

First John – Chapter 1 (#1)... Verse

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

1. Entering the divine library of the Bible, the entrance has a sign, *The Words of the Living God*.
2. We see the sixty-six volumes on its shelves divided into two certain sections of two testaments.
3. Of the twenty-seven volumes of the New Testament, five were written by the apostle John.
4. Our knowledge of his large gospel lends credibility and direction for the content of his epistles.
5. Taking his first epistle down, we see its five chapters and 105 verses, packed from first to last.
6. Its contents indicate five main lessons – crucial doctrine for victorious living in a sinful world.
7. Starting similarly to his gospel, John detailed the identity and character of God and His Son.
8. Christian doctrine is defined and defended, and Christian character described and commended.
9. The short epistle teaches you what to believe, how to live perfectly, to be sure of eternal life.
10. You have enemies within and without, but here is comforting doctrine and details for victory.
11. John will begin and nearly end with glorious statements about the identify of the Son of God.
12. While we could use many cross-references for a broad study, we will focus on the words here.
13. Do not be disappointed or misled looking for sound bites, for the doctrine builds ever higher.
14. Let us take apart these first four verses choosing the summary of: *doctrine, fellowship, joy*.
15. Then let us take apart the last six verses with the summary: *holiness, fellowship, forgiveness*.

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;

That.

- A. *That* is a glorious demonstrative pronoun for our Lord Jesus Christ – the Word of life!
 1. A personal pronoun like Who loses proximity, timing context by *That* versus *This*.
 2. *That* was the biggest snow ... *this* was the biggest ... which is closer in place or time?
 3. Jesus ascended to heaven years earlier, so the distant demonstrative pronoun is used.
 4. *This* which was from the beginning would not make sense, for Jesus was not present.
- B. Reader, this *That* is everything. All things are by Him, through Him, for Him, to Him.
 1. You were created and exist for this *That*; no need to distinguish Jehovah or His Son.
 2. Though Jesus is subordinate to God as our Mediator (I Cor 15:28), He is also God.

3. Though Jesus is subordinate to God, He has been exalted for worship (Phil 2:9-11).
4. Though Jesus is subordinate, He is the glorious express image of God (Heb 1:1-3).
5. To the degree you daily confuse your existence with any other purpose, you lose.
6. Jesus is the Head of our religion, our King, our Priest, our Savior, and coming Judge.
7. He shall, in His times, reveal He is the Blessed and Only Potentate (I Tim 6:13-16).
8. We want to love and obsess over all that exalts Him and hate all that neglects Him.
9. You need to know His attributes and to seek a vision of Him for passion ... **Knowing God, A Vision of God – 2019**

C. The world may deny or question His life on earth or corrupt it by lies, but it is confirmed.

1. For victorious and joyful living, the first thing to know is Him for Whom you exist.
2. John proved Jesus' earthly life among the apostles and four critical facts about Him.
3. Controversy is the mother of orthodoxy, requiring men be more precise in doctrine.
4. First critical issue ... *Is Jesus of Nazareth the Christ, the promised Messiah of God?*
5. Second critical issue ... *Is Jesus Christ the Son of God? And by what means is He?*
6. Third critical issue ... *Did Jesus Christ have a real, flesh, material human body?*
7. Fourth critical issue ... *Is Jesus Christ God (an issue not as obvious as the others)?*
8. At stake is being God's and knowing the Father (I John 2:22-23; II John 1:7-11).
9. Doctrine is important, especially regarding the identity and nature of the Son of God.

D. Many love this epistle for its simplicity and sublimity of love and fellowship with God.

1. However, before you choose sound bites for superficial mantras, grasp its content.
2. It begins immediately with doctrine – detailed theology or Christology of the Son.
3. There is no fellowship with the Father or Son without right doctrine (II Jn 1:9-10).
4. God has glorified Himself through His Son, and the Father loves Him, so you should.
5. Do not resent, neglect, or presume to know and love God or Christ without doctrine.
6. On the opposite side, doctrine without fellowship or relationship is devilish error.
7. Once you see the importance of doctrine, then you can bask in John's intimate offers.
8. God is an infinite Spirit, and He can relate personally with your spirit like no other.
9. Fellowship, knowledge, assurance, and joy of walking with God exceeds all others.

Which was from the beginning.

A. The *beginning* must be rightly divided, for John used it seven times in different ways.

1. In this first verse, we use it just as he used it to open his gospel – eternity (Jn 1:1-2).
2. In the next verse, John called the Word of life that *eternal life* – eternal God Himself.
3. To the epistle's end, he used *beginning* for eternity, creation, gospel era, conversion.
4. Here is our eternal God, from everlasting to everlasting (Ps 41:13; 90:2; Is 57:15).
5. No wonder we have such startling statements about Jesus as we do (John 1:15; 8:58).

- B. Why did John start off with this technical section about the identity of the Word of life?
 1. To refute antichrist liars seducing from Jesus (I John 2:18-23; 4:1-6; II John 1:7-9).
 2. Any error in the identity of Jesus or relationship to God is not true worship He seeks.
 3. Without true worship God seeks, the full fellowship in this context will not happen.
 4. Without the full fellowship in this context, the full Christian joy will also not happen.
 5. The greatest fulfillment and joy in the human heart is knowing Christ (Eph 3:14-19).
- C. If Jesus did not have a body, how could He die for you and be your priest (Heb 2:14)?

Which we have heard.

- A. The facts starting here about Jesus' time on earth may seem wasteful, but they are not.
 1. Why, especially in a first verse, is it about hearing Him, seeing Him, touching Him?
 2. Remember from above, the four critical facts that John must establish about Jesus.
 3. Heretics then denied the critical facts; this epistle may have saved you from the lies.
 4. John's gospel also exalted Jesus' key flesh existence, appearance, and life (Jn 1:14).
 5. There is a place for basic facts, simple statements, and precise definitions for truth.
 6. The gospel of Jesus Christ is based on many facts from apostles that lived with Him.
- B. Note the plural pronoun – *we* – referencing other apostles and witnesses of Jesus Christ.
 1. One witness is not enough, two or three was the legal minimum, but Jesus had more.
 2. Paul recorded that more than 500 brethren at one time saw Jesus Christ (I Cor 15:6).
 3. Huge multitudes heard Him during His life, sometimes requiring a boat as His pulpit.
 4. Jesus on trial for His life reminded Pilate He had always taught openly (John 18:20).
- C. No one ever spoke like Jesus Christ, yet most rejected the content (Matt 7:21-29). The apostles were eyewitnesses and earwitnesses of Jesus Christ, hearing and seeing.

Which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon.

- A. The facts starting here about Jesus' time on earth may seem wasteful, but they are not.
 1. Why, especially in a first verse, is it about hearing Him, seeing Him, touching Him?
 2. Remember from above, the four critical facts that John must establish about Jesus.
 3. Heretics then denied the critical facts; this epistle may have saved you from the lies.
 4. Spirits cannot be seen unless they have a body. Jesus had a body for all men to see.
 5. John's gospel also exalted Jesus' key flesh existence, appearance, and life (Jn 1:14).
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4. John carefully used words and repetition to prove Jesus was not an illusion or vision.
- C. The apostles and some others were authoritative witnesses of Christ, having seen Him.
 1. Luke starts off to Theophilus explaining about eyewitnesses of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4).
 2. Grasp and appreciate that God arranged for eyewitnesses to confirm the gospel facts.
 3. Some have taken in hand to prove Christianity as in court or by forensics ... [J. Warner Wallace, Christian apologist \(coldcasechristianity.com\)](#), [the God's Not Dead film collection \(themoviedb.org\)](#).
 4. Apostles were eyewitnesses of the living Christ (Acts 1:3,21-22; I Cor 9:1; 15:8).
 5. Even today we have our brand of false apostles, frauds by this one simple evidence.

