

First John Chapter 3 (#1)... Verse

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Chapter 3

Simple Outline of Chapter:

- 1-3** God's Love in Adoption and Glorification
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- 8-10** Sin Proves a Child of God or of the Devil
- 11-13** Brotherly Love Is Not of Nature or World
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God's Love in Adoption and Glorification – Verses 1-3

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.

Behold.

- A. **Behold** = an imperative verb as interjection; to give attention, consideration, regard to.
 - 1. This is the only occurrence of *behold* in I John, in 105 verses, yet 218 times in N.T.
 - 2. The incredible acts and events of these first two verses should get our full attention.
 - 3. There is nothing else in your life or in the world that is worth anything in comparison.
 - 4. This news transcends all you are capable of imagining for it is beyond it (I Cor 2:9).
 - 5. This world's princes are ignorant by any measure, but especially this (I Cor 2:6-10).
- B. There is context to this abrupt and bold beginning to chapter three ... from chapter two.
 - 1. Note the last words of chapter two, *born of him*, which is a familial term of sonship.
 - 2. For assurance, we need a striking resemblance to Christ in character and conduct.
 - 3. Note the next to last verse about the appearing and second coming of Jesus Christ.
 - 4. These two significant hints and introductions lead us to adoption and glorification.
- C. The exclusive intent here is to point and focus our attention on God's love in adoption.
 - 1. However, we should recognize the following facts transcend doctrine like Proverbs.

2. Wherever we might be at any time in God's word, we want to make it very important.
 3. But the essential character and effect of this information goes far beyond a corn crib.
 4. However, we should know our adoption is for a formal, public declaration. Behold!
 5. God did not save us for a secret rapture to quietly go to heaven. No! The opposite!
- D. There are only two kinds of people on earth – children of God and children of the devil.
- E. The Bible, from beginning to end, is about the children of God (Gen 6:1-2; Rev 21:7).

What manner of love.

- A. **Manner** = kind, form, sort, degree of a thing. To identify a rare occurrence of a thing.
1. Compare, *What manner of man* (Matt 8:27)! *What manner of buildings* (Mark 13:1)!
 2. There is no precedent or example of the benevolent favor shown to the sons of God.
- B. **Love** = benevolent favor by intentional design toward another for his good and pleasure.
1. The love of God toward us also has the divine goal of glorifying Himself to creatures.
 2. No one has ever loved another even close to the exceeding riches of God's grace.
 3. A soldier dying can hardly be called love, for he did not ask or intend to die for any.
 4. A mother dying in childbirth is not comparable love, for it was far from her mind.
 5. God's love to save men is transcendently superior to all human concepts of love by (a) the infinite happiness of God without us, (b) the inferiority and despicableness of man, (c) the cost of killing His only Son by intentional design, (d) man's rebel rejection of all kindness, and (e) bestowal of infinite, personal, permanent riches.
 6. For much more about the incredible aspects of God's grace and love in Christ ... [**The Unsearchable Riches of Christ \(5 Sermons\)**](#)

The Father hath bestowed upon us.

- A. The Father here is the Creator God of the entire universe; Jehovah is His chosen name.
1. Let us repeat what John repeated – He is the Father of the Son (I Jn 1:3; 2:22; etc.).
 2. We are always too eager and hasty to think of ourselves as making God the Father.
 3. Let us see Him first and chiefly as the Father of Jesus, to give rightful preeminence.
 4. He is our Father by creation before adoption, as in the case of Adam (Luke 3:38).
 5. He is our Father by adoption in a far more intimate and meaningful way (Ep 1:1-6).
- B. God's love for us was by intentional design for His glory and our profitable pleasure.
1. **Bestow** = To confer as a gift, present, give. See Bible examples (I Cor 13:3; 15:10).
 2. His love was not coerced or enticed from Him by His need, by our need, by our desirability, by our reciprocal love, by any obligation, any pressure, any request, etc.
 3. We love Him, because He first loved us, which He will state clearly (I John 4:10,19).
- C. Eternal life, including adoption, is God's gift to us in three different ways (John 17:2).
1. God gave His elect to Jesus before the world began (Ephesians 1:3-4; II Tim 1:9).

2. God gave His Son Jesus to die for the elect sinners (I Pet 1:20; Gal 1:3-4; Eph 5:25).
3. God gave eternal life to the elect (John 10:28-29; Romans 5:15-18; 8:32; Eph 2:8).
- D. God's bestowal of loving adoption began in eternity when He predestinated us unto it.
 1. Predestination is used four times, for adoption/inheritance (Ro 8:29-30; Eph 1:4-12).
 2. Paul clearly stated adoption as God's predestinated purpose and will (Eph 1:4-6).
 3. Our adoption was by Jesus Christ legally, for we became acceptable in Him. Amen.
 4. For much more about *Eternal Life Is the Gift of God* and all that is included in it ... **Eternal Life Is a Gift.**

That we should be called the sons of God.

- A. This is adoption – His intentional choice to take a lost child and make it His very own.
- B. It is not unusual for men to adopt a deprived child to show affection and privileges, and it is usual such children due to poor birth and circumstances are available for adoption.
 1. Adoption is entirely intentional, without any accidents or surprises, from planning, to qualifying, to paying, to choosing, to possessing, to informing, to declaring, to guaranteeing, to doting, to providing, to perfecting, to bestowing (inheritance), etc.
 2. This is different and inferior in important respects to ordinary childbirth, which is more a surprise with far less intentional choice and selection in comparison. Think!
 3. For much more about, *Adoption as Sons of God*, greatest facet of salvation ... **Adoption.**
- C. Adoption is a process with necessary steps to be understood naturally and spiritually.
 1. It begins when a father weighs his intentions and options and then plans to adopt.
 2. He hires lawyers for an official transfer making it legal and binding on all parties.
 3. With the transfer complete, the child is given a new name, status, parents, home.
 4. As the child grows, he learns of his loving adoption, its privileges, and his duties.
 5. When his adopted father dies, he inherits his estate for the full extent of adoption.
- D. Adoption is best seen through the five phases of salvation God taught us (II Tim 2:15).
 1. God planned to adopt before the foundation of the world (Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:5,11).
 2. God paid for our adoption by the death of His Jesus Christ (Gal 4:4-5; Heb 2:14-17).
 3. God regenerated us by the Spirit to change our nature (Jn 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Eph 4:24).
 4. God sent the gospel to tell us about it and how to live (Mat 5:43-45; II Cor 6:14-18).
 5. God will send Jesus to raise our bodies for total glorification (Rom 8:23; Eph 1:14).
 6. For many more details about adoption in five phases, see the table collating them.
 7. For a PPT of adoption's five phases, *Salvation's Facets Divided by Phases* ... **Salvation Facets Divided by Phases.**
- E. Who can describe this incredible thing? This is the greatest of all the facets of salvation.
 1. We, the children of the devil and children of wrath by nature, are made God's sons; we, who showed allegiance to His archenemy Satan by wicked works, are adopted.

2. God sent Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins, but that does not make God our Father; redemption describes the purchase price from God's justice, but redemption does not make us sons; pardon for crimes committed is a great gift, but it does not make us the beloved children of God; justification clears of guilt and condemnation and makes us righteous, but it does not make us God's sons; sanctification as a holy object without sin is wonderful, but it does not make us His children either. Go up!
 3. Consider it this way: you must be justified to be adopted, but you do not have to be adopted to be justified, so let us rise higher than justification in this place of scripture.
 4. Adoption rises higher than any other aspect or facet of our salvation in Jesus Christ.
 5. Say with John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us."
 6. For much more about, *The Facets of Salvation*, with adoption as the greatest ... **Facets of Salvation**.
 7. For much more about, *Adoption as the Sons of God*, get into all its phases ... **Adoption**.
- F. As sons of God in the universe, we have the choicest and closest relationship to Him.
1. The angels are our servants (Heb 1:14); they are sons of God by creation/reflection.
 2. We are incredible beneficiaries – adopted to impress angels (Eph 3:10; I Pet 1:12).
 3. We are in the inner circle without a doubt (Rev 3:21; 4:4-6,9-10; 5:6,9-10,11-13).
- G. What blasphemous heresy or sacrilege to think adoption is by choice of a rebel child!
- H. Jehovah never offered adoption! It was His eternal plan! We could not meet conditions!

Therefore the world knoweth us not.

- A. There are only two kinds of people on earth – children of God and children of the devil.
- B. This world, the domain of Satan, the god and prince of this world, cannot see the truth.
 1. We have a *because* following this *therefore*, so we see the main logical connection.
 2. With *therefore* positioned as it is, we include the world's general spiritual ignorance.
 3. They have no ability to recognize spiritual truth, for they are only natural (I Co 2:14).
 4. They have no character to accept creation, for they resent a Creator (Rom 1:18-21).
 5. They walk by sight, not knowing all the things of faith that will soon destroy them.
 6. The mystery, hidden wisdom is far beyond them; it is our possession (I Cor 2:6-8).
- C. The world does not have a clue about our true identity and high position in the universe.
 1. We will participate in judgment with Christ (I Cor 6:2-3), our brother and our friend.
 2. We shall be received into glory forever, while they are consigned to an eternal hell.
 3. If they knew we were God's sons, knowing and owning all things, paparazzi would swarm us, were it not for their depravity, Satan's blinding, and mutual hatred of God.
- D. The difference between us and the world should be retained at all times for perspective.
 1. The blind, deluded fools around us do not know origin, condition, purpose, destiny.
 2. John just warned us against their lifestyle and system as a danger (I John 2:15-17).
 3. In Noah's generation, the sons of God foolishly married daughters of men (Gen 6:2).

4. There has been perpetual animosity and there always will be (Proverbs 29:10,27).
 5. David and Asaph warned against forgetting this great difference (Ps 49:15; 73:17).
- E. For more about *Real Insider Information*, our secret wisdom of the universe ... [Real Insider Information \(1\)](#), [Real Insider Information \(2\)](#).
- F. For more about the animosity and enmity between sons of God and the world ... [the Proverbs 29:27 commentary](#).

Because it knew him not.

- A. The world, the domain of Satan, the god and prince of this world, could not see truth.
 1. The princes of this world, the best on earth, knew nothing of truth and killed Jesus.
 2. Pilate, one of Rome's best, once asked Jesus, *What is truth?* His education worthless!
 3. He was taken from judgment; there could be no honest treatment of Him (Is 53:8).
 4. There was a wicked division among the Jews, and they killed Him after a few years.
- B. Total depravity and the devil's blinding remove ability to recognize the most obvious.
 1. Jesus said His works were sufficient to identify Him as the Son of God (John 14:11).
 2. We marvel at their inability to consider countless miracles, but it was no different than Pharaoh's insolence and choice to enter the Red Sea – both by God's blinding.
 3. What happened at the cross was sufficient for the centurion, but not all (Matt 27:54).
 4. The supernatural character of the Bible and Christianity's effect on nations are lost.
 5. When men reject offered truth, God sends strong delusion to damn (II Thes 2:9-12).
- C. They hated Jesus, and since apostles were not greater – they hated them (Jn 15:18-25).
- D. Praise and thank God ceaselessly that you see, believe, understand, and are convicted!

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.

Beloved.

- A. This 'B' word, similar to the interjection starting the previous verse, is precious indeed.
- B. **Beloved** = Loved. It is used five times in this epistle, but this use is the first occurrence.
 1. It should be the first occurrence, since God's love had not been identified (I Jn 3:1).
 2. It is perfectly appropriate to call his readers *beloved*, for God did indeed love them.
 3. If or when we use the phrase, *beloved brethren*, think of God's adoptive love first.

Now are we the sons of God.

- A. There are very real aspects of our adoption as sons of God that are already in place now.
 1. The five phases of salvation are a helpful dividing of the word of truth (II Tim 2:15).
 2. Anyone reading John's epistle with joy and works had three – eternal, legal, vital.

3. God choice, God's payment, and God's creation or regeneration are certain, final.
 4. We leave the fourth phase, the practical, as a state of growth and increase (I Jn 3:3).
- B. There is a very real aspect of our adoption as sons of God that is entirely in the future.
1. We know the very specific future phase – glorification – is not yet (Romans 8:23).
 2. But we should remember that it was absolutely certain – even past tense (Rom 8:30).
 3. It is this future and final phases of adoption – glorification – that John next described.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

- A. Keep in mind that the main lesson of this verse is what we shall be by our glorification.
- B. Though a child of God in the present now, we have not seen our future glorification.
1. *And it doth not yet appear what we shall be* = we have not yet seen our glorious end.
 2. Do you know your sense of sight is very limited by light, time, distance, spirits, etc.?
 3. Paul gave a rule for our worldview – important things are invisible (II Cor 4:17-18).
 4. We cannot see unbelievable authority, beings, glory, intelligence, power, wars, etc.
- C. The transformation coming crushes all human experience, known only by revelation.
1. Our natural bodies and their abilities cannot grasp any of the realities now invisible.
 2. But glory is coming that will be in us that totally annihilates all suffering (Rom 8:18).
 3. All we can know about it now is to submit to the few places in scripture stating it.
- D. Believer! Beloved believer! Join with me like Abraham in heading to our destination!
1. Abraham did not where he was going, but he knew it would be good. Do you know?
 2. We should love His appearing and the ending of all you presently know (II Tim 4:8).
 3. We should be watching for it and asking and hoping for it to hurry (II Pet 3:10-14).
- E. Glorification is certain – for a new universe and new bodies – due to God's promises.
1. Paul gave a fabulous description of the universe's bondage of corruption due to sin being broken and creatures being delivered from their hopeless pain (Rom 8:17-25).
 2. This passage is our glorification – redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:17-19,21,23).
 3. He mocked any attempt by natural man to define our new bodies (I Cor 15:35-57).
 4. He knew the glory we will get from God crushes all problems now (II Cor 4:17-18).
 5. By Paul's superior knowledge via inspiration, he was confident for it (II Cor 5:1-8).
 6. True Christians live for heaven and their certain, new glorious body (Phil 3:20-21).
 7. True Christians declare in baptism their total commitment to this event (Col 3:1-4).
 8. Peter described the total re-creation of the universe after its burning (II Pet 3:10-14).
- F. The whole universe moves toward its greatest, climactic event – our formal unveiling!
1. It is called the manifestation of the sons of God – He owns us before all (Rom 8:19)
 2. It is called the glorious liberty of children of God – free from sin's curse (Rom 8:21).
 3. The event is centered around us, for all other creatures and matter are inferior to us.

- G. For much more about the great change that will take place in us and the universe ... **When Pain Ends** (Rom 8:17-25).

But we know that.

- A. There are certain things true Christians should know from the Bible and live by them.
1. Paul used the rhetorical question, *Know ye not*, twelve times. Do you know them?
 2. Here are five in just one chapter from that apostle to Corinth (I Cor 6:3,9,15,16,19).
 3. God expects us to learn by progressive revelation foundation truth for higher things.
 4. Truth builds on its foundation; the church is its pillar and ground (I Tim 3:15-16).
 5. God's ministers with God's words are to save us from all variations (Eph 4:11-14).
- B. What John is about to review with these sons of God was to be known by all Christians.
1. We are not Fundamentalists as some define and practice the idea, but we have basics.
 2. There is foundational truth that we cannot alter and upon which we build the edifice.
 3. One foundational point of truth is Christ's second coming, to always be emphasized.
 4. Connected to our Lord's return is our final glorification in every way to be like Him.
 5. Therefore, Paul exhorted us to remind each other of these things (I Thess 4:18; 5:11).
- C. If you do not pay attention to all preaching and review it, you will default to ignorance.
1. Once you default to ignorance or lies of your flesh, the world, or Satan, you are lost.
 2. John had just taught that the basic truth of Jesus' person was enough to save them; if they would abide in it, keep what they had heard, they could survive antichrists.
 3. If you do not continually do maintenance work, you will default to lies, for your own heart is the worst deceiver, the world deceives, and the god of this world deceives.
 4. Paul had to rebuke his Hebrews audience due to forgetting doctrine (Hebrews 12:5).
- D. For a warning from various angles to remember truth, *Never Forget*, a sermon ... **Never Forget**.

When he shall appear.

- A. The second coming of Jesus Christ is of very great importance and should rule our lives.
- B. John had introduced this event three verses earlier with a personal address (I John 2:28).
- C. Jesus is coming in His glorified body in the most literal, physical, visual way possible.
1. The angels explained to apostles that He would return the way He left (Acts 1:9-11).
 2. He will descend from heaven with several noted accessory events (I Thess 4:13-18).
 3. His coming should change our lives to live different from the world (I Thes 5:1-10).
 4. He will be revealed for all to see with His mighty angels and fire (II Thess 1:7-10).
 5. The apostles repeated His coming or appearing (I Cor 1:7; 15:23; I Thess 3:13; 5:23; I Tim 6:14; II Tim 4:8; Tit 2:13; I Pet 1:7; 5:4; II Pet 3:4-12; Jude 1:14-15; Rev 1:7).
 6. His first coming paid for sins; if you look for Him, He is coming to save (Heb 9:28).
- D. Confidence at His coming requires the same doctrine as here (I John 2:29 cp I John 3:3).

- E. Keep in mind going forward that His appearing means the elect see him, for He appears.
- F. For much more about our Lord's coming, *The Facts About the Second Coming ... Second Coming Facts*.

We shall be like him.

- A. This promise has been revealed by inspiration from the beginning for us to embrace.
 - 1. Job, writing who knows when, likely 2000 years before Jesus, knew (Job 19:25-27).
 - 2. David, writing 1000 years before Jesus, described his resurrection body (Ps 17:15).
 - 3. Paul, writing a few years after Christ, told of glorified conformation (Rom 8:29-30).
 - 4. Then, when dealing with a doubting church, Paul declared it forcefully (I Cor 15:49).
 - 5. He denigrated our vile bodies in comparison to new bodies like His (Phil 3:20-21).
 - 6. For us to appear with Christ in glory requires us to be changed like Him (Col 3:1-4).
- B. God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, even bodies (Rom 8:29).
- C. If we are going to be like Him in appearance and nature, let us be like Him in conduct!

For we shall see him as he is.

- A. Do not separate this clause from the verse, for it depends on the verse for its meaning.
 - 1. The main intent and lesson of this verse is our glorification – what we shall be like.
 - 2. It says we have not seen our glorified end and that we know we get a body like His.
 - 3. Even this clause is about our seeing ability rather than any information about Him.
 - 4. The end of adoption and glorification are about us more than about the Lord Himself.
- B. This clause, which gives some trouble, should not, though the wording is challenging.
 - 1. If the coordinating conjunction were *and*, you would have no problem adding a fact.
 - 2. You should not lose this perspective – glorification includes changing seeing ability.
 - 3. Believers already see Him when He appears (early clause), so it not just seeing Him.
 - 4. Rather it is seeing Him as He is – in His glorified state with much higher properties.
 - 5. Do not let the coordinating conjunction *for* make you think *cause for previous effect*.
 - 6. Seeing Him as He is does not cause us to be like Him but is rather evidence of it.
- C. Being glorified like Him (previous clause), enhances sight so as to comprehend Him.
 - 1. Being like Him will give us the same nature as Him rather than two different natures.
 - 2. Believe the promises listed for the previous clause that indicate very similar natures.
 - 3. Our bodily change will be complete and thorough to match His glorified nature.
- D. Two facts ... being made like Him ... seeing Him in His glorified state ... are both true.
 - 1. The main lesson of this verse from its beginning is what we shall be by glorification.
 - 2. What has never been seen yet by the sons of God is their glorified bodies like His.
 - 3. Do not let this last clause distract you from the two facts that are the entire lesson.
 - 4. The only issue left is dealing with the conjunction *for* to satisfy “every word” lovers.

- E. The first word of this clause is the conjunction *for*, with but limited possibilities [OED].
1. It can be the cause of what preceded ... *because* ... not possible, for He is the cause of us being transformed to be like Him by His mighty working power (Phil 3:21), and this would nearly put the cart before the horse; we need ability before activity.
 2. It can be the ground or reason of what preceded ... *seeing that, since* ... for ability to see Him in His glorified state indicates a change in nature by being made like Him.
 3. It can be the effect of what preceded ... *in order that* ... we are like Him in order to see Him, but the clause's grammar does not use *that, should, may*, in quite this way.
 4. We choose the second (and maybe third) of these options for the basis or evidence of seeing Jesus Christ as He is in glory is by our being made like Him, so we may say to give the sense of these clauses ... we will be changed to be like Jesus, *seeing that, or since, we will then be able to see and comprehend Him in His glorified state.*
- F. Some suggest other options for this clause, but most are distractions and/or corollaries.
1. Is the clause modifying ... when he shall appear ... rather than we shall be like him?
 2. Is it only modifying ... when he shall appear ... for the fact of His visible appearance?
 3. Is it indicating we shall see Him as loving Savior ... not terrifying Judge like others?
 4. Is it stating cause ... of being like him ... a transformative view of him (II Cor 3:18)
 5. Is it stating cause ... of being like him ... in the order of David's prophecy (Ps 17:15)?
 6. Is it describing us seeing Him and His environment and pleasures (as Psalm 16:11)?
 7. Is it describing the result of what went before ... or the cause ... or only a corollary?
 8. Is it a further future promise to be added to the first promise – we shall be like him?
 9. Is it saying that we shall be in His presence, looking on Him in glory (II Cor 5:6-8)?
 10. Is it fulfilling the request of our Lord to behold His glory from before (John 17:24)?
 11. Is it fulfilling the promise we will bear the image of the heavenly Adam (I Co 15:49)?
 12. Is it saying that we shall see Him and know what we look like by the mirror effect?
 13. Is it indicating effect of ... we shall be like him ... then able to see him (as Matt 5:8)?
 14. Is it like the previous ... the effect of being like him ... which transforms our sight?
 15. Is it describing a result of glorification for the ability to see with eyes (as Job 19:26)?
 16. Is it indicating the effect of glorification to view and comprehend Christ's true glory?
- G. Job, writing who knows when, maybe 2000 years before Jesus, knew it (Job 19:25-27).
1. Jesus desired us to see Him with His heavenly glory (Jn 17:24), requiring a change.
 2. Jesus Christ was very different in appearance to John in His glory (Rev 1:12-18).
 3. Our natural bodies are very limited, but we shall see and comprehend spiritual things.
 4. Think about the drastic comparison of our two bodies Paul gave us (I Cor 15:39-44).

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is *pure*.

And every man that hath this hope in him.

- A. Every man/woman has the duty to change his/her life due to the fabulous facts declared.
 - 1. Purging your life based on God's past and future acts for you should be a no-brainer.
 - 2. This is not an optional suggestion, but a safe and sound assumption for true believers.
 - 3. God is pure (holy) and expects us to be pure (holy) for that reason (I Peter 1:14-16).
 - 4. There is no evidence and thus no assurance that you are adopted without holy living.
- B. It is called *this* hope, for it is based on the immediately-preceding facets of salvation.
 - 1. If you believe the chapter's first verse, it is God's love that predestinated adoption.
 - 2. If you believe the second, it is God's promises of total glorification with His Son.
 - 3. The two verses combined – adoption and glorification – are the most hope possible?
 - 4. There is no real reason to be very discouraged or ever depressed with such hope.
 - 5. These things, which John assumed they knew, should be talked about (I Thess 4:18).
- C. It is called this *hope*, for it has promises of future good that transcend human experience.
 - 1. Hope = expectation of future blessings and good. The previous verses are full of it!
 - 2. We have a blessed hope – our Lord's coming with incredible benefits (Tit 2:11-14).
 - 3. We have a lively hope – Jesus rose from the dead to prove eternal life (I Pet 1:3-5).
 - 4. And the promise of great future good should cause holy living now (II Pet 1:4; 3:14).
- D. We hate full preterism, for it steals the hope of the believer with no future expectations.
 - 1. The truth of the gospel brings hope (II Thess 2:16; Col 1:5; Titus 3:7; Heb 6:17-20).
 - 2. There is one being without hope, and he is the father of all lies (II Pet 2:4; Jn 8:44).
 - 3. If the RCC invented preterism (likely), it is one more abomination from the brothel.

Purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

- A. God is pure. He is holy. He is free from sin. He has no darkness in Him at all (I Jn 1:5).
 - 1. Habakkuk once reasoned due to God's eyes being too pure to behold evil (Hab 1:13).
 - 2. Jesus Christ is our holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners priest (Heb 7:26).
 - 3. No man can see God or Christ without purity and holiness (Matthew 5:8; Heb 12:14).
 - 4. Do not miss the nature of Father, Brother, and sons (I John 2:29; 3:7,9,10; 4:7; 5:1).
 - 5. There should be a striking family resemblance, especially when compared to world.
 - 6. For much more about God's holiness to remember, *A Blue Ribbon Reminder ... Holiness of God*.
- B. We certainly know our legal justification and final glorification are God's work alone.
 - 1. The purity we have in His sight is by His sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us (Titus 2:14).
 - 2. We are holy and without blame before Him in love by election in Christ (Eph 1:4).
 - 3. Christ's love for us is to purify us; we should be about the same work (Ep 5:25-27).

4. The purity we must have for His presence will be His change of us (I Cor 15:50-57).
5. Sanctification, or making us holy for Himself, also has five phases for beauty ... **Sanctification**.
- C. However, we have the practical duty to purify ourselves from sins that spot our lives.
 1. It is a rather simple process to confess and forsake sin to be clean (Isaiah 1:16-20).
 2. Every young man – all persons – should use God’s word to avoid dirt (Ps 119:9,11).
 3. To change your life for what God has already done is reasonable (Romans 12:1-2).
 4. He has promised great good now as a promised reward for your purity (II Cor 7:1).
 5. It is a shame when we quote only part of a verse that has much more (James 4:8-10).
 6. God expects us to change to pure religion (Phil 4:8; I Tim 1:5; Jas 1:27; I Pet 1:22).
 7. His bar is not too high, and He forgives fully and quickly, so repent, reform, renew!
 8. For many sins often overlooked, *Forgotten Sins*, will remind you of many ... **Forgotten Sins (8 sermons)**.
 9. For a great reminder for living fearfully, *Sojourning Here in Fear*, will help ... **Sojourning in Fear**.

Sin Proves a Person Outside Jesus Christ – Verses 4-7

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.

- A. This basic fact is absolutely true, and we need not modify it yet, though we must soon.
 1. *Whosoever*= anyone that does is guilty; there are no exceptions to the simple rule.
 2. *Committeth*= to do or perpetrate something against God’s demands or restrictions.
 3. *Sin*= violation of the rules of conduct God has commanded for man’s life on earth.
 4. *Transgresseth*= break or violate terms of an authority or an agreement of conduct.
 5. *Law*= the moral code of God communicated before Moses, under Moses, and after.
 6. Thus, we may read it = Any person that disobeys God also breaks His moral code.
- B. The moral law of God, without Moses’ ceremonial or national rules, still applies to us.
 1. Paul brought the second table of the Ten forward (Rom 13:8-10; Ephesians 6:1-3).
 2. Remember how simple this is – love of God and love of neighbor as your own self.
 3. Any commandments of Moses for O.T. ceremonial worship has ended (Heb 9:10).
 4. Any commandment of a national sort has also ended for us in America in 2022.
 5. There is overlap e.g. moral and national, but we now keep the moral in other nations.
 6. God’s law, the codified set of His rules, is precious and valuable (Deut 4:5-8; 32:47).
- C. Note *also* in the clause, which combines two or more things to give us the full meaning.
 1. The previous verse identified Christ’s purity (holiness) as the goal for us to match.
 2. For we will be like Him and see Him as He is, which hope should motivate godliness.

3. That verse was very positive about godly living to have a resemblance to our Brother.
4. The motive was hope to obtain the blessings described and prophesied (I Jn 3:1-3).

For sin is the transgression of the law.

- A. God's inspired definition of sin – the violation of God's moral code for human conduct.
- B. The only true difference in the two clauses here is the use of *also* in the first. See above.
- C. Nearly a restatement of the first clause, John by the Spirit wrote to paint sin accurately.
 1. Any laws other than God's might be questioned in nature or degree, but not God's.
 2. The law – God's moral code conveyed various ways – is always infinitely perfect.
 3. Therefore, sin is very terrible due to the Author of the law and its perfect commands.
 4. Sin proves the depravity of our heart against the Author and our mind against good, for the best human life possible in this cursed world is to keep God's rules for it.
 5. Sin shows a lawless character that is entirely contrary to His infinite purity and good.
 6. Furthermore, our apostle will shortly tell us that His commands are not grievous, including both their ease of compliance and a great reward for complying. Glory!
 7. The way of transgressors is hard, saith the Preacher and Paul (Pr 13:15; Rom 6:21).
 8. Unlike all other authorities, His rules are for our profit and pleasure (Heb 12:9-10).

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.

- A. Here we go again with foundational truth that must be retained and applied to our lives.
 1. There are certain things true Christians should know from the Bible and live by them.
 2. Paul used the rhetorical question, *Know ye not*, twelve times. Do you know them?
 3. Here are five in just one chapter from that apostle to Corinth (I Cor 6:3,9,15,16,19).
 4. God expects us to learn by progressive revelation foundation truth for higher things.
 5. Truth builds on its foundation; the church is its pillar and ground (I Tim 3:15-16).
 6. God's ministers with God's words are to save us from all variations (Eph 4:11-14).
- B. What was the purpose of God sending His Son to die for us? To take away our sins.
 1. Therefore, it is obviously simple that we should not sin, if we appreciate His death.
 2. *Manifest* = revealed to open view so as to know and understand a thing once hidden.
 3. He was made manifest by a body (I Jn 1:2; 4:9-10; Jn 1:31; I Tim 3:16; II Tim 1:10).
 4. *Incarnation* = a theological term for God taking on flesh by a human body (Col 2:9).
 5. He was given that body to pay for our sins (Hebrews 2:14-17; 10:9-14; I Peter 2:24).
 6. What is taking sins away? Paying for them to remove them legally from God's mind.
 7. Our holy God by this use of His Son's death has forgotten our sins (Heb 8:12; 10:17).

- C. Therefore, it is obviously simple that we should never sin, if we understand His death.
1. Here is where it fits to describe our sins as driving the nails or thorns into Him again.
 2. Thus, committing sin in the previous verse is contrary to God's purpose in Christ.
 3. A person understanding our Lord's sacrificial, substitutionary death should hate sin.

And in him is no sin.

- A. Not only did God send Jesus in human form to die for our sins, Jesus was also sinless.
1. John had named our Lord Jesus Christ the righteous, which is without sin (I Jn 2:1).
 2. Both a thief and a centurion declared that Jesus had done no wrong (Luke 23:41,47).
 3. Paul in an epistle of Christ's preeminence stated Him sinless (Heb 1:8-9; 4:15; 7:26).
 4. Justification by imputation is Jesus' perfect righteousness applied to us (II Cor 5:21).
- B. Therefore, it is obviously simple that we should never sin, if we understand His life.
1. Thus, committing sin in the previous verse is contrary to the very nature of Christ.
 2. A person knowing our Lord's impeccable character and conduct should hate sin.
 3. How can a believer, knowing Jesus is His all in all, ever defy God like He never did?
 4. As stated before, character and conduct should match (I John 1:5-6; 2:6,16,29; 3:3).

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.

- A. John now took his argument against sin by Christians to greater, direct condemnation.
1. This is the first statement in this section of absolute terms used with a relative sense.
 2. The sound of the words is sinless perfection by true Christians, but it is not the sense.
 3. The sound of the words is sinning proves reprobation and no relationship to Christ.
 4. The sound of the words is severe and strict, just as it should be for adopted children.
 5. Only abiding in Him, continuing faithfully as a disciple, has evidence of eternal life.
- B. *Abiding*= is staying connected to Christ (like a branch in a vine) by truth and godliness.
1. Rather than some esoteric, mysterious union with the Lord, stay connected to Him.
 2. A person walking with God and His Son daily abides in Christ by conscious choice.
 3. Discipleship begins by coming to Jesus Christ in faith, which John taught in John 6.
 4. Discipleship is extended – abiding in Christ – by continuing in His truth (John 8:31).
 5. Discipleship by obedience brings fellowship and favor from God (John 14:15-23).
 6. *Abide*= remain and stay without leaving. Compare John (I John 2:24,27 for *remain*).
 7. John's gospel has a beloved section about believers abiding in the vine (Jn 15:1-8).
 8. John identified it here as holding doctrine, love, righteousness (I John 2:6,10,27-28).
 9. For more about John's inspired concept of abiding, see exposition of John 15 ... [John 15 \(6](#)

Sermons).

- C. John declared here that any believer abiding in Christ – a true Christian – does not sin.
 - 1. Stated clearly here, John stated or implied it before (I John 1:5-6; 2:3-6,9-11,15,29).
 - 2. Embrace the Spirit's use of absolute terms with a relative sense to get your attention.
 - 3. If the Spirit chose to present it as most preachers do, there would hardly be a lesson.
 - 4. You cannot talk out of both sides of your mouth and also communicate as effectively.
 - 5. A bold line must be drawn to condemn and discourage any believers choosing sin.
- D. John had used this same absolute language about resisting antichrists (I John 2:20,27).
 - 1. He said in each of the two verses that they knew all things and did not need teachers.
 - 2. However, the context limits their knowledge to Christ basics against Christ heresies.
 - 3. Readers getting to this chapter and its absolute language already learned to limit it.
 - 4. For a helpful review of this kind of interpretation, see the notes for the two verses.
- E. The meaning of absolute terms here and in following verses is a lifestyle of habitual sin.
 - 1. Recall our two-step approach to Bible study to rule out the impossible (II Pet 1:20).
 - 2. It cannot mean what it sounds like – that real Christians never sin – for they do sin, even in this epistle (I John 1:8-10; 2:1; I Kgs 8:46; Rom 7:7-25; II Pet 1:9; 2:20-22).
 - 3. Any reader getting this far already read about sin in earlier verses (I Jn 1:8-10; 2:1).
 - 4. It must mean continuing in sin without remorse, repentance, renewal, reformation.
 - 5. It must mean such preponderance of character and conduct to affirm or deny Christ.
 - 6. It must mean following righteousness or sin, not single events (III Jn 1:11; I Jn 3:7).
 - 7. God's children are new creatures and repent without repenting (II Co 5:17; 7:10-11).
 - 8. Sinning is not our way of life; when we sin, we confess it quickly (I John 1:9; 2:1).
 - 9. For more about interpreting absolute and relative statements in the Bible ... **Rule 7: Absolute & Relative.**
- F. The absolute tone of John's warnings are to be understood in context in a relative sense.
 - 1. It is acceptable to speak in absolute terms of certainty to be strict about godliness.
 - 2. In order to draw clear lines of truth and error, saved and unsaved, this is the format.
 - 3. Compare verses with imminency and yet warnings against it (II Thess 2:3; Phil 4:5).
 - 4. John said no murderer has eternal life, yet David and us (I John 3:15; Matt 5:21-22).
 - 5. The evidence of eternal life is striving toward righteousness and avoiding the sinful and unrepentant lifestyle of the wicked, without desire for holiness or hatred of sin.
 - 6. The verses are not absolute, or we condemn Noah, Lot, David, Solomon, Peter, etc.
 - 7. Any reader getting this far knew John rejected sinless perfection (I John 1:8-10; 2:1).
 - 8. Sinless perfection or anything close is not taught here; relax, but live righteously.
 - 9. Put off your old man; put on your new; choose righteousness and brotherly love.
- G. Hate this world and its lifestyle; those that love it are enemies (Jas 4:4; I Jn 2:15-17).

H. Do not comfort yourself God's elect all sin, for God's elect do not live like the world.

Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

- A. With the same intent and sense as the verse's first half, you should understand this half.
 - 1. Sinning in both parts is not a single sin, or sporadic sins, but a lifestyle of sinning.
 - 2. All Christians sin, as this epistle declares from its first verses, but not without grief.
 - 3. Any person that can continue in a life of sin of any kind shows they are not saved.
 - 4. His sons can be great sinners before and after conversion, but they repent and reform.
- B. Phrases of seeing Christ and knowing Christ describe union and fellowship with Him.
 - 1. Use the text itself to define the terms – abiding in Christ is seeing and knowing Him.
 - 2. The issue is not literally seeing Jesus, for the apostles did that for us (I John 1:1-3).
 - 3. The issue is not literally seeing Jesus, for those that have not are greater (John 20:29).
 - 4. The issue is not literally seeing Jesus, for we love Him without seeing (I Peter 1:8).
- C. A real relationship with God and His Son (they go together) will preclude you sinning.
 - 1. If have heard the joyful sound of the gospel that Jesus saves, then you will obey Him.
 - 2. If you love the Savior you have heard about, then you will please Him without sin.
 - 3. There will be no commandment too grievous or onerous for you to avoid obeying.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

Little children, let no man deceive you.

- A. John continued his lesson about sin in believers by lovingly calling them *little children*.
- B. Due to the warning, we know there were false teachers telling lies against gospel truth.
 - 1. Truth allows no variation or compromise, especially in doctrine of sin and salvation.
 - 2. Paul told the Galatians to curse any false teacher no matter the source (Gal 1:6-9).
- C. Due to the context, we know the false teachers were easy or lax about Christians sinning.
 - 1. While the Christ wars here may not fit us well, this false doctrine fits us very well.
 - 2. Arminianism with decisional salvation and once saved, always saved is twice heresy.
 - 3. For much more about false teachers allowing sin, *They Promise Them Liberty ... They Promise Them Liberty (2 Sermons)*.

He that doeth righteousness is righteous.

- A. Our apostolic Christian religion is not one of a decision for Jesus and all is settled by it.
- B. Jesus will boldly declare with authority that only the obedient enter heaven (Matt 7:21).
- C. Just as we understood *sinneth* with limitations, this doing righteousness is also lifestyle.
- D. Martin Luther erred by *sola fide* and mocking James; faith requires works (Ja 2:14-26).

- E. For more about necessity of good works for eternal life, [Salvation By Works](#).

Even as he is righteous.

- A. Jesus is righteous, not by saying He is righteous, but by hating sin to love righteousness.
- B. Jesus always did those things that pleased His Father – He did them (John 8:29; 15:10).
- C. teachers of lascivious grace lie about eternal life, for righteousness is the evidence.
- D. Accepting Jesus and an offer of eternal life to gain heaven ... is blasphemy and heresy.
- E. For much more of false grace or lascivious grace, *True Grace and False Grace ... True Grace and False Grace (2 Sermons)*.

Sin Proves a Child of God or of the Devil – Verses 8-10

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.

He that committeth sin is of the devil.

- A. The content of this short section is different enough from the previous for its own lesson.
 - 1. It is the difference of a person unrelated to Jesus Christ or instead related to the devil.
 - 2. Both are the same, for there is no middle ground, but the evident nature is now key.
 - 3. The previous lesson is how contrary sin is to the life and work of Christ (1 Jn 3:4-7).
 - 4. This lesson is how sin shows a connection by character, conduct, nature with Satan.
- B. By the same sense as the previous lesson, understand *committeth sin* (notes for verse 6).
 - 1. *Committeth sin* here is not a single sin, or sporadic sins, but a lifestyle of sinning.
 - 2. All Christians sin, as this epistle declares from its first verses, but not without grief.
 - 3. Any person that can continue in a life of sin of any kind shows they are not saved.
 - 4. His sons can be great sinners before and after conversion, but they repent and reform.
- C. The consequence of a sinful lifestyle indicates a child of the devil obeying his father.
 - 1. Jesus told the Jews, even some believing on Him, the devil was their father (Jn 8:44).
 - 2. Before regeneration, when we were like others, we followed this fiend (Eph 2:1-3).
- D. But salvation changes us inwardly and the gospel converts our mind to resist the fiend.
- E. Sin is entirely contrary to God and Christ, but common to the devil, so sin matches him.

For the devil sinneth from the beginning.

- A. Sin is entirely contrary to God and Christ, but common to the devil, so sin matches him.
 - 1. Satan has been a sinner from the beginning, so then a sinner by lifestyle is his stooge.
 - 2. Since he has been a sinner from the beginning, Christians should abhor similarity.
 - 3. From when we meet the devil in scripture (Gen 3:1-6), he is fully committed to sin.

- B. When was Satan created and began sinning? Let us not exercise ourselves too high here.
 - 1. David warned us about such subjects, and his inspired warning is good (Ps 131:1).
 - 2. Though of little value here, the angels seem to celebrate earth's creation (Job 38:7).
 - 3. The devil certainly sinned from the beginning from an Eden perspective (Gen 3:1), for when we meet the devil in the beginning of our race and world, he is a sinner.
 - 4. But he had his own sin, when heaven had folly (Job 4:18; 5:15; II Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6).
 - 5. The sin of the devil was that of pride, for that is Paul's inspired charge (I Tim 3:6).
 - 6. The devil abode not in the truth; he left his first estate with the God of truth (Jn 8:44).
- C. The lesson here is not the devil's creation or time of sinning, but the fiend's character.
 - 1. Fools rush to fuss about things beyond their ability or privilege and miss key lessons.
 - 2. Here is the lesson: those with a lifestyle of sin are like Satan in character and conduct.
 - 3. When you sin, you match up well with the devil, for he has always been a sinner.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested.

- A. John then went an argument farther regarding the devil by Christ's role against Him.
 - 1. Jesus was incarnate on earth for a Man to destroy the devil's use of sin against us.
 - 2. How can a Christian, claiming Jesus as Lord, continue in agreement with His enemy.
 - 3. If Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, how can we do Satan's works?
 - 4. God was manifest in the flesh and achieved incontrovertible success (I Tim 3:16).
- B. Paul confirmed this revelation of Jesus' specialized work at the cross (Heb 2:14-17).
- C. Paul wrote that the Man Jesus had a great triumph at the cross over the devil (Col 2:15).

That he might destroy the works of the devil.

- A. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil – sin – so your sin opposes Christ's work.
 - 1. Jesus did not come to help the devil by destroying his works for him but for you.
 - 2. Satan easily got our first parents condemned by God through tempting them into sin.
 - 3. Jesus came, the Seed of the woman, to defy him in every way and pay for that sin.
 - 4. Since the devil got our race under God's thumb for death, Jesus died to release us.
 - 5. So the devil's successful strategy in Eden was overthrown by Jesus 4000 years later!
- B. Everything you do is either Christ-like or devil-like, so transform (Rom 12:1-2; 13:14).
- C. When we appreciate this great work by the Man Christ Jesus, it should stop any sinning.
- D. A person continuing to sin shows alignment with Satan; any sin is contrary to the gospel.
- E. We cannot be content with taking communion – we must live without sin for our Lord

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.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.

- A. John here presented a new argument based on the intent, power, result of regeneration.
 - 1. The new birth, or second birth, is mentioned by John for the second time (I Jn 2:29).
 - 2. John is the Spirit's primary writer for this term for regeneration (Jn 1:12-13; 3:1-8).
 - 3. Regeneration, which we believe is entirely the monergistic work of God, stops sin.
 - 4. Being born again is quickening into life and a mighty resurrection from death in sins.
 - 5. We understand that this vital phase or salvation delivers us from the power of sin, different from the legal deliverance from its penalty and practical from its practice.
 - 6. This powerful work of the Spirit makes us sons of God vitally – vital signs of life!
 - 7. We now have a new man created in righteousness and true holiness to rule our life.
- B. By the same sense as the previous lesson, understand *commit sin* (the notes for verse 6).
 - 1. *Commit sin* here is not a single sin, or even sporadic sins, but a lifestyle of sinning.
 - 2. All Christians sin, as this epistle declares from its first verses, but not without grief.
 - 3. Any person that can continue in a life of sin of any kind shows they are not saved.
 - 4. His sons can be great sinners before and after conversion, but they repent and reform

For his seed remaineth in him.

- A. When we are born the first time, we get the seed of the first Adam by our natural father.
- B. When we are born again, we get a new nature in us like Christ's by our spiritual Father.
 - 1. Regeneration creates a new man in us in righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24).
 - 2. The new man is created by Jesus in the image and knowledge of Christ (Col 3:10).
 - 3. By this means the spiritual man (born again) has the mind of Christ (I Cor 2:16).
 - 4. Something is born of God here (clauses before and after) that stays inside the elect.
 - 5. It is God's seed by His creation and its nature; it is our seed for it is our new man.
 - 6. It is our duty daily to put off the old man by nature and put on the new by the Spirit.
 - 7. This new nature does not leave or die, but we rather wait for death to discard the old.
- C. Paul creatively identified three – he himself, his old man, his new man (Rom 7:14-25).
 - 1. He thanked God he would eventually be free from his body of death (Rom 7:23-25).
 - 2. He confessed he strongly wanted to do right but could not perfectly (Rom 7:18-25).
 - 3. He wrote, *I myself, serve the law of God in my mind (new man), but my body and flesh only sin (old man), which keeps me from being perfect. Jesus will save me!*
 - 4. There was nothing good in his flesh, and evil was always present with him, but he wanted to do what was right by the law, but could not do so perfectly due to his flesh.
 - 5. Paul's description here is not hopelessly sinning continuously, but rather exactly what John described in absolute terms, the presence of sin but not the victory of sin.

6. By the first rule of scripture, Paul and John described the same evidence (II Pet 1:20).

And he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

- A. Persons born again cannot freely sin; they are no longer dead in sins but alive in Christ.
 - 1. His new man by regeneration fights sin (I John 5:18; Ephesians 2:10; Phil 2:12-13).
 - 2. They have been sealed with the earnest of the Spirit that assists their war (Gal 5:17).
 - 3. The new man in them, the seed of God, will not allow easily living in sin habitually.
 - 4. The new man is a vital gift, but it is the practical choice of the believer to hate sin.
- B. Lot made terrible choices, but his new man gave him no peace but vexation in Sodom.
 - 1. Though having success on several levels, he was constantly grieved (II Pet 2:7-8).
 - 2. He was a righteous man with a righteous soul – his seed – allowing him no peace.
- C. By the same sense as the previous lesson, understand *cannot sin* (the notes for verse 6).
 - 1. *Cannot sin* here is not a single sin, or even sporadic sins, but a lifestyle of sinning.
 - 2. All Christians sin, as this epistle declares from its first verses, but not without grief.
 - 3. Any person that can continue in a life of sin of any kind shows they are not saved.
 - 4. His sons can be great sinners before and after conversion, but they repent and reform.

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.

In this the children of God are manifest.

- A. The privilege to know and prove adoption and sonship should cause love of this verse.
- B. John takes the argument to its logical extension – birth creates a like nature to the father.
 - 1. He already wrote that sinning like the devil makes you of the devil (I Jn 3:8; Jn 8:44).
 - 2. Since we cannot see the soul of man, how do we know children of God or the devil?
- C. **Manifest** = revealed to open view so as to know and understand a thing once hidden.
- D. John closed out this lesson and introduced the next two proofs of sonship for us to do.
 - 1. Righteousness has been mentioned twice in the epistle so far (I John 2:29; 3:7).
 - 2. Love of the brethren has been mentioned once but will now be stressed (I Jn 2:7-11).
- E. The children of God plainly prove their sonship by righteous living and loving brethren.
- F. For any that want assurance of eternal life, use this text and choose to do two things.

And the children of the devil.

- A. The children of Satan plainly prove their sonship by lacking righteousness and love.
 - 1. You need not join the Church of Satan to be the devil's child – simply sin and hate.
 - 2. You need not skip church and blaspheme to honor Satan – sin and neglect brothers.

- B. There are only two kinds of people on earth – and you are one or the other. Period.
- C. The harsh reality of John’s reasoning should sober every reader and motivate change

Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.

- A. God is righteous and He expects righteousness from His and those He has regenerated.
- B. If we live in sin as a lifestyle without repentance and reformation, we are sons of Satan.
- C. By the same sense as the earlier lesson, grasp *doeth not righteousness* (verse 6 notes).
 - 1. *Doeth not righteousness* is not a single sin, or sporadic sins, but a lifestyle of sinning.
 - 2. All Christians sin, as this epistle declares from its first verses, but not without grief.
 - 3. Any person that can continue in a life of sin of any kind shows they are not saved.
 - 4. His sons can be great sinners before and after conversion, but they repent and reform.
 - 5. The children of God do not continue in sin; they repent, reform, repay, and rejoice.
- D. This doctrine sounds like works salvation even for those who understand, but it plainly destroys Arminian or decisional salvation without lordship, repentance, or works.

Neither he that loveth not his brother.

- A. Here is the second evidence that reveals whether a person is a son of God or of the devil.
 - 1. Loving your brother is equal to and comparable to righteousness, not something less.
 - 2. A person neglecting love for brethren as the Bible defines it is not a child of God.
 - 3. God’s two great commandments – love of Him and others – are the greatest of all.
 - 4. And you cannot have the first without the second, by His rule (I Jn 4:20-21; 5:1-2).
 - 5. This is not the first time John mentioned love, for He did it earlier (I John 2:7-11).
- B. These are the plain facts of whether a person is saved or not – righteousness and love.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit by John’s pen could not have made it easier, plainer, and simpler.
 - 2. Most that hear about election want to know if they are elect. The evidence is obvious.
 - 3. Peter began with faith and added seven with the last two love related (II Pet 1:5-11).
 - 4. No man should comfort himself in any other duty, grace, or confidence. Love rules.
 - 5. It is devilish folly to trust doctrinal belief, baptism, or other things but brotherly love.
- C. What spirit or actions do you associate with being a child of Satan? It is a lack of love.
- D. This clause is clearly transitional as it renews a duty that John will now emphasize.

Brotherly Love Is Not of Nature or World – Verses 11-13

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning.

- A. This lesson is distinct from the lessons before (sin) and following (character of God).

1. If a church ever fully accepted and practiced these lessons, it would be like heaven.
 2. It would grow evangelistically for the evidence of true disciples would be obvious.
 3. The members would be happy with limited problems, for love of others dilutes self.
 4. The members would all be better Christians and more confident to die and meet God.
 5. The Holy Spirit's presence, power, and fellowship would explode to unseen levels.
- B. The previous verse, ending a lesson (I Jn 3:8-10), clearly transitions to brotherly love.
1. John had just taught strongly that righteous living proves eternal life (I John 3:1-10).
 2. He had introduced this evidence of salvation closing out chapter two (I Jn 2:28-29).
 3. He closed out his final verse by adding brotherly love to righteousness (I John 3:10).
- C. Some of the Bible's best guides for assurance are the brotherly love found in this epistle.
1. If you think the eight things of Peter trump it, remember his final two (II Peter 1:7).
 2. Love is elsewhere as well (Jn 13:34-35; I Thess 1:2-4; Gal 5:6; Heb 6:10; I Pet 1:22).
 3. The N.T. is filled with duties and definitions of brotherly love far beyond this study.
 4. Before going further, sincere believers will review what love is and learn to always think about others, which is proof of eternal life (Rom 12:10; Phil 2:3-4; Heb 10:24).
 5. Fellowship with God and His Son is experienced, known and enjoyed by the Spirit moving us in character and conduct against nature and the world (I John 3:24; 4:13).
 6. For much more about importance of love, see *Love is the Greatest ... Love Is the Greatest – 2017 (6 Sermons)*, *Definition of Love*, *For Love Of A Soul*.
- D. This *beginning* is the same John introduced about brotherly love earlier (I John 2:7-11).
1. How do we define *beginning* here? Is it the same as *beginning* opening the epistle?
 2. The *beginning* opening the epistle describes the eternal Word of life (I John 1:1-2).
 3. So that *beginning* is eternity in relation to creation, since God is eternal (Gen 1:1).
 4. Since this verse is not a covenantal relationship in Christ, it must be *their beginning*.
 5. *Their beginning* was their conversion, when they began to follow Christ (I Cor 4:15).
 6. John used both senses in close proximity – *Satan's beginning and theirs* (I Jn 3:8,11).
 7. The commandment they had from the beginning is what they had heard preached.
 8. Jesus declared it first; all the apostles then taught it; as John wrote a lady (II Jn 1:5).
 9. Our Lord's rule for His kingdom is faith and love for each other (I John 3:23; 4:21).
- E. If these believers had the message of love from the beginning, then it is foundational.
1. Love is foundational in God's revelation, for His religion hangs on two commands.
 2. When He gave codified law to His O.T. church, it exalted love as doubly supreme.
 3. The foundation rule of two loves is highest (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:11-18; Mk 12:28-34).
 4. The Ten Commandments is divided into two obvious sections for God and neighbor.
 5. The books of Moses have 36 uses of *neighbor* for specific loving treatment of them.
- F. The message preached since conversion, as the next clause states, is love of brethren.

1. Love of brethren is 29 verses or 28% of I John, second only to godly living (36;34%).
2. If in this sense John is described as apostle of love, we agree by gospel and epistle.
3. They heard the rule by apostles accurately, faithfully teaching Christ's commands.
4. Jesus had taught love extensively, and it was primarily recorded by John (Jn 13:35).
5. The apostles were charged by their risen Lord to teach His commands (Matt 28:20).
6. One command after baptism is love (Rom 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-14; James 2:8-9).

That we should love.

- A. John by the Holy Spirit knows only two positions – you either love or you hate others.
 1. There is no middle ground for you to tell God ... “Well, I don’t really hate anyone.”
 2. Absence of malice does not = love ... absence of love = malice ... given our religion.
 3. Love is God’s commandment, therefore it precludes any indifference or neutrality.
 4. Isolation, avoidance, withdrawal, neglect are all symptoms of hatred, not neutrality.
 5. There are negative and positive aspects of love, both of which must exist for love.
 6. The negative aspects of love are cheerful patience and overlooking of others’ faults.
 7. The positive aspects are the proactive steps taken to befriend, help, promote others.
 8. Fellowship with God and His Son is experienced, known and enjoyed by the Spirit moving us in character and conduct against nature and the world (I John 3:24; 4:13).
- B. *What is brotherly love?* You must not excuse yourself by missing some of its angles.
 1. Cheerful and fervent desire for wellbeing of God’s children resulting in sacrificial and selfless actions to serve by condescending and personal humility for comfort in life, encouragement in heart, and perfection before Christ (Matt 20:25-28; 25:37-40; Luke 14:12-14; Rom 9:1-3; 12:9-10,16; Col 3:12; Phil 2:3-4,19-22; I Cor 13:4-7; I John 3:16-18; 4:9-12; Acts 2:44-47; I Cor 16:15; II Cor 12:14-15; Heb 10:24).
 2. Love is kind favor by intentional design toward another for his good and pleasure.
 3. Love is esteeming each member in the church more important than you in all ways.
 4. Love is plans how you might create incremental value to the overall life of another.
 5. Love is sharing your personal gifts and position in life to help lift the life of a brother.
 6. Love only and always rejoices and never envies the success or blessings of others.
 7. Love is always thinking about others as to what good might be done (Heb 10:24).
 8. Love praises, encourages, commends, honors, promotes, and defends others always.
 9. Love does anything it can to make another better for Christ, the church, and his life.
- C. *What is brotherly love?* You must not excuse yourself by missing some of its angles.
 1. Love never goes even an inch too far in suggestions, instruction, correction, reproofs.
 2. Love puts up with disappointments and frustrations of others and never gets bitter.
 3. Love despises revenge and the thought never enters the mind let alone the heart.
 4. Love never wants the limelight but would much rather give that attention to others.
 5. Love never wants a brother to suffer in any way outside an act of God but will help.

6. Love never wants to choose for another but will do all it can for them to make choice.
7. Love wants everyone to think the best about everyone else, so abominates tattling.
8. Love never applies a measure against another it does not multiply by ten for itself.
9. Love never talks about itself or its events or plans but seeks out the events of others.

D. *What is brotherly love?* You must not excuse yourself by missing some of its angles.

1. Love forgives, flushes, and forgets faster and fuller than anyone but God Himself.
2. Love never feels slighted, for it remembers that the other parties are more important.
3. Love thinks a new minute or situation should be used to praise or promote another.
4. Love knows effort or time with family or friends does not count (Luke 14:12-14).
5. Love is glad there are brothers of low degree and uncomely to get excited to serve.
6. Love knows anything good in his own life is a gift from God and totally undeserved.
7. Love flushes its comfort zone for it knows all such ideas are excuses for selfishness.
8. Love knows that neglect, silence, and withdrawal are parts of hatred toward others.
9. Love knows that expecting to be loved or honored is a very depraved perversion.

E. *What is brotherly love?* You must not excuse yourself by missing some of its angles.

1. Love is conventional, considerate, cooperative, complimentary, and complementary.
2. Love is affectionate, embracing, friendly, gracious, kind, serving, touching, warm.
3. Love never says anything critical, cutting, cruel, or sarcastic unless forced by duty.
4. Love never thinks about faults or failures of others unless humbly, kindly correcting.
5. Love enjoys hospitality and entertainment and will make up excuses to show either.
6. Love enjoys celebration, for brothers are its favorite people and Christ the reason.
7. Love is as generous as it can reasonably be, for local sons of God deserve the best.
8. Love wants every brother as happy as can be and will do anything it can to cause it.
9. Love knows that enthusiasm is contagious so it is cheerful, excited, personal, fervent.

F. *What is brotherly love?* You must not excuse yourself by missing some of its angles.

1. Love knows death and life are by the tongue, so always, only chooses life (Pr 18:21).
2. Love knows some speech cuts like a sword, so it always and only health (Pr 12:18).
3. Love treats all, even if enemies, carefully, kindly, gently, humbly, respectfully, etc.
4. Love is not the absence of malice; it is not thoughts or words; it is selfless service.
5. Love is far better than doctrine, faith, discipline, or any other Bible grace or trait.
6. Love rejects being a loner, rejects solitude and withdrawal, and chooses to engage.
7. Love is not somber by confusing sobriety, but cheerful, friendly, gracious, uplifting.
8. Love is glorious by passing over transgressions and loving to show extensive mercy.
9. Love is discontent, dissatisfied, and obsessive to befriend, help, serve, uplift others.

G. *What is brotherly love?* You must not excuse yourself by missing some of its angles.

1. Love is willing to be defrauded rather than debate or fight small things (I Cor 6:7).
 2. Love is willing to spend and be spent though obtaining even less love (II Cor 12:15).
 3. Love delights and loves mercy like God does and is quick to show it (Mic 6:8; 7:18).
 4. Love suffers long, is not easily provoked, bears all things, and endures all things.
 5. Love includes charity, which is largely a lenient, merciful spirit about others' faults.
 6. Love includes rebuking, as in Leviticus 19:17, but love is far more than rebuking.
 7. Love is addiction to serving saints as in the case of the household of Stephanas.
 8. Love is sacrificial desire and action to help another realize God's best for his life.
 9. Love always thinks the best of others actions, believing and hoping all things.
- H. As He did before introducing brotherly love, the Spirit blasts hatred next (I Jn 2:7-11).
1. See the extensive notes defining hatred provided for that earlier section in the epistle.
 2. Every sincere child of God should consider that the apostle of love identifies hate.

One Another.

- A. Love *one to another* is what Jesus tripled to His apostles in his Gospel (John 13:34-35).
1. This compound reciprocal pronoun, *one another*, is a beautiful creation for churches.
 2. *One* is the grammatical subject and *another* the grammatical object of a noble action.
 3. Since every word of God is pure and we are to live by each one, embrace these two.
 4. Simply defined – each church member is to love each of the other church members individually, directly, intimately, personally, specifically, vulnerably, humbly, etc.
 5. The tightness of a family or a church depends on reciprocal love by all members.
 6. This creates pairs of two in any group, which in mathematics is called *combinations*.
 7. Each member in a pair has the duty, doubling the combinations, called *permutations*.
 8. For example, a church of 135 members will have 9,045 pairs and 18,090 obligations.
 9. For much more about love and other duties in a church, [One Another Duties](#).
- B. John identified the message from the beginning, love of one another, brotherly love.
1. This is the new commandment. It is the old commandment. This is Christ's religion.
 2. Love of family is not the issue, for all skunks and most reprobates love their families.
 3. Love of friends is not the issue, for you picked those poor victims to scratch backs.
 4. Love of truth is not the issue, for it requires little to nothing and devils tremble at it.
 5. Love of Christ is not the issue, for He is perfect and far easier to love than least ones.
 6. It is love of a brother, singular, individual, one by one, one another, that is the lesson.
 7. It is love of a saved sinner with all his/her irritating features that anger/frustrate you.
 8. God adopted us through Jesus Christ to be in a large family and local family of love.
 9. It is the greatest evidence of adoption and also the greatest means of praise and profit.
- C. The religion of Jesus is fundamentally based and exquisitely shown by brotherly love.

1. Neglect or hatred of any child of God shows a black, depraved, devilish soul (Cain).
 2. The religion of Jehovah and Jesus stresses love and requires selfless, sacrificial love.
 3. This is not love of social programs as socialists and humanists corrupt His religion.
 4. This is not love of peace and unity over doctrine (Le 19:17; II John 1:1; III John 1:1).
 5. This is not love of compromise to end any and all judgment of others (Matt 7:1-6).
 6. This is not Jane Fonda's love of peace over war without regard for civil authority.
 7. This is not love of murderers causing Mother Teresa spasms re: capital punishment.
 8. This is not sentimental card-sending or cake-decorating without real love's virtues.
 9. This is not only positive aspects of love like kindness but also negative like suffering.
- D. How shall a church show they fulfill the prophecy of David's Son? By love (Is 11:5-9)!

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.

Not as Cain.

- A. Why would the apostle of love name Cain? Surely no Christians could ever be like him.
1. Does this get your attention? It should. Why does the Bible have to be so extreme?
 2. Come on, disciple that Jesus loved, surely there is some middle ground for comfort?
 3. Contrary to ordinary sense and most natural men, there is a spirit of Cain in some.
 4. Not all men are equally depraved in cold, cruel, serpent malice or who would be left?
 5. But some by temperament, genes, pride, habit, and brewed bitterness are like Cain.
 6. They can only see and think what they hate; they cannot admire and praise an enemy.
 7. Rather than rejoice about the good in a person, they can only despise, envy, and hate.
 8. There are critical, hard, moody, negative persons that kill in heart and would in life.
 9. You are like Cain when you are self-righteous, envious, critical, grudge-bearing, etc.
- B. Paul was not far behind saying Christians could devour each other (Gal 5:13-16,22,26).
- C. Paul confessed to Titus he had lived hatefully with envy, malice, and hate (Titus 3:3).
- D. Jude described false teachers in the churches and feasts that were like Cain (Jude 1:11).
- E. James said bitter envying and strife in your heart – the heart – is devilish (Jas 3:14-16).

Who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.

- A. Cain was a child of the devil, a reprobate, and under the murderous influence of Satan.
- B. This is not a new idea, for John had just introduced children of the devil (I John 3:10).
- C. Satan was a murderer from the beginning in more ways than one as Jesus said (Jn 8:44).
1. He was the spirit in Cain that propelled him to kill Abel against God's warning.
 2. He was the serpent that deceived Eve who seduced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit.

- D. We mock faith as proof of salvation as the Bible does, for the devils have it (Jas 2:19).
- E. But the devils do not have love, which is a far greater evidence of salvation (II Pet 1:7).
- F. Fellowship with God and His Son is experienced, known and enjoyed by the Spirit moving us in character and conduct against nature and the world (I John 3:24; 4:13).

And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

- A. This is a hard thing to read and believe, but the Jews did the same thing to their Messiah.
 - 1. Pilate was able to discern the Jewish motive to crucify Jesus as envy (Matt 27:18).
 - 2. The Jews also envied Paul's ministry and would have killed him (Acts 13:45; 17:5).
- B. This contrast to brotherly love should move you to hate negative thoughts about others.
 - 1. Jesus warned against the harsh spirit that judges well beyond the fault (Matt 7:1-2).
 - 2. Jesus warned against the evil spirit noticing motes while having beams (Matt 7:3-5).
 - 3. His solution, similar to what Solomon had taught, was to overlook (Matt 5:38-42).
 - 4. Paul had to deal with pastors preaching to hurt him while in prison (Phil 1:15-18).

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

Marvel not, my brethren.

- A. Learn this; never forget it; teach it – we are very different from the world and its people.
 - 1. John introduced us to it when warning about the world and its things (I Jn 2:15-17).
 - 2. He then warned us in the context of adoption that they know nothing of us (I Jn 3:1).
 - 3. There has been an adversarial conflict since Cain and Abel down to us (Pr 29:10,27).
 - 4. No wonder God drowned earth for His sons marrying worldly wives (Gen 6:1-3).
 - 5. It should not surprise us that the world hates us for being diligent, faithful, good.
 - 6. They are operating by the spirit in them, and we operate by the Spirit in us. Amen!
- B. The people of God must stick together and love each while being hated by the world.
- C. While the world around us hates, hurts, and wars ... we love, help, comfort, and serve

If the world hate you.

- A. Why is this odd reminder placed right here? There are two spirits and two kinds of men.
 - 1. The Holy Ghost is teaching us that brotherly love is entirely contrary to the world.
 - 2. Many Christians think they oppose the world by homeschooling and Tucker Carlson.
 - 3. But the greatest difference from the world is the love of brethren for His sake only.
 - 4. We do not love them for their greatness, kindness, or compatibility, but for Christ.
 - 5. When we love the brethren as stated here and elsewhere, we prove our eternal life.
 - 6. We show a drastic and great difference from Cain by being like Abel and Abraham.
- B. The world will show affinity to Satan and Cain by hating us even when good and kind.
 - 1. If you truly live for God and His Son in deed and in truth, the world will hate you.

2. If they do not hate you, then examine your character and conduct (II Timothy 3:12).
- C. We must show our nature and the Spirit of God by loving each other and even enemies.
- D. Fellowship with God and His Son is experienced, known and enjoyed by the Spirit moving us in character and conduct against nature and the world (I John 3:24; 4:13).

Brotherly Love Proves Eternal Life or Death – Verses 14-15

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.

We know that we have passed from death unto life.

- A. The world is dead in trespasses and sins, following the world's god (Ep 2:1-3; 4:17-19).
- B. There is something we can know – you can be sure of it – we can count on it – it is key.
- C. The evidence of eternal life and salvation should be one of our greatest goals and needs.
 1. We rightly mock Arminians for promising eternal life merely for a mental decision.
 2. We must follow through from election to proof (I Thess 1:2-4; II Pet 1:5-7; Gal 5:6).
- D. Here the apostle gives us clear proof that we have been regenerated into new creatures.
 1. We cannot see our names in the book of life, but we can see a phase coming from it.
 2. From death in trespasses and sins obeying Satan, we are made sons of God in Christ.
 3. We were spiritually dead and appointed to the second death, but no longer. Rejoice!
 4. The second death has no power over those in the first resurrection (Rev 20:6); this is the mighty work of regeneration – being born again (John 1:13; 3:8; Eph 2:1-10).
 5. What did it take? The voice of the Son of God saying, *Live!* And Holy Spirit power!
 6. What is most important here? Monergistic doctrine or abundant evidence by love?
 7. For more details about being born again in regeneration ... [Regeneration and Conversion – Slides](#), [Regeneration & Conversion – Abuoma](#), [Regeneration and Conversion – Roland](#), [Regeneration & Conversion Compared](#), [Born Again Truth](#).
- E. This first epistle of John has the densest and strongest content for assurance of heaven.

Because we love the brethren.

- A. Here is the evidence and proof God has given us eternal life – we love Christ's brethren!
 1. You expect your children to love each other, though they did not pick each other.
 2. God expects you to love His children; He picked them for Him and you (I Cor 12:18).
- B. Peter combined aspects of salvation and regeneration by unfeigned love (I Pet 1:22-23).
- C. When a person loves others only because they are Christ's, then it shows a great change.
 1. Natural men only love others when there is some personal benefit they can obtain.
 2. It is love of brethren that is the evidence, and it must be love as defined by the Bible.
 3. God chose the other members of any church, and the Bible clearly states your duties.

4. You may not pick your family or friends in a church nor choose your idea of love.
5. When the standard of Bible love is practiced toward other base, foolish, and weak persons only due to Christ, it is powerful proof depraved malice has been defeated.
6. Fellowship with God and His Son is experienced, known and enjoyed by the Spirit moving us in character and conduct against nature and the world (I John 3:24; 4:13).

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

- A. If a person cannot or will not love other Christians, he proves he is not yet born again.
 1. Though it has been and will be repeated, this love must be defined only by the Bible.
 2. Love of family and friends is utterly worthless as evidence, for reprobates do that.
 3. Testimony of faith, baptism, belief of doctrine, or attendance do not prove change.
 4. God's electing grace and Christ's justification cause Spirit regeneration for a change.
- B. Love is the evidence of passing from death to life; lack of love proves still in soul death.
- C. Not loving your brother is evidence of damnation and is argued in this epistle as hate.
 1. You cannot comfort or excuse yourself that you do not hate – lack of love is hatred.
 2. Lack of malice does not equal love. Lack of love is malice. Too much calls for love.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.

- A. How can John move from lack of love to hateful murder? Because that is the difference.
 1. There is no neutral area between love and hate. John taught this earlier (I Jn 2:7-11).
 2. If you think John too extreme, then so was Jesus (Matt 5:21-22). Humble yourself.
 3. Unjustified anger or name-calling violates the Sixth Command and brings hellfire.
- B. What is hatred? See the detailed notes describing it in an earlier lesson (I John 2:7-11).
- C. What is hatred? It is the lack or opposite of love, which must be defined by Bible only.

And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

- A. When put in those terms – hatred is murder – it is easier to deny a person eternal life.
- B. Murder is a capital crime and easy to believe denies eternal life, just like Cain above.
- C. Murder is a sin often listed as proving damnation (Rev 21:8; Gal 5:19-21; Rom 1:29).

Brotherly Love Copies God's Love for Us – Verses 16-17

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.

Hereby perceive we the love of God.

- A. This lesson is distinct from lessons before (evidence of salvation) and after (assurance).
 - 1. Moving beyond Cain, hatred, and murder, the Spirit introduced the nature of God.
 - 2. Since we are sons of God, and since He commands love, let us follow His example.
 - 3. God has not asked of us anything that He has not done far more of and much better.
 - 4. If the previous negative lesson did not motivate you, then this positive lesson should.
- B. How do we know God's love? By His character and conduct toward objects of His love.
 - 1. To perceive a thing is to apprehend, discern, grasp, know, learn, and understand it.
 - 2. Both God's general benevolence to all and His particular affection for some is open.
 - 3. He revealed His general benevolence to all men through creation and providence.
 - 4. He revealed His special affection for some through revelation and internal witness.
- C. What John wanted us to see in this lesson of love is the sacrificial gift of His only Son.
 - 1. He does not yet use *God is love* to prove God in us by love of others (I John 4:8,16).
 - 2. For this lesson we need to see the action, the conduct, the cost of God's love for us.

Because he laid down his life for us.

- A. We know God's love for us by the humble, sacrificial, submissive gift of His life for us.
 - 1. This was no accidental death like a soldier dying in combat or a woman in childbirth.
 - 2. This was no vague death for some general concept or idea but for specific enemies.
 - 3. This was not a quick, surprising death but one seen coming and involving suffering.
 - 4. This was death by choice for greater good by taking on a body and allowing murder.
 - 5. He could have avoided death at many decision points but sacrificed Himself for us.
- B. The language here is of Christ, and the previous clause about God, but there is no error.
 - 1. While there are places, times, and verses where we must divide, we need not always.
 - 2. For example, does God have blood? No, but yes, if we believe the Bible (Acts 20:28).
 - 3. The love of God is greatly involved in Christ's death by design and charge to Him.
 - 4. The love of God is very involved in Christ's death by His being in the form of God.
 - 5. The pain, suffering, and death of Jesus was by compact or covenant between the two.
 - 6. Learning the dimensions of Christ's love fills us with God's fulness (Eph 3:14-21).
 - 7. John also recorded that God and Jesus are one and in each other (Jn 10:30; 17:8,21).
- C. While we usually, and especially at communion, think of legal benefits, it is not so here.
 - 1. The lesson here is not justification, pardon, and redemption we gained by His death.
 - 2. The lesson here is the example He provided us of how we should relate to brothers.
 - 3. Focusing on His example in death does not reduce its import but rather broadens it.

- D. It is humble condescension and sacrificial suffering for us that identifies His great love.
 - 1. He did not die for us for what we could do for Him (but for what His Father would).
 - 2. He did not die for us due to a previous relationship we had that moved Him for us.
 - 3. He did not die for us due to our compatible backgrounds, likes, natures, intentions.
 - 4. He died for us when we were impotent, ungodly, sinners, enemies (Romans 5:6-10).
- E. He died to make us acceptable to God to obtain the planned adoption and glorification.
- F. Thus, we should sacrifice ourselves for irritating members for their profit and pleasure

And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

- A. If we are the sons of God, then we will show the nature of God in us, especially by love
 - 1. Recall from recent verses, love is the great divider between Cain and Satan and us.
 - 2. God's love is a great part of the gospel, *For God so loved the world, that...* (Jn 3:16).
 - 3. This is the only kind of love that God accepts and that your conscience should accept, which is condescending sacrifice of your life for the benefit of all other brothers.
- B. Because God through His Son sacrificed His life for us, we should do so for brethren.
 - 1. To show God's nature in us by love, our care of brethren should look like His for us.
 - 2. We can be sacrificial to brethren by effort, emotion, time, money, service, forgiveness, protection, mercy, support, encouragement, gentle correction, etc.
 - 3. If you do not crush and flush your comfort zone or freely give up time and money, you do not truly love, for the example given and stated is laying down your life.
 - 4. Reject devilish thinking that rebuking others is love (Lev 19:17), for John minimized that little point with the reminder of God's overwhelming positive love of us, and you better praise Him for loving far beyond rebuking you, or you would be in hell.
- C. **Love** = benevolent favor by intentional design toward another for his good and pleasure.
 - 1. The love of God toward us also has the divine goal of glorifying Himself to creatures.
 - 2. No one has ever loved another even close to the exceeding riches of God's grace.
 - 3. A soldier dying can hardly be called love, for he did not ask or intend to die for any.
 - 4. A mother dying in childbirth is not comparable love, for it was far from her mind.
 - 5. God's love to save men is transcendently superior to all human concepts of love by (a) the infinite happiness of God without us, (b) the inferiority and despicableness of man, (c) the cost of killing His only Son by intentional design, (d) man's rebel rejection of all kindness, and (e) bestowal of infinite, personal, permanent riches.
 - 6. For much more about the incredible aspects of God's grace and love in Christ ... [*The Unsearchable Riches of Christ \(5 Sermons\)*](#).

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?*

But whoso hath this world's good.

- A. The inspired disjunctive *but* indicates John now prosecuted a case opposite that of God.
 - 1. This should terrify us, for who wants to be guilty of being contrary in action to Him.
 - 2. John just presented the greatest love and gift ever, so cheating on our part is heinous.
- B. Having assets and income is not truly your choice or ability, but God's kind blessing.
 - 1. Yes, we know better than most that riches in Proverbs is by diligence and wisdom.
 - 2. But the same book of Proverbs teaches that God makes rich and poor (Prov 22:2).
 - 3. Note how God defines reproachful conduct – it is mocking the poor (Pr 14:31; 17:5).
 - 4. While there can be no excuse for sloth or stupidity, God's choices for you are higher.
 - 5. While the slothful or stupid should starve, yet time and chance are enormous factors.
 - 6. Thus, do not miss John's lesson of loving liberality while adoring your character.
- C. God and His Son were not gifted by any, but they gave sacrificially to scumbag enemies.
- D. Therefore, since God has given us things we do not deserve, we should so give to others.
- E. Therefore, those with more should have given more as they will hear at Judgment Day.

And seeth his brother have need.

- A. It is your duty as Christian and church member to think about member needs (Heb 13:3).
 - 1. The righteous consider the poor, but the wicked ignore needs around them (Pr 29:7).
 - 2. God favors the man that considers the poor and will help him (Ps 41:1 vs. Pr 21:13).
- B. In this case, the need is financial assistance, but brothers can have all kinds of needs.
 - 1. In the top text for this clause, the need of the brother is prison and other adversity.
 - 2. Limited finances create a burden, but burdens also exist due to limited time, energy, ability, wisdom, weakness, etc. We should want to help bear any burden (Ga 6:1-2).
- C. For the sake of thoroughness, this is seeing needs, not wants, and usually acts of God.
 - 1. If you choose to go beyond need to want, it is your choice and not a rule for others.
 - 2. If you choose to go beyond need to want, you better not show damaging partiality.
 - 3. We do not bail out those who by sloth, folly, or waste have caused their own need.
 - 4. We ordinarily look for acts of God to show charity, where need is not a consequence.
 - 5. Since we have far more than any church, we do at times assist beyond acts of God.
 - 6. For black and white mentalities that do not know God's kindness and mercy, beware.
 - 7. If we shall err, and we never want to err, let us always err on the side of mercy.
 - 8. God will see the intent, if done prudently, and will protect us from evil damages.
 - 9. For much more information about God's priorities and rules for charity ... [Christian Charity – Haiti's Earthquake \(2 Sermons\)](#).

D. One of the greatest verses in the Bible is about the liberal man – love it (Isaiah 32:8).

And shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him.

- A. Love is a choice. Charity, mercy, and compassion are choices. Beware of your choice.
 - 1. A righteous man chooses to consider his beast, but the wicked are cruel (Pr 12:10).
 - 2. God through Solomon condemned withholding good when you have it (Pr 3:27-28).
 - 3. Bowels of mercies to others is a choice and also kindness, humility, etc. (Col 3:12).
 - 4. James, when mocking faith without works, used love without cost (James 2:15-16).
- B. Bowels are used in the Bible as a metaphor for feelings (often in the stomach) for others.
 - 1. Compare Joseph (Gen 43:30), the true mother (I Kgs 3:26), and a spouse (Song 5:4).
 - 2. In Paul's most intimate epistle, he used bowels three times (Philemon 1:7,12,20).
- C. Paul had problems with Corinth for lack of love toward him (II Cor 6:11-13; 12:14-15).
 - 1. Though he had served them freely like a parent a child, they loved him less anyway.
 - 2. He described it as a heart and bowel matter, which was a choice for him and them.

How dwelleth the love of God in him.

- A. God expects us to reason in such ways. Your conduct clearly indicates if you love God.
- B. *What exactly is this love of God dwelling in a man?* It is the man's love of God Himself.
 - 1. We have met this matter before about our love of God in this epistle (I John 2:5,15).
 - 2. We shall meet it again; our goal is to perfect our love of God (I John 4:12,16,20-21).
- C. A person can attend church, get baptized, and pray always, just like any good Catholic.
 - 1. The greatest evidence and proof of eternal life is loving the brethren as taught here.
 - 2. Paul and Peter both taught election is proven by love (I Thess 1:2-4; II Peter 1:5-7).
 - 3. It is a greater measure of growth in grace than being an apostle (I Co 12:31; 13:1-3).
 - 4. We must cut off those that think faith or doctrine is a proof of life; it is devilish folly

Brotherly Love Assures Us of Eternal Life – Verses 18-21

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

My little children.

- A. Here again is John's affectionate term for converts and early Christians from an apostle.
- B. We do not assume a young Sunday School class as explained earlier (I John 2:12-14).
- C. We should use this personal address for one reason of several to form a new lesson here.

Let us not love in word, neither in tongue.

- A. God and Christ did no such thing – love in word only – their costly action was glorious.

1. Almighty God did not just think or talk about loving us; He delivered up His Son.
 2. He did not like Arminians believe preach that His Son paid for sins of those in hell.
 3. He actually and literally created a body and asked Jesus to submit it to murderers.
- B. Of course, we do love in word and use our tongues, but not to the exclusion of action.
1. God, Jesus, Paul, and John did express their love by words and tongue to persons.
 2. But they did more than just verbally declare it, for they backed it up by serious deeds.
 3. The bigger problem is those that do nothing and say nothing – worse than worthless.
 4. A fool or reprobate can corrupt his conscience and lie about this great internal matter.
 5. But God's sincere and true children teach their conscience to think just like the Bible.
 6. They know that church attendance, daily Bible reading, and closet prayer are minor.
 7. They read the Bible not to find their pet excuses for comfort but God's real emphasis.
- C. Solomon condemned the wicked that speak love and do not (Prov 3:27-28; 25:14; 20:6).
- D. Job by his perfect example never let a situation pass without action (Job 29:13; 31:16).
- E. Moses by inspiration required carefulness about daily pay (Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15).
- F. Paul was intensely thorough about performance: action, deeds, payment (II Cor 8:1-15).
- G. Do not comfort or excuse yourself that you love the brethren. Prove it by mighty works.
1. God is offended by you claiming something not true by the easy ways He expects.
 2. The house of Stephanas was addicted to the ministry to the saints. Who is so here?
 3. Paul gave a long list of loving saints that served others in Romans 16. Do you serve?
 4. Do not think in general terms about loving brethren; only actions to a person count.
 5. Do not think about fun with brethren, for that is not serving or laying down your life.
 6. Do not sing with this church about love being greatest and a mark of saints. You lie.
 7. Brotherly love in action, cost, service, time should be your highest priority. Read it!
 8. We should deal furiously in our own hearts and minds and easily rank all members.
 9. Christ will say *Tekel* to many, *Thou are weighed in the balances and found wanting*.

But in deed and in truth.

- A. God and Christ did no such thing – *love in word* – their sincere, true action was glorious.
- B. The criterion and measure here is deeds, just as all love is measured and no other way.
 1. If thoughts or statements of love have no action to prove and support them, then they are only flattering lies or self-righteous deceit or the excuses of hateful hypocrites.
 2. We rightly say, *Put your money where your mouth is*, to the stingy talking charity.
 3. James mocked faith without works by mocking love without deeds (James 2:15-16).
 4. The flattery of an adulteress, prostitute, or politician does not have true loving action.
 5. This scripture and the preaching of it is God's call to you for loving acts of service.
 6. You and your family should think about who you could help and what you will do.

- C. Love in action and deeds is in truth, for it is not false promises of love without any cost.
 - 1. If we love in thoughts, word, or song without action, then it is a lie and not the truth.
 - 2. It is beyond me how anyone can talk about “truth” of any kind and not love in action.
- D. While not the lesson or motivation here, God does bless care of the poor (Prov 19:17).

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth.

- A. **Hereby** = as a result of this; by this means. Love in deeds, not words, proves salvation.
 - 1. The *hereby* used here identifies the evidence, proof, and value of the previous verse.
 - 2. The connection is vital for right understanding. Love in action proves eternal life.
- B. *What does it mean to be of the truth?* It is to be part of Christ and His kingdom of truth.
 - 1. God is a God of truth. Jesus is the truth (John 14:6). Satan and the world are all liars.
 - 2. God chose us and Jesus died for us to translate us out of a world of lies into His truth.
 - 3. The child of God has the seed of the new man, which is dedicated to truth in deeds.
 - 4. We separate from the devil and the world by living a life of obedience to God’s truth.
 - 5. The one true religion of Jehovah and His Son has only one way to live – in the truth.
 - 6. The true faith was once delivered to the saints, and we must contend for it (Jude 1:3).
 - 7. John stressed being with God or against Him by the truth (I Jn 1:6,8; 2:4,21,27; 4:6).
 - 8. We do not know we are of the truth for declaring election and monergism are truth.
 - 9. The devils know better than this writer or any reader about election and monergism.
- C. John creatively transitioned from love in truth (action) to assurance in truth (salvation).
 - 1. True love of brethren is condescending but eager sacrifice to profit and please others.
 - 2. We are only in the truth, and we can only be assured of heaven, if we love in action.
 - 3. Cut off any talk about a person as elect and saved for believing “the truth.” It is a lie.
 - 4. Truth is much more than a body of doctrine devils believe – it is love of God’s poor.
- D. In this context, sincere love that produces godly actions is the way to prove eternal life.
 - 1. This is likely the epistle’s single largest lesson – brotherly love proves eternal life.
 - 2. The rest of the N.T. teaches it (I Cor 13:1-13; I Thess 1:2-4; Gal 5:6; II Peter 1:5-7).
 - 3. Eternal life is something we can know, and God intended for us to be sure of heaven.
 - 4. Our conscience can easily tell us whether we love in deed and truth or in word only.
 - 5. For much more on the greatest evidence of salvation, Love Is the Greatest ... [Love Is the Greatest – 2017 \(6 Sermons\)](#).

And shall assure our hearts before him.

- A. We can have assurance of eternal life by brotherly love that matches the Bible and God.

1. It matches the Bible by the definition of love (I Cor 13:4-7; 16:15; Heb 13:3; etc.).
 2. It matches God as taught in the previous lesson of condescending sacrifice for others.
 3. If we do this simple command – love one another – our hearts can be sure of heaven.
 4. We do not have to be ashamed when He appears, for we will be confident (I Jn 2:28).
- B. *What does it mean to assure our hearts before him?* In the sight of God we will be safe.
1. It means to make your calling and election very sure in God's sight (II Peter 1:5-11), which does not alter anything in heaven but rather assures your own conscience.
 2. God sees everything, which is the great check of conduct, but which can be satisfied.
 3. *Conscience is God's spy and man's overseer; God's deputy judge, holding court in the whole soul, bears witness of all a man's doing and desires, and accordingly excuses or accuses, absolves or condemns, comforts or torments* (John Trapp).
 4. Jesus will soon put you among sheep on His right and tell you why (Matt 25:31-46).
 5. Pay attention to the lessons we are working through – they are inspired rules of truth.
 6. True brotherly love proves regeneration, the character of God, and assures our heart.
 7. Do not lie to your conscience or allow your conscience to lie to you – it takes deeds.
 8. Your conscience is irrelevant or an enemy deceiver when it leaves God's definitions.
- C. God sees everything, but this is not a problem but rather a blessing, for His bar is low.
1. Jesus sits at His right hand as our counselor, friend, intercessor, priest, and protector.
 2. Do you understand that God pardons faster and fuller than you imagine (Is 55:6-9)?
 3. Recall David was God's favorite before and after aggravated adultery and murder.
 4. David appealed to his righteousness and cleanness and do so in truth (Ps 18:19-24).
 5. Gideon and Samson are in the hall of faith; you can likely do better (Hebrews 11:32).
 6. Anyone presuming on these points of gracious mercy is likely a reprobate (Rom 3:8).
- D. We must assure our hearts before Him by hearing the duty of love and doing it mightily.
1. A warning comes next that God is greater than a conscience condemning us. Beware.
 2. The goal is the greatest; the duty the best; the example glorious; be addicted to love!
 3. If you play with this duty, if you excuse withdrawn selfishness, how are you saved?
 4. Do not lie to your conscience or allow your conscience to lie to you – it takes deeds.
 5. Christ will say *Tekel* to many, *Thou are weighed in the balances and found wanting*.
- E. If you say you have assurance of eternal life without love in deed, you deceive yourself.
1. Jesus will soon put you among goats on His left and tell you why (Matt 25:31-46).
 2. He is never unrighteous to forget labors of love, but you must have some (Heb 6:10).
 3. We do not have to be ashamed when He appears, for we will be confident (I Jn 2:28).

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and *knoweth all things*.

For if our heart condemn us.

- A. Let us make sure we rightly divide and properly, truly interpret this and the next verse.
- B. There is a context that must drive our interpretation – true brotherly love can assure us.
 - 1. By loving in deed and truth, a person can assure their hearts even in the sight of God.
 - 2. The connection between this verse and previous is the coordinating conjunction *for*.
 - 3. Note two things from the previous verse – we can assure our hearts and before God.
 - 4. Therefore, the lesson here is love that will satisfy our conscience and thus God also.
 - 5. If we fail to assure our heart, if we cheat against conscience, God also condemns us.
- C. We grasp this verse to add to and aggravate our sin of hate rather than comfort or defend.
 - 1. If the verse were comfort in sinning against our heart, it would be a disjunctive *but*.
 - 2. Or if this verse were for comfort, other words would have been added, *For even if*.
 - 3. There are three verses – we can assure our hearts even before God (19); we can live without heart condemnation before God (21); to do otherwise is very dangerous (20).
 - 4. The next verse reverts to the previous verse – keep your heart from condemning you; if you assure your heart without condemnation, you can be confident before God.
 - 5. If we violate our hearts that know God’s definition of love, then He knows we hate.
 - 6. If the greatest measure of life is love, and your heart condemns you, God surely will.
- D. Anything short of loving/serving others as God loved/served you should condemn you.
 - 1. Hearing these verses preached or read at another time should cause self-examination.
 - 2. These are not mere words. This is not mere doctrine. This is whether you are saved.
 - 3. You should stop all other thoughts and biblically examine your life compared to His.
 - 4. Most Christians do not have a conscience set to true north, for they have ruined it.
 - 5. Most Christians in self-righteous arrogance have chosen to neglect or reject others.
 - 6. They do not have time or interest for hospitality, entertainment, communication, etc.
 - 7. Their consciences should condemn them, and it is sermons like this to revive such.
 - 8. If you are not convicted or condemned by your conscience, ask one of us for truth.
- E. It is possible to live with a clear conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:16; Rom 9:1; II Cor 1:12; I Tim 1:5,19; 3:9; II Tim 1:3; Heb 13:18; I Pet 3:16), so why cheat duty into doubt?
- F. We do not have to be ashamed when He appears, for we will be confident (I John 2:28).

God is greater than our heart.

- A. If your heart (conscience) condemns you, then you should fear, as He is a greater Judge.
 - 1. Your conscience seldom smites as severely as it could or should due to depravity.
 - 2. By constant efforts to excuse or justify yourself, you have perverted your conscience.

3. God is not moved by your self-righteousness and knows every detail of selfishness.
 4. He does not care about any of your excuses, and He will mock them in a Day soon.
 5. If when you measure your actions of love by the Bible and find them deficient, fear!
 6. The terror of the Lord should persuade men, as Paul warned (II Corinthians 5:9-11).
 7. When He separates the goats and sheep by their actions, you will then hate your life.
- B. Paul himself knew that in spite of his own examination and view of his life, God was truly his only Judge and would do so at a different level than men (I Corinthians 4:3-4).
- C. We have given the right interpretation of the verse here, which we also taught in 2014.
1. This verse is not for comfort but for fear; God knows more and judges more severely.
 2. If you want comfort in this lesson, then obey the comforting verses of 18-19 and 21.
 3. If you want peace assessing your soul, then love enough to satisfy your conscience.
 4. If your deceitful heart condemns you about love, how much more omniscient God?
 5. If the goats and sheep warning is only half true, you should run to love another now.
 6. For the same sense taught 2014, see page 11 of the outline and points 39-45 ... [Assurance of Eternal Life #1](#).
- D. Though not the lesson here, there is comfort in the mercy of God for a doubting Thomas.
1. The exchange guilty Peter had with the Lord should comfort many (John 21:15-17).
 2. There are other related verses for the fearful to search and consider (Matt 25:37-40; Josh 22:22; II Sam 7:20; II Kings 20:3; I Chron 29:17; Job 16:19; Luke 19:7-9; John 20:24-28; II Tim 2:13,19; Psalm 17:3; 103:13-14; II Cor 1:12; Heb 6:10; 13:18; etc.).

And knoweth all things.

- A. God knows all the angles and excuses for hateful selfishness, laziness, withdrawal, etc.
1. This verse is not some vague disconnected reference to the omniscience of Jehovah.
 2. You can justify your lack of love to yourself and naive others, but not our great God.
 3. The apostles warned about feigned love, beware (Rom 12:11; II Cor 6:6; I Pet 1:22).
 4. Our God sees and knows everything, so never compromise sincere, affectionate love.
 5. The easiest way to do it right is to give and serve others as if it were the Lord Himself.
- B. Only the sincere with Bible consciences can pray like David (Psalm 26:1-5; 139:23-24).
- C. You do not have good relationships in the church? That is entirely and only your fault.
- D. You joined swearing that church is the body to love and serve, not be loved and served.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

Beloved.

- A. This affectionate apostle gives his readers a lesson in verbal love while teaching them.

- B. God lovingly adopted us into His family, so we should easily be able to love each other.
- C. God by incredible love adopted us, His bar is not too high for us to be bold with Him.

If our heart condemn us not.

- A. There are three verses – we can assure our hearts by love in deed and truth (18-19); we can have confidence before God in the duty (21); any other choice is dangerous (20).
- B. This verse reverts back to the opening verses – keep your heart from condemning you; if you assure your heart without condemnation, then you can be confident before God.
- C. Our hearts should not condemn us for every provision has been made for us to excel.
 - 1. The context leading to this verse could not have been plainer or more persuasive.
 - 2. Enough love in deed and truth will quiet your heart for great confidence before God.
 - 3. The unction of the Holy One was mainly Christ doctrine, but more (I Jn 3:24; 4:13).
 - 4. Paul witnessed Thessalonians' great love taught them by the Spirit (I Thess 4:9-10).
 - 5. It is the first use of the Spirit for Christian fruit against the flesh (Galatians 5:13-26).
 - 6. It is instructed and convicted by the new man in Christ's image (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).
 - 7. The new man and old man are fully opposite each other pertaining to love and hate.
- D. Therefore, only fools will be comfortable with their present degree of love and service.
 - 1. Great love toward God and to others (others emphasized here) will bring boldness.
 - 2. The righteous will react to such teaching with examination, repentance, reformation.
 - 3. Though they were far superior to you, Paul would not let lovers rest (I Thes 4:9-10).
 - 4. Growth in grace = change = doing things differently that you did before = more love.
 - 5. Our assemblies and fellowship outside assemblies should be love feasts (Jude 1:11).
 - 6. The church at Jerusalem under influence of the Spirit of Pentecost did so (Acts 2:46).
- E. If you ignore a doubting heart, trust Jesus, believe the Bible evidence, you will be fine.

Then have we confidence toward God.

- A. The candle of the LORD, our heart or conscience, is a great internal reminder (Pr 20:27).
- B. If you will obey this helper from God, who can hear and produce love, you will do fine.
 - 1. The two are not entirely separate – it is God's candle to light you with the new man.
 - 2. He convicts, reminds, instructs, and prompts to love the more you walk in the Spirit.
- C. Confidence toward God is not by God overriding your conscience – a false application.
 - 1. Assurance and confidence are in a good conscience by loving much (I John 3:19,21).
 - 2. Assurance or confidence are forfeited with a condemning conscience (I John 3:20).
 - 3. God does not make up for a condemning conscience in this place. Fix it. Love more.
 - 4. We do not have to be ashamed when He appears, for we will be confident (I Jn 2:28).
- D. But if you excuse yourself from the preaching and reminders of God's word, beware.

Faith and Love for Prayer and Fellowship – Verses 22-24

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him

- A. This lesson, stressing fellowship, has been pursued from the start (I John 1:3-4; 2:3-6).
 - 1. While it includes prayer for sure in this verse, it will press on to mutual dwelling.
 - 2. God's face of approval and ears of hearing are only open to those that love in actions.
 - 3. No matter what a man may think of himself, only God's word tells truth about prayer.
- B. The previous lesson is confidence toward God by love actions in truth (I John 3:18-21).
 - 1. Your conscience by godly action due to Christ's love command must approve you.
 - 2. If it approves you, then you can have assurance and confidence you are truly saved.
 - 3. Thinking love and/or talking love are both worthless to our God and to the brethren.
 - 4. God demands worshippers in truth (John 4:20-24), and we know it by love in truth.
 - 5. Your conscience is irrelevant or an enemy deceiver when it leaves God's definitions.
- C. But this verse is about prayer and is not placed here without regard to both contexts.
 - 1. Brotherly love is so agreeable to God that He promises His loving response to lovers.
 - 2. John will bring up a very similar argument before closing the epistle (I Jn 5:14-15).
 - 3. What follows here and precedes in the fifth chapter is faith in God's witness of Jesus.
 - 4. When our conscience, the candle of the LORD, approves us, then God approves us.
 - 5. If God approves us faithful and obedient in the high duty of love, we can pray boldly.
 - 6. A man with a clear conscience and obeying God will also pray according to His will.
- D. Here is a key for prayer, which we certainly want to know and understand perfectly.
 - 1. From what went before, John taught confidence toward God by true brotherly love.
 - 2. From what follows, John continued the same argument for faith and brotherly love.
 - 3. If the arguments so far (and the Bible elsewhere) are true, love is the greatest duty we have and the greatest evidence of walking with God; He will answer such prayers.
 - 4. Power in prayer is by pleasing Him we pray to, which is loving Him and the brethren.
 - 5. There is unlimited power in prayer, but only effectual prayer gets it done (Jas 5:16).
 - 6. The benefits of brotherly love continue on by this inspired verse here about prayer.
 - 7. A church that believes and loves like it should will be able to move its mountains.
- E. For much more about the power of prayer to realize its potential for good ... **Power of Prayer, Power of Prayer.**
- F. For much more confidence and excitement about prayer to God our Father ... **Confidence & Excitement in Prayer, Confidence in Prayer.**
- G. For a nearly exhaustive study of how to pray from many different Bible angles ... **Effectual Prayer (8**

sermons).

Because we keep his commandments.

- A. God hears and answers prayers of the righteous (Ps 34:15-18; Prov 15:8,29; I Pet 3:12).
- B. John's two commands by which assurance and confidence are gained are faith and love.
 - 1. The previous lesson is brotherly love in deed and truth for a believer's conscience.
 - 2. With a clear conscience by keeping the great love duty, we have boldness with God.
 - 3. John continued his argument into the next verse for faith in Christ and brotherly love.
- C. All other commandments are obvious based on these two foundational commandments.
 - 1. Jesus knew faith and love of Him would result in keeping commands (John 14:21).
 - 2. Paul clearly taught love of neighbor would keep the second table (Romans 13:8-10).
 - 3. Paul taught evidence trumping circumcision is faith working by love (Gal 5:6; 6:15).
 - 4. Peter began his list of eight with faith and capped it by brotherly love (II Pet 1:5-7).
- D. With love toward God and brethren fully active in deed and truth, zeal for all else rises.
 - 1. Love of God is the greatest motivator; love of others is a strong reason to do the rest.
 - 2. With God pleased by your faith and brotherly love, His Spirit will grant great power.

And do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

- A. Love of God and others will lead to zeal toward God to do everything that pleases Him.
- B. Is there any difference in keeping His commandments and doing things pleasing Him?
 - 1. We need not divide these phrases, for obedience pleases God, but let us think a little.
 - 2. The distinction can be like child obedience (Ep 6:1) and parental honor (Ep 6:2-3).
 - 3. There are things beyond bare commandment keeping that made David very special.
 - 4. God has worked in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, so do (Phil 2:13).
 - 5. Paul worked harder than other apostles, and it went beyond obedience (I Cor 15:10).
 - 6. God our Father wants to please those that please Him by obeying and going beyond.
 - 7. Therefore, we should pray and aim to be perfect, never even disappointing this God.
 - 8. The more we obey Him out of love, the more pleasing it is to Him (John 14:21-23).
 - 9. He can always discern our love and zeal (Mal 1:6-14; Gal 4:18; Heb 4:12; 12:28).
- C. Do you do those things that please God for a clear conscience and confidence of heaven?
 - 1. A fool or reprobate can corrupt his conscience and lie about this great internal matter.
 - 2. But God's sincere and true children teach their conscience to think just like the Bible.
 - 3. They know that church attendance, daily Bible reading, and closet prayer are minor.
 - 4. They read the Bible not to find their pet excuses for comfort but God's real emphasis.
 - 5. Get started! Believe each detail about His Son and practically live for and with Him daily. Be a happy living epistle of Him known and read of all men (II Cor 3:2-3).
 - 6. Get started! Love the brethren in all ways negative and positive, for it pleases Him, reflects Him,

honors His Son, and adorns the everlasting gospel about His Son.

7. By weight of Bible evidence, love is the practical way to please Jehovah the most.
8. For much more Bible proof showing clearly brotherly *Love Is the Greatest ... Love Is the Greatest – 2017 (6 Sermons)*.

D. When was the last time you confessed your fear of disappointing Him? How fervently?

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.

And this is his commandment.

- A. The previous verse in this lesson introduced our power in prayer with God by obedience.
 1. True Christians, the true sons of God by adopting regeneration, obey their Father.
 2. They cheerfully and energetically seek to please their Father and not disappoint Him.
- B. This summary or collective commandment summarizes our duties toward God and man.
 1. How are God's commandments best summarized and His pleasure best fulfilled? By believing on His only and beloved Son and loving all the other children He adopted.
 2. Sincere and true, experimental and passionate, faith in Christ has love and all else.
 3. Did God give this command about His Son and His Son the later love command?
 4. We do not divide where division is not clear or not needed; John combined the Two.
 5. Embrace the fact John kept the singular pronoun *his* for both the Father and the Son.

That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.

- A. Faith is based and grounded on the truth of Christ Jesus the Son of the LORD Jehovah.
 1. John already introduced Jesus the Word of life in detail in his opening (I Jn 1:1-3)
 2. He then condemned Christ heresies before and after this verse (I Jn 2:18-27; 4:1-6).
 3. The various witnesses God has given of His Son demand full belief (I John 5:4-13).
 4. This is no light matter, for the Father loves His Son and expects you to (Jn 5:17-47).
 5. His punishment of Israel for denying Jesus were the worst ever (Matt 21:41; 22:7).
- B. The name of the Son of God in this world was/is Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God.
 1. We must believe and not miss or overlook any components or facts about His name.
 2. See the introduction for this epistle and then also the notes for its opening verses.
 3. His full name – *the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God* – includes much (I Jn 1:1-4).
 4. We should fully admire and embrace Him in heart and mind as the perfect Savior.
 5. We should deny all else, we ourselves or any man or angel, as an equal or competitor.
 6. We stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene for His actual bloody work.
 7. We then fully trust our soul's destiny and wellbeing to Him (II Tim 1:12; I Pet 4:19).
 8. We humble ourselves to Him as Lord to obey (Luke 6:46; Romans 14:6-9; Mat 7:21).

9. We cannot be ashamed to smite our breast as a centurion to declare Him Son of God.
- C. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Jn 1:11-13; Acts 16:30-31).
 1. This was never merely a choice or decision in time as it is commonly abused today.
 2. It is a way of life – a commitment of change – a full dedication to a new Master, etc.
 3. No matter the words, faith without works is vain (John 2:23-25; 8:30-33; Luke 6:46).
 4. Eternal, legal, and vital phases precede faith, so only practical and proof of final fit.
 5. Faith without baptism and works is nothing in heaven or earth (Mark 16:16; Tit 3:8).
 6. For much more about the Philippian jailor's question and an apostle's answer ... [Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ](#).
 7. For the five phases of salvation to clarify what is and is not related to faith ... [Five Phases of Salvation: When Were You Saved?](#).
 8. For a study of salvation problem texts where men read far too much into faith ... [Salvation Problem Texts](#).
 9. For a review of why preach the gospel, which is not for new names in glory ... [Why Preach the Gospel? \(4 sermons\)](#).

And love one another.

- A. The two great commands are love of God and neighbor, especially brethren (Gal 6:10).
- B. Jesus commanded loving brethren with new emphasis and example of it (Jn 13:34-35).
- C. Sincere and true, experimental and passionate, faith in Christ produces love and all else.
 1. If Christ is in you, empowering and teaching by the Spirit, you will love (I Thes 4:9).
 2. The fruit of the Spirit in nine parts listed in one place starts with love (Gal 5:22-23).
 3. Pleasing God the Father for power in prayer or anything else needs love (Ep 5:1-2).
 4. God denies ability or option to love Him and not His children (I Jn 4:20-21; 5:1-3).
 5. If Jesus Christ laid down His life for you, and He is the Head of your religion and Master of your faith, then He is the Example of your character and conduct, so love!

As he gave us commandment.

- A. Jesus commanded the apostles to love one another and to spread this message of love.
 1. Brotherly love is not an option or suggestion, but rather the commandment of God.
 2. When we study the N.T. to define our Lord's religion accurately, love is the greatest.
- B. If these believers had the message of love from the beginning, then it is foundational.
 1. Love is foundational in God's revelation, for His religion hangs on two commands.
 2. When He gave codified law to His O.T. church, it exalted love as doubly supreme.
 3. The foundation rule of two loves is highest (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:11-18; Mk 12:28-34).
 4. The Ten Commandments is divided into two obvious sections for God and neighbor.
 5. The books of Moses have 36 uses of *neighbor* for specific loving treatment of them.

- C. The message preached since conversion, as John has stated twice, is love of brethren.
 - 1. Love of brethren is 29 verses or 28% of I John, second only to godly living (36;34%).
 - 2. If in this sense John is described as apostle of love, we agree by gospel and epistle.
 - 3. They heard the rule by apostles accurately, faithfully teaching Christ's commands.
 - 4. Jesus had taught love extensively, and it was primarily recorded by John (Jn 13:35).
 - 5. The apostles were charged by their risen Lord to teach His commands (Matt 28:20).
 - 6. One command after baptism is love (Rom 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-14; James 2:8-9).
- D. Refer to notes for earlier verses with more extensive descriptions (I Jn 2:7-11; 3:11-17).

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.

And he that keepeth his commandments.

- A. Keeping God's commandments is the wisest thing you can do for God and for yourself.
 - 1. Moses taught Israel it was their life, righteousness, wisdom (Deut 32:47; 6:25; 4:6).
 - 2. Solomon said it was the conclusion of his study and whole duty of man (Eccl 12:13).
 - 3. John began this chapter defining sin, which is the opposite of keeping (I Jn 3:4-6).
 - 4. His commands are not grievous; His yoke is easy and light (I Jn 5:3; Matt 11:28-30).
- B. Having introduced the foundational commandment of faith and love, what is our gain?
- C. It is by believing on Christ and loving the brethren that we gain fellowship with God.

Dwelleth in him, and he in him.

- A. The world existed for 6000 years with only a rare few having such fellowship with God.
 - 1. Pentecost changed things: God would be in them, not merely with them or on them.
 - 2. Jesus spent His last hours on earth detailing the great change (John chapters 14-16).
- B. This John in his Gospel recorded the how and what of this fellowship (John 14:18-24).
 - 1. Jesus had to leave the apostles one way, but He would come to them another way.
 - 2. He would not leave them comfortless, a great part of fellowship, by the Comforter.
 - 3. The world thought Jesus gone for ever; the apostles saw Him and lived through Him.
 - 4. After His resurrection the apostles knew the glorious bond of Father, Son, and them.
 - 5. Jesus laid out the rule of His religion for ultimate fellowship – faith working by love.
 - 6. Even an apostle could not grasp how the apostles would know Him but not the world.
 - 7. The Father and Son in great affection for us would come to live in them by the Spirit.
 - 8. We are in Him, not eternally and legally, but vitally and practically (Heb 12:22-24).
 - 9. Paul wrote of it as already seated in heavenly places in Christ (Eph 2:6; Rev 3:20).
- C. Baptism declares these things, though you may not have been told clearly (Col 3:1-4).

- D. It is our duty and high pleasure to abide in Him (I John 2:5-6,27-28; 3:6; John 15:1-8).
- E. For our High Priest's intercessory prayer for our fellowship with God and Him ... [John 17 \(7 Sermons\)](#)

And hereby we know that he abideth in us.

- A. The fact God dwells in men and they in Him is wonderful, but how can we *know* it?
 - 1. This is a fabulous fact and feature of the Christian religion – God in us; we in God.
 - 2. What other religion offers such an incredible friendship on top of eternal adoption!
 - 3. And their gods are fanciful manlike or womanlike imaginations, not LORD Jehovah.
 - 4. We *know* it by the influences and instructions received by His presence in the Spirit.
 - 5. Fellowship with God and Jesus is experienced, known, proven, and enjoyed by the Spirit moving us in character and conduct against nature and world (I Jn 3:24; 4:13).
- B. The context here, within this verse and the previous two, teaches faith, love, obedience.
 - 1. We know that the Father and the Son are in us by our keeping of His commandments.
 - 2. This commandment keeping is based on our faith in Christ and love toward Him.
 - 3. This is exactly what Jesus had laid out to the apostles before dying (John 14:21-23).
 - 4. Of course, as John will prove, love of God and Christ requires loving the brethren.

By the Spirit which he hath given us.

- A. What you should *know* in the previous clause is answered in this clause – by the Spirit.
- B. This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the epistle, but there will be more mentions.
 - 1. John will repeat much of this verse in a verse in the next chapter for us (I John 4:13).
 - 2. Comparing John's two verses, we know how the Holy Spirit proves God's presence.
 - 3. One of the best evidences for you and others of God with you is fruit (Eph 5:8-10).
 - 4. The Spirit is God. The Spirit is Christ. It is by the Holy Spirit that both abide in you.
 - 5. Are God and Christ in you? Yes, if the Spirit is in you, and you know that by fruit!
 - 6. Faith and love are the two commandments in context, which prove the Spirit in you.
 - 7. It is the Spirit dwelling in us that brings the Father and His Son to us (Jn 14:21-23).
- C. The gift and presence of the Holy Spirit is an essential part of our fellowship with God.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit is God Himself and far more than merely a force, influence, power.
 - 2. God chose in the manifestation of Himself to send the Spirit for witnessing to us.
 - 3. Before Christ's first coming, the Holy Spirit came temporarily on only a few men.
 - 4. Since Pentecost, He is given to all baptized believers (Jn 7:39; Acts 2:38; Eph 1:13).
 - 5. God's gift to His children is so great that Jesus could say His absence was expedient.
 - 6. This presence, power, and fellowship with us can grow much more (John 14:21-23).
 - 7. For more about the need for the Holy Spirit, see point two in *Higher Ground* ... [Higher Ground \(20 Sermons\)](#).
- D. There are several ways in which the Holy Spirit proves to us our fellowship with God.

1. Paul said the Holy Spirit teaches internally (Rom 5:5; 15:13; Eph 1:15-19; 3:16-19).
 2. John in the next chapter says the Spirit moving us to love proves God (I John 4:13).
 3. There are no private interpretations, so Paul combined both together (Rom 8:13-16).
 4. For much more about the Holy Spirit's many ministries to us, from Ephesians ... [The Holy Spirit \(in Ephesians\)](#).
- E. The lesson here is for individual persons, but the Spirit is the candlestick in each church.
1. Revelation chapters 1-5 teaches a church's candlestick is the Spirit's presence in it.
 2. A church by neglect or sin can forfeit the Spirit's presence and power (Rev 2:1-5).
 3. A man by neglect or sin can lose the Spirit's power (Eph 4:30; I Thes 4:19; Is 63:10).
 4. A man turns cold and dead toward God; a church turns cold and dead toward Christ.