

First John Chapter 4 (#1)... Verses 1-3

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Simple Outline of Chapter:

- 1-3** Proving Teachers by Christ Doctrine
- 4-6** Proving Teachers by World Approval
- 7-8** Brotherly Love by Nature of God
- 9-11** Brotherly Love by Example of God
- 12-13** Brotherly Love by the Spirit of God
- 14-16** Faith and Love Prove Eternal Life
- 17-19** Love of God Cures Fear of Judgment
- 20-21** Love of God Requires Brotherly Love

Note: The next six verses, teaching two lessons, were crucial then and now also in these perilous times of the last days when most Christians and churches compromise character and conduct with the world and turn away from sound doctrine and truth to fables and entertainment. Proving all things and holding fast to apostolic truth was the inspired order then and now. We see countless heresies and isms, most traceable back to the Roman brothel one way or another. It is the duty of each church as the pillar and ground of the truth to identify and reject teachers of heresies, as the Bible warns (Gen 3:1-5; Neh 8:8; Jer 23:28-29; Mal 2:9; Acts 20:28-32; II Cor 2:17; 4:1-2; 11:1-4,13-15; Eph 4:11-14; II Tim 2:15; 2:16-18; II Tim 4:1-4; Tit 3:9-11; Rev 2:14-15,20-23; 12:17).

Truth Reminders

1. God demands spirit (internal) and truth (correct).
2. Only revelation works; we are Bible Christians.
3. We cannot add, take away, turn right, turn left.
4. Truth is a gift no man deserves and few obtain.
5. It is rare for no man has ability or desire for it.
6. Times are perilous – fewer love truth than ever.
7. Satan's revised tactic is counterfeit Christianity.
8. We as pillar/ground protect, promote, publish.
9. We will have heresies to approve or reject you.
10. You must diligently hear, review, apply, or fall.
11. If doubtful, see baptism or age of accountability.

12. The world, devil, all men hate it, so unpopular.
13. Truth condemns alternatives, accept criticism.
14. Truth must be loved and obeyed or God takes it.
15. God chose us for now – it is a sacred privilege.

Proving Teachers by Christ Doctrine – Verses 1-3

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Beloved.

- A. The affectionate apostle continued terms of endearment throughout his epistle at breaks.
 1. It is proper, if adopted children of God, the family of God, and household of faith.
 2. He used *beloved* five times; he used *little children* seven times. What an example!
- B. In the N.T. culture of the times, believers greeted with kisses. Let us not be too different.
- C. Bible Christians must stick together against great compromise in doctrine and practice.

Believe not every spirit.

- A. God seeks worshippers to worship in spirit and in truth – never forget it (John 4:20-24).
 1. Only internal religion of the heart and soul is acceptable (Col 3:16; Heb 9:10; 10:22).
 2. Only religion accurate and correct in fact and truth works (II Tim 3:16-17; Jude 1:3).
- B. For a helpful review of the exchange between Jesus and a woman of Samaria ... **Spirit and Truth of John 4:20-24.**
 1. A perspective of the times and threats to these early Christians is important for learning.
 2. Most Christians today never meet anyone denying Jesus as Christ or His flesh body.
 3. After Jesus bound the devil from deceiving earth to idolatry (Matt 16:18; Rev 20:3), he took up variations of false Christian doctrine (II Cor 11:3-4,13-15; Rev 17:1-6).
 4. These early Christians did not have the N.T. canon of 27 books yet to try teachers, so doctrine and practice could only be known by divine revelation by the Holy Spirit.
 5. Prophetic gifts then were partial and temporary (I Cor 12:4-11; 13:8-12; 14:29-33).
 6. The apostles relied on Holy Spirit inspiration, so false teachers had or implied spirits.
 7. The many antichrists and false prophets had devil spirits aping Holy Spirit prophecy.
 8. Since 70 A.D. or so, Christians have had the complete N.T. canon to test all doctrine.
 9. Rather than just 2-3 tests of the most basic facts, we must teach and try many points.
 10. For lists short of our church history are these samples ... **Ancient Landmarks, The Only Right Worldview (16 sermons), Articles of Faith, Higher Ground (20 Sermons), Christian Liberty Expanded (10 sermons), Holidays.**

- C. From the opening verses to previous chapters are tests (I John 1:1-3; 2:22-23; 3:23-24).
 - 1. Like in his Gospel, John began both with the clearest identity of Jesus (John 1:1-18).
 - 2. Therefore, all revealed facts about Jesus are crucial, including His incarnate sonship.
 - 3. There is no room for games or speculation about the Father-Son relationship facts.
- D. God expects us to prove all things, even if from an apostle (Acts 17:11; I Thess 5:21).
 - 1. The simple – fools by ignorance, impulse, naivety – believe everything (Pr 14:15).
 - 2. Bible Christianity is very dogmatic about truth against error (Ps 119:128; Is 8:20).
 - 3. If any variation from apostolic doctrine, out they went (Rom 16:17-18; Gal 1:6-9).
 - 4. Paul warned Ephesus that heretics would arise outside and inside (Acts 20:26-32).
 - 5. Paul ordered his ministers to be exclusive (Titus 3:9-11; I Tim 6:3-5; II Tim 3:1-5).
 - 6. Under Moses, even with miracles following, testing was of content (Deut 13:1-6).
 - 7. Paul fought Jews with circumcision (Gal 1:6-9; 2:3-5; 3:1; 4:25; 5:1-4,12; 6:12-16).
 - 8. It is my job and other pastors to constantly teach against deceivers (Eph 4:11-15).
 - 9. Compromisers and deceivers are not getting better, but worse (II Tim 3:13; 4:3-4).
- E. What is every *spirit* here? It is preachers/teachers with variations of Christian doctrine.
 - 1. Why did John not call them teachers? John did, calling them *prophets* in this verse.
 - 2. It is impossible to test spirits or the Spirit directly, but rather by the agent or medium.
 - 3. The test is of doctrinal content, not an esoteric, litmus, or secret test for demons, etc.
 - 4. When John wrote his lady friend, he warned about literal teachers (II John 1:7-11).
 - 5. When Paul warned similarly to identify the Spirit, he described men (I Cor 12:3).
 - 6. Spirits is a metonym, being put for the preacher/teacher being moved by the spirit.
 - 7. We use metonymy similarly, if we might write, the White House or Kremlin said.
 - 8. The growth of Christianity gave rise to related sects with their respective teachers.
 - 9. Such heretics continue to rise with the 1830's in America one of the worst decades.
- F. The N.T. canon was not complete yet, so all prophets operated by spirits or the Spirit.
 - 1. Until the N.T. canon of 27 books was done, men relied on direct Spirit inspiration.
 - 2. Paul described this N.T. temporary phenomenon (I Cor 12:4-11; 13:8-12; 14:29-33).
 - 3. With apostles and prophets being the two highest offices then, seducers aped them.
 - 4. The devil was able to duplicate some gifts like Pharoah's magicians, so the seducers.
 - 5. So the early Christians without a complete Bible had to discern the truth of teachers.
 - 6. But John had already encouraged them by the Spirit in them (I John 2:20,27; 3:24).
 - 7. False prophets had spirits of revelation (Acts 8:9-11; 13:6-11; 16:16-17; 19:13-20; II Thess 2:9-10; I Tim 4:1; II Cor 11:3-4,13-15; I Sam 28:7; Rev 16:13-14).
 - 8. False prophets like Simon the sorcerer had miracle power to deceive the Samaritans.
 - 9. We believe the N.T. canon was done near 70 A.D. by Peter's words (II Pet 3:15-16).
- G. There have been two spirits in the world since Eden's sin, and things have not changed.

