to be faced in these letters which demands an alternative approach rather than to simply give the gospel. The problem in 2 John is firstly, what must be done when a false teacher comes to the church and wants to speak, and secondly, what must be done when an elder, who will not deal with a false teacher, actually welcomes them. To address these inter-related issues we must begin on a firm foundation, and that is the place we have in Christ Jesus. John begins with our grace foundation. **1 John 2:21-25, 4:10.**

He begins this verse with the reminder of the Lord's gifts to us; grace, mercy and peace. These things are to characterize our responses to all things. We also have the three witnesses; the Father's plan, the Son's sacrifice, and the integrity of God's Word that is taught to us by the Holy Spirit. Everything is based upon and comes to us in 'truth and love'. These two characteristic being the two that stand for the totality of the perfect character of God, for it is God's character and plan alone that gives us stability as we face challenge and error in the church, or in our personal life. **Romans 1:1-7, Philippians 1:2-8, 1 Timothy 1:2.**

Truth is at the core of true faith; if there is no truth, we have no faith or hope, and finally no mental stability at all. **1 Corinthians 15:16-22, 2 Timothy 1:7.** We see this today with people denying that the Bible is the Word of God, they doubt the virgin birth, the miracles of Christ, that the Old Testament is history, they cannot accept the physical resurrection, the Second Coming, etc. There is then little left and that person has become a true liberal in their theology. The church thus becomes a hymn singing rotary club, praying to the "god of all nations" and doing good deeds to each other, in total spiritual confusion and without hope, or eternal life.

Such a liberal faith is no faith at all. Those who have this weak, "wishy-washy" view of God and his plan (or lack of it) and so cannot have strength when facing any challenge, nor can they have guidance when facing challenge to their beliefs, for they do not believe in a God who has acted, acts, and will yet act in history. They want a watch-maker, not a judge! It is totally without logic, for a Creator who has died for his creatures will require accountability from them if they ignore Him!

Biblical faith is so much more powerful than illogical liberalism, for it rests upon facts and realities as to who God truly is. God's truth will not fail, for it is based upon his perfect character. The big question in this letter and to us is, will we fail? God will not fail, his plan is perfect, you are part of it, but will you lose your way by straying aside from the true path? Will you give up on God's Word? God's blessings will only come upon you in the place of truth and love, as shown in this verse. Refer to the BTB studies, GRACE, MERCY, PEACE, CHRISTIAN LIFE – OBEDIENCE.

Verse 4. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

Note what makes John's day. What really makes him feel great is that those he loves are walking in the truth, hand in hand with Jesus and each other, in accordance with the standards set by the Father. The first commandment of the Lord is "love one another", and so John reminds the church that this is at the heart of Christian living. **John 15:9-17.**

Notice that John says, the commandment was received "from the Father". The apostles heard this command from the Son, but by stating that it was the Father who gave the command, John reminds us that the Lord did exactly what the Father required. **John 8:16-28, 10:15-18, 25-30, 36-38, 12:26-28, 49-50, 14:6-24, 27-31, 15:23-26, 16:15-17, 28-32, 17:1-10.** That is a major theme of the Gospel of John.

As you read through these verses from John's Gospel you can see the power of John's record of the Lord's words. The Father and the Son are together in the plan, and the things said by the Son are said by the Father. The Holy Spirit is sent by both to reinforce the words given. **John 14:16-20, 16:7-16.** Refer to the BTB study GOD – PLAN OF GOD.

Notice also the dynamic way John refers to the Christian's daily life. He rejoices with their "walking in truth". There are echoes here of **1 John 1:6-7, 2:3-6.** He rejoices in their habitual pattern of living in the path directed by the truth of God's

Word. As he made clear in his first letter, it is the habitual nature of sinfulness, or obedience to the Word, that illustrates where a person really belongs, and to whom they owe their allegiance. **1 John 3:4, 14, 24, 4:17-19.**

God calls us to be strong in his Word and work that faith out in action to build the church in the local community. This has always been God's plan; faith leading to actions which are sweet music to the ears of God. Obedience is true Worship. **Hosea 14:9, Zechariah 8:19, Malachi 2:5-7, Ephesians 5:8-18.** Fake brethren speak many words, but do not obey!

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.

The repetition of the command to abide in love appears superfluous to many, yet John's repetition reminds us that we all too often forget the central truths of our faith and our love grows cold as we get distracted and walk away from the path the Lord has for us. **1 John 2:7-8.** John makes his request in a passionate and powerful way, reminding us that there has been a growing cold within this lady of love for the Lord and the saints. **Revelation 2:4-7.**

It is so easy to drift away from the place where the Lord is central to life, to a lesser place. We must guard ourselves from this, by walking daily in close fellowship with the Lord, in prayer constantly, for then we will experience the overflow of love to our brethren. **Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 4:2-5, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.** A life that does not overflow in concern to other believers is not the life of a Holy Spirit connected believer! To be connected to the Lord powerfully is to overflow in agape love! **1 John 3:11-24, 4:7-21.** If the real power flows the lights of love are on!

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.

True love for God is expressed in our obedience to the things he commands us to do. We cannot say, 'Lord, Lord' and disobey a clear command of his! The Lord's most powerful warning against false prophets and teachers in Matthew 7 reminds us that not all who cry out in pseudo-spiritual fervor to God are saved! By the fruits of the life is the heart known, and we are to be known by our love for God and one another. **Matthew 7:15-27.**

The command of the Lord is clear, and it is to keep on walking in love. There is no other foundation for eternal security that can be laid in this life than this one. Only genuine relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ saves, and such a relationship overflows into daily life in acts of agape love to others. Refer to the BTB studies below on CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUBMISSION, WALKING, and CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. The sign of the true pastor is that they love their flock as a parent loves their child. Let us audit our bank of love today and be sure we are growing in agape love for others under our care. Let us be searching for ways of showing practical love to the flock of the Lord.
2. Grace, mercy and peace are the results of walking with the Lord in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Let us ensure that we manifest these fruits of the Holy Spirit's presence to all we meet. Let us ensure that there are clear channels of blessing in our life down which God can pour his love to others.
3. Walking is an intuitive movement of the body forward. If you try to walk consciously you will fall over by tripping yourself up. To walk successfully you just put one foot in front of the other and allow your brain to coordinate things. This is what God wants us to do with the Holy Spirit in our life. We are to just let the Spirit move within us and advance down the path he has for us. Let us walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OBEDIENCE - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING - see index of doctrines

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SUBMISSION

1. This means to humble oneself in willing service to another, with the connotation that it is for your good. Genesis 16:9, 1 Peter 5:6, Hebrews 13:17.
2. We must fully surrender ourselves to God. James 4:7, Romans 12:1-2 As the Lord made himself obedient unto death so must we. Philippians 2:18.
3. We are, in Christ to submit ourselves each to the other within the church. This involves putting the spiritual needs of others ahead of any personal interests. Ephesians 5:21.

4. Within the church believers are to submit to the teaching authority of the pastor as he preaches from the Word. Hebrews 13:17, 1 Corinthians 16:6, 1 Peter 5:5.
5. A wife is to submit herself to her own husband within their marriage. This involves respect for him as her spiritual leader and protector. Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:4 -5.
6. Children also are to submit in love to their parents' authority under God. Colossians 3:20.
7. All believers are to be in submission to the laws of their land, unless those laws violate the clear command of God. Romans 13:1, 2, Matthew 22:21, 1 Peter 2:13-17, exception example, Acts 4:15-20, 5:40-42.
8. Workers are to be under authority of their employers and their managers. Colossians 3:22-25, Ephesians 6:5-8, Titus 2:9, 10, 1 Peter 2:18-24.
9. Those in authority have a special responsibility to treat those under them with care and respect. Colossians 4:1

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

1. True Christian character is Christ like ness. Ephesians 4:13.
2. True Christian character is produced by dealing with sin regularly. 1 John 1:5-10.
3. True Christian character is produced by feeding on God's Word and applying it in life in the power and filling of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 4:1-2.
4. It is in tune with the will of God for the life, by being responsive to the Holy Spirit in all the daily details of life. Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19.
5. Character is formed by the power of God working on an obedient, yielded life. Romans 12:1-2.
6. Character radiates God's power and presence through the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23, Colossians 1:11.

CHURCH: MINISTERS

1. Used for political leadership in a nation (Romans 13:4).
2. Used as the pastor of the local church (Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23,25; Colossians 4:7; Ephesians 6:21; 1 Timothy 1:12).
3. Used for all believers (2 Corinthians 3:6; 4:1; 6:4).
4. Origin - in the classical Greek the word was used for those who rowed in the lower decks, the place of greatest toil on a ship - a servant or slave.
5. Principle - The minister should see himself as the servant as well as leader of his flock.

CHURCH: - PASTORAL AUTHORITY

1. Christ taught with authority and so should his men in his ministry. Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:27, John 5:24-30.
2. All spiritual authority comes from God, and if legitimate, is of God, and its exercise will bring glory to God. Matthew 21:23, Mark 11:28.
3. Christ has authority over all things. Mark 1:27, Luke 4:36.
4. Christ has delegated some authority to some members of his body the church, by way of special authority gifts. In the church this is the gift of pastor-teacher. Mark 13:34, Luke 19:17, Hebrews 13:7,17.
5. In the early church the apostles were the leaders in authority (above even the pastors), given specially at the beginning to establish the church. Luke 9:1, 2 Corinthians 10:8.
6. No woman was given this authority within the early church, and the language of the passages where the gift is discussed indicate that none ever will be given the gift. 1 Timothy 2:12, 1 Corinthians 14:34,35.

7. Pastoral authority is not a cause for boasting, it is a grace gift received from God. 1 Corinthians Chapter 12.

It is leadership based on service for the saints in a spirit of strong humility, as the Lord made it clear all his leaders should have. John 13:5-17.

It is an authority that carries with it a great responsibility to pour themselves out for the saints. 2 Corinthians 10:8, Galatians 6:3-5.

8. Ministers must be clear and open about their authority; there must be no softness on any issue that affects the Word of God. Their authority is not over the private lives of the people but over all matters of doctrine and practise of it; their authority is authority to teach so that all will see the truth clearly. If they are wrong in their teaching they are to be convinced from the Scriptures by their elders. Titus 2:15, 2 Corinthians 13:10, 2 Timothy 4:2.

9. Age is not to be a barrier here, as a called pastor may be younger than many he will teach. 1 Timothy 4:9-12.

10. If a believer cannot take the authority of a called pastor teacher they will not tend to grow spiritually at all. Pride is often the reason people will not heed the pastor's authority. 1 Peter 5:5,6, 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13.

11. If the pastor becomes apostate then he becomes an object of the Lord's discipline. If the church cannot convince him of his error he may be removed, or the people must withdraw from him to make room for the Lord to judge. 1 Timothy 6:3-5, James 5:19-20.

CHURCH: SHEPHERDING THE SHEEP

1Peter 5:2-4. "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; 3 neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

1. As pastors we are all "fellow-elders", equals before God, tried by suffering, focused and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and with a heart for service, and an expectation of glory within to drive us.

2. We are to "shepherd the flock; loving, self sacrificial service is in view here.

3. We are to feed the flock; they must not starve when they are with us.

4. They are God's flock, not ours. We have the care and responsibility, but we answer to the Lord himself for our work with the flock he has given us.

5. We are to exercise oversight, so as to receive a good report from the Lord, and we are to be focused, as we serve Him, on His well done not anything else (Matthew 25:21-23).

6. We are to serve in a free way, under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, not from any other "constraint". No compulsion is to drive us except the desire coming from within from love for our Lord.

7. We are to be as keen as a volunteer, and with all the passion that this involves.

8. Lust for money, power, authority, position, or reputation, are not to be a part of our lives at all. Such lust for power is illustrated by Diotrophes (3 John 9-10).

9. We are to be filled with passion, ready to serve, with total zeal for the task to which we are called.

10. Not lording it over the flock, as monarchs or dictators.

11. Being patterns, role models that others can follow in holy and joy filled living.

12. Being focused on winning the crown of glory, that is the eternal reward for the pastor who serves well. This involves being prepared to wear the crown of suffering in time with glory in our hearts, for they are fixed on eternal realities, where our true reward will be received.

Lazy pastors, power or money hungry pastors, are strongly rebuked here, and are reminded that the Lord's expectation of them is serious, and the consequences of failure or success (as the Lord determines it), are eternal. The Lord is the Chief Shepherd, he is the one to whom we must give account, and it is his well done that we are to focus on.