And our hands have handled.

- A. The facts starting here about Jesus' time on earth may seem wasteful, but they are not.
 1. Why, especially in a first verse, is it about hearing Him, seeing Him, touching Him?
 2. Remember from above, the four critical facts that John must establish about Jesus.
 3. Heretics then denied the critical facts; this epistle may have saved you from the lies.
 4. Spirits cannot be touched without a body. Jesus had a body for the apostles to touch.
 5. John's gospel also exalted Jesus' key flesh existence, appearance, and life (Jn 1:14).
 6. There is a place for basic facts, simple statements, and precise definitions for truth.
 7. The gospel of Jesus Christ is based on many facts from apostles that lived with Him.
- B. Note the plural pronoun – *our* – referencing other apostles and witnesses of Jesus Christ.
 1. One witness is not enough, two or three was the legal minimum, but Jesus had more.
 2. It hardly gets any better to prove a person real and not a ghost than handling Him.
 3. The only thing maybe better than touching is eating and drinking (Acts 10:39-41).
 4. Many infallible proofs confirms our religion of a resurrected Godman (Acts 1:3).
 5. They were an intimate group, especially this writer John, who laid on His bosom.
 6. Keep in mind this personal intimacy the apostles had, for they offered it (I John 1:3).
 7. Jesus promised it much better after Pentecost (Jn 14:18-23; 15:10-11; 16:7,19-22).
- C. Thomas was blessed to touch the resurrected Jesus, and it affected him (John 20:26-31).
 1. But Jesus blessed and commended believers coming later that never saw (Jn 20:29).
 2. Why did Jesus tell women after He rose not to touch Him (John 20:17; Matt 28:9)?
 3. He meant, *Let go of me. We will have more time together. I have not ascended yet.*
- D. If Jesus did not have a body, how could He die for you and be your priest (Heb 2:14)?
- E. Gnostic heresies be damned ... there were ear-witnesses, eye-witnesses, hand-witnesses.

Of the Word of life.

- A. John did use *Word* for our Lord's divine nature the most, but he was not the only one.
 1. How often did John call Jesus the Word? Five (Jn 1:1,14; I John 1:1; 5:7; Rev 19:13).
 2. You have learned that Hebrews 4:12, though not capitalized, is Jesus (Heb 4:12-14).

3. Luke, Peter, and James used *word* for Jesus (Luke 1:2; I Pet 1:23,25; James 1:18,21).
- B. What significance should the name and title of Jesus as *the Word* teach us about Him?
1. **Word.** I. Speech, utterance, verbal expression. Things said, or something said; speech, talk, discourse, utterance; report, tidings, news, information. II. An element of speech. A combination of vocal sounds, or one such sound, used in a language to express an idea and constituting an ultimate minimal element of speech having a meaning as such. [OED].
 2. The English sense directly above is comparable to the Greek *logos* usually adored.
 3. By John's gospel context, note how the Word of God is a declaration or revelation.
 4. The heavens, part of all things, declares the glory of God (John 1:3; Psalm 19:1-6).
 5. The Word of God is the light of men by eternal life He gives to men (John 1:4-5).
 6. He was the true Light that lights every elect man coming into the world (John 1:9).
 7. He was incarnated in man's flesh for men to see; He revealed God to us (Jn 1:14).
 8. Jesus brought grace and truth, totally unlike the word Moses brought (John 1:17).
 9. No man has ever seen God, but the incarnate Word declared Him to men (Jn 1:18).
 10. The eternal life with the Father, *the Word of life*, was manifested to us (I Jn 1:1-2).
- C. Jesus is the Word *of life* for He is the One that lives forever and the One that gives life.
1. Life is a crucial concept. God lives forever. He made us alive. We need eternal life.
 2. He is alive and lives forevermore, and He has the keys or authority of hell and death.
 3. He is the way, the truth, and the life, which He declared to His apostles (John 14:6).
 4. James could call Him the word of truth (James 1:18), for He is also truth (John 14:6).
 5. He is the greatest life in the universe we can relate to, and without which we starve.
 6. This is an eternal life, a divine life, in a human body, for us (Col 2:9; Eph 1:15-23).
 7. In Christ we can see perfect divine life coupled with humanity for perfection forever.
 8. In the next verse he will immediately appeal to the adjective phrase *the life* by itself.
- D. What a glorious and profound contrast to everything we received from our father Adam.
1. That man, though told clearly of the consequences, chose a three-fold death for us.
 2. He destroyed life. He lost the tree of life. He secured the second death for all of us.
 3. All we have contributed to the universe is sin and death – it sums up our existence.
 4. All we have ... all we have heard ... all we have seen ... all we have touched ... dies!
 5. Jesus earned abundant life for us now, eternal life for us later (John 10:10; 17:1-3).
 6. What a difference between life by Adam or by Jesus (Rom 5:12-19; I Cor 15:22,45).

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

- A. The apostolic gospel was in large part witness of the earthly life of Jesus by the apostles.

1. When God manifests – declares or reveals Himself – we better respond (Rom 1:19).
 2. Sodomy is one of the judgments on those rejecting God’s manifestation in creation.
 3. God is manifest in providence and conscience; submit (Ac 14:15-17; Rom 2:14-16)!
 4. But we have the written record of earwitnesses, eyewitnesses, and handlers of Him!
 5. In this short chapter, they bore witness, showed, wrote, and declared several times.
 6. What would we know about Jesus the Son of God without this apostolic revelation?
 7. God has given witness of His Son, and you better believe it above men (I Jn 5:9-10).
 8. The apostles witnessed the Godman, showed the Godman, and declared the Godman.
 9. We do not believe God and Christ by oral tradition, but many writers (Luke 1:1-4).
- B. The eternal life that was with the Father was the Word of God that became incarnate.
1. A review of John’s prologue to his gospel (John 1:1-18) is very helpful for *with God*.
 2. This divine being that was God and was with God (trinity) was made a flesh body.
 3. It was this incarnation – being made flesh – that the apostles could hear, see, touch.
 4. Invisible God became visible to men in the Godman (John 1:18; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).
- C. That the eternal, infinite LORD Jehovah came to earth to die and rise again is incredible.
1. Paul described it as an incredible thing, so God highly exalted Jesus (Phil 2:5-11).
 2. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, just as John wrote (Col 1:15; John 1:14,18).
 3. The great mystery of godliness begins, *God was manifest in the flesh* (I Tim 3:16).
 4. The book of Acts and then the epistles are not dry reading, but apostolic declarations.
 5. Our religion is not based on hallucinations, visions, wishful thinking ... but true facts.
 6. The apostles proved Jesus of Nazareth as Christ in a flesh body every way needed.
- D. What were the consequences of ignoring or rejecting their message? 70 A.D. horror! If you know Jesus Christ or the Father, He was revealed to you (Matthew 11:27; 16:17).
1. If He was revealed to you, then you owe Him and especially His Father total love.
 2. If He left you alone, you would believe evolution, Mormonism, or Mahatma Gandhi.