1. Paul told those with liberty about meat that idolatry involved devils (I Cor 10:20).
2. Moses and others also taught it (Lev 17:7; Deut 32:16-17; Ps 106:37-39; Rev 9:20).
3. When we believe a lie, we follow the devil, as Jesus told the Jews (John 8:38-45).
4. Satan is the god and prince of this world, ruling its darkness (II Cor 4:4; Eph 2:1-3).
5. While devil possession is not as visible in Jesus' day, we should never ignore them.
6. We sometimes refer to a spirit in people with some truth, like the Christmas spirit.

Because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

- A. Why did these early Christians have to test every teacher? There were many false ones!
 1. This clause states the dangerous issue more clearly – there were many false teachers.
 2. Jesus said many, dangerous false prophets and Christs would arise (Matt 24:11,24).
 3. John had already warned that there were many antichrists for the last time (I Jn 2:18).
 4. Corrupt doctrine and practice occurred immediately (II Cor 2:17; II Thess 2:1-3).
 5. Doctrinal and practical errors abounded immediately by influence of a lying spirit.
 6. Paul was not confused about the spirit behind a false gospel (II Cor 11:1-4,13-15).
 7. Peter by inspiration warned that many would be deceived (II Pet 2:1-3,12-15,17-19).
 8. Jude took up a very similar warning of gospel corrupters (Jude 1:3-4,11-19,22-23).
- B. They had gone out from the churches, so they were heretical Christians (I Jn 2:18-19).
 1. Antichrists – opposed to Christ – is used only by John (I Jn 2:18,22; 4:3; II Jn 1:7).
 2. John's vision of the RCC drunk with blood of Christians shocked him (Rev 17:1-6).
 3. They were seducers (I John 2:26), which required objective tests to expose them.
 4. Paul also warned of heretics among church elders stealing believers (Acts 20:26-32).
 5. Jesus threw the devil out of heaven, leaving the world to his wrath (Rev 12:5-17).
 6. For a brief overview of heresies about Jesus, see *Christ Wars* or *Sonship ...* [this video \(Vimeo\)](#), [this video \(Vimeo\)](#).
- C. These were not false prophets *from the world* like Hindus/Muslims, but *into the world*.
 1. We do not need to waste time preaching against such extreme paganism ... hopefully.
 2. Neither do we waste any time on atheists or agnostics, they can learn on their knees.
 3. It is easier and panders to the fleshly lusts of carnal hearers to preach against *isms*.
 4. But we do need to take time to preach against subtle variations of the Christian faith.
 5. The greatest enemy of Christianity is the RCC Mother and her Protestant daughters.
 6. Her abominations have crept in everywhere, even Baptists, when examined closely.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God.

- A. What precious information and a great criterion for those then to know truth from God.
 - 1. The first heresies attacked the Person of Jesus; the believers had no N.T. scripture.
 - 2. We will likely not meet persons denying Jesus is the Christ or His real flesh body.
 - 3. But we can appreciate this loving care from God and use the N.T. criteria ourselves.
- B. True teachers are directed and taught by the Holy Spirit of God – correct Christ doctrine.
 - 1. John inspired by the Holy Ghost identified a crucial fact about Jesus being corrupted.
 - 2. There are acid tests for believing on Jesus Christ – this is one of them – a real body.
 - 3. The Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus Christ, so Christ doctrine is the test (Jn 15:26).
 - 4. John demanded *Christ* and *flesh* for Jesus, and Paul required Lordship (I Cor 12:3).
 - 5. Do not be surprised at Jesus lies. The devil hates that Jesus the Man destroyed him.
- C. The doctrine of the Person of Christ is the great divider for some heresies of that time.
 - 1. John began this epistle with the strongest declaration of Jesus as Christ with a body!
 - 2. God never wasted a single word in the Bible, so always look for the value of each.
 - 3. He could not have been plainer exalting apostolic eyewitnesses of the eternal Word.
 - 4. The apostles had handled Jesus, which is the strongest proof of his real flesh body.
 - 5. Testimonies of division in his gospel show the Jews divided (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19).
 - 6. Included in these sample tests is Father-Son distinctions consistent with all scripture.
- D. This acid test for the Spirit of God is only one heresy popular then; we have many more.
 - 1. We have never engaged anyone denying Jesus as the Christ or our Lord's real body.
 - 2. Based on other scriptures, we apply the principle and rule here for us (Acts 17:11; I Thess 5:21; II Thess 2:15; Titus 3:9-11; Galatians 1:6-9; II Tim 3:16-17; etc., etc.).
 - 3. For example, Paul gave a precise order of events of Jesus's return (II Thess 2:1-3).
 - 4. For example, Paul gave strict instructions for even hair length by sex (I Co 11:4-16).
 - 5. For lists short of our church history are these samples ... [Ancient Landmarks](#), [The Only Right Worldview \(16 sermons\)](#), [Articles of Faith](#), [Higher Ground \(20 Sermons\)](#), [Christian Liberty Expanded \(10 sermons\)](#), [Holidays](#).
- E. Can a false teacher teach truth about Jesus Christ, such as the Messiah and a real body?
 - 1. What do you mean by false teacher? If you mean a reprobate, yes, for Judas did so.
 - 2. What do you mean by false teacher? If you mean another Jesus, yes, as in seduction.
 - 3. What do you mean by false teacher? If you mean bad goals, yes, like Paul's enemies.
 - 4. Even devils can declare truth about Jesus, as they often did (Matt 8:29; Mark 1:24).
- F. Can a God-called minister teach error about Jesus? Sure, for they must study diligently.
 - 1. If a minister does not rightly divide scripture, he will end up ashamed (II Tim 2:15).
 - 2. If a pastor does not take heed to doctrine, he will cost his hearers truth (I Tim 4:16).
 - 3. Are there God-called men believing and teaching eternal sonship? We believe many.
 - 4. Are there God-called men teaching errors of salvation in Christ. We believe many.