GOD: ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

1. The Biblical concept of predestination does not conflict with human freewill.

2. Christ was predestined for a specific purpose from eternity past - to go to the cross and be raised to glory (Isaiah 42:1, 1 Peter 2:4-6, Acts 2:23)
3. All members of the human race are potentially elect by the Father under the concept of unlimited atonement. (2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 2:2)
4. When a person trusts in Christ for salvation, he is united with Christ and therefore shares His election and destiny (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30, Romans 8:28, 32, Ephesians 1-4)
5. Election is closely linked with foreknowledge. In eternity past, God knew who would believe, He therefore predestined them, called them, and they were saved (Romans 8:29-30, 2 Timothy 1:9)
6. Therefore, election and predestination applies to the believer only. No person is predestined for hell - it is a choice of freewill (John 3:18, John 3:36).
7. Election is a present and future possession of every believer. (John 15:16, Colossians 3:12)
8. Election is also the foundation of the universal church. (1 Thessalonians 1:4)
9. There are five Greek words used in conjunction with predestination.
 - a) Pro Orizo - to predesign (Romans 8:28, 29, Ephesians 1:5, 11)
 - b) Protithemi - to predetermine (Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:9)
 - c) Prothesis - a predetermined plan (Romans 8:28, 9:11, Ephesians 1:11, 3:11, 2 Timothy 1:9)
 - d) Proginosko - to foreordain, to preordain. (Romans 8:29, 11:2, 1 Peter 1:20)
 - e) Prognosis - foreknowledge or predetermined purpose (Acts 2:23, 1 Peter 1:2)
10. The life of Judas is a good illustration of predestination and freewill.
 - a) God's call is to all people, His desire is that all will be saved. (Matthew 28:18-20, John 3:16 1 John 2:2, 3:23)
 - b) God is long suffering towards the lost, not willing that any should perish. (2 Peter 3:9)
 - c) God's call is to all, but people must respond. (John 3:36, 16:8-11)
 - d) God's call is of love. (Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16)
 - e) Those who resist become hardened in their souls and open to Satanic influence or possession. (Romans 1:20-32, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)
 - f) Judas was chosen in love by the Lord (Matthew 10:1-4, John 13:18) and received the sop of the honoured guest and sat at the Lord's right hand at supper.
 - g) However Judas was a thief and a traitor. (John 12:6, 13:18)
 - h) As an unsaved man he was involved in evangelism. Others were probably saved through his reading of the word but he was not. (Matthew 10:1-8)
 - i) He became the Son of Perdition by his decision, he could not blame anyone else (John 17:12)
11. Drawing (gk. elkuo) means to draw, lead or impel. In this case the drawing or calling is in love. All the elect will freely respond to the work of the Holy Spirit. The drawing provides the motive to respond.
12. All people are called to repent, but only the elect are drawn. (John 3:16, 36, 12:32 16:8-11, 1 John 2:2)
13. Believers, Called Ones, Elect, are all names for the same person. God calls, the Holy Spirit works, we simply respond to the call of Love. (Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16)
14. The calling provides the motivation for the expression of love in the unbeliever who is positive towards salvation. (Philippians 2:13)
15. God can thereby give His gift of salvation to the elect. (John 1:13, Romans 9:16 Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5-6)
16. God therefore gets the glory for His work, we get the benefits (Jude 24-25)
 - (a) God planned it in eternity past.
 - (b) God provides it at the cross.
 - (c) God prepares for it in the life by conviction.
 - (d) God provides the motivation to accept the offer.
 - (e) God gives the gift of salvation to the elect.
 - (f) God gives the Holy Spirit to the new believer.
 - (g) God has prepared a new body for the believer.
17. Christ was elected from eternity past (Isaiah 42:1, 1 Peter 2:4-6). Election of the believer means we share the election of Christ and share the destiny of Christ.
18. This election of Jesus Christ occurred under the concept of Divine Plans (John 15:15, Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2)

19. Each believer shares the election of Christ through positional sanctification. (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30, Romans 8:28, 32, Ephesians 1-4)
20. This election occurs at the moment of salvation. (1 Thessalonians 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 1:9)
21. Election therefore depends on the positive application of the free will of man to God's plan. (John 3:16)

GOD: PLAN OF GOD

1. In eternity past, God designed a plan for every believer, which takes into account every event and decision in human history.
2. The plan centres around the person of Jesus Christ. (1 John 3:23, Ephesians 1:4-6)
3. Entrance into the plan is based on the principle of grace. (Ephesians 2:8, 9) where the sovereignty of God and the free will of Man meet at the cross. God brings salvation which is complete, Man brings his faith.
4. God's plan was so designed so as to include all events and actions. (1 Peter 1:2)
5. Under his plan God has decreed to do some things directly and some through agencies, Israel, the Church.
6. Without interfering with human free will in any way God has designed a plan so perfect that it includes cause and effect, as well as provision, preservation and function.
7. There are many functions in the Plan of God. They all constitute one whole comprehensive plan which is perfect, eternal and unchangeable.
8. The plan of God is consistent with human freedom and does not limit or coerce human free will. Distinction should be made between what God causes and what God permits. God causes the Cross but permits sin. God is neither the author of sin nor sponsors sin.
9. His plan portrays that man has free will. God never condones sin in the human race. Man started in perfect environment and innocence. Man sinned of his own free will. Man will sin in the perfect environment of the Millennium.
10. Distinction should be made between the divine plans which are related to the plan of God and divine laws which regulate human conduct on the earth. Divine laws occur in time, divine plans occur in eternity.
11. God's plans derive from His foreknowledge. He recognised in eternity past those things which are certain. The foreknowledge of God makes no things certain, but only perceives in eternity past those things that are certain.
12. There is a difference between foreknowledge and fore ordination. Fore ordination establishes certainty but does not provide for the certainty which is established. It is the plan that provides. (Romans 8:29, Acts 2:23, 1 Peter 1:2)
13. Therefore the elect are foreknown and the foreknown are elect. God knew in eternity past what way each free will would go for each particular problem in life. God does not coerce human free will but he does know what way each freewill will choose at any given time. As free will decides so God provides.
14. Since God cannot contradict his own character he plans the best for the believer. God is perfect, his plan and provisions are therefore perfect.
15. The cross was planned in eternity past but the human free will of Christ decided for the cross at Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:39-42) God has provided salvation through the cross and it is a free will decision as to whether one accepts it or not.
16. No plan in itself opposes human freedom but once a choice is made from the free will then the plan limits your human freedom. At the same time it gives you the freedom to love and appreciate God. God lays down the means of living the Christian life.

GRACE

1. Grace is all that God is free to do for man on the basis of the cross. Therefore Grace is unmerited favour from God.
2. Grace depends on the character of God therefore Grace depends on who and what God is. Grace is what God can do for man and still be true to his own character.

3. The believer must recognise the difference between legalism and grace. Legalism is man's work intruding upon the Plan of God, rather than obeying the instructions of the Plan.
4. The greatest thing God can do for the saved person is to make them exactly like His Son Jesus Christ. This is accomplished in three stages of sanctification.
5. Positional Sanctification: At Salvation every believer enters into union with Christ. (Hebrews 1:2) Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father and is therefore superior to all angels in his humanity. At the point of salvation we are entered into union with Christ thus we are positionally higher than angels. We are positionally seated with Christ at God's right hand.
6. Experiential Sanctification: During the Christian's life on the earth the time spent under the power of the Holy Spirit. During this time we produce the character of God in our lives - gold, silver, precious stones. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)
7. Ultimate Sanctification: When the believer receives a resurrection body we lose the sin nature and all human good. At this point the believer is physically superior to all angels. We remain in this perfect state eternally.
8. All believers have tasted of Grace at least once (1 Peter 2:3). This refers to the point of Salvation at which the believer receives at least 34 things which we did not earn or deserve. (Ephesians 2:8, 9.) Disorientation to grace is the believer's greatest occupational hazard in our Christian life. (Galatians 5:4, Hebrews 12:15)
9. The divine attitude to grace is expressed in Isaiah 30:18-19. God is constantly waiting to pour out his blessing on all believers in the Christian life.
10. Grace in salvation is expressed in many ways. It is always the same - believing in Jesus Christ (Psalm 103:8-12, Romans 3:23-4, Romans 4:4, 5:20, Ephesians 2:8, 9)
11. There are many ways in which the Christian life expresses GRACE:
 - a) Prayer (Hebrews 4:16)
 - b) Suffering (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10)
 - c) Growth (2 Peter 3:18)
 - d) Stability (1 Peter 5:12)
 - e) Lifestyle (Hebrews 12:28, 2 Corinthians 1:12)
 - f) Production of Divine Good (1 Corinthians 15:10, 2 Corinthians 6:1)
12. Grace is the correct attitude in relation to giving. (2 Corinthians 8 & 9)
13. Grace is the only means of coping with suffering in the Christian life. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Through Grace God is able to bless the believer in the midst of the pressures and adversities of life. (1 Peter 1:6,7)
14. Implications of grace:
 - a) God is perfect, his plan is perfect.
 - b) A perfect plan can only originate from a perfect God.
 - c) If man could do anything in the plan of God the plan would no longer be perfect.
 - d) A plan is no stronger than its weakest link. Grace therefore excludes all human merit, all human ability.
 - e) Legalism, human works is the enemy of Grace.
 - f) The works of human righteousness have therefore no place in the plan of God. (Isaiah 64:6)

MERCY

1. The Hebrew and Greek words for mercy carry the meanings of, gentleness, tenderness, and compassion towards others.
2. It is not a passive concern but an active one that works out to help the one in need of love and concern.
3. God is merciful towards us all. Exodus 33:19, Romans 9:15, Isaiah 13:18, Jeremiah 6:23, 21:7, cf 1 Kings 8:50, Jeremiah 3:13, 42:12
4. God is rich in mercy towards us. Ephesians 2:4, James 5:11, 1 Timothy 1:2, 2 Timothy 1:2, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:3.
5. People appealed to the Lord on the basis of his mercy towards the weak and needy. Matthew 9:27, 15:22, 17:15, 20:30, Mark 10:47, 48, Luke 17:13, 18:38, 39.
6. The "Good Samaritan's" acts were praised by the Lord as acts of mercy. Luke 10:37
7. When the rich man appealed to Abraham in the story of Dives, he appealed on the basis of mercy Luke 16:24.

8. As we are recipients of mercy so we must be merciful to others. Zechariah 7:9, 10, Luke 1:50.
9. Grace gives us that (blessing) which we don't deserve; mercy withholds that (judgment) which we do deserve.

PEACE

Three types of peace are referred to in the Bible.

1. Peace on Earth:- The unlimited peace when Jesus Christ establishes his millennial reign on the earth. (Isaiah 9:6, 7, Isaiah 11:1-12, Luke 2:14)
2. Peace with God:- Which comes when a believer is born again as a result of justification by faith (2 Peter 1:1,2, Ephesians 2:14-17, Philippians 4:9) - Reconciliation.
3. Peace of God:- Which is the peace of believers in their soul and spirit who have cast all their cares on the Lord (1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6,7) - The Spirit filled life.

2 JOHN 7 – 13

“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. 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 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. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. 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. 13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen”

KEY WORDS

Deceivers	planoi	vagabonds, roving bands, wanderers, leaders astray
Entered	eis-erchomai Ex-erchomai	aorist, active, indicative; entered into. some MSS aor, act, indic; went out into.
Confess	omologeō	present, active, participle; keep on affirming.
Come	erchomai	present, middle, participle; entered into.
Look	blepo	present, active, imperative; Look out! Beware!
Lose	apollumi	aorist, active, subjunctive; might lose.
Wrought	ergazomai	aorist, middle, indicative; have worked/produced
Receive	apolambano	aorist, active, subjunctive; might receive
Full reward	pleres misthos	full and complete payment of wages
Transgresseth	parabaino	present, active, participle; oversteps, violates Keeps on Neglecting the standard of God and wandering away.
Abideth	meno	present, active, participle; does not stay within Staying within the bounds of doctrine.
Come	erchomai	present, middle, indicative; is coming to you.
Bring	phulasso	present, active, indicative; is not keeping on in Guarding true doctrine, and keeping to truth.
Receive	lambano	present, active, imperative; keep on receiving.
Biddeth	chairo	present, active, infinitive; be verbally greeting. Wishing for the other people Grace upon them.
Partaker	koinoneo	present, active, indicative; keeps on being with In fellowship with such a person.
Greet	aspazo	present, middle, indicative; keep on greeting.

REFLECTIONS

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.

Just as in the days when the first letter went out, false prophets have come in and said that Christ had not come in the flesh. The enemy is always about, and the only defence against false doctrine is to walk in true doctrine. **1 Peter 5:8-11.** The enemy has always had more workers in the field than the Church has had! False prophets/teachers outnumbered all the true prophets all through Israel's history, and we should not be surprised that today, as in John, Paul's, and Peter's day, the enemy outnumber us on the ground. The genuine believers have always been a remnant! Refer to the BTB study REMNANT. Get used to walking with Jesus alone, for you will often be dealing with loneliness.

If you want to be with the crowd on the "broad way", you are on the path to destruction. **Matthew 7:13-20**. We are well warned about the presence of the enemy as wolves in sheep's clothing! **Matthew 10:16, Luke 10:3, Acts 20:29, 1 Timothy 4:1-11, 2 Peter 2:1-22, 1 John 18-25, Jude 3-4**. Don't be distracted by numbers and apparent "success" of some churches and ministries, for the numbers may simply reflect their carnality – for carnality "sells".