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

- A. Grasp the *that* and *that* here – the first a demonstrative pronoun and then a conjunction.
1. The first *that* is twice a demonstrative pronoun for Jesus Christ – the Word of life!
 2. The second *that* is a conjunction identifying John’s goal and purpose for writing.
 3. **That.** Introducing a clause expressing purpose, end, aim, or desire: often with *may*.
 4. Do not miss these two *that* conjunctions – one here for fellowship, the next for joy.
- B. The apostolic gospel was in large part witness of the earthly life of Jesus by the apostles.
1. When God declares – manifests or reveals Himself – we better respond (Rom 1:19).

2. We have the written record of earwitnesses, eyewitnesses, and handlers of the Life!
 3. In this short chapter, they bore witness, showed, wrote, and declared several times.
 4. What would we know about Jesus the Son of God without this apostolic declaration?
 5. God has given witness of His Son, and you better believe it above men (I Jn 5:9-10).
 6. The apostles witnessed the Godman, showed the Godman, and declared the Godman.
 7. We do not believe God and Christ by oral tradition, but many writers (Luke 1:1-4).
- C. What is the purpose of the apostles seeking out God's elect? For *fellowship* with God!
1. After the doctrine of Christ – the true body of knowledge about Him – is relationship.
 2. There is salvation from the hopelessness of this life in knowing Christ (II Tim 2:10).
 3. Learning of Jesus, where He is now and He will return, is our religion (I Cor 15:19).
 4. But most Christians know little or nothing of this gift – they are belly worshippers.
 5. They love this life, which will soon be taken from them, instead of God and His Son.
 6. Note – John used present tense for fellowship after our Lord's ascension to heaven.
 7. Jesus did not change by losing a body, but His body was glorified after resurrection.
 8. The apostles surely had ultimate fellowship with God and Christ, but offer it to us.
 9. However, a proper understanding of Pentecost puts us on an equal footing with them.
- D. We must understand *fellowship* to fully appreciate a relationship with God and Christ.
1. God considers us adopted children in His family, accepted in Christ (Eph 1:6; 3:15).
 2. Our position as sons of God is so high above the angels we are heirs (Rom 8:14-17).
 3. **Fellowship.** The condition or quality of being a fellow in various senses. Partnership; membership of a society. Participation, sharing (in an action, condition, etc.); 'something in common', community of interest, sentiment, nature, etc. Companionship, company, society; an instance of this. Mutual intercourse, esp. spiritual; intimate personal converse; = communion. The spirit of comradeship; friendliness. An association or union of any kind; also a brotherhood, fraternity.
 4. **Fellowship** = intimate friendship in the family of God with the Father and Son as affectionate companions for mutual personal exchanges in committed union forever.
 5. **Fellowship** = yoked / communion / concord / partner / agreement (II Cor 6:14-16).
 6. Jesus offered the church at Laodicea rich fellowship as intimate dining (Rev 3:20).
 7. In context, the fellowship is described as *one with another* ... with God (I John 1:7).
 8. We want what others had, but better – Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Paul.
- E. Let us get a glimpse of this fellowship – intimate friendship – by comparing the apostles.
1. Thus far, John described a very intimate and personal relationship with the Godman.
 2. We know from his gospel and rest of the N.T. the apostles were very close to Him.
 3. Note – this writer was one of three worthies Jesus shared much more intimacy with.
 4. Think – mount of transfiguration, laid on His bosom, Mary welcomed at His feet twice and highly honored, compassion for widow of Nain, raised Lazarus but wept before it, took the three deeper

into Gethsemane, personal appearances to Paul, etc.

5. Recall – led the Samaritan woman to truth, defended the sinner woman to Simon, looked out the man born blind, His desire for the last supper, the words in the walk from Jerusalem to Bethany and its prayer, the road to Emmaus with burning hearts.
 6. Jesus, though Lord and Master, did not treat them as servants, but friends (Jn 15:15).
 7. But John here, one of the three worthies, offered fellowship with God, Jesus, them.
 8. He did this long after Pentecost, because fellowship was by the Holy Spirit for all.
- F. Let all readers be wise and realize the great change at Pentecost both for them and us.
1. Jesus said it was expedient for Him to go (Jn 16:7). Why? The Spirit would be better.
 2. He taught during His ministry rivers of living water would come later (Jn 7:37-39).
 3. This happened on the Day of Pentecost for the apostles and 3000 on the same day.
 4. Fellowship with the apostles was shared with the whole church (Acts 2:41-47).
 5. God and Jesus by the Spirit's presence and power have fellowship now (II Co 13:14).
 6. It is the Holy Spirit, not the earthly presence of Jesus, that has power (Rom 15:13).
 7. It is the Holy Spirit, not the earthly presence of Jesus, that loves (Rom 5:5; 8:14-17).
 8. This was more than the apostles had before, and you can also have it (Jn 14:21-23).
- G. How can we best maximize this offered fellowship with God and His Son Jesus Christ?
1. Looking backward here, we want to know and love the detailed facts about our Lord.
 2. Looking forward here, we must walk in the light (holiness) as God and His Son do.
 3. We must hate the world and its fleshly grasp and pursuit of our lives (I Jn 2:15-17).
 4. We must pursue God and His Son intentionally – draw nigh to God – and in prayer.

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

- A. We do not limit *these things* to the first three verses, but neither do we minimize them.
1. There is fellowship in the verses before and after this verse, indicating both included.
 2. Fellowship with God – by doctrinal truth and godly conduct – is the basis of real joy.
 3. These things = plural demonstrative adjective for the content of verses 1-3 and more.
 4. It is a shame to watch carnal Christians (if they are saved) look for joy in the world.
- B. Why did John write? Why did the Holy Spirit inspire him and then preserve the letter?
1. The *that* here, like above, is a conjunction for John's goal and purpose for writing.
 2. **That.** Introducing a clause expressing purpose, end, aim, or desire: often with *may*.
 3. Because this glorious God ... and His Son ... love us and want our utmost happiness.
 4. Any lack of fulness of joy is always our fault, not His, and we miss His intentions.
 5. Our God is terrible, but He loves His adopted children and wants to dote on them.
 6. Why do any parents adopt? To take a deprived child and drastically improve its life.
 7. How much joy does God want us to have? Filled with all you can receive (Ro 15:13).