- G. The more we talk of Jesus Christ in eternal, heavenly, spiritual, loving terms, the better.
 - 1. We will eventually drive from us or expose internally any earthly belly worshippers.
 - 2. It is amazing the ridiculous things carnal Christians can talk about in God's house.
 - 3. It is even more amazing how carnal Christians are irritated by spiritual talk of Christ.
 - 4. Our constant talk of Christ will glorify God and Him and turn away worldly visitors.

Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

- A. The only contact you have with the spirit of a teacher is by the content of his teaching.
- B. John by the Holy Spirit began this epistle with very clear doctrine of Jesus' real body.
 - 1. The purpose and role of the Holy Spirit was to testify of Jesus Christ (John 15:26).
 - 2. How could the first verse be more dramatic and powerful about His real flesh body?
 - 3. Jesus is the Seed of the woman – a holy thing born of a virgin's womb (Luke 1:35).
 - 4. Almighty God used the very childbirth cursed in Eden for His Son (I Timothy 2:15).
 - 5. The Jews knew Jesus had a real flesh body, for they demanded its blood from Pilate.
- C. There were heretics teaching by the devil's influence against Jesus having a real body.
 - 1. They taught Jesus was just a spirit, an illusion, an apparition, a mystical vision, etc.
 - 2. The literal birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of His body are key.
 - 3. The fulfillment of every prophecy of literal death, blood, burial, grave, etc. is crucial.
 - 4. The substitutionary atonement for our salvation requires our nature (Heb 2:14-17).
- D. Another heresy was that Jesus was not the prophesied Jewish Messiah. See I John 2:22.
 - 1. Jews could not admit Jesus was Christ, the promised Messiah, without obeying Him.
 - 2. So they called Him everything from a Samaritan to working by Beelzebub's power.
- E. For more about heresies pertaining to Jesus as the Christ, see notes for chapter 2 ... [First John Chapter 2 \(#15\) ... Verses 20-22.](#)
- F. For more about Christ heresies in general, see PowerPoint sermon, *Christ Wars* ... [this video \(Vimeo\).](#)

Is of God.

- A. Certain things we can know are from God, prove God to us, and prove a matter truth.
- B. God is source, knowledge, power for preaching Jesus as Christ with a real flesh body.
- C. The Holy Spirit bears witness of Jesus Christ, so Christ doctrine is the test (John 15:26).
- D. Before the epistle ends, John will call up nine witnesses, the Spirit as three (I Jn 5:6-8).

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

- A. Another spirit was directing and driving other teachers against Jesus' real flesh body.
 - 1. John warned his lady friend to avoid teachers of this identical heresy (II John 1:7).
 - 2. The devil hates Jesus Christ and will do anything in his power to eliminate His glory.
 - 3. Being defeated by lowly Jesus of Nazareth's death, burial, resurrection, truth hurts.
 - 4. So false doctrine had Jewish denial of Him as the Messiah and Greek of a real body.
 - 5. These heresies make God and Jesus liars and demolish substitutionary atonement.
 - 6. The drama of this universe – why you exist – is centered around God's Son Jesus.
 - 7. We must hate any variation, lack of emphasis, lack of worship, etc. of Jesus the Son.
 - 8. Many will give some credit to a God for blessings, but let us praise God's Son, for it immediately separates us from pretenders and it glorifies God by His beloved Son.
- B. Love our Lord's virgin birth, His swaddling, His growth in stature, etc. It is all key truth.
 - 1. In our righteous hatred of Christ's Mass, we can neglect the glory of the virgin birth.
 - 2. In our hatred of Good Friday, we can neglect the care and details of His body buried.
 - 3. Love our Lord's offer to Thomas in light of the apostles handling Him (John 20:27).
 - 4. He took our nature and proved it by many infallible proofs (Heb 2:14-17; Acts 1:3).
- C. For a short review and timeline of heresies about Jesus, see *Christ Wars* sermon ... [this video \(Vimeo\)](#).
- D. For a thorough review of the doctrine of incarnate vs. eternal sonship, see slides ... [this video \(Vimeo\)](#).
- E. For all the sonship slides, some missed in the previous link, use these 161 slides ... [Sonship Simplified and Settled](#).

Is not of God.

- A. The spirit behind false teaching, especially about Jesus, is from the lying devil himself.
 - 1. Jesus went right after this fact with the Jews, not the Greek Gnostics (John 8:38-47).
 - 2. God told Satan in Eden about enmity between him and the woman's Son (Gen 3:15).
 - 3. Remember, *another Jesus* is a corruption and error by Satan (II Cor 11:3-4,13-15).
 - 4. It galls him to know that a lowly Man from Nazareth will throw him into hell soon.
 - 5. Jesus threw the devil out of heaven, leaving the world to his wrath (Rev 12:5-17).
 - 6. God allowed him intelligence only so far – to know torment coming but not repent!
- B. It does not mean all such teachers and hearers are reprobate, but rather they are heretics.
 - 1. A truly God-called minister can be in error about Christ doctrine as easy as any other.
 - 2. It is a minister's duty to study carefully to avoid any error (I Tim 4:16; II Tim 2:15).
 - 3. It is Bible ignorance to think that calling a person a heretic is assigning them to hell.
 - 4. It is also ignorance to think Jesus heresy is okay (I Cor 16:22; II Cor 11:3-4,13-15).