These false teachers were to be called in the next century to John's, the 'Docetists', after the Greek verb that means, 'to seem', for they argued that the Lord only appeared to be human. By attacking the true nature of the Lord they attacked the central truth of the incarnation and salvation. Any attack on the unique person of Christ is a serious attack on the truth of the gospel. It is to be opposed firmly by the truth. Refer to the BTB study on CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS, HYPOSTATIC UNION, VIRGIN BIRTH.

If you look at those who have been captured by the cults from church membership and ask them why, and how they were captured and led astray, you will find they were people who did not know the truth of God's Word, or if they did know it, they were not walking in conformity with it. The cults go hunting on Sunday mornings for this reason. They know they will find disobedient believers at home then. The cults have always sought to destroy the faith of the weak. We become weak because we walk in ignorance, or we walk away from close daily fellowship with the Lord.

Peter says that Satan walks around like a roaring lion seeing whom he can devour. Lions spend ninety percent of their time sleeping or watching animals, and will always and only attack the straggler, the isolated, or the weak. Those who are working against Christ, on Satan's orders, are targeting weak, under fed believers, or those who are not walking closely with the Lord. Don't make yourself an easy target believers! Refer to the BTB studies, ANGELS – COUNTERFEITS OF SATAN, SATAN'S STRATEGY.

Verse 8. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

The cults door knock on Sunday morning to pick up the Christians who are not at church. If you have a little bit of knowledge it can be twisted because your grasp on the truth is so weak. There is a principle of learning and memory, that what you do not use you lose. If you do not practice God's Word you will forget the truth, and if you know only a little and do not advance, then you will be overwhelmed by events that you lack discernment to understand. However if you walk in the truth, and grow in the truth, you are protected from the deceiver. You either stand in the doctrine of God's Word, or you will eventually sit in the company of Satan's people.

The heretics were saying that Jesus Christ was not a real person but just a spirit; that he did not truly die on the Cross but had a spiritual resurrection. The false teachers of today mostly say that Jesus Christ was just a man, and not God, but they share the Docetist's viewpoint regarding the resurrection, believing it was a spiritual thing; that Jesus rose in the hearts of the disciples! Both of the heresies have the same source - Satan. Refer to the BTB study on RELIGION.

Verse eight says strongly, look to yourselves, or look out, lest you lose what you worked for, namely your stability and confidence. Paul had the same concerns for the Colossians in **Colossians 2:18-23**. Fake religiosity is the ace trump card that Satan likes to play. His religious systems have a fake spirituality to them that appeals to the natural man, and so he deceives many. The Lord himself warns against deception even to the very end of this present age in the months before his second advent. **Matthew 24:4-5, 23-27, John 4:36, Hebrews 12:15-17**. Many have, like Esau, sold their spiritual birthright in lust for a good meal, or some other thing this world can give, and lived to regret it. **2 Timothy 4:10**.

As the pastor of these people John agonizes over them lest they have their confidence robbed from them by the false teachers. He wants them to receive a 'full reward' for their time upon earth and not lose out because they got side tracked by error. Remember, ever moment we spend out of fellowship is a time we cannot earn eternal rewards, with which to glorify the Lord in heaven. Every moment away from the truth is a moment lost forever! We don't have the time to be led astray, nor do we have a minute to waste on error for eternal rewards are at stake. **Daniel 12:3, 1 Corinthians 3:8-14**. Refer to the BTB study CROWNS AND REWARDS.

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.

The false teachers said that if you went with them, you got closer to God, and that the spiritual being "Jesus" was simply an 'image' of God, so drawing near to God was the issue, and for a price they could help you. John corrects this, by noting that if you move away from occupation with Christ, from his teachings, and from obedience to his every word, then you move away from God. If you do not have the Lord and his Word within you do not have God within!

These false teachers were anxious to be known as the 'advanced group', who were moving beyond thinking about the words of Jesus, to attain unity with the God-head. Their views were much like the Eastern cults that talk about attaining 'godhead'. John bluntly recalls us to the historic apostolic faith, with It's emphasis on the Lord Jesus Christ as the unique person of the universe, the only Saviour, and Lord of all, and the one by whom we come to know the Father.

There is no coming to the Father except by him, and there is no knowledge and relationship with the Father except through the Son. Refer above again, to the comments made on verse four, to see the power of the Gospel record of the Lord's words concerning his identity with the Father's purpose, plan, and person. **2 Peter 2:1-3, Jude 1-5**.

Verse 10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

In the ancient world, where hospitality was a way of life, this was a revolutionary thing to say. It was expected of people to support their brethren, irrespective of any previous disputes they had between them, and it was a disgrace if people didn't practice hospitality. John makes it clear that there is a higher standard to that of cultural expectations.

He is firm in his point, that if a person does not agree with the historic doctrines of the Bible you are not to give them a welcome to your home, nor even say a blessing or greeting to them. The biblical doctrine of separation is to be applied correctly, and in the apostolic manner. It is not to be falsely applied to those who just disagree with you, but only with those whose witness and beliefs are totally opposed to the apostolic faith. Refer to the BTB study at the end of this section, SEPARATION, and CHURCH – PASTORAL DISCIPLINE.

What do you do when a person comes to the local church and after discussion you find that they do not believe the doctrines of the truth or have perverted the truth? John is very clear. You do not receive them, nor ask for them God's blessing, because by doing so you become associated with them, and their evil deeds. When you support a false teacher/believer, you in effect encourage them to stay in their evil, thus not encouraging them to repent and return to genuine fellowship. To give any comfort to those following a path of evil is to encourage that path, and no such help is to be given, for we are to have no part in evil. **Revelation 18:4-7**. An unbeliever was to be given water, **Proverbs 25:21**, but the false teacher was to be given nothing, lest people think you support their words!

This is harsh and for some difficult, but we are instructed to do this by John, and as he was directed by the Holy Spirit, we are to be obedient. If you welcome a person who is living in evil and teaching false doctrine you are welcoming the evil they are doing. We must not condone or encourage others in thinking evil is OK if you are involved. As a minister you are going to be very unpopular if you do this but you need to teach this passage and explain to your people why John says this. You cannot avoid this issue otherwise the truth will be evil spoken of. The key element of doctrine that is at stake is the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ and the results and powerful effectiveness of his ministry. You are Jesus' ambassador, and are not to greet/comfort the enemy in any shape or form. **2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 6:20**.

Verse 11. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

To greet or welcome an evil teacher is, in God's sight, to give approval to what they teach. To feed or water them is to enable them to teach more evil and mislead others. We can have no part in the work of Satan. This is far more tough than most of us would be, but this is the apostolic standard and we are obliged to keep to this. It is this serious! The enemy will otherwise deceive and destroy more, and he will do it with your help.

I have seen many evil teachers operate over the years, and stories have come back to me from others, that they are my friends or allies in the work! We cannot stop lies being told, but we must be very careful in our contacts with evil men and women, and be clear about **NEVER** giving any support or comfort to evil teachers, for they will quote our actions as supporting them, and so may make others believe them, because they claim we support them! **Ephesians 5:11-18, 1 Timothy 5:22**. As we face the last days of the Church, the satanic forces are more malice filled and determined than ever before to pull down any clear witness to the truth, and what better way than to say we are with them!

Verses 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. 13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen

John says that there were a number of other matters that he will talk to them about when he gets there, but this problem and its solution is recorded for the Church at large for immediate action. The direct orders of the apostle are clear. Do not allow evil to go unchallenged, do not welcome it in the church. Do not even let an observer think you might tolerate evil. Do not give comfort to any preacher or teacher of evil. You cannot hate the evil and keep loving the person; you are called to put them out of the church and have nothing to do with them at all. They have made their choice – it is for evil!

How can we influence them then? Only by telling them the truth at the time we expel them, and refuse them any support or fellowship, making it 100% clear that the reasons for our rejection of them is their doctrine, and that such rejection will continue as long as they hold that viewpoint. Only if they repent and change are we then to greet them, as Paul gives guidance. **1 Corinthians 5:1ff, 2 Corinthians 2:1-11**.

There are issues that need to be dealt with quickly, by letter, email, or phone call, but there are other things that can await a personal visit and John has decided that the rest of the subjects that he wishes to share with them can await that personal visit. The result of all interactions in the church should be joy and the other fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Where there is anything else, the reason can only be sin or evil that is yet to be dealt with. John has cleared away the evil issue and so now joy can flow freely between all the believers who are united in Christ Jesus. If there is not a time of fruitfulness in a church meeting, then sin or evil is present! It is that clear from Scripture. No Holy Spirit fruit = no true relationship with the Lord! **Romans 8:9**.

Let us be aware of the spiritual "feel" of each meeting we enter into, and if we sense the darkness, let us expose the cause and having dealt with it, then let us then enjoy the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Believers are almost surprised when they enjoy a meeting, as if it is a wonderful, but strange thing, for the Holy Spirit to bless them.

Prayer is often made by leaders for the Holy Spirit to bless and come upon a meeting, yet if there is no unconfessed or unconfessed sin and evil present, then the Holy Spirit will burst forth from each believer and unite the group in the power of spiritual fruitfulness. Let us be obedient to the scriptures; confront sin or evil, deal with it, and confidently expect the blessing of the Holy Spirit within each life that is sold out to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a "normal" Christian meeting!

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Let us deal with sin and evil in a biblical manner whenever we realize the enemy has made inroads into the church family. Let us recognize his inroads will increase in our own last days, as they had in John's last days.
2. We are challenged to see that any sin or evil issue that confronts the church must be dealt with immediately and biblically. There is to be no delay where any weak believer may be influenced by the evil one. We are to move with speed to deal with sinful and evil ideas before they destroy the lives of the weak saint.
3. A person who persists in their evil doctrine (Anti-Biblical) is to be rejected from fellowship and not even to be greeted or given any blessing at all. Unbelievers may be greeted and even given food and water, so that the love of the Lord is shown to them, but to those who teach evil in the name of Jesus nothing is to be given, lest they claim we support and agree with them. No-one is to be in any doubt about our attitude towards these people. They are to be rejected totally, until they repent of their false ideas and return to truth.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS - SATAN'S STRATEGY - see index of doctrines

CHRIST - FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS - see index of doctrines

CHRIST - HYPOSTATIC UNION - see index of doctrines

CHRIST - VIRGIN BIRTH - see index of doctrines

CHURCH - PASTORAL DISCIPLINE - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE - CROWNS AND REWARDS - see index of doctrines

RELIGION - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION - see index of doctrines

ANGELS: COUNTERFEITS OF SATAN

1. Doctrine of Demons (1 Timothy 4:1)
2. Communion Table (1 Corinthians 10:20-21)
3. Ministers (2 Corinthians 11:12-15)
4. Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
5. Spirituality (Galatians 3:2-3)
6. Righteousness (Matthew 19:16-28)
7. Power (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
8. Gods (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)
9. Religions (Matthew 23)

REMNANT

The following steps to be taken when choosing to be among the remnant.

1. Make a clear understanding of God's Word the priority - 1 Timothy 1:3-6, 4:6-16

2. Develop power in intercessory prayer which is exemplified in the ministry of Elijah - 1 Timothy 2:1-5
3. Stir up, develop and exercise your spiritual gift - 2 Timothy 1:6-7, 13,14, 2:15
4. Pursue purification and sanctification - 2 Timothy 2:19-22
5. Prepare for and expect persecution. 2 Timothy 3:10-12
6. Develop endurance, spiritually, mentally and physically - 2 Timothy 2:1-3, 4:5
7. Live expectantly in the light of eternity - 2 Timothy 4:8

3 JOHN

The theme is again love and truth. In this letter we have three men, Gaius, Demetrius, and Diotrophes. Gaius is a stable mature believer. John rejoices that Gaius is standing for true biblical doctrine. He is encouraged to continue in his practice of providing hospitality for traveling pastors. In 2 John we have seen the importance of discernment regarding hospitality; ensuring that we do not offer any comfort to those who preach falsehood, or practice evil, lest we partake of their evil. This man has been discerning in his hospitality and so is a true servant of traveling Gospel ministry. He is well known for this.

If you were a Christian pastoral worker, Gaius would give you a good welcome, a meal and a dry bed. By being discerningly hospitable we become fellow helpers and ministers in the spread of the Gospel truth. When ministers traveled in the ancient world they took no money from unbelievers. They went out to be supported by the church alone.

As a matter of principle the Christian church did not, and should not, receive funds from unbelievers, as the unbeliever could construe that salvation could be purchased. They need a Saviour and must believe in Him and understand that they cannot buy their way into heaven. No "good works" on their part will do anything other than place them in the Lake of Fire. **Revelation 20:12-15.**

The only monies received for ministry are to be from believers. Exceptional circumstances may mean that some things are received from an unbeliever, but each situation where anything is received needs to be prayed over and the pastor involved needs to be sure as to why they are doing what they are doing, and the nature of the gift must not be a consideration, only the impact upon the giver. The only focus upon the lost is their salvation and all that might be done to achieve it.

Sadly today, as in John's day, there are Christian churches, organizations, and ministers, which go and beg money from unbelievers, as they do from Christians also. This is wrong and creates a false impression for unbelievers. The organizations the "beggars" administer may do good works but by taking unbelievers money for "Christian work" they can muddy up the water of salvation in the process. If they are doing the Lord's work they will receive money from the Lord, if not, then the Lord will not provide the money. That is the only way to run a ministry; where you place the accelerator and the brake of the ministry under God's control.

The basic rule for ministry is pray for provision, and as it comes in, give thanks and keep working. As the money stops, pray more and seek the reason for the Lord's tightening of the purse strings. If we are doing the Lord's work we will not lack anything to accomplish his purpose, for it is his work, and he will not allow his work to be short, for he lacks nothing. If we are short the reason is on our side, not God's. When we have needs we pray, and we seek the Lord's reasons behind any shortage. The only question to be asked is always, "What is God doing here, and what is our task within this?" Prayerful obedience is our response to all challenges as we find the Lord's assigned task for us.

This is the reason why we do not beg or even ask politely for funds for the EBCWA ministry, for we seek to practice the apostolic faith, and they expelled from the church anyone who asked for money in the church. Grace was their "modus operandi", and it must be ours also, if we seek a biblical path.

3 JOHN 1 – 8

"1 The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 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. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 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: 7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth."

KEY WORDS

Well beloved Love	agapetos agapao	the one who is loved – his character is “lovely”. present, active, indicative; keep on loving. Both this man and John’s character “in the truth” draw them together in mutual concern for each other’s welfare. The fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work in both lives draw them together in love for each other. This is the sign of genuine Christian fellowship – each loves the other, and it is expressed in their mutual love of the Word of God.
Wish Above all Prosper	euchomai peri panton eu-odoo	present, middle, indicative; wish/desire/pray in all respects – purpose of John = next verbs. present, passive, infinitive; to be led along a good path in life – with good things happening because of the nature of the path and the quality of the guide. The Spirit filled/led life is in view.
Be in health Prospereth	ugiaino eu-odoo	present, active, infinitive; to be sound/strong. present, passive, indicative; that his body may receive good inner guidance and empowerment, just as his soul keeps on getting from the Holy Spirit. Body and soul led along good and healthy paths
Rejoiced Greatly Testified Walkest	chairo lian marteureo peripateo	aorist, passive, indicative; rejoiced, praised. rejoicing that was open, warm, and seen by all. present, active, participle; were testifying. present, active, indicative; you keep on living Consistent pattern, habits of a godly life.
Joy Walk Doest	chara peripateo poieo Ergazomai	joy in spirit, gladness of heart. present, active, participle; keep on walking present, active, indicative; keep on doing aorist, middle, subjunctive; work as able Doing whatever you can – choice in this.
Faithfully Charity Bring forward	pistos agape protempo	according to doctrine – obedient to the Word love, concern for ultimate wellbeing of others aorist, active, participle; sending on the way The concept here involves material support.
Godly sort Shalt do well Went forth Taking Nothing Gentiles	axios kalos+poieo exerchomai lambano medes ethnos	worthy of God future, active, indicative; will do well aorist, active, indicative; went out on the way present, active, participle; habitually taking nothing by way of serious provisions/victuals the unbelievers, as all who are not members of The new body – the Church.
Ought	opheilo	present, active, indicative; we keep on being We are in debt to, have ongoing moral obligation
Receive	apolambano	present, active, infinitive; habit of receiving Infinitive of purpose – it is God’s purpose to
Fellow helpers	sunergoi	fellow laborers in the common work.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

The letter is addressed to Gaius, who like all brethren is called, 'beloved', but John adds in “well-beloved” here to emphasize the great affection he has for this saint. This is a lovely title that we all have in Christ Jesus. We are beloved, and should be living like it, and when people think of us they should think of us well with affection for our good works!

He is loved by John, both because of his works for the saints, and because he stands in all the details of his life, 'in the truth'. The unity that binds us is the unity we have in the truth of the Word of God. Gaius is stable in the truth of God’s word, and so John can have a stable relationship with him because of that. This is the foundation for stable relationships within the church that the believers are walking in the truth.

This man Gaius is discerning and as such can be a good friend, mentor, adviser, support, and even counselor for John. Can the child mentor his/her father in faith? Yes she/he can at times, as the father in faith can fall into despair and his child in faith then has the privilege of ministering comfort to him. Comfort is meant to be shared around, and what we show to others can come back to bless us later. That is God’s plan; for there to be mutual blessing in the church family.

This man may be the Gaius of the riot in Ephesus. **Acts 19:29-41, 20:1-5**. This man was a leader of the church, a convert from Derbe, and was beaten up badly in Paul’s place on the day of the riot. If this is the man, and we must remember Gaius was a common name at the time, then he was a man who stood for truth from the beginning in the Roman provinces of Greece and Asia. **Romans 16:21-24, 1 Corinthians 1:14**. He would be a very old man, like John, if this is the Gaius of Paul’s ministry days. It may explain why John wishes him bodily strength and health below, but remember, it was a very common name – we will meet him in heaven – wait till then to be sure.

Verse 2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

John's prayer is that he prospers, and is in good health, even as his soul is prosperous with the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It is not wrong to wish believers health and wealth, for the stable and spiritual believer will use both to further glorify the Lord. Wealth is not something we are to seek, but it is certainly something we can use to further the Lord's work, if the Lord's path for us calls us to walk with wealth. It's a lot harder to walk with wealth, than with poverty, for in poverty you cannot forget you need God, but in wealth you can forget your vulnerabilities! **Proverbs 13:7-10, 30:7-9.**

This having been said, notice that the word used to describe "prosperity" is a good describing a "good path in life", and indicates more moral and spiritual wealth than financial. John's desire for this man is that he be kept by the Lord in the place of maximum service to the Lord and his church. This is the prayer for all mature believers for all others in the Lord's service. **Psalms 20:1-5, Philipians 2:2-4, 25-30, Colossians 1:3-11.** Refer to the BTB for the studies on CHRISTIAN LIFE – SERVICE, STEWARDSHIP, THANKFULNESS.

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.

It is always a joy to hear of the practical spiritual witness of another believer or church, and John rejoices in the witness of the life of Gaius. This should be our aim, should it not, to be a cause of glory for others? We are here to be a blessing to our brethren, and a servant to our Lord. Gaius was a glory in both areas.

The purpose of our lives upon the earth after salvation, is that we might bear spiritual fruit that adorns the Gospel message and draws unsaved people to Christ, and draws lovers of the Lord to worship. We are meant to be a blessing and a source of joy. **John 15:5, Romans 1:9-10, 2 Corinthians 7:6-7, Colossians 1:7-8, Philipians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.** All those who cause rejoicing have one thing in common; they walk habitually in the truth of the Word of God. Refer back to the BTB study on WALKING. Praise for the life witness of brothers or sisters should be ever on our lips, with prayer for their continued spiritual prosperity and blessing. **Ephesians 1:15-18.**

Verse 4. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

There is no greater joy for John that he hears that those he has taught are walking as they should in the love of the Lord, and the service of his church. This is the evidence of the author being an old man, for this is the sentiment of an older pastor teacher. As we grow in years and the service of the Lord what dominates in our thought, is the desire to see our children in the faith reach more of the lost for the Lord, and grow spiritual stronger through their own years. John's desire is for his spiritual children to grow and be a blessing, and be more and more blessed by the Lord in their walk with God. **Proverbs 23:22-26.**

Many put their efforts into their biological children to make them wealthy and financially successful, yet often the greatest family we can have is our spiritual family through the work of the Holy Spirit. **1 Corinthians 4:14-21, Galatians 4:19-20.**

Every person we have led to the Lord is our child in faith, and every believer we have nurtured is our adult adopted child. Many believers rob themselves of their greatest family joy by ignoring this spiritual dimension. Some Christian couples spend thousands of dollars on infertility treatment, as if having a biological child is the purpose for their being upon the earth. It is not! The instruction to Adam to "fill the earth" is well and truly fulfilled!

Our focus must be on what the Lord seeks us to do as a couple, and for us not to simply fall into the things all others do. Having a large family may be the Lord's plan for us, but it most likely is not, and we ought to seek his face in these things in today's world. Our spiritual children are equally or more important to any physical ones we have.

Verse 5. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;

The greatest compliment that can be paid to us is that we are faithful workers for the Lord, doing whatever we can. We all have limits as to what we can do; these will be limits of time, money, transport, and personal gifting and ability. It is working right up to our limits, under his direction, that is what the Lord requires of us, and for which he delights to bless us. We are not called to live any other person's life, or to be like them; we are called to play the part God has for us in the unfolding drama of redemption. Refer to the BTB studies on CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONSECRATION, DESTINY, DEPOSIT, IMITATE CHRIST.

The Lord will not ask us why we were not more like another person, but he will judge us on the basis that we fulfilled the destiny that he called and equipped us for. He has called us as ourselves, and requires we be the people we are called to be. This is what is behind the parable of the talents. **Matthew 25:15-30.** We are each given different gifts, different things to do, and different paths to walk through life, each path to be personally guided along by the Holy Spirit. It is walking our called path that is eternally rewardable, and it is that goal alone that is to be at the heart of our prayers. **Luke 12:42-44, 16:1-13, 2 Corinthians 4:1-7, Colossians 3:17, 1 Peter 4:10-11.**

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:

It was the custom to escort a visiting teacher from the city, walk with him for several miles and ensure he was provided with food and money for the next journey. This is what John alludes to here. Gaius has been hospitable while teachers were in the city, and then did the culturally appropriate thing in escorting them beyond the city limits, providing for their journey. He has been rightly recognized by the church for these acts of agape caring and protective love.

The testimony of the lips, and the life, and the wallet, are all important, and we ought to have the reputation of charity and practical caring towards the saints. The Lord asks us to love each other as he loved us. This may mean we drive people around, put them up in our home, provide clothes, food for functions, or money to assist them. We may pray for them and journey with them in dangerous places, but whatever we do we do as a testimony of our love for the Lord and so to all who love Him. **Romans 15:22-24, 2 Corinthians 1:15-16, Titus 3:12-15, Philemon 5-7.** As we read these verses we see the apostolic expectation of assistance at each step of the way in the spread of the Gospel message. If we could have this same expectation, what would we achieve in our ministries?

Verse 7. Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

We should all be eager to serve the Lord's servants in any way we can, for this is the fruit of the love of God in our hearts; that we are eager to assist in any way those who serve the Lord we love. In accordance with the Lord's commands the Bible teachers of old would take nothing from the unbelievers amongst whom they walked, but trust to the local churches to feed and clothe them as they required after their initial provisions were used up. They walked out in faith and through love they were to be looked after. They were sent out by the local churches, so we are not talking about individuals sponging off the local churches. **1 Corinthians 9:11-18, 2 Corinthians 11:7-9.** Pastoral workers operating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are entitled to be supported, but those who just travel for their own plans and goals should support themselves.

There is a modern disgraceful practice whereby young Christians from wealthy homes, head off and backpack their way around the world, taking advantage of Christian charity in third world countries. Many in our day have used other's charity and so stolen from poor people, who felt obliged to give charity to these wealthy prats! Such things are great evils. If believers from the wealthy West visit their poorer brethren in the third world, they ought to be going there to bless them and bring support; they must not sponge off them and take food out of the mouths of their starving children.

John's people were sent out to minister, are preachers of the Gospel message, and they could trust and depend upon other local churches to assist them because they were united by a bond of love and truth. This is God's way of providing for his own so that we all are blessed; both the teacher, who in faith, gives teaching and receives support, and the believer who receives teaching and gives support in loving appreciation. Refer to the BTB study on CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING, and also WELFARE.

Verse 8. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.