- C. **Joy.** Vivid emotion of pleasure from a sense of well-being or satisfaction; the feeling or state of being highly pleased or delighted; exultation of spirit; gladness, delight.
1. A Christian, with doctrine and fellowship, can have joy unspeakable (I Peter 1:8).
 2. Even if there is persecution, it cannot end it (I Peter 1:3-9; Heb 12:2; Acts 16:25).
 3. Is joy a secondary goal for Christians after holiness, self-denial, etc? No (Neh 8:10)!
 4. John was intense about holiness as follows, but he began with fellowship and joy.
 5. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace – three components of maximum living.
 6. When you add in the hope that this book offers, nothing else is needed for great joy.
 7. Real joy ... lasting joy ... motivating joy ... sustaining joy ... is found in Christ only.
- D. How to have joy? Follow the inspired John from doctrine of Christ to fellowship to joy.
1. True doctrine is the body of knowledge with perfect answers for every part of life.
 2. Fellowship with God – *one with another* – thrills our spirits far above anything else.
 3. The fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life starts with love, joy, and peace (Gal 5:22)
 4. The power of the Holy Spirit can fill you with all joy, peace, and hope (Rom 15:13).
 5. You can be filled with the Spirit by opening to Him and praying (Ep 5:18; 3:14-19).
 6. Obeying Christ's commands keeps you in His love and His joy in you (Jn 15:9-11).
- E. How to lose joy? Disregard the lessons here and try life your way or the world's way.
1. Knowledge of God is infinitely superior to anything man can pursue (Jer 9:23-24).
 2. David tried life his way, and he described destroyed joy well (Ps 32:3-4; 51:8-12).
 3. God is jealous, and you cannot enjoy worldly flirting, if saved (I Jn 2:15-17; Jas 4:4).
 4. Grieve or quench the Holy Spirit by any means – He will be your enemy (Is 63:10).
 5. Focus on your family, your job, your finances, bodily exercise, USA politics, etc.
- F. John's inspired goal is your full joy – nothing lacking from perfect, contented happiness.
1. Solomon, who knew little of Jesus Christ, offered us a continual feast (Prov 15:15).
 2. Solomon, who knew little of Jesus Christ, taught a joyful way to live (Eccl 9:9-10).
 3. But if we stop with Solomon, we totally miss David and far greater N.T. blessings.
 4. Fellowship – intimate friendship – with God and His Son trumps such earthly vanity.
 5. We sing the above truth ... prisons would palaces prove ... or palaces become prisons.
 6. Your wife? No such thing in heaven. Your job or business? Labor and pain for what.
 7. Money? An eternal inheritance. Children? A lot of trouble. House? Over a mansion.
 8. Cars? Chariots? In the shop and very costly. Fun and ease? Guilt and shame later.
 9. David and Jesus used superlatives for great joy with God (Ps 16:11; 21:6; 36:8; etc.).
- G. Most Christians have never given God or His Son a chance to infuse them with full joy.
1. They never advance past mental assent and Sunday services while chasing the world.
 2. Without repentance and passionate pursuit of God, the joy here is boring and empty.
 3. Christians parents can tell their children this, but it fails while youth and world mix.

4. Christians parents can tell their children this, but they must show them by example.
5. Philip Mauro once answered the skeptic Thomas Edison, *I have proven the existence of God in the same way you have electricity and light, by testing and experience.*
6. What an epistle introduction! Will you add doctrine, fellowship, and joy to Christ?
7. What will you do today, tomorrow, and this week to pursue the three apostolic gifts?

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.

This then is the message.

- A. The first four verses were clearly and obviously introductory. Here begins a new lesson.
 1. For serious students, John's gospel was the same, with a clear preamble (Jn 1:1-18).
 2. His progression from doctrine to fellowship to joy now needed detailed instruction.
 3. After preparing hearers with a great introduction, John proceeded with crucial truth.
 4. What follows is crucial to obtain what went before and crucial to lessons following.
- B. The demonstrative pronoun *this* here emphasizes what follows as his important lesson.
- C. John impressively set up the lesson he then would declare by these words of importance.
- D. He will proceed similarly identifying this important lesson in chapter two (I John 2:1).

Which we have heard of him.

- A. What John was about to write was not of human origin, even his, but divine revelation.
- B. This apostle, John of Zebedee, was a fisherman. He had nothing of his own to offer us.
 1. Jesus taught them for 3.5 years; He then sent the Spirit to remind them (John 14:26).
 2. Furthermore, they had the Spirit of Christ continuing to teach them (II Peter 1:21).
 3. God gave Peter his confession and his inductive reasoning (Matt 16:17; Acts 2:4).
- C. If speaking of LORD Jehovah, *Thus saith the Lord*. If Christ, *Nevertheless at thy word*.
 1. All we want is God's revelation, His word, Christ's gospel ... clear, convincing, loud.
 2. It is the words of the living God that make all the difference (Luke 4:4; I Thess 2:13).
 3. Paul received truth about Jesus, communion, future (I Cor 15:3; 11:23; I Thess 4:15).
 4. What he preached and wrote to churches and pastors was by revelation (Gal 1:12).
- D. What immediately follows was clearly taught by Jesus to His apostles – holy obedience.
 1. Jesus revealed God's attributes, character, and conduct by illustration and doctrine.
 2. His Sermon on the Mount was very high in holy content, emphasis, and application.
 3. Note its spiritual list of holy traits called beatitudes and ending warning (Matt 7:21).
 4. Never have religious hypocrites been exposed like Jesus did the Pharisees (Matt 23).
 5. The holy character and conduct of brotherly love gains heaven (Matthew 25:31-46).
 6. Good or evil, truth or error, are known by choice of light or darkness (John 3:19-21).

7. Only believers that continue in God's commands are real disciples (John 8:31-42).
8. The only love of God and Christ that counts is keeping His commands (Jn 15:9-14).
9. It is this obedient love – emphasize obedience – that gains fellowship (Jn 14:21,23).

And declare unto you.

- A. You should be incredibly thankful for apostles Jesus called and charged to write to you.
- B. Ministers have a fire in their belly to teach God's revelation to His children (I Cor 9:16).
- C. If they do not declare it, then they will be guilty for souls (Ezekiel 3:16-21; Acts 20:26).
- D. Never resent preaching (I Thes 5:20). It is God's chosen means for truth (I Cor 2:6-13).
- E. Reading the Bible or other activities is not the same (Mal 2:7; II Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-2).
- F. What Jesus taught the apostles about fellowship, John taught to us here (John 15:9-11).

That God is light.

- A. Here is a very important word for this section and the epistle. Let us clearly identify it.
 1. If we are not careful, we will see too many aspects of light and dilute John's point.
 2. Is light sometimes glory, sure. Is it sometimes truth and guidance, sure. But not here!
 3. The light here is against darkness and sin and for fellowship and keeping commands.
 4. The warning, immediately identified against sin, is stated again shortly (I John 2:1).
- B. God may be loving; He may be merciful; He may be powerful; but for sure, God is holy.
 1. If we compromise God's holiness or mingle it with other attributes, we demote Him.
 2. When Moses and Joshua met God, they heard of holiness (Ex 3:1-5; Josh 5:13-15).
 3. For those that turn *God is love* into a mantra, they need *God is light* (I John 4:8,16).
 4. This is a great error in churches, neglect of holiness in preaching, worship, and life.
- C. God is light: He is impeccably holy and pure without any allowance for any sin at all.
 1. The lesson, immediately identified against sin, is stated again shortly (I John 2:1).
 2. Light here ... is for fellowship (1:3,6-7) and relational connection with God (2:3-5).
 3. Light here ... is compatibility of character and conduct (1:7; 2:6,16,28-29; 3:3-7,24).
 4. Light here ... is obedience by keeping His commandments (I John 2:3-5; 3:22-24).
 5. Light here ... is against darkness, or sin, which is darkness (1:7-10; 2:15-17; 3:6).
 6. Light here ... is the command to love against the darkness of hatred (I John 2:7-11).
 7. John also recorded Jesus telling Nicodemus about light and darkness (John 3:19-21).
- D. There is no reason to broaden the definition lest we dilute it and miss the true God.
 1. The message the apostle of love had for his readers was God's impeccable holiness.
 2. You cannot worship God or walk with God without holiness (Psalm 29:2; Gen 6:9).
 3. Without holiness, you will never see heaven or know God (Heb 12:14; II Cor 7:1).
 4. The daily conflict of God and evil in your life is set very clearly (I Jn 2:3-6,15-17).

5. Thus, this epistle has some of the strongest warnings about sin (I John 3:3,6-7,9-10).
- E. When men are in God's presence, they repent for sins (Isaiah 6:1-8; Luke 5:8; Job 42:6).
 1. His judgment of Noah's generation, Sodom, and Israel in the wilderness reveal Him.
 2. His judgment of His only begotten Son on Calvary reveals His impeccable holiness.
 3. When we are allowed a glimpse of heaven, there we hear about holiness (Rev 4:8).
- F. Therefore, to realize the fellowship and joy John introduced, we must be perfectly holy.
 1. Embrace Paul's offer of fellowship with God and how we get it (II Cor 6:14-18; 7:1).
 2. Flirting with the world – befriending it – is spiritual adultery and enmity (James 4:4).
 3. Peter taught the same as well – compatibility in holiness with God (I Peter 1:13-17).
- G. For much more about the holiness of God, see the sermon *Blue Ribbon Holiness ... Holiness of God*.
- H. For Paul using holiness for divine fellowship in II Cor 7:1, *Perfecting Holiness*.

And in him is no darkness at all.

- A. God's holiness is infinite, perfect, and transcendent without any allowance for sin at all.
 1. God's approving eyes are purer than ours and cannot favorably view sin (Hab 1:13).
 2. The heavens are not clean to Him, so He severely judged angels (Job 4:8; 15:14-16).
 3. The elect angels retained are holy angels, preserved in created holiness (Matt 25:31).
 4. When reading of God's hatred, do not overlook His holiness (Psalm 5:4-6; 11:4-7).
- B. His severe judgment of minor alterations and compromise of details is the real truth.
 1. There are many, but Nadab and Abihu died by fire for altered incense (Lev 10:1-2).
 2. Consider the foolish bloke that picked up sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:30-41).
 3. It does not matter if otherwise you are good Joe, for David was judged (I Chr 15:13).
- C. God is great, but He is always and inherently perfect without any iniquity (Deut 32:4).
- D. He is immutable and cannot change like we do; He is as holy as He ever was or will be.
- E. God is love, so John will stress it repeatedly, for otherwise is darkness (I John 2:7-11).

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

If we say that we have fellowship with him.

- A. Here we go – John's goal and purpose are to identify professors and test their claims.
 1. Consider seven warnings John has and will repeat (I John 1:6,8,10; 2:4,6,9; 4:20).
 2. We are all professors – we all make various claims – but do we prove it by His rule?
 3. We open our mouths often in church – public prayer, singing, membership, etc., etc.
 4. No wonder Solomon warned us – God is in heaven, you on earth, speak few words.
- B. Having declared the goal of fellowship with God and His Son, John then limited it here.
 1. The prospect of having apostle-like fellowship with both God and Jesus is incredible.

2. But this is not as easy as walking an aisle, signing a membership card, or tithing, etc.
 3. God is not an ordinary family member or buddy that has a million faults of his own.
- C. Having laid down a preeminent fact about God, John demanded compatibility with Him.
1. A simple fact of fellowship or friendship requires agreement (Am 3:3; II Cor 6:14).
 2. This compatibility of character and conduct is repeated (I Jn 1:7; 2:6; 3:3; 4:16-17).
 3. God has no interest in creatures that do not conform as perfectly as possible to Him.
- D. John will spend much of this epistle exposing and condemning false professors. Beware.
1. Many times John identified men claiming things (I John 1:6,8,10; 2:4,6,9; 4:20).
 2. The apostle is gentle toward hypocrites initially – using the first person plural *we*
 3. But he will then show their grave errors by calling them liars (I John 2:4,22; 4:20).
- E. We do a variety of things to promote reverence in our church assemblies and worship, as commanded (Heb 12:28-29), but the emphasis here is your personal and private walk.

And walk in darkness.

- A. We have above defined darkness as sin, and we need not make it any more complicated.
1. A depraved heart and corrupt mind likely limit it to adultery, bestiality, cursing, etc.
 2. But John in this epistle wrote that lacking brotherly love is darkness (I John 2:8-11).
 3. You have been taught and warned many times about brotherly love like this epistle.
- B. Walking in sin is continuing in a course of sin without any repentance or reformation.
1. We understand this as a lifestyle in one or more ways of sin, not a simple stumble.
 2. When we stumble and sin, there is an easy, simple, fast remedy to retain fellowship.
 3. David in the first Psalm drew a distinction between walking, standing, and sitting.
 4. It is regarding iniquity in our heart that God finds repulsive if we pray (Psalm 66:18).
 5. It is retaining silence and not confessing that causes chastening to hurry (Ps 32:3-6).
- C. Every day with every thought, word, or activity, we should ask, *Is this light or darkness?*
1. Help yourself by further asking, *Would God do it? Would He approve me doing it?*
 2. If that is too weak, ask yourself, *Would the most holy person in our church approve?*
 3. Apply this to everything ... your thoughts, how you speak to your spouse, how you serve the least members, how much you talk as a woman, how much you drink, what you watch on television, how fast you drive, how you criticize others, disrespect of civil rulers, lack of honor to parents, if you purloin on the job, if you are merciful, if you scatter money as a godly man, if you save as a strong man, if you prepare diligently for services, if you arrive early, if you are always serving, if you are productive, if you are known as a servant of men, if you meddle with anarchists, etc.
 4. Because we have more inputs than ever before, each must be tried by strictness for God's holiness e.g. social media, Pinterest, television, Internet, blogs, friends, etc.
 5. See David's promise and Paul's warning about sinful inputs (Ps 101:3; Rom 1:32).
- D. If you truly love I John, then you will want to fully embrace His holiness and this rule.

1. Whatever you appreciate later in the epistle is more or less predicated on this rule.
 2. If want to be bold and avoid shame on Judgment Day, it starts right here as well.
- E. If you learn the lesson John intended for you here – you will be strange to most others.
1. The lesson is that you cannot walk and talk with the true God without strict holiness.
 2. But you live in a time when ever Christians and churches are not holy (II Tim 3:2).
 3. There may be nineteen symptoms of perilous times, but do not overlook this one.
 4. Therefore, true thinking will be strange to you, to your family, and other Christians.
 5. No one distinguishes between holy and profane, but mingle them (Eze 22:26; 44:23).
 6. Holiness, hatred for sin, and love of purity are now ridiculed as outdated religion.
 7. It is hardly preached anywhere, little understood, and not practiced like the Bible.
 8. It is impossible to tell the difference between most Christians and the world in speech, dress, entertainment, business ethics, family function, dating practices, vacations, politics, authority, etc.

We lie, and do not the truth.

- A. Having laid down the preeminent fact about God, John now demands our compatibility.
1. Your character and conduct must match His, or there can be no fellowship with Him.
 2. This is basic and fundamental truth that God cannot and will not tolerate differences.
 3. This compatibility of character and conduct is repeated (I Jn 1:7; 2:6; 3:3; 4:16-17).
 4. While salvation involves God's great grace, fellowship requires our great holiness.
 5. So true is this axiom of walking with God, He will disrespect prayers (I Peter 3:7).
 6. There are no positive duties we can keep that cover sins (Pr 15:8; 28:9; Is 1:11-15).
 7. Haggai argued this key point from the basic rules of Moses' religion (Hag 2:10-14).
- B. Any thought to the contrary is self-deceit, misrepresents God, and impugns the gospel.
1. We know this truth, for sin grieves and quenches the Spirit (Eph 4:30; I Thess 5:19).
 2. If you really want to know God, realize the Holy Spirit can be your enemy (Is 63:10).
 3. It is confusion to hear persons profess love of truth but have little regard for holiness.
 4. Befriending the world is spiritual adultery and enmity – examine yourself (Jas 4:4).
 5. Real Christianity is sacrificial living, but few restrict anything (Rom 12:1-2; II 7:1).
- C. A man may say He is a Christian and has a relationship with God, but only works count.
1. Chronic disobedience is evidence enough that a person is not saved and also a liar.
 2. The converts of Jesus Christ, other than exceptions you cannot know, are obedient.
 3. The grace of God that regenerates and converts changes the nature and proclivities.
 4. Such a contradiction – I am saved, but I cannot stop sinning – is a lie against 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*.

But if we walk in the light.

- A. The inspired disjunctive *but* is the opposite of a self-deceived, apostate hypocrite above.
- B. This is the choice for the lifestyle and mindset of holiness to please our thrice-holy God.
- C. This is day by day, without taking days off, from conscious time in bed to all activities.
- D. Holiness and sanctification implied and required here are extreme, as John wrote next.

As he is in the light.

- A. This defined compatibility of character and conduct is repeated (I Jn 2:6; 3:3; 4:16-17).
- B. Your ideas of godliness and holiness are worthless and dangerous. They must be God's.
- C. God could not care less of other ideas of holiness, no matter how popular or impressive.
- D. Nadab and Abihu were the right men, at the right place and right time, for the right God.

We have fellowship one with another.

- A. John introduced fellowship with God, defined His character, then required us to follow.
- B. For review of what fellowship means and involves, see the notes above on verse three.
- C. This is your own fellowship with God and His Son by the Spirit; there is no other person.
 - 1. This is not brotherly love or fellowship among and between church members at all.
 - 2. First, the two pronouns have already had their antecedents identified – we and He – considered one at a time – one of we, or one solitary Christian with the another, God.
 - 3. Second, the disjunctive creates a negative comparison with the previous verse, where the issue is clearly fellowship between God and a Christian.
 - 4. Third, John had already established the fellowship as with God and Christ (I Jn 1:3).
 - 5. Fourth, the rule is walking in the light like Him for compatibility with God, not man.
 - 6. Fifth, there is nothing in the context about brotherly love until 2:7 (I John 2:7-11).
 - 7. Sixth, the knowledge and abiding position in context is in Him, in God (I Jn 2:3-6).
 - 8. Seventh, the great goal is fellowship with God, not others (John 15:9-11; 14:21-23).
- D. Fellowship with God and His Son is personal, individual, intimate friendship. Glory!
 - 1. Note and love the singular nouns/pronouns, and this is not with church members.
 - 2. This is fellowship among three parties – God the Father, Jesus the Son, and you.
 - 3. Yet there is a fourth party that makes all this possible, and He is the Spirit of God.
 - 4. It was expedient for Jesus to leave, so He could send the Comforter for each of us.
 - 5. This is friendship on an internal level of comfort, joy, peace, hope, and love supreme.
 - 6. This is knowing you are heard, and hearing God speak to you without use of ears.
 - 7. This is having Him speak to you through His word as if He were reading it to you.

- 8. This is having new vistas of understanding of all aspects of Him and His salvation.
- 9. For more of what the Spirit can do for you, [The Holy Spirit in Ephesians](#).
- E. This is the same rule for greater love and manifestation of his gospel (John 14:21,23).
- F. Think of any man that walked with God, like Enoch or Noah, they were certainly holy.
- G. When you read David's commitments (Ps 101:1-8), no wonder he was God's favorite.

And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

- A. This verse should be connected with the following verse more closely than any other.
 - 1. This pair of verses, verses 7-8, deals with the principle of sin and sins of ignorance.
 - 2. Paul clearly identified a law, power, and presence of sin in believers (Rom 7:14-25).
 - 3. David clearly identified sins of ignorance, against which he prayed (Psalm 19:12).
 - 4. While walking in the light with God as here, Jesus Christ's blood covers those two.
 - 5. But when sins are known, they must be acknowledged and confessed as found next.
 - 6. If we deny sins for confession (I Jn 1:9-10), we make God a liar and deny His word.
 - 7. This verse here is about the power and principle of sin and sins of ignorance as well.
 - 8. It is present sinfulness that corrupts while obeying and walking in the light (I Jn 1:7).
 - 9. The sin here is not known as in the next pair of verses where confession is required.
- B. Without the blood of Christ, meaning His death, we are infinitely separated from Him.
 - 1. We have no basis, method, or wisdom for gaining this God's approval in any way.
 - 2. We are workers of iniquity by nature and conduct, and He rightly hates us as such.
 - 3. It is only His longsuffering for His greater glory that He endures vessels of wrath.
 - 4. We have never shown anything but disdain for Him and infatuation with the devil.
 - 5. But, we have a glorious mediator and high priest that opens our way fully to God.
 - 6. However, we need much more than legal cleansing by His death, we need practical.
 - 7. Sin separates us from God different than basic depravity (Is 59:1-2; I Cor 11:27-32).
 - 8. The cleansing here is not a past tense work but a continued operation in the present.
- C. Let us identify the two main reasons and purposes for this need for fellowship with God.
 - 1. First, we have the basic truth in context of full forgiveness for confession (I Jn 1:9).
 - 2. Second, we have covering mercy of God to sanctify or cleanse all we do not confess.
 - 3. Does this second option imply or intend consciously not confessing? No, no, never.
 - 4. This option deals with our present situation with corrupt flesh and ignorant minds.
- D. Our confession of sins, with His faithful forgiveness and cleansing, is in close context.
 - 1. Note the terminology of cleansing from sin in this verse and two verses from here.
 - 2. To maintain fellowship with God, we use I John 1:9 to avoid walking in darkness.
 - 3. God forgives fast, if we confess, repent, reform (Job 33:27-28; Ps 32:5; Pr 28:13).
 - 4. David is an incredible example of instant forgiveness for great sins (II Sam 12:13).

5. Peter is an incredible example of being forgiven great sins, for he was honored and promoted quickly by Jesus and given charge of apostles, Pentecost, Cornelius, etc.
 6. He has given us everything we need to walk with Him (II Peter 1:2-5; I Cor 2:16).
 7. But what of creeping, corrupting sin in our actions before we are perfect in heaven?
- E. However, we also need the sanctifying effect of His death for our remaining corruption.
1. We cannot have fellowship with God on our own. His blood cleanses while walking.
 2. If we understand our depravity and flesh as we should, all we do is tainted with sin.
 3. No matter how hard we try, sin will worm its way into our best actions as pride, etc.
 4. Paul wrote at length about a war within him between two natures (Romans 7:14-25).
 5. The next verse demands that we understand the cleansing here of all kinds needed.
 6. God knows full well about sins of ignorance. What covers them? Christ's perfection.
 7. Asa led a fabulous revival, but he was not perfect, yet perfect (I Kings 15:14). How?
 8. Isaiah thought he was fine until he was in the presence of our holy King (Is 6:1-8).
- F. God in great mercy chose to cover our imperfections by Christ's perfect death and life.
1. What is Jesus doing in heaven right now? Interceding for us on merits of His death.
 2. Is this legal, or only legal? Or is there practical work as our Priest for practical faults?
 3. Can we ever bring worship acceptable to God without Him? No, never (I Peter 2:5).
 4. Nothing here implies or allows us to presume on forgiveness without confession.
 5. For He will not tolerate us knowing about sin and continuing in it (Ps 32:3; 66:18).
 6. But there remains sinful corruption in all we do and inherent ignorance of His will.
 7. So He covered us from that sinfulness or those sins we cannot avoid or do not know.
 8. This does not mean because an area of your life is difficult that God covers forfeiture.
- G. You can and should have full, constant, joyful fellowship with God. Shout, Hallelujah!

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

If we say that we have no sin.

- A. This verse should be connected with the previous verse more closely than any other.
1. This pair of verses, verses 7-8, deals with the principle of sin and sins of ignorance.
 2. Paul clearly identified a law, power, and presence of sin in believers (Rom 7:14-25).
 3. David clearly identified sins of ignorance, against which he prayed (Psalm 19:12)
 4. While walking in the light with God (I John 1:7), Christ's blood covers those two.
 5. But when sins are known, they must be acknowledged and confessed as found next.
 6. If we deny sins for confession (I Jn 1:9-10), we make God a liar and deny His word.
 7. This verse here is about the power and principle of sin and sins of ignorance as well.

8. It is present sinfulness that corrupts while obeying and walking in the light (I Jn 1:7).
- B. Here is another lie and self-deception contrary to the truth (I Jn 1:6), denying sinfulness.
1. John by inspiration crushed another argument that costs holiness and so fellowship.
 2. Note the grammar here – it is present sin (not have had) and sin in general (not sins).
 3. Thus, we understand it to be mainly a denial of remaining sin altering fellowship.
 4. John's response will totally deny their lack of need for the Lord's continued work.
 5. If you discuss Bible doctrine with very many, you will encounter those that deny sin.
 6. They claim salvation changes us so drastically that truly saved persons do not sin.
 7. They will boldly argue from chapters three and five, ignoring chapters one and two.
 8. They do not allow sin (I John 3:6-9; 5:18), but John did (I John 1:8-10; 2:1; 5:16).
- C. Let us get a matter very clear and right. We have no sin in our legal standing in Christ.
1. We are perfectly righteous by the finished work of the second Adam (Rom 5:6-21).
 2. There is nothing that can be laid to our charge by election in Christ (Rom 8:33-34).
 3. Jesus by Himself purged us from our sins and has sat down with it done (Heb 1:3).
 4. This same apostle opened the book of Revelation with sins washed away (Rev 1:5).
 5. From an eternal perspective of heaven, we are as righteous as Jesus is before God.
- D. John will spend much of this epistle exposing and condemning false professors. Beware.
1. Many times John identified men claiming things (I John 1:6,8,10; 2:4,6,9; 4:20).
 2. The apostle is gentle toward hypocrites initially – using the first person plural *we*.
 3. But he will then show their grave errors by calling them liars (I John 2:4,22; 4:20)
 4. Here he calls them self-deceived apostates, for they are deceived and outside truth.
- E. Can we identify this error more clearly, since we do not know such heresies at that time?
1. When John defends Jesus' person, heresies at that time are known, thus *Christ Wars*.
 2. So we conclude these are more general problems in thinking by ordinary Christians.
 3. First, some might fatalistically exalt elect and justification to deny any continual sin.
 4. Second, some might deny it interrupts fellowship, for it cannot alter the relationship.
 5. Third, we can think it possible to exalt regeneration to deny remaining sinfulness.
 6. Fourth, we can think it possible some might grow in grace enough to claim perfection, similar to how Corinth was corrupted by Spirit gifts to many heresies.
 7. Fifth, some might think by their sanctification that God no longer sees practical sin.
 8. Sixth, we can think it possible some might think many good works overwhelm sin.
 9. Seventh, we can assume Jews might reason that the final sacrifice ended sin forever.
 10. Eighth, it might be due to all of the above that continued intercession is not needed.
- F. Do not mock this verse as foolish. How do you minimize your sin to avoid repentance?
1. Do you compare yourself with others to lie to yourself that you are better than they?
 2. Do you lie to yourself that your lofty thoughts of God make you any less of a sinner?

3. Do you comfort yourself with the lie that your goodness in the past leaves you holy?
 4. Every man, for all have a deceitful heart, do not fully appreciate the blood of Jesus.
 5. You need His bloody death in more ways and in greater degree than you ever think.
- G. To maintain walking in light for fellowship with God, we must constantly see our sins.
1. To the degree we understate sin or sins, we lose love of Christ, His cross, His blood.
 2. Therefore, we must admit and resent sin in our members and sinfulness (I Jn 1:7-8).
 3. And we also admit and resent the actual events of sin that we confess (I Jn 1:9-10).

We deceive ourselves.

- A. This is terrible self-deception, for the Bible and our consciences say otherwise loudly.
- B. We must pray often for God to save us from deception, for how will you know you are?
- C. Studying scripture by the man of God is certainly a means for truth, but it is not enough.
- D. **How many Christians are self-deceived by misunderstanding scripture? Most of them!**

And the truth is not in us.

- A. The truth of the gospel includes the record of the very best Christians still sinning.
- B. David in the Old Testament is an example of many sins, yet he was God's favorite.
- C. Peter in the New Testament is an example of great sins, yet he led the other apostles.
- D. If they argue before or after Pentecost, then Corinth is our example (I Cor 11:27-32).

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins.

- A. This verse should be connected with the following one more closely than the preceding.
 1. The previous pair, verses 7-8, dealt with the principle of sin and sins of ignorance.
 2. Paul clearly identified a law, power, and presence of sin in believers (Rom 7:14-25).
 3. David clearly identified sins of ignorance, against which he prayed (Psalm 19:12).
 4. While walking in the light with God (I John 1:7), Christ's blood covers those two.
 5. But when sins are known, they must be acknowledged and confessed as in this verse.
 6. If we deny sins for confession (I John 1:10), we make God a liar and deny His word.
 7. This verse is for actual known sins, not a sin principle or sins of ignorance as above.
- B. This is a favorite verse of some, as it should be, for it describes amazing practical grace.
 1. The verse is very clear, plain, and simple. You should believe it and use it boldly.
 2. Praise God for this simple solution for rebellion and stupidity that cost Jesus His life.
 3. Do you have a favorite verse of practical forgiveness for conviction and assurance?
 4. Here are few others that have similar value (Job 33:27-28; Psalm 32:5; Prov 28:13).

5. And never forget that His ability to pardon totally transcends our best (Is 55:6-9).
- C. What does confess mean? Let us be as clear and simple as possible, but yet complete.
 1. What is sin? It is transgression or breaking of God's law or rules for us (I John 3:4).
 2. First you must tell God you sinned and did a thing He told you not to do (Job 33:27).
 3. Then you should acknowledge you are a loser to go against perfect rules (Job 33:27).
 4. Then you should admit that your way did not work and brought no profit (Job 33:27).
 5. David described it as coming clean and not hiding sin by acknowledging it (Ps 32:5).
 6. Solomon described it as not covering it at all but fully exposing it to God (Pr 28:13).
 7. Solomon also introduced the forsaking and reformation that should occur (Pr 28:13).
 8. Elihu also taught confession in light of chastening and seeking light (Job 34:31-32).
 9. The best description of true repentance that works is very thorough (II Cor 7:10-11).

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

- A. What is the result? Let us be very clear and simple for encouragement and assurance.
 1. By God's promise about God, we should boldly confess and believe His forgiveness!
 2. God immediately forgives us practically to retain fellowship and walking with Him.
 3. Why and how does He do this? Because He is faithful to this and all His promises.
 4. Because He is faithful to the finished work and continual intercession by His Son.
 5. Because He is absolutely just and would never require double jeopardy for our sins.
 6. He has declared over and over in the Bible that His Son's death put away our sins.
 7. When we confess, repent, and reform, we activate His practical forgiveness of sins.
 8. Stop sinning! Repent, confess, reform! Do right! Hate wrong, even for a second!
 9. For more about the success of repentance and confession, *The 'R' Factor ... [this video](#) (Vimeo)*.
- B. Think about David's horrible crimes – forgiven instantly by confession (II Sam 12:13).
- C. Think about Peter's horrible denial – forgiven and honored and promoted in the church.
- D. God can forgive so easily and so fast, because Jesus suffered so painfully and so slowly.

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- A. So thorough was the death and payment of His Son, He forgives and cleanses all sin.
 1. As Isaiah promised wicked Israel, they could be white as now and wool (Is 1:16-18).
 2. There is nothing left after His forgiveness – *no darkness at all* – to restore fellowship.
 3. Therefore, you can be fully restored in intimate friendship with the thrice-holy God.
- B. The effect of this wonderful verse should be confident confession and bold renewal.
 1. If you do not believe the verse, you doubt God's faithfulness or Christ's sufficiency.
 2. You should immediately get up from prayer (standing is also fine) and serve joyfully.
 3. Wallowing in self-pity is straight from the devil, not the Holy Spirit (Job 33:28)!

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

If we say that we have not sinned.

- A. This verse should be connected with the previous verse more closely than any other.
 - 1. The previous pair, verses 7-8, dealt with the principle of sin and sins of ignorance.
 - 2. Paul clearly identified a law, power, and presence of sin in believers (Rom 7:14-25).
 - 3. David clearly identified sins of ignorance, against which he prayed (Psalm 19:12).
 - 4. While walking in the light with God (I John 1:7), Christ's blood covers those two.
 - 5. But when sins are known, they must be acknowledged and confessed as above verse.
 - 6. If we deny sins for confession (I John 1:9), we make God a liar and deny His word.
 - 7. This verse is for actual known sins, not a sin principle or sins of ignorance as earlier.
- B. Here is another lie and self-deception contrary to truth (I Jn 1:6,8), denying sinfulness.
 - 1. John by inspiration crushed another argument that costs holiness and so fellowship.
 - 2. If you discuss Bible doctrine with very many, you will encounter those that deny sin.
 - 3. They claim salvation changes us so drastically that truly saved persons do not sin.
 - 4. They will boldly argue from chapters three and five, ignoring chapters two and three.
 - 5. They do not allow sin (I John 3:6-9; 5:18), but John did (I John 1:8-10; 2:1; 5:16).
- C. Let us get a matter very clear and right. We have no sin in our legal standing in Christ.
 - 1. We are perfectly righteous by the finished work of the second Adam (Rom 5:6-21).
 - 2. There is nothing that can be laid to our charge by election in Christ (Rom 8:33-34).
 - 3. Jesus by Himself purged us from our sins and has sat down with it done (Heb 1:3).
 - 4. This same apostle opened the book of Revelation with sins washed away (Rev 1:5).
- D. John will spend much of this epistle exposing and condemning false professors. Beware.
 - 1. Many times John identified men claiming things (I John 1:6,8,10; 2:4,6,9; 4:20).
 - 2. The apostle is gentle toward hypocrites initially – using the first person plural *we*.
 - 3. But he will then show their grave errors by calling them liars (I John 2:4,22; 4:20)
 - 4. Here he calls them self-deceived apostates, for they are deceived and outside truth.
- E. Do not mock this verse as foolish. How do you minimize your sin to avoid repentance?
 - 1. Do you compare yourself with others to lie to yourself that you are better than they?
 - 2. Do you lie to yourself that your lofty thoughts of God make you any less of a sinner?
 - 3. Do you comfort yourself with the lie that your goodness in the past leaves you holy?
 - 4. Every man, for all have a deceitful heart, do not fully appreciate the blood of Jesus.
 - 5. You need His bloody death in more ways and in greater degree than you ever think.
- F. To maintain walking in light for fellowship with God, we must constantly see our sins.
 - 1. Unless we know our wretchedness, we will underestimate the darkness in our lives.

2. Unless we know our wretchedness, we will not exalt Jesus' blood (Rom 7:24-25a).
3. Unless we know our wretchedness, we will not know sin corrupts the good we do.
4. Unless we know our wretchedness, we will not confess as often or fast as we should.

We make him a liar.

- A. John by the Spirit altered the wording from a previous verse to malign and impugn God.
- B. God has stated and recorded in writing that all men are sinful and sinners even at birth.
 1. The Bible is filled with God declaring man's sinfulness (Ps 14:1-3; Rom 3:9-18).
 2. The Bible is filled with men continuing to sin – the church of the O.T. displays it.

And his word is not in us.

- A. The truth of the gospel includes the record all men are sinners and Christians still sin.
 1. David in the Old Testament is an example of many sins, yet he was God's favorite.
 2. Peter in the New Testament is an example of great sins, yet he led the other apostles.
 3. If they argue before or after Pentecost, then Corinth is our example (I Cor 11:27-32).
- B. Jesus once used similar words to Jews, but they were the devil's children (John 8:37).
- C. We can prove His word is in us by confessing our sins and sinfulness often and loudly.
- D. When did you last tell others that you are a great sinner without false humility or show?
 1. Paul soberly told he was a sinful mess in need of a mighty Savior (Romans 7:14-25).
 2. It is this very example of Paul's appreciation for Jesus that should drive us daily.
 3. You and I deserve physical death right now. You and I deserve the lake of fire today.
 4. What should you do? Praise God and His Son for saving you from the three deaths.
 5. It was all dependent, and will be forever, on the blood of the Lamb – Jesus death!