And this is that spirit of antichrist.

- A. The spirit of antichrist is the devil and Satan, for both Paul and John made it quite clear.
 - 1. No one hates Jesus as much as Satan, for the Godman Jesus shamed him (Col 2:15).

2. He then threw the devil out of heaven, leaving the world to his fury (Rev 12:5-17).
 3. Paul foretold the satanic spirit behind the popes and their apostasy (II Thess 2:1-12).
 4. He foretold RCC doctrines of celibacy and avoiding meat as devilish (I Tim 4:1-3).
 5. John described the devil with pagan and papal Rome (Rev 12:3,9; 13:1-10; 17:1-6).
 6. Daniel foretold this blasphemer long before as the little horn of Rome (Daniel 7:25).
 7. Pagan Rome did not eradicate Christianity, so Satan chose papal Rome to corrupt it.
- B. The RCC has been the greatest enemy of Bible Christianity throughout a sordid history.
1. Judas was an antichrist as one son of perdition, and so are the popes (II Thess 2:3).
 2. It shocked John to have a vision of the “holy Mother church” killing Christians, for pagan Rome doing so would not have surprised or troubled him at all (Rev 17:6).
 3. The RCC is the worst combination of pagan religion, O.T. religion, and Christianity in one mongrel monstrosity whitewashed with the beauty and power of seduction.
 4. They claim the name of Christ and some few doctrines and corrupt all other truth.
 5. They have committed spiritual fornication with the kings of the earth like no other.
 6. Named the Great Whore church by the Holy Spirit through John, it is incredibly true.
 7. For some examples of RCC heresy, see the outline, [Is Catholicism Christian?](#)

Whereof ye have heard that it should come.

- A. While John wrote of the devil’s influence in the book of Revelation, we think Paul here.
1. Due to the location of the book of Revelation and its closing words, we date it last.
 2. Paul picked up Daniel’s little horn of Rome and wrote about him (II Thess 2:1-12).
 3. Since the canon was not yet complete, reference is made to hearing and not reading.
- B. Like Paul before him, John reminded Christians of verbal instruction they had received.
1. It was verbal to avoid bringing down the wrath of Rome on them (II Thess 2:5-7).
 2. They certainly had not heard about the emperor being taken out of the way at school.
 3. If you read all the prophecies of the last beast, they are obscure enough to save life.
 4. However, many preachers declared it openly and suffered the wrath of both Romes.
 5. God loves such and so do we, which is why we sought to honor them (Rev 6:9-11).
 6. This mystery is unknown to most, but no mystery to us (Rev 17:5,7; II Thess 2:7).
 7. Daniel foretold this blasphemer long before as the little horn of Rome (Daniel 7:25).
 8. For the detailed rise of the popes, their character, and their end, see Daniel 7 ... [Daniel Chapter 7](#).
- C. The great enemy of Christians – the RCC and popes – was foretold before Jesus’ return.
1. Paul identified the two main events to occur before Jesus came back (II Thess 2:1-3).
 2. It is does not matter what means of deceit any men have used to teach anything else.
 3. This great enemy of Bible Christianity is like Judas ... an antichrist = against Christ.
 4. For a detailed sermon with slides about II Thess 2 of things no longer known ... [II Thessalonians 2](#).

- 5. For a detailed sermon identifying the popes from Daniel, Paul, and then John ... [Antichrist](#).
- 6. For a detailed timeline of prophecies leading to Rome and its Catholic popes ... [Rome Connection](#).
- D. Daniel's little horn of Rome is totally different from Greece's little horn (Dan 7:1-28).
- E. Paul's man of sin like Judas blaspheming in a temple of God is popes (II Thess 2:1-8).
- F. John's final beast with seven heads and ten horns is Daniel's Rome beast (Rev 13:1-9).
 - 1. John's great whore riding this beast is clearly the Catholic Church (Rev 17:1-6,18).
 - 2. Do not be distracted with historical molehills: Third Reich, USSR, CCP, USA, UN.
 - 3. We know world history is five kingdoms: Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, our Lord.
- G. These antichrists are not content with their heresies, but must spread them (I John 2:26).
- H. For more about attacks against the truth of Jesus Christ during the apostles' lives ... [The Christ Wars](#).

And even now already is it in the world.

- A. Satan took up very different tactics after Jesus came and the apostles changed the world.
 - 1. What had been pagan darkness over all the earth was pushed back by gospel light.
 - 2. Satan was bound from deceiving the world, and the apostles turned it upside down.
 - 3. Idolatry, once universally observed, was greatly altered. Hear silversmith Demetrius.
 - 4. So Satan made a seducing "Christian church" to alter and destroy Bible Christianity.
 - 5. Think of Mariolatry, transubstantiation, infant baptism, priesthood, adoration of the host, inquisitions, superstitious ignorance of Latin, no Bible until 1960s, etc., etc.
 - 6. From her came daughter churches of Protestants, Unitarians, Mormons, SDA, JW, CS, Pentecostal and Charismatics, compromising Baptists of all kinds, etc., etc.
- B. Opposition of heretics against true Christianity had been prophesied (Matt 24:5,11,24; Acts 20:29-30; II Cor 2:17; 11:1-4,13-15; II Tim 2:16-18; II Pet 2:1; 3:1-4; Jude 1:4,18).
- C. It began with an apostasy from truth and doctrines of devils (II Thess 2:3; I Tim 4:1-3), which Paul described as the mystery of iniquity already at work back then (II Thes 2:7).
- D. Paul described the same great gulf between antichrist and the Spirit (II Thess 2:7-15).
- E. The specific attacks against Jesus are hard to believe – Jesus as Christ and in the flesh.
 - 1. In John's context, he identified one lie – Jesus is not Christ or Son (I John 2:22-23), which lie was very important to the Jews to resist with all their might (John 9:22).
 - 2. In context, John gave another – Jesus did not come in the flesh (I Jn 4:2-3; II Jn 2:7).
- F. It is a shame many Christians adore the greatest haters of Christ (Rev 2:9; 3:9; Jn 8:44).
- G. Let us be zealous for the true gospel and understand our Lord's strictness (Luke 11:23).