John says that the believers should be keen to receive teaching, and also equally keen to provide monetary support to those who bless them, in order that by so doing they can be fellow helpers to the advance of the truth. If the truth is being taught, and you are a supporter of the biblical teacher, you are a 'fellow helper' of the truth, and under God's blessing, and that's where John wants us to be. **1 Corinthians 3:5-9, 16:10-11, 2 Corinthians 6:1-3, 8:23-24.**

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Does our soul prosper? Do we experience the blessing of the Lord in the midst of pressure situations? If the answer to these questions is "no", then we need to deal with sin and move forward spiritually again. The aim of the Lord is that we all prosper in his Holy Spirit's ministries. Let us pause and ensure we are walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit at this point, and have the prosperity of soul that the Lord desires for us all.
2. If we leave a thing behind on this earth when we die, it is not prosperity of soul! The teaching of the "Prosperity Gospel" is the spreading of a false concept. It is error. The Lord will give us what we need of the things of this world to accomplish what we need to accomplish, but having us rolling in money here is not the Lord's plan. Any money or goods received are to be used for the real purpose of being here, which is serving Him, being ambassadors, and serving his people. There will always be enough money in the church to accomplish everything; the challenge is for each to pray and each to look at what they have and ask daily, "Lord, how can I use what I have for your work today?" Let us do this daily.
3. We are to be a source of rejoicing for others. How long is it since you heard your name being praised by another for the joy you have brought into their lives? This is to be a goal for each of us, each week; to be a source of blessing and joy. Let us focus on any work the Lord has called us to do, and do it in such a way as to bring joy to our own soul and rejoicing to others.
4. Supporting Christian ministry is our call as believers, and it comes directly from the Lord and the apostles. Let us be discerning in this matter. We need to ensure we do not spend our money on the support of those who do not do the work of the Lord but consume the Lord's money on their own lusts! Let us be known as Gaius was, as people of charity towards the Lord's people and the Lord's work.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONSECRATION - see index of doctrines

WELFARE - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SERVICE - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE: DEPOSITS

The Christian life has a number of deposits:

1. First Deposit - at salvation the believer makes a deposit with the Lord. (2 Timothy 1: 1 2) You deposit your life with the Lord.
2. Second Deposit - in the Christian life the Lord deposits Bible doctrine with the believer - through teachers and personal study. (2 Timothy 1: 1 4)
3. Third Deposit - the believer in the Christian way of life deposits his fears, problems, pressures, (1 Peter 4:19) with the principle being found in (1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 55:22)
4. Fourth Deposit - the believer in the Christian way of life deposits the gospel with the unbeliever. (Romans 1: 14)

CHRISTIAN LIFE: - DESTINY OF BELIEVERS

1. He who believes in Jesus Christ has eternal life now (1 John 5:11-13). He will never die (John 11:25,26, John 8:51)
2. Believers are said to "fall asleep" at their death (1 Thessalonians 4:14). The soul departs to be consciously present with Christ, but the body "sleeps" in the grave until the resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)
3. When Christ comes at the Rapture, the bodies of those in Christ shall be raised from the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23)
4. Our physical bodies will be replaced by immortal bodies (2 Corinthians 5:1-4) - conformed to the body of Christ (Philippians 3:20-21)
5. We shall be like him (1 John 3:2) seeing His glory and reflecting it in ourselves (Colossians 3:4, John 17:22).
6. We will be rewarded because of works of faith (Luke 19:12-19) which will vary in proportion to our faithfulness in serving God (Matthew 6:20, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)
7. In the Millennial Kingdom, we shall reign with Christ as priests of God and Christ (Revelation 20:6).
8. To the overcomer (1 John 5:4-5) Christ will give to eat of the tree of life (Revelation 2:7) and shall not be hurt by the second death - the lake of fire (Revelation 2:11). He will be given authority to rule over nations (Revelation 2.26-27) Jesus will acknowledge the believer before God (Revelation 3:4-5) who will be made a pillar in the temple of God. (Revelation 3:12) and will be seated with Christ in His own throne. (Revelation 3:21)
9. God will wipe away all tears from his eyes; sorrow, crying, pain, and death shall be no more (Revelation 21:4)
10. We shall know all things perfectly (1 Corinthians 13:12)
11. We will receive an incorruptible inheritance. (1 Peter 1:3-5) kept by our all powerful God in heaven.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: GIVING

1. Giving is an important part of spiritual life. It includes your attitude, the giving of yourself, your capacity as well as your possessions. Giving is as much a part of worship as praying, singing, listening to teaching, observing the Lord's Table, reading the Word. It is a function of priesthood for team work and often to sustain the work of leadership.
2. Basic Principles of Giving
 - (a) Old Testament Giving - this giving was grace giving just as it is in our age. (Proverbs 11:24,25)
 - (b) New Testament Giving - (2 Corinthians 9:7) also grace giving.
 - (c) Tithing - this means ten per cent. It was a form of income tax in Israel. Offerings or giving were above this. Tithing was for all Jews, offerings for believers only. It should be remembered that Israel was a theocracy.

- [i] In Israel two tithes were required annually
 - [ii] Tithe 1 - for the maintenance of the Levites (Numbers 18:21, 24) Civil servants in a theocracy.
 - [iii] Tithe 2 - for national feasts and sacrifices (Deuteronomy 14:22-26)
 - [iv] Every third year a third tithe was required:-
 - [v] Tithe 3 - for the poor of the land. (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29) Social security. In (Malachi 3:8-10) it mentions tithes and offerings, the tithes to be brought to the storehouse or treasury.
- (d) The time to give - the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2)
- (e) How much - as God has prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2)

3. General Scripture on Giving. (2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9)

- (a) 2 Corinthians 8:1-8. Contrasts the Macedonian givers to the Corinthian givers, the former having been made poor by Roman oppression gave liberally. The Corinthians, the richest Church in Greece, gave sparingly.
- (b) Giving is an attitude of grace and inner happiness rather than compulsion or the amount donated (2 Corinthians 8:2)
- (c) Before money is given you must give yourself. (2 Corinthians 8:5)
- (d) Giving is as important an act as any other act in the fellowship. (2 Corinthians 8:7)
- (e) Giving is love giving not law giving (2 Corinthians 8:8)
- (f) Giving depends on being oriented to grace, the prime example being the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- (g) Money given in the Lord's service must be properly administered. (2 Corinthians 8:19-21)
- (h) If you give in grace you reap bountifully. If you give in legalism or with strings you reap sparingly. (2 Corinthians 9:6)
- (i) How to give. Giving is a reflection of your character, by grace not habit. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- (j) God has given unto us his unspeakable Gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15, 1 Peter 2:24)
- [k] Giving should be regular. 1 Corinthians 16:2.
- [m] As we are prospered so we give: God provides the capital with which to give. 2 Corinthians 9:7-10.
- [n] Mature believers are most effective givers. 2 Corinthians 9:10. Generosity of mind leads to generous giving. 2 Corinthians 9:11. Philippians 4:14-18.
- [o] The pastor's logistical support comes from giving: He makes an issue out of the word never money, if he does his job God will provide the money. Pastor provides spiritual food and receives money for physical needs. Mutual blessing is thus assured, as the people show their appreciation for the ministry of the word. 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, Philippians 1:3-5, 4:10, 4:14.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: IMITATE CHRIST

1. Imitation is the foundation of discipleship, the surest and quickest method of training - 1 Corinthians 4:16
2. The Corinthians could imitate Paul, for he was imitating Jesus Christ. In context the imitation has to do with self sacrifice for the cause of the ministry - 1 Corinthians 10; 23-33, 11:1
3. As the believer imitates Christ he reflects the character of the invisible God. Here the imitation relates specifically to God's love expressed in forgiveness - Ephesians 4:32, 5:1-2
4. Peter illustrates the fact that the minister of God's Word is to be an example to those he teaches - 1 Peter 5:2-3
5. To become an example you first must be an imitator. - 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
6. Imitation is the primary teaching method of Jesus Christ - 1 Peter 2:21
7. The call of "follow me" was used by ancient rabbis to call their disciples to a life of learning by imitation - Matthew 4:19, John 21:19,22
8. The principle of imitation is conformity. - Matthew 10:24-25; Luke 6:40
9. This principle was fulfilled when the training of the disciples was finally completed. - Acts 4:13
10. The quest of the pastor teacher must be to imitate Christ and to be imitated in the faith. - Hebrews 13:7

CHRISTIAN LIFE: STEWARDSHIP

1. There are a number of promises related to good stewardship. (Luke 6:38, Acts 20:35, 2 Corinthians. 9:6, Hebrews 6:10, 13:16)
2. We are to distribute to the saints. (Romans 12:13)
 - a) Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - b) simply (Romans 12:8)
 - c) to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)
 - d) faithfully (1 Corinthians 4:2, Luke 21:1-4)

3. Stewardship in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Psalm 112:9; Proverbs 11:24,25; Ecclesiastes 11:1; Malachi 3:10).
4. Stewardship for the rich is given in (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

CHRISTIAN LIFE: THANKFULNESS

1. In everything we are told to give thanks. In (1 Corinthians 1) Paul gives thanks for a number of items concerning God's provision.
2. Thanksgiving for grace (v 4).
3. Thanksgiving for spiritual wealth (v 5).
4. Thanksgiving for witnessing (v 6).
5. Thanksgiving for spiritual gifts (v 7).
6. Thanksgiving for ultimate sanctification (v 8)
7. Thanksgiving for divine faithfulness (v 9):
 - a) Faithful to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9)
 - b) Faithful in not allowing too great a temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)
 - c) Faithful is He who calls you (1 Thessalonians 5:24)
 - d) Faithful in keeping us from evil (2 Thessalonians 3:3)
 - e) Faithful even when we are unfaithful (2 Timothy 2:13).

3 JOHN 9- 14

“9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 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. 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. 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. 13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 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.”

KEY WORDS

Wrote	grapho	aorist, active, indicative; purpose - I wrote
Loveth	philoproteuo	present, active, participle; keeps on loving To have the first place amongst them.
Receiveth	epidechomai	present, middle, indicative; receive hospitably
Come	erchomai	aorist, active, subjunctive; if I come to you
Remember	upo-mimnesko	future, active, indicative; will bring to mind
Doeth	poieo	present, active, indicative; keeps on doing.
Deeds	ergon	works – by his fruit he is known to be a fake.
Prating	phluareo	present, active, participle; utter nonsense Empty, evil charges brought against good men.
Evil words	poneros	evil words that reflect satanic doctrine/tactics
Content	arkouo	present, middle, participle; enough/satisfied
Receive	epi-dechomai	present, middle, indicative; greet hospitably
Forbiddeth	boulomai	present, middle, participle; who are desiring to
	Koluo	present, active, indicative; keeps on forbidding
Casteth	ekballo	present, active, indicative; throws them out
Follow not	mimeomai	present, middle, imperative; to not allow yourself To imitate such a person.
Doeth good	agathopoieo	present, active, participle; keeps on doing good
Doeth evil	kakopoieo	present, active, participle; keeps on doing evil
Seen	orao	perfect, active, indicative ; not seen – lasting

Report	martureo	To really see God's revelation = lasting results perfect, passive, indicative ; witness is given Testimony has lasting results – based in his Genuine witness of a life that has spiritual fruit
Bear record	martureo	present, active, indicative; keep on witnessing
Is true	eimi	present, active, indicative; keeps on being true
To write	grapho	aorist, active, infinitive; purposed to write
See	eido	aorist, active, infinitive; to see/know you (old)
Shortly	eutheos	immediately – very soon – any time now.
Greet	aspazomai	present, middle, imperative; greet!

REFLECTIONS

Verses 9 -10. While some desire to serve the Lord in assisting the traveling Bible teachers, some do not, for they are filled with anger, resentment, and the other fruits of the enemy, and their motives and actions betray their true master.

Verse 9. I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Here with Diotrephes, we have an apparently unsaved, or carnal, church politician. The politician, as distinct from the Statesman is known by their narcissism. The fruit of the Old Sin Nature is the self centeredness of the father of sin itself. These people are self centered, because they centre all things in their pride and arrogance. Such people will hate the humble servant of the Lord, for they will be convicted by the very presence of the Spirit filled believer, and they will resist the Spirit and so hate the believer even more. These type of people love to have the preeminence; they want the whole church to centre on them. They want to be the elder or deacon but do not have the spiritual gift or the maturity.

The fruit of the Old Sin Nature is the desire to be in the limelight; to be central and seen as important. The Lord's servants seek men to look up to their Lord. We are called to be like John the Baptist. **John 1:27, 3:25-36.** They want everybody to look up to them. They despise spiritual authority, as they want to rule in the strengths of their Old Sin Nature. All such people are Satan's men and women, and they cause great evils in church history by their deeds.

Who is meant to have the "pre-eminence" in the church? The answer of course is the Lord Jesus Christ! When individuals seek to be "top of the bill", and the centre of attention, they are not actually taking the publicity from other men or women, but directly from the Lord. They are desiring, seeking, and grasping the Lord's place – that's Satan's game! **Isaiah 33:10, Ezekiel 28:1-22.** Refer to the BTB study on NEBUCHADNEZZAR – PRIDE.

Read each of the following passages on the character of Christian Leadership and see the thrust of the Lord and the apostle's words. **Matthew 20:25-28, 23:1-12, Luke 22:24-27, Romans 12:10, Philippians 2:3-16, 1 Timothy 6:3-5.** God's servants do not seek titles and public acknowledgement of their position, for they seek the Lord's exultation; never their own. The ambassador seeks to honour their king, never draw attention to them self; arrogance and self importance is the fruit of the enemy's work, not the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Refer to the BTB study AMBASSADORSHIP.

This man denied hospitality to the Apostle John, and to those John sent as Bible teachers. To reject the bible teacher sent by the apostle may have meant the teacher had to walk twenty miles to another town without food. This was a serious matter. Note the acts of this evil man who believed he was the leader of the church. Re-read verse 10. This man would not receive the apostolic delegates, nor would he receive the old apostle himself. He would claim he was discerning, and he would say that he believed they were wrong, and so he could quote **2 John 10-11.** His error is demonstrated by his choices. We are always known by our choices and their results in our life, and by the company we choose as our own. Beware those who do not stand with good people and support them. **Matthew 10:40-42.**

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.

If a person in the first century was able to rebuff the Apostle John, you can be sure that there will be people out there who will snub you as a pastor or elder. Do not think that you have failed if it happens to you. Keep on following the truth even if you get thrown out of your congregation. If you have all the good people thrown out of a church, it can be a good thing, as you can then form a new church that stands for truth and love. What will then happen to the old church? The old one, run now by the pride of men rather than the Holy Spirit, will either prosper for a time in Satan's power, or it will go under God's direct discipline, and cease to exist. Some are baffled that an apostate church can grow, but they shouldn't be, for the enemy has always been able to draw a crowd – he lies easily, and entertains. The Lord told us that! **Matthew 7:13ff.**

Satan can always pull the numbers, for he appeals to weaknesses, be they carnal or religious. The end of his work is however, always misery and destruction. The Lord leaves some powerful Satanic deceptions intact, without destroying them, simply to make the choices for mankind more stark, between truth and error. Free will is the test in this world and the existence of Satanic churches is a part of this. Diotrephes was thorough in his opposition to the truth, but he provided a daily test for the believers. He refused to receive true teachers, abused and disciplined those who wanted to receive them, and cast people out of the local church who disagreed with him. What do we have then? We have a cult, for the

definition of cult centres around a central figure who must be obeyed, and cannot be challenged. Remember, all genuine pastors welcome testing of their words and actions, for they open themselves to the scrutiny of the Word of God, but cultists will not allow any testing or challenge. Refer back to the BTB study on ANGELS- SATANIC COUNTERFEITS.

Do not compromise and allow your self to be a party to evil. Accept that the enemies of the truth will infiltrate the churches, for there Satan's men can be more powerful and destructive of the believers, and that is his strategy, as we have seen above in the BTB study. Once one of Satan's people gets power, be sure they will use it to oppose all teaching of biblical truth. If you are treated as John and his leaders were, then rejoice that you are worthy to stand in their company, and oppose the evil teachers and their teaching. **Acts 4:29-31, 5:40-42, 7:59-60, 16:22-31.**

If you are defeated by the church in a vote and forced out, then move off rejoicing, to the place the Lord will lead you at that time. Shake the dust of the evil place off your feet, and keep moving with the Lord, in the power of his Holy Spirit. Do not weep for what a church once was, but see what it has become/will become, and act to stand for the Lord, not the beloved bricks and mortar of a familiar place. **Matthew 10:11-18, Luke 9:4-6, 10:3-16, Acts 13:45-52.**

I have had to move on from a couple of places due to apostasy, and each time there was great sadness, and one time it took me several years to recover fully from the grief of the hurt that evil doctrines caused to God's foolish people in that place. These were not wasted years, but were not pleasant as they could have been for the Lord's work, or for my joy. I however sat with my sadness, and recognized that my role was to be the "last voice" to those people, and that is not a pleasant role, but is needed. We must not weep too long over places that have come under judgment, but rather move on, having done our job in the apostate place, and then put all our energy into building up the true work elsewhere. There is blessing to be seen through obedience, even in sadness, and the king is to be glorified even through warnings given.

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.

John repeats the principles of the First Letter here. **1 John 2:29, 3:6-16, 5:1-3.** When you see an evil man, or men, take over a local church it will grieve you. When you are thrown out of a church it will hurt greatly, but leave it in the Lord's hands if you cannot defeat the enemy in that place, for he has too many people in that church. At times churches will go bad and that is the time when you quietly move on, seeking the Lord's guidance where to go. You keep moving forward. To pause too long and weep over Sodom is to end up like Lot's wife! Flee for your life from apostate people, their activities, and organizations that have been captured by them, no matter how great they have been before they fell! **1 Corinthians 6:13-20, 10:13-14, 1 Timothy 6:6-12.**

Recognize the principle, that the person who does evil habitually does not know God, and that our call under God is to do good. **Psalms 37:27-28, Isaiah 1:16-20, John 10:27-30, 12:26, Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Peter 3:10-17.** These are texts to meditate upon and draw strength from in difficult times of attack by evil church attendees and controllers. We are to imitate Christ, we are not to be tempted to copy in any way the evil man, nor are we to court his favour, no matter how influential he is in the church. **James 4:7.**

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.

For every Diotrefes, there is, in the Lord's good grace, always a man or woman of the other sort; a strong believer who stands for truth. Another fellow in town is Demetrius, who like Gaius, is also standing up to the bully. There are therefore, in every place, at all times, those who stand for the truth and those who oppose it, and this state of affairs will continue until the end of history. We must choose our company in this life, and stand with those who love the Lord and his Word, being ready to stand alone if need be. Often we may feel alone like Elijah, but we are not, any more than he was! **1 Kings 19:3-5, 11-18.**

God seeks men and women who will stand for truth and love in the midst of deceptive men and women, and will support true ministry irrespective of the personal cost to them. We want to be like the role call of the heroes of faith, and have as our testimony, that we have a good report from those who matter. **Acts 10:22, 22:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 3:6-10, Hebrews 11:32-40.** Finally, as this Age draws to its close, it is the Lord's opinion alone that should matter to us.

Verse 13-14. I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 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.

John again concludes that there are many other things that he has to see them about, but he is going to visit them, and he would rather save these things for his personal visit. There are things that can be addressed easily and without confusion or misunderstanding by email, telephone call, and letter, but there are other subjects that are best left for a personal visit. Wisdom in leadership knows which is which here. Because you stand for the truth you stand with God, and so it is vital that you pray through the issues before they are raised with the people. It is vital that you have the Lord's leading as to the right medium for raising issues and resolving them, as well as the right verses/doctrines to apply to the case.

You should relax in the truth in any leadership position. That means you do the right thing, in the right way, using the right means, at the right time, and then leave the results with the Lord. So you will enjoy the peace of God and recognize that, whatever happens then, you can retain your confidence as long as you hold to the truth and handle it carefully. In the middle of the trouble you can have joy if you are walking God's way.

We must stand firm, looking to the Lord alone for guidance in these matters, and walking carefully, so that we do not give offence, cause confusion, or create discord. In **Proverbs 6:12-19**, Solomon discussed the "Seven Deadly Sins" that the Lord hates. Sowers of discord amongst brethren are one of these! The fruit of biblical leadership is always good and life giving spiritual fruit. Refer to the BTB study on HOLY SPIRIT – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

The letter ends with the standard reminder from the old apostle that the church and people are behind him, and all are untied in love for the recipients. The result of walking correctly as a believer is always love, joy and peace. John greets them with a prayer for their peace. The blossoming of the full fruit of the spirit within the people is the desire of John's heart for them all. Refer to the BTB study on BLESSING below.

APPLICATION POINTS FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY

1. Apostate churches will grow and often financially prosper, and apostates will receive great physical and earthly position and apparent blessing. Remember, the enemy pays his troops well in this world, but there is evil fruit in the life for all such apparent blessing. Do not envy the enemy's people, or their apparent financial blessing. Keep focused upon the Lord and his work, and he will always provide enough to enable you to complete the task he has given you. Walk your called path alone if necessary, and do not envy the evil man on his comfortable path, for it leads to destruction.
2. When you must separate from apostate organizations there will be great pain at times, as you recall just how wonderful the place was before, when under godly leadership. Do not be distracted by the past reality, for it is already gone. See and decide actions on the present reality, for it is the truth! Move on without too much weeping over the evil ones and their choices. As the church buried Ananias and Sapphira without a great funeral, so do yourself. Keep moving onwards, without the backward glance. Do not love any place; love the Lord and his work alone, and set your heart only on his "well done"!
3. If any person "loves the pre-eminence" flee from them. Anyone who seeks to magnify himself is not centered in Christ Jesus. Any narcissism is a sign of satanic infiltration or control. Spot it quickly, rebuke and oppose it thoroughly, and flee from that place if it wins dominance. Have no part in evil or with evil people who seek only their own benefits.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS – SATANIC COUNTERFEITS - see index of doctrines

CHRISTIAN LIFE – AMBASSADORSHIP - see index of doctrines

GOD - THE CHARACTER OF GOD - see index of doctrines

NEBUCHADNEZZAR – PRIDE - see index of doctrines

APOSTASY

1. Apostasy means falling away.
2. Apostasy differs from backsliding. A true Christian can backslide, an apostate is never born again. eg. Judas Iscariot.
3. The backslidden Christian breaks fellowship, but doesn't lose his salvation. (John 5:24)
4. The apostate is declared in (2 Timothy 4:3-4) and (1 John 2:19)
5. Apostates may do good works calling themselves Christians but they should not be accepted as such. (2 John 9-11, John 10:12-13).
6. There will be a great apostasy prior to the Rapture (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER

1. Scripture views blessing as a sense of "peace and happiness". Peace (eirene) in the New Testament means both inner tranquillity of soul and great prosperity of Life. This is Paul's prayer for all believers that they might know the blessing of true God given prosperity. Romans 1:7, 1Corinthians 1:3, 2Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Colossians 1:2, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, 1Thessalonians 1:1, 2Thessalonians 1:2, 1Timothy 1:2, 2Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, Philemon 3
2. To be spiritually minded is peace, (Romans 8:6), i.e. to be thinking as God would have us think. Peace means contentment, tranquillity and spiritual prosperity in life. Paul uses this prayer as a greeting in many of his letters. It is similar to the Hebrew greeting, Shalom, which implies peace and prosperity.
3. Blessing comes by giving God and His righteousness first place. The details of life such as money, house, car, job, marriage partner are then able to be sorted out correctly. Matthew 6:31-34, 1Corinthians 10:13, cf. Philippians 4:11.
4. Believers should not have it as their aim in Life to be the richest person in the cemetery. Luke 12:16-21. Having eyes on money first is a foolish thing. Matthew 6:21 cf. James 5:1-6. Godliness and contentment are God's will for your life, irrespective of wealth or possessions (1 Timothy 6:6-12)
5. Our intimate relationship with Jesus Christ is our treasure (2 Corinthians 4:6-7).
6. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ - we share everything that He is (Ephesians 1:3)
7. God often uses material blessings to accompany spiritual blessing (3 John 2). However, we are to be content in all circumstances (Philippians 4:11-13)
8. Blessings from God include such things as:
 - a) Peace (Psalm 29:11)
 - b) Comfort (Matthew 5:4)
 - c) Riches (Proverbs 10:22)
 - d) Rain (Ezekiel 34:26)
9. The believers who enjoy God's blessings are:
 - a) Righteous (Psalm 5:12)
 - b) Just (Proverbs 3:33)
 - c) Faithful (Proverbs 28:20)
 - d) Pure in heart (Psalm 24:4,5)
10. God's blessings are secured by:
 - a) Delighting in His Word (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1 -3)
 - b) Obeying the Word (Deuteronomy 28:1,2; James 1:25)
 - c) Teaching from the Word (Psalm 94:12; Hebrews 12:5-11)
 - d) Kindness to Jews (Genesis 12:3; Psalm 122:6).
 - e) Generosity (Proverbs 11:26; Malachi 3:10)
 - f) Walking in God's way (Psalm 128:1-4)
 - g) Prayer (James 5:16).
11. There are blessings in the book of the Revelation for those who
 - a) those who heed the words of the book - 1:3, 22:7
 - b) those who die in the Lord - 14:13
 - c) those who are alert in the Tribulation regarding the Second Advent 16:15
 - d) those who attend the marriage supper of the Lamb - 19:9
 - e) those who are part of the first resurrection - 20:6
 - f) those who as believers will have eternal blessings in heaven. - 22:14

Notes

DOCTRINES

DOCTRINE	CHAPTER	PAGE
ABIDING IN GOD	1 JOHN 4	123
ANGELS – ANGELIC CONFLICT	1 JOHN 2	78
ANGELS - COUNTERFEITS OF SATAN	2 JOHN	155
ANGELS - SATAN – STRATEGY AND TACTICS	INTRO	21
ANGELS – SATAN'S WORK	1 JOHN 4	113
ANTICHRIST – WORLD RULER	1 JOHN 2	65
APOSTACY	3 JOHN	165
BLOOD SACRIFICE	1 JOHN 1	37
CHRIST - JESUS CHRIST – EMMANUEL	1 JOHN 4	122
CHRIST – ASCENSION AND SESSION	1 JOHN 2	44
CHRIST: FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS	INTRO	11
CHRIST: HYPOSTATIC UNION – GOD – MAN	INTRO	20
CHRIST - I AM	INTRO	12
CHRIST –IMPECCABILITY	1 JOHN 3	92
CHRIST –KENOSIS	1 JOHN 3	93
CHRIST – MEDIATORSHIP	1 JOHN 3	93
CHRIST – MINISTRY AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD	1 JOHN 2	44
CHRIST - RESURRECTION APPEARANCES	1 JOHN 5	136
CHRIST – SACRIFICE OF CHRIST	1 JOHN 2	45
CHRIST TYPES – ANTICHRIST AND CHRIST CONTRASTED	1 JOHN 2	68
CHRIST – VIRGIN BIRTH	1 JOHN 4	123
CHRIST – WORK ON THE CROSS	1 JOHN 3	93
CHRISTIAN CHARACTER	2 JOHN	147
CHRISTIAN LIFE – AMBASSADORSHIP	1 JOHN 2	65
CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER	3 JOHN	165
CHRISTIAN LIFE – CHRIST FORMED IN YOU	1 JOHN 2	46
CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS	1 JOHN 1	38
CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONSECRATION	1 JOHN 2	81
CHRISTIAN LIFE – DEPOSIT	3 JOHN	160
CHRISTIAN LIFE – DESTINY	3 JOHN	160
CHRISTIAN LIFE – DISAGREEMENTS	1 JOHN 2	57
CHRISTIAN LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE	1 JOHN 5	132
CHRISTIAN LIFE – ETERNAL SECURITY	1 JOHN 3	100
CHRISTIAN LIFE - EVANGELISM	1 JOHN 5	133
CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY	1 JOHN 3	93
CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	INTRO	17
CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING	3 JOHN	160
CHRISTIAN LIFE – IMITATE CHRIST	3 JOHN	161
CHRISTIAN LIFE – LOVE	1 JOHN 2	57
CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY	1 JOHN 2	46
CHRISTIAN LIFE: MATURITY: CROSS TO THE CROWN	1 JOHN 2	47
CHRISTIAN LIFE – MENTAL ATTITUDE	1 JOHN 1	32
CHRISTIAN LIFE – OBEDIENCE	1 JOHN 2	85

DOCTRINES [continued]

DOCTRINE	CHAPTER	PAGE
CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMER	1 JOHN 5	129
CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMING BY FAITH	1 JOHN 5	129
CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER	1 JOHN 4	111
CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRIORITIES	1 JOHN 2	81
CHRISTIAN LIFE – REPENTANCE	1 JOHN 1	38
CHRISTIAN LIFE – REWARDS AND CROWNS	1 JOHN 2	59
CHRISTIAN LIFE - ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD	1 JOHN 3	95
CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION	INTRO	16
CHRISTIAN LIFE – SERVICE	1 JOHN 2	82
CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY	INTRO	16
CHRISTIAN LIFE – STEWARDSHIP	3 JOHN	161
CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUBMISSION	2 JOHN	146
CHRISTIAN LIFE – THANKFULNESS	3 JOHN	162
CHRISTIAN LIFE – THINKING BIBLICALLY	INTRO	17
CHRISTIAN LIFE - UNION WITH CHRIST	1 JOHN 3	94
CHRISTIAN LIFE - WALKING	1 JOHN 3	95
CHURCH DISCIPLINE	1 JOHN 2	39
CHURCH – MINISTER	2 JOHN	147
CHURCH – PASTORAL AUTHORITY	2 JOHN	147
CHURCH – SHEPHERDING THE SHEEP	2 JOHN	148
CONSCIENCE	1 JOHN 3	106
DISPENSATIONS - CHURCH AGE	1 JOHN 2	68
ETERNITY PAST	1 JOHN 1	30
EVIL	1 JOHN 2	56
FEAR	INTRO	22
FUNDAMENTALISM	1 JOHN 2	85
GOD – ANCHOR OF THE SOUL	1 JOHN 2	83
GOD: CHARACTER OF GOD	INTRO	14
GOD – COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS	1 JOHN 2	83
GOD – DIVINE DECREES	1 JOHN 2	49
GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS- FREE WILL	1 JOHN 2	49
GOD – ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION	2 JOHN	148
GOD – FATHERHOOD OF GOD	1 JOHN 2	83
GOD – PLAN OF GOD	2 JOHN	150
GOSPEL OF SALVATION	1 JOHN 2	84
GRACE	2 JOHN	150
HERESY	1 JOHN 2	86
HOLY SPIRIT – EFFECTIVE CALLING	1 JOHN 1	30
HOLY SPIRIT – FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	1 JOHN 1	31
HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	1 JOHN 1	31
HOLY SPIRIT – SINS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT	1 JOHN 3	101
ISRAEL	INTRO	21

DOCTRINES [continued]

DOCTRINE	CHAPTER	PAGE
JUDGMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE	1 JOHN 5	136
LIGHT	1 JOHN 1	37
MERCY	2 JOHN	151
MIRACLES OF CHRIST: CATEGORIES	INTRO	12
NATIONS AND RACES	1 JOHN 2	69
NATIONS – DESTINY	1 JOHN 2	70
NEBUCHADNEZZAR – PRIDE	1 JOHN 2	70
NIMROD – INTERNATIONALISM	1 JOHN 2	71
PEACE	2 JOHN	152
PROPHECY – PROPHECY AND HISTORY FULFILLED	1 JOHN 5	134
PROPHECY – SEQUENCE OF END TIME EVENTS	1 JOHN 2	72
PROPHET	1 JOHN 4	114
RELIGION	1 JOHN 2	85
REMNANT	2 JOHN	155
SALVATION	INTRO	19
SALVATION - ATONEMENT - UNLIMITED ATONEMENT	1 JOHN 2	46
SALVATION – EXPIATION AND PROPITIATION	1 JOHN 2	46
SALVATION – JUSTIFICATION	1 JOHN 4	124
SALVATION – RECONCILIATION	1 JOHN 4	124
SALVATION – REDEMPTION	1 JOHN 4	124
SALVATION – REGENERATION – BORN AGAIN	1 JOHN 3	101
SALVATION - SANCTIFICATION	1 JOHN 3	101
SALVATION: SIN - BARRIER BETWEEN MAN AND GOD	INTRO	18
SALVATION – SIN- MAN'S NEED FOR SALVATION	1 JOHN 3	91
SIN – OLD SIN NATURE	1 JOHN 1	39
SIN – OLD SIN NATURE FRUITS OF	1 JOHN 2	73
SIN – SIN UNTO DEATH	1 JOHN 5	142
TIME	1 JOHN 2	73
WELFARE	1 JOHN 3	106
WORLD	INTRO	15
WORLDLINESS	INTRO	15

REFLECTIONS UPON THE PERFECT TENSES IN THE LETTERS OF JOHN

The First Letter of John is John's Commentary on the Gospel; it is a sermon to be read aloud with the reading of the Gospel in the churches receiving it. It runs along with the text of the Gospel with specific teaching points being emphasized in the Letter. We will see this especially in the use of the perfect tenses for particular verbs.

There are many obvious and deliberate parallels between the First Letter and the Gospel. Examine the following verses and see how they tie together. Compare the following verses:

1 John 2-3	John 3:11	then	1 John 1:4	John 16:24
1 John 2:11	John 12:35	-	1 John 2:14	John 5:38
1 John 3:5	John 8:46	-	1 John 3:8	John 8:14
1 John 3:13	John 15:18	-	1 John 3:14	John 5:24
1 John 3:16	John 10:15	-	1 John 3:22	John 8:29
1 John 3:23	John 13:34	-	1 John 4:6	John 8:47
1 John 4:16	John 6:69	-	1 John 5:9	John 5:32
1 John 5:20	John 17:3			

The dangers to the early churches were great at this time in the mid-90s of the First century. They are the ones we still face, reinforcing the point made in many of our written works at EBCWA – that Satan has not had an original thought for several thousand years, because he doesn't need to! So many believers do not believe and apply the Word of the Scriptures, and so Satan can recycle old ideas without worrying about most church members being aware of his use of these tactics.

The satanic attack is launched to achieve certain results – and they centre round disabling believers, not killing them quickly. Killing a believer is the end of Satan's opportunities, for it sends the believer into the arms of Jesus, even if in the "sin unto death". They are beyond his malice then, and they cannot be used to distract and disable others. A wounded soldier takes far more resources to support, and distracts his own army far more than a dead soldier.

Satan's main strategies may be seen in the following four words:

Distractions	-	Anything other than the Will of God, the Word of God, and the Work of God!
Distortions	-	If the truth can be turned into a ½ truth it is dangerous to all who believe it.
Deceptions	-	False doctrines will disable all aspects of ministry, and bring disgrace.
Distancing	-	Any distance from fellowship with Jesus will end in disgrace/destruction.

Let us see the things John really emphasizes through the Perfect tenses of the Greek verbs used, and we can see where the main satanic attack came from, and most likely still does.

(1:1) "We, as the Apostles, have "heard" and "seen" the things recorded in Scripture". John wants the people hearing these words for the first time, and for us in our time, to hear the words of the last eye witness and believe them with all our hearts. His words echo the opening words of the Gospel to which they refer. John is emphasizing the importance of our accepting the revelation of the truth; that this is the "visited planet" and we all have limited time here, and that time is to be "bought up" in Holy Spirit filled service, witness, and worship. **Ephesians 5:14-21**.

(1:2) We are not following "cunningly devised fables", 2 Peter 1:16. The evidence for the truth of the message of Jesus the Christ is open for all to examine. **Acts 26:25-27**. These things have been "seen" and the message and significance of it is eternal for all who accept or reject it. God has stepped into space-time in the person of the Creator become a creature, in order to become the Saviour of his creation. To accept the incarnation is to be blessed forever, and to insult/reject/ignore the incarnation is to be judged forever for such an attitude towards your own creator.

(1:3) For the third time in three verses John repeats the, "seen and heard", message. "Truly, truly, truly" this is the message of the apostolic band – hear and believe and apply what you hear into the fabric of your daily lives. The objective is living, and powerfully close, "fellowship" with the apostles in the Word and with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is living fellowship in the Word, in prayer, in worship that protects us all from the enemy's expected attacks.

(1:4) The objective of all the Lord's work is that we might "rejoice in the Lord and rejoice in His Work". **John 10:10**. John's objective, like his Lord's, is that the believers hearing these words might be "filled up" with the Joy of the Lord. **Nehemiah 8:10**. Love and Joy are "hallmark" fruit of the Holy Spirit. They are there as the evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence. **Romans 8:6-11**.

(1:5) The Apostles "have heard" this message from the Lord. John keeps coming back to this fact, and we are challenged to see the seriousness of this in the heart and mind of this old man, for he is urgently arguing for total attention to be paid to the purposes of God in each of our lives. We are to take every word here personally, as from the Lord to our heart individually.

(1:10) If we say we “have not sinned” we are doing more than lying to ourselves, we are calling God a liar! This is a most serious verse, and targeted to one satanic false doctrine of the Gnostics of John’s day that we still have with us in cultic groups – the belief that if you follow their rules you can be sinless. John makes the eternal life significance of this falsehood clear – it is wrong, and it is fatal, not just in time but into eternity in its consequences for anyone fooled by this nonsense.

(2:3) We “have known Him”. We know Him by hearing, believing and obeying his commandments. It is in keeping his words that we draw close, not in rituals, or cultic behaviours, or listening to priests reciting sacred texts. It is only by obedience to His Word that Jesus is known! Cultic groups down the centuries have taught what the Gnostics of John’s day taught – that by special rituals and stylised prayers you drew near the “godhead”. It is cultic nonsense that still wins an audience from those who don’t want to obey the words of Jesus because they think they have “further revelations”!

(2:4) John leaves no manoeuvre room for the liars and cultists, stating with severity that anyone who says they “know” Jesus, but does not have the spiritual “fruit” of obedience to Jesus words in their life, then they are certified as a “lair”. Don’t look for “politeness” with John, the truth had to be told, and those who say these things that are evil indicators of cultic belief are well beyond being spoken to in gentleness. Telling the truth in love (agape) requires harsh honesty and truth, for if you have deep concern for the ultimate welfare and blessing of anyone (agape love) you use any language that will reach them and challenge them to change their heart and mind! Their eternal life and blessing is at stake if they continue walking in and talking satanic nonsense.

(2:5) The “love of God” is “perfected” (perfect tense) in those who take Jesus words seriously and live them out in daily life and fellowship. **James 2:19**. We know we are “in union with Him” by our passionate keeping of His Word, and our passionate concern for those who are walking to judgment with cultic nonsense on their minds and arrogance in their hearts.

(2:11) If the fruit of evil is in your heart, and you “know” it is, if you hate a brother or sister! John is seriously tying together Matthew 7 with Romans 6, 7, 9, Galatians 6, Philippians 1, and James 3 where fruit is emphasized. John is moving it up a notch here, and focusing the spot light of the Holy Spirit upon the “fruit” of each of our lives. If we “hate” any brethren we are not walking with Jesus – full stop! We can “know” our spiritual position by the fruit in our life! Hatred indicates a family likeness to Satan.

(2:12) Your sins are “forgiven”, with results that go on forever. In Christ we are forgiven totally, and we need to affirm and sing of it, lest the cultist uses guilt and doubt to rob us of our security in Christ, and then lead us into ritualistic and theological nonsense. Cults have always used guilt, doubt and arrogance to hook their people into their nonsense. We are forgiven – secure eternally in the arms of Jesus – so let us keep his words and fellowship with Him and those who love Him.

(2:13) The older believers, the “fathers”, have “known” the Lord from the beginning and they know these truths, but need to be reminded that unless truth is proclaimed it is smudged by evil forces. Let us recall what we have been taught by faithful pastor-teachers and proclaim the historic truths of the faith once delivered the apostles. Jude 3. The young men who have applied the Word have “experienced the victory” (with eternal results in blessing forever for them), over the evil one. Eternal rewards are at stake in the daily battles we fight, and each victory over satanic temptation, or satanic idiot servant, has eternal rewards associated with it. God rewards us forever for our battles won – lets get our armour firmly on and wield the Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God.

(2:14) The Fathers have “known” these truths from the beginning. The repetition of this is instructive, not a mistake by John. We need to be reminded that we have “known” certain things, and be challenged to bring them to the front of our minds again and apply them for the benefit of the young.

(2:18) We all can “know” that these are “the last days”, because of the numerous false “christs” who spread their nonsense about. John wasn’t in error about eschatology here. He is not saying the world is going to end before he dies, but is saying that the intensified stage of the angelic conflict of history is the “Church Age”. We have been in “last days” for nearly 2000 years! We are to have the mental attitude that should go with this and not waste time, nor expect foolishly for things to get easier as we approach the final end. **1 Timothy 4:1-5, 2 Timothy 3:1-7, 2 Peter 3:1-9, Jude 8, 16-25**.

(2:20) We all, in Christ Jesus, have an anointing/unction from the Holy Spirit, and in the filling of the Holy Spirit we can “know” all things we need to know. Are we walking in a way that opens the door for the Holy Spirit to show us all the things we need?

(2:29) We “know” He is righteous, and so logically we know that everyone who lives righteously and is like Jesus knows Him. Those who do not live righteously do not know him at all! No fruit = no root! No fruit of the Holy Spirit = no relationship with the Spirit = no relationship with Jesus.

(3:1) What amazing sort of love have we received from the Father? It was “given/bestowed” upon us by the Father and by this gift of love we have become the children of God, heirs of all that the Son won for us through the First Advent. **1 Peter 2:9-10**.

(3:5) You all “know”, (with eternal results), he came to take away all sins. All believers need to “know” this with the certainty that John indicates is the apostolic norm. We can know this, for it is the teaching of scripture, but too many doubt the extent of the results of the First Advent. Satan wants this hidden, and we need it proclaimed. The truth alone sets us free from nonsense.

(3:6) To ‘abide in sin’, means to be habitually sinning without real remorse or any change of attitude and behaviour. To abide in fellowship with Jesus means to be in constant contact with Him in prayer and Bible study, and anyone in fellowship with Him is always going to be convicted of sin and will deal with it. It is “abiding” that is the key word here – indicating relaxed enjoyment. John’s point – you are either relaxed in the arms of Jesus and enjoying fellowship with Him and the saints, or you are relaxed into your Old Sin Nature and feel no need to change your sinful patterns. You can “know” your status by examining your desires and the actions that reflect them. If you have truly “seen” Jesus you are uncomfortable with any sinful life pattern – or you haven’t seen Jesus truly!

(3:9) To be “born” of/by means of God indicates you now have a totally different life within you than you had before in your “natural/carnal” state. If you are born of God you have no desire to be “born of the flesh”, and it is the root of desire that John is identifying here. Genuinely being “born again”, **John 3:16-36**, separates you from all who are not “born of God”, and their desires are now foreign to you. Those who still have all their carnal desires active and dominating have their new birth in doubt!

(3:14) We can “know” that we are truly “born again”, by the fruit of the Spirit of love – love for the brethren. If we love the company of the saints we have evidence of the new birth, but if we find the company of genuine Christians annoying to us, we are in doubt as being saved at all. Love is the evidence that we have “passed over” from death to eternal life in Christ Jesus.

(3:16) We “know” the love of God for us because He Gave His Life for our sins. God’s Holy Character is shown by His Actions, and so our character and our nature in relationships, is shown by our attitudes, desires and actions. Love shows family relationship and resemblance, as the Holy Spirit always produces the same fruit.

(4:2) Jesus has “come” in the flesh, for God stepped into space-time in human form to win for all mankind their salvation – He paid the redemption price. He “came” into the Creation, as the Creator He came as a Creature, and has lifted us up above the angels as a result.

(4:3) Any spirit that does not confess that Jesus (came) in the flesh as the God-Man to dwell amongst mankind and pay the penalty for sin is a spirit of “Anti Christ”, not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will always acknowledge the truth of the incarnation, where as satanic spirits will lie about that fact and have ‘alternative explanations’. He truly “came” at a point in time, stepping into this space-time universe, with results that go on forever.

(4:4) We have already, in our eternal position in Christ Jesus, “overcome”(Nikao) them. The reason that we have, as Holy Spirit filled believers, victory (nikao – from “nike” victory) over the satanic, at all points of conflict, is that the Holy Spirit is within us forever. Greater is the Holy Spirit’s power than any demonic force!

(4:7) All people who are loving by “born again nature” are “born” of God. John’s persistent point is that our real family is known by our nature, and the family likeness of Christ is agape love for others. It is a lasting characteristic of genuine believers that they have consistent “love for one another” (**John 15:9-17, Romans 13:8**).

(4:9) The incarnation is again in focus with the perfect tense of this verse. The Father has “sent” his Son into the world that we might live forever through his person and work. Jesus was “sent” – there is an eternal plan and it has worked out in space-time and the results go on forever in blessing for us all in Christ Jesus.

(4:10) We did not have “eternal love” for God, but at the point in time of the incarnation, HE loved us and sent the Lord Jesus Christ to be our “propitiation”. The price of sin is paid in full, and we can receive through faith God’s love for us, and thereby our love is transformed and it truly does become something that goes on forever! The “good news” = God has stepped into time, and what HE did for mankind has opened the door to eternity for all who believe in HIM!

(4:12) No-one has ever “seen” God at any point in time, and so God made himself known in the incarnation through Jesus, so that we could know him through faith. As we manifest our relationship with Him through the fruit of the Spirit (love), so His Love is “completed” in us. We become the on-going incarnation message in our own bodies here and now, through our showing the results of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus continues to minister upon the earth today, through the believers who walk in Holy Spirit’s filling. He is seen in us.

(4:13) It is the Holy Spirit’s ministries through us that are the visible evidence that we have met Jesus and are in a living relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit has been “given” to all genuine believers and that “gift” is by grace, and so there are no “tricks/rituals/gimmicks” required to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given by God to all genuine believers at the point of salvation! No Holy Spirit = no genuine salvation!

(4:14) Through the Holy Spirit’s ministry all believers have “seen” the Lord in their spirit, and we can all bear witness that the Father has “sent” the Son into the world, for we fellowship with him as we witness! The believers continue the “eye witness” testimony of the apostolic band, for in the Holy Spirit’s work we all “see Jesus” daily within our spirit, and can testify to the reality of His incarnation and on-going work within us and through us in the world.

(4:16) By grace, through faith, we have “believed” and this acceptance of the reality of the Lord’s incarnation and ministry for us has eternal consequences for us, and for our eternal testimony. All this begins at the point of salvation, when we “believe”, and we “know” with absolute certainty of the fact of his incarnation, for we live in its reality daily, and will do so forever.

(4:18) People living in a constant state of fear/anxiety about all things have not met, or not embraced the Lord and Saviour. They may be saved, but they have not grown in relationship with Jesus, for a real relationship with Him eliminates fear/anxiety. Relationship with Jesus “completes/perfects” love and relaxation about the path of life - for it is hand in hand with Jesus. The lasting and eternal result of walking in the Holy Spirit’s filling, fellowshiping with the Lord Jesus in the Word and Prayer is the elimination of all anxiety over time on the journey. Spiritual growth builds love and faith-rest; it never builds anxiety. Believers rob themselves of complete rest in their spirit by failing to walk with Jesus in the Word.

(4:20) Hypocrisy is exposed by John here. No-one tells the truth if they say they love God and yet hate a brother believer. If there is hatred for a “family member” there is no family relationship. Love is incompatible and cannot live with hatred. We are either God’s child or a child of the devil – he hates! We may have disagreements within our Christian family at times, but hatred is not ever to characterize any disagreement – or it reflects badly on the person who hates, and throws doubt on more than just their theology!

(5:1) All who are truly “born” of God, with eternal results, love their “fellow born” believers. To love God, who gave salvation, is always going to be reflected in your love towards all to whom he has given salvation. If you are born again there will be a loving (agapao – caring love that will do anything to bless that person forever) of others who are also born again.

(5:4) To be “born” of God, with eternal results, is to gain victory over the things of this temporary world. The mechanics of our moment by moment victory over any temptation that comes from this temporary world, is our “faith”. We hear God’s Word, we believe it and apply it, and we have victory in and through the application of truth to the lies of the devil. The dynamic of our victory is the Holy Spirit who fills, empowers, teaches and directs our path.

(5:9) We have the testimony of reliable men about the truths of Scripture, but how much more powerful is the inner testimony of God the Holy Spirit? In Christ we have the inner witness to truth in the daily ministries of the Holy Spirit.

(5:10) John places three perfect tenses in this verse to powerfully “hammer home” his repeated points from the whole letter about the seriousness of the Gnostic’s lies, and the deception of all other satanic cultic groups. God has given us all we need to accept and be empowered by the truth. To reject the message is to “make” (eternal consequences) God a liar! The seriousness of rejection of the message of the Incarnation is underlined by this perfect tense verb. The reason judgment comes is that the rejecter of truth has “not believed” (eternal consequences) the witness, and God “has witnessed” (with eternal consequences) fully concerning the true identity of His Son. The Holy Spirit convicts (**John 16:8-11**) the unbelievers personally, and believers testify to them of the truth. There is no reason for mankind not to accept the truth, except each individual’s desire to walk away from, and avoid God’s legitimate demands on their life!

(5:13) John’s purpose is clear in his Gospel and in this Letter; that believers may “know” with absolute certainty that they have eternal life, and that this life is secure in Christ. No-one has power to pluck us out of the hand of the Father and from the arms of Jesus! **John 10:28-29**.

(5:15) Again John reminds us, we “know” that we are secure, and we “know” that we are heard, and that all we have “desired/asked” for is answered by Him. We have security in our prayers because we have security in our position of spiritual power, and our loving relationship with Him. In prayer we are not asking for favours from a distant and reluctant king, but speaking to our loving Heavenly Father, with the Son who loves us and gave himself for us, sitting there and interceding on our behalf. How secure can we be in our prayers? We can always, “boldly approach the Throne of Grace”. **Hebrews 4:16**. It is the “Throne of Grace”, not the throne of arbitrary decision... God made the decision in eternity past – we are loved, we are saved, we are children of the Most High God.

(5:18) We “know” another thing clearly also. We know that those who love God do not keep up the habit of persistent sinfulness, for we love the Lord our God and will not do things to upset, offend, or insult our Lord. We value our relationship with Jesus and it flows into every day we walk through this world. We are “born” again into a new relationship, and we have a new nature in that relationship – and we do not love sin any more, we love Jesus.

(5:20) We “know” that the Son has come, and that the results of that incarnation/advent go on forever in blessing for us. We **Know** these things and it has transformed our lives! He has come, and he has “given” us understanding through the Holy Spirit’s ministries in the Word, so that we can have knowledge that will baffle the world, and confound the devil’s best temptations. The key knowledge we gain is that understanding of the Lord’s person, plan and power in and for our life. It is not just emotional feelings, but secure knowledge within of the reality of “Jesus with us”.

(2 John 1) All believers have a fellowship together across the miles, across cultural, racial, and economic differences. We have unity in the fellowship of the Church Universal because of the testimony of the Lord’s Word through the Holy Spirit within us. God has given us his Spirit to give us His Unity! We keep this unity by walking with

Jesus, and we will find wherever we go we experience the family relationship that the Holy Spirit always produces. We will not have this with false brethren.

(2 John 4) John's joy is that he "found/discovered" the brethren walking in the truth of the Word of truth and life. John's joyful discovery has eternal results, for all who walk with Jesus in the filling of the Holy Spirit have His Joy now and forever. It is a joy to be with the brethren always! Only the enemy's people are miserable and give that "dodgy" feel – God's people are always characterized by some fruit of the Holy Spirit – and the fruit of the Spirit always produces JOY.

(3 John 11) You have not "seen" God if you by habit and with persistence "do evil"! To truly "see" the Lord is always to be transformed by God's power. God is light, and the light reveals any dark thoughts or behaviours, and the washing of the water of the Word sweeps the rubbish away. People who claim relationship with God through Christ Jesus are transformed people. People who remain unchanged in attitude and behaviour have not met Jesus!

(3 John 12) Demetrius "has a good report/witness" due to his good works, and the results of his genuine faith, shown in his transformed life, flow on forever. Our life testimony, our good witness, flows on forever, with rewards eternally for ourselves, and in the gospel witness to others who are influenced by our good works.

We KNOW, we BELIEVE, and we are TRANSFORMED by the power of God's Incarnation in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We LIVE now and forever in the power of the Holy Spirit, and we have CONFIDENCE and ASSURANCE through the ministries of the Holy Spirit, with a relaxation in prayer and then facing anxiety that baffles the satanic forces. We FAITH-REST through life, expressing faith in His Word and resting upon His Promises, and obeying his commands. We REJOICE in the one and only True Lord, Saviour and King. AMEN