Proving Teachers by World Approval – Verses 4-6

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater

is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Ye are of God, little children.

- A. John comforted his readers by another term of endearment and as being the sons of God.
 - 1. The previous chapter began with the glorious details of their adoption (I Jn 3:1-3).
 - 2. Not only were they legally adopted by God, they were born of Him (I Jn 2:29; 3:9).
 - 3. Not only were they born of Him, but they had God's Spirit in them (I Jn 3:24; 4:13).
 - 4. Not only the three things above, but they heard God's truth and believed (I Jn 2:24).
 - 5. As such, sons of God and apostolic converts, they were attached to God many ways.
 - 6. They were very different from the world as taught and practiced (I John 2:15-17).
 - 7. Recall how John had described their unction and anointing by God (I John 2:20-27).
- B. Faithful and sincere Bible Christians are wildly different from the world many ways.
 - 1. Of course, the context's main point preceding in this chapter is true Christ doctrine.
 - 2. God's presence and power in Christians lead them in ways contrary to the world.
 - 3. For a thorough review or study of the Only Right Worldview of Christians ... [The Only Right Worldview \(16 sermons\)](#).
 - 4. For another view of Christian doctrine and practice, [the Ancient Landmarks](#).
- C. It is our sacred and solemn duty to abide in God by faithful obedience against any opposition, which John emphasized and Jude (I John 2:24-28; 3:23-24; Jude 1:16-21).

And have overcome them.

- A. John comforted the converts and readers of his epistle as having survived Satan's lies.
 - 1. They had believed the apostles of Christ by the Spirit and held on (I John 2:20-27).
 - 2. Though apostates had gone out from them, the faithful holding apostolic truth stayed.
 - 3. Jesus commended the church at Ephesus for exposing false apostles (Rev 2:2-3).
 - 4. As He exhorted the seven churches of Asia, let us be overcomers for His great praise.
- B. Regardless of gifted speakers, appealing philosophy, popular reception, desirable practices, governmental support, educational control, threats of persecution, they won!
- C. God used poor and simple overcoming believers to preserve His words 2000 years, and in addition to destroy and shame the wisdom of this world (I Cor 1:18-28; 3:18-23).
- D. The means God used for you to hear the truth was by faithful, evangelizing preachers.
- E. Let us be the pillar and ground of the truth and sound it out to the world (I Tim 3:15).

Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

- A. Jesus, the Builder and Head of His churches, gave the gift of the Spirit (John 14:16-24).
 - 1. Remember the winning anointing that was in them by the Holy Spirit (I Jn 2:20,27).
 - 2. John had already and would again refer to the Holy Spirit in them (I Jn 3:24; 4:13).
 - 3. John had told His apostles it was expedient for Him to leave for the Spirit to come, and the benefit

was just as great, though different, for all believers after Pentecost.

4. The Holy Spirit empowered rather ignorant apostles to turn the world upside down.
 5. The same Spirit reveals great things to ordinary believers (Eph 1:17-20; 3:14-19).
- B. While the great work of Satan might be intimidating, the Holy Spirit is infinitely greater.
1. The Spirit's presence in believers, if guarded, is far greater than any devilish power.
 2. As we obey and separate from the world, His power is greater in us (II Cor 6:14-18).
 3. The Holy Spirit (as God) created the devil, the Creator's power trumps any creature.
 4. Jesus (as the Word of God) created the devil, our Lord's power is for our strength.
 5. Jesus shamed the devil in victory; that Spirit of the Son is in us (Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6).
- C. Thus, there must be great emphasis praying for the Spirit, living and walking in the Spirit, not grieving or quenching the Spirit, so that His power is unrestrained in us.
- D. For many and significant ministries of the Holy Spirit as Paul taught to Ephesus ... **The Holy Spirit (in Ephesians)**.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

They are of the world.

- A. The plural pronoun opening this verse are false prophets in context (I John 4:1; 2:26).
- B. Remember what went before – Christians and the world are different and adversaries.
 1. First, from Cain and Abel to the present, there is violent antagonism (Pr 29:10,27).
 2. Second, just as the world missed God and Jesus, so they miss Christians (I John 3:1).
 3. Third, Christians must not love the world antithetical to God (I Jn 2:15-17; Jas 4:4).
 4. Jesus of Nazareth was the best of our race by an infinite measure in all good ways, but the most intelligent and best educated, earth's princes, killed Him (I Cor 2:6-8).
 5. Bible Christianity is the most beneficial and liberating social force the world knows, but they are not able to see it for blind depravity and confusion by the devilish RCC.
- C. The false teachers guilty of heresies against the apostles were of the world in some way.
 1. They were of the world as in the next clauses in compatible content and sentiments.
 2. They were of the world as following its devilish way of life from Satan (Eph 2:1-3).
 3. The things listed we are to hate, they embrace, promote, and defend (I Jn 2:15-17).
 4. Rather than choose godliness over the world, they preach liberty for sin (II Pet 2:19).
 5. Rather than accept divine revelation, they preferred philosophical speculation, etc.
- D. Popularity is a true but horrible judge and revealer of truth or error – worldly approval.
 1. From a religious survey in 3400 B.C. after Noah preached a century – 50MM vs. 8.
 2. Moses warned Israel a multitude was not to be trusted or followed (Exodus 23:2).
 3. Jesus taught anything highly esteemed by men is proof God hates it (Luke 16:15).

4. Jesus taught that worldly esteem is consistent with the false prophets (Luke 6:26).
5. The truth of the gospel is very divisive as Jesus promised; false religion is less so

Therefore speak they of the world.

- A. When the world accepts a gospel preacher or religious minister, it is due to compromise.
 1. Once upon a time a man from Atlanta, wrongly made a Baptist pastor, talked dreams.
 2. God mocked dreams compared to the fire and hammer of His word (Jer 23:28-32).
 3. Some tyke working with parents by the devil told he went to heaven and returned.
 4. If Billy Graham, James Dobson, Joel Osteen meet presidents, truth is compromised.
 5. Stadiums are filled, radio stations signed, Lakewood continues, by worldly content.
- B. Our worldview is always, totally different from the world on all moral or related issues.
 1. There is no compatibility of our view of life and conduct compared to the world's.
 2. For details of our *The Only Right Worldview*, see the sermon outline for it ... [The Only Right Worldview \(16 sermons\)](#).
- C. Never forget how the world persecuted Bible Christians from the apostles to the present.
 1. The apostles were despised and persecuted by Gentiles of all kinds and by the Jews.
 2. The first Baptist church in the South was by Congregational persecution in Maine.
 3. No matter how much we love the King James Bible, that king persecuted Baptists.

And the world heareth them.

- A. Why does the world listen to lies right and left but will not listen to us with the truth?
 1. Their depraved hearts resulting from the choice for a lie in Eden continues on today.
 2. Any idea floated of a Supreme Being with authority over their lives must be rejected.
 3. Any message of Jesus, righteousness, heaven, love, or hope must be denied by Satan.
- B. They treated Jesus the same – He knew the only way to get them was to lie (John 8:45).
 1. The depravity of man is consistently anti-God and anti-Christ without divine grace.
 2. Then there is God's judicial blindness, especially on the Jews, to miss the gospel.
 3. Our Lord described the gate and road to destruction as having many on it (Matt 7:13).
- C. Think! Why are so-called pastors like Pope Frank and Joel Osteen loved by the world?
- D. Billy Graham could pack any stadium anywhere, so could Benny Hinn. How and why?

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

We are of God.

- A. This is different from two verses earlier, where John wrote, *Ye are of God* (1 John 4:4).
- B. We believe John used a first person, plural pronoun for himself and the other apostles.

1. Compare the opening verses of the epistle, where only apostles had such privileges, and where John used first person plural pronouns *we*, *our*, and *us* about 13 times.
 2. Two verses earlier he used the second person, plural pronoun for Christian readers.
 3. They were safe by the Spirit unction and anointing given them (I John 2:20,27; 3:24).
 4. The plural *we* and *us* are preachers; the verbal action of others in context is hearing.
 5. John's readers were not described as teachers, but children, young men, and fathers.
- C. The apostles and prophets of Jesus are the foundation of His one church (Eph 2:19-22).
1. Apostles and prophets had the highest rank in office of the church (I Cor 12:28-30).
 2. When Jesus ascended, He told eleven to teach all things (Matt 28:18-20; Jn 14:26).
 3. They wrote down the Lord's commands in their epistles, especially Paul to Gentiles.
 4. The rule of Christianity for Gentiles is Paul (I Cor 3:10; 4:15; 11:1,16; 14:38; 16:2).
 5. Bible Christians hold to traditions, but only to those of the apostles (II Thess 2:15).
 6. Noble Bereans, though they checked Paul's verses, received the word (Acts 17:11).

He that knoweth God heareth us.

- A. The true followers of God with the Spirit in them will hear and follow apostolic truth.
1. Though uneducated rednecks from Galilee, they were mighty (Acts 4:13; 5:12-16).
 2. Reprobate Jews rejected Paul's gospel, but elect Gentiles believed (Acts 13:45-52).
 3. They wrote down the Lord's commands in their epistles, especially Paul to Gentiles.
 4. The rule of Christianity for Gentiles is Paul (I Cor 3:10; 4:15; 11:1,16; 14:38; 16:2).
 5. Bible Christians hold to traditions, but only to those of the apostles (II Thess 2:15).
 6. Noble Bereans, though they checked Paul's verses, received the word (Acts 17:11).
- B. This is different and more than the single Christological detail of Jesus's real flesh body.
- C. John had commended his readers for retaining apostolic preaching in them (I John 2:24).
- D. He had also commended them for the Holy Spirit anointing abiding in them (I Jn 2:27).

He that is not of God heareth not us.

- A. The world's reprobates could easily find many things to criticize about Christ's apostles.
1. Though uneducated rednecks from Galilee, they were mighty (Acts 4:13; 5:12-16).
 2. Reprobate Jews rejected Paul's gospel, but elect Gentiles believed (Acts 13:45-52).
- B. What has happened in churches? They want fables, not sound doctrine (II Tim 4:3-4).
1. It is part of the compromise of perilous times of the last days (II Tim 3:1-17; 4:1-4).
 2. If Joel were to preach true apostolic doctrine as it should be, Lakewood would close.
- C. The one religion of Jesus in 27 books of the N.T. canon must be preached and enforced.
1. It is a spiritual religion entirely opposed to human depravity and sentimentality.
 2. It is not compatible with this world at all, which is God's enemy by their choice

Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

- A. What a glorious difference to engage the mind, enliven the heart, and consume the time.
- B. The apostles of Jesus Christ were the greatest teachers possible for determining truth.
- C. Our duty as pillar and ground of the truth is to press and push the apostles' epistles hard.

Note: The next seven verses are some of the most precious and powerful in I John and in the Bible for exalting, encouraging, and exhorting to brotherly love. It is clear the seven verses are separate from what came before – trying the spirits of teachers to identify truth and error – and what comes after – believing and confessing the apostolic eyewitness accounts of Jesus the Son of God.

These next three lessons in seven verses that follow are obvious, persuasive, and profound. We should easily and gladly love one another due to love being a chief trait of our God, His incredible example of love by sending His Son for rebel enemies, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit in us to convict, teach, and empower us to love others. Embrace the message here – love is the greatest!

Brotherly Love by Nature of God – Verses 7-8

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Beloved.

- A. The affectionate apostle continued terms of endearment throughout his epistle at breaks.
 - 1. It is proper, if adopted children of God, the family of God, and household of faith.
 - 2. He used *beloved* five times; he used *little children* seven times. What an example!
- B. In the N.T. culture of the times, believers greeted with kisses. Let us not be too different.
- C. Bible Christians are beloved children of God by adoption and should love each like this.
- D. Some of the strongest evidence for assurance regard brotherly love found in this chapter.

Let us love one another.

- A. John, by perfect conviction and direction of the Holy Spirit, returns to brotherly love.
 - 1. Though God demanded proving the truth, and we must contend for it, there is more.
 - 2. The previous six verses were an inspired aside (I John 3:22-24), now back to love.
 - 3. He left brotherly love assurance in verse 21 to summarize the keys of faith and love.
 - 4. We cannot and must not understate the importance of love in the Bible and the N.T.
 - 5. Jesus and His apostles elevated this interpersonal concern, desire, and action highly.
 - 6. When in this epistle, it is our sacred duty to recognize the Holy Spirit's emphasis.
 - 7. For a study of the importance of love from many angles, *Love Is the Greatest ... Love Is the Greatest – 2017 (6 Sermons)*.
- B. The apostle showed the gentle skill of a kind man of God with the Spirit ... *Let us do so.*
 - 1. Why the gentle word to love one another? Was it not taught already (I Jn 3:10-24)?

2. Why is it so important? It is the greatest evidence, grace, means! Note *one another*.
 3. Can you, will you, choose to fervently embrace and serve each of your brothers?
 4. The *one another* duty of members toward each other must be obeyed and prayed for.
 5. Is there in you the totally transformed spirit that responds to John's request by, *Yes!*
- C. John then introduced a slightly different angle on brotherly love by the nature of God.

For love is of God.

- A. Here is a profound yet simple inspired axiom of our God, our religion, our worldview.
- B. What is love? Benevolent but intentional kindness to help another in every way needed.
 1. Love must be defined by God in the Bible – not by man or any other source or idea.
 2. It is selfless in that it is willing to sacrifice self in order to improve the life of another.
 3. It is for the good of others, thus it is the opposite of lust, which the world calls love.
 4. It never compromises righteousness or rejoices in iniquity, but always the opposite.
 5. Why would or could God kill His Son for His enemies? To magnify love (Rom 5:8)!
 6. For a study of God's inspired definition of love, see *The Definition of Love ... Definition of Love*.
- C. Where does love come from? Who created, designed, invented it? Who exemplifies it?
 1. Our glorious Creator God Jehovah is the First Cause of love. He is our loving Father.
 2. We will get to the example and exemplification of love by God next (I John 4:9-11).
 3. John had shown the natural man, the world, and Satan do not love (I John 3:11-15).
 4. We chose a liar and murderer back in Eden, so envy and selfish malice are the results.
 5. We only love in the proper sense of love because He first loved us and changed us.
- D. Therefore, by these few points and more have and will be added, love is only from God.
 1. When we love, as John has and will state clearly, we show strong connection to God.
 2. When we love, as John next taught, we show we have a new nature by the new birth.
 3. We would never love if God did not overthrow our hateful natures with a new one.

And every one that loveth is born of God.

- A. If it were not for regeneration changing us from hate to love, we would not (Tit 3:3-7).
 1. Before regeneration (quickening), we are wicked followers of the devil (Eph 2:1-3).
 2. Transforming power of God's grace must be embraced, taught, sought in converts.
 3. Being born of God, regenerated, gives us a new nature, a seed, that loves (I Jn 3:9).
 4. Love is so much a part of the divine nature (and not ours) that it proves God in us.
- B. The order is clear by the verb tenses, not the order of verbs, regeneration must be first.
 1. Verb tenses determine order of actions, for the cause of love is God recreating us.
 2. *Every one that loveth* = present tense; *is born of God* = perfect tense of a past action.
 3. The perfect tense means a completed action in the time period under consideration.

4. We would say today in common speech – *Anyone that loves has been born of God.*
 5. We cannot and do not love first – God must change our nature first in order to love.
 6. John worded it differently in an earlier verse (I John 3:14), where he wrote, *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* Order clear!
 7. John used similar verbs for faith and regeneration, where faith is a result (I John 5:1), and he clarified the verbal order of action as well with another verse (I John 4:15).
 8. If you miss it here, regeneration is by your righteousness (I John 2:29). God forbid!
 9. For a study of verbs in salvation including John, [The Grammar of Salvation](#).
- C. This is the vital phase of salvation, and brotherly love proves that it already occurred.
- D. From the vital phase, and in that order, is the practical phase of actually knowing God.

And knoweth God.

- A. The soul to soul relationship with God, fellowship and unity, is a favorite of this apostle.
1. If it were only mental knowledge, which it is not, love would still indicate it as true.
 2. It is experimental/experiential knowledge of God by unity of spirit and fellowship.
 3. Compare Paul's desire to know Christ – mental assent it surely is not (Phil 3:8-11).
 4. It was to know Him by knowledge that resulted in joining Him in His character traits.
 5. No intellectual knowledge of God or even faith can compare to the evidence of love.
 6. Love of others shows not only the knowledge of God but compatibility of character.
- B. John began early in the epistle criticizing claims to know God without fruit (I Jn 2:3-6).
1. From the beginning of the epistle, John rejected fellowship with any sin (I Jn 1:5-7).
 2. You are only connected to God truly knowing and walking with Him by godliness.
 3. Do not make a profession of faith, and do not talk about knowing God without love.
 4. Since the apostle's argument is love as coming from God, knowing Him requires it.
 5. Walking with God, delighting in Him, fellowshiping with Him, will produce love.
 6. Love is so much a part of God's nature that you must have it to show real connection.
- C. To make your calling and election sure, the top needs are brotherly kindness and charity.
- D. This is the practical phase of salvation; brotherly love proves the vital phase came first.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

He that loveth not knoweth not God.

- A. The soul to soul relationship with God, fellowship and unity, is a favorite of this apostle.
1. If it were only mental knowledge, which it is not, love would still indicate it as true.
 2. It is experimental/experiential knowledge of God by unity of spirit and fellowship.
 3. Compare Paul's desire to know Christ – mental assent it surely is not (Phil 3:8-11).
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- B. John began early in the epistle criticizing claims to know God without fruit (I Jn 2:3-6).
 1. From the beginning of the epistle, John rejected fellowship with any sin (I Jn 1:5-7).
 2. You are only connected to God truly knowing and walking with Him by godliness.
 3. Since the apostle's argument is love as coming from God, knowing Him requires it.
 4. Walking with God, delighting in Him, fellowshiping with Him, will produce love.
 5. The only love that counts is brotherly love on an individual basis as God defined it.
 - C. To make your calling and election sure, the top needs are brotherly kindness and charity.
 1. Do not make a profession of faith, and do not talk about knowing God, without love.
 2. Lack of love in a person's life is compelling and condemning evidence against him.
 3. What will a person appeal to, if lacking the greatest and surest evidence of salvation?
 - D. Assuming or telling that you know God without loving others is self-deceit and a fraud.
 1. Your character and conduct must declare love to all witnesses to truly know God.
 2. Without obvious and visible love of brethren, you have no true knowledge of God.
 - E. There is a very simple reason for all that John wrote in this and in the previous verse.

For God is love.

- A. Our glorious creator God, the LORD Jehovah, has a very certain character trait – love!
 1. Men know love is a great and wonderful thing when shown to them, but God excels.
 2. For His glory and the praise of rational creatures, He revealed His intentional love.
 3. He showed His love to reprobates and elect; we are to copy (Matt 5:43-48; I Jn 3:16).
 4. Think, when your heart is full of good and gladness by weather or food (Acts 14:17).
 5. Why would or could God kill His Son for His enemies? To magnify love (Rom 5:8)!
 6. His commitment of love by intentional predestination is glorious (Romans 8:28-39).
 7. His love is intentional; He made it possible and set it on us in eternity (Eph 1:3-6).
- B. No matter that Arminians abuse and pervert His love, we know it in its glorious truth.
 1. They mock God and His love by declaring equal love for all men in heaven or hell.
 2. Their omniscient God lovingly created those He would send to hell – what cruelty!
 3. All they talk about is His love, ignoring that the epistle began with ... *God is light!*
 4. They think evangelism is painting billboards or eyelids with John 3:16 for any man.
 5. They think salvation is accepting this love then living your life any way you wish.
 6. They make the Great Commission their calling, but loving the brethren is more love.
 7. Church members you are around all the time to see their flaws are perfect for love.
- C. A man who lives for self and does not lay down his life for others does not know God.

Brotherly Love by Example of God – Verses 9-11

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us.

- A. Since God is love, and we are to show His nature, He clearly displayed it to be known.
 - 1. We need not wonder what the required love is like, for He showed us (I John 3:16).
 - 2. We need not wonder what specific aspect of His loves show it best, for it follows.
 - 3. This definition is key so we grasp the sacrificial investment in others for their benefit.
- B. Let us be clear about His love – intentional, objects, the cost, purpose, unreciprocated.
 - 1. No love like His love – He chose to love to display His glory without need or reason.
 - 2. No love like His love – He chose the objects to be evil, vile, rebel, sinful enemies.
 - 3. No love like His love – He gave His only Son He loved dearly for torture and murder.
 - 4. No love like His love – He paid the cost to free them from justice for eternal sonship.
 - 5. No love like His love – He loved in spite of being hated before and neglected after.
- C. Of course, His love deserves a full-blown study to do it justice, but such is beyond here.
- D. Paul did well describing God's love and a response to it (Rom 5:6-11; II Cor 5:13-15).
 - 1. Paul learned to love like this in limited human capacity (II Cor 6:11-13; 12:14-15).
 - 2. Paul taught us to learn to love like God and Christ loved us (Rom 12:9-18; 15:1-3).
- E. For exploring the love of God further, see a sample of other sermons ... [The Unsearchable Riches of Christ \(5 Sermons\)](#), [The Love of God – \(#1\)](#), [He Is Altogether Lovely \(1998\)](#).

Because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world.

- A. This was not just any Son, but this was God's beloved and only begotten Son of Man.
- B. It was the Father's intentional plan even against the Son's desire for another alternative.
- C. They did not do it together – the Father and the Son – but the Father sent the Son away.
- D. The Father had to desert the Son due to the magnitude and nature of legal substitution.
- E. Not only was Jesus His only begotten Son, but God sent Him into a vile, depraved place.
- F. When have you ever loved another equal like this, for that is the measure (I John 3:16)?
 - 1. To match this verse, you must give up your most valuable possessions for others.
 - 2. To match this verse, you must love those you think the least desirable beneath you.

That we might live through him.

- A. In addition, God sent His only Son to die – for whom? – for vile, hateful, rebel enemies.
- B. What was the end goal of the gift of His Son? Our good – sonship and eternal pleasure.
 - 1. He defied His own infinite, perfect justice and righteousness by substituting His Son!
 - 2. We deserved hell. We deserve hell. But He saved us from deserts for eternal glory!

- C. For our love to be like God's, we must sacrifice greatly for another's incredible good.
- D. Is your desire and constant action for each church member to have the best life possible?

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Herein is love.

- A. **Herein** = in this thing, matter, or case; in this fact, circumstance, or condition; in this particular = here are the details of real love, which is God's love of us, not ours of Him.
- B. The sacrificial investment in the previous verse is the definition and measure of love.
- C. This definition is key so we grasp the sacrificial investment in others for their benefit.
 - 1. Forget everything your parents, NEA, PETA, and the Beatles taught you about love.
 - 2. Forget every thought you have ever had about love, for you are vilely opposite love.
 - 3. If you truly fear God and love His truth and wisdom, then let Him teach you of love.
- D. Let us be clear about His love – intentional, objects, the cost, purpose, unreciprocated.
 - 1. No love like His love – He chose to love to display His glory without need or reason.
 - 2. No love like His love – He chose the objects to be evil, vile, rebel, sinful enemies.
 - 3. No love like His love – He gave His only Son He loved dearly for torture and murder.
 - 4. No love like His love – He paid the cost to free them from justice for eternal sonship.
 - 5. No love like His love – He loved in spite of being hated before and neglected after.

Not that we loved God.

- A. We know nothing about love; we did not love even God, but hated Him from Eden on.
 - A. God's love came from nowhere, if you allow the expression, while we hated Him.
 - B. There is nothing loving in our nature; we are selfish, critical, hateful, vengeful, etc.
- B. We find it easy to return love to those loving us, but God loved us when we hated Him.
 - 1. Real love includes loving your enemies like He does every day (Matthew 5:43-48).
 - 2. Jesus mocked and condemned loving any that love you; it is nothing (Matt 5:43-48).
- C. We did not love God, and even now our love for Him is inferior, but we hated this God.

But that he loved us.

- A. We know nothing about love; we did not love even God, but hated Him from Eden on.
- B. He loved us while we hated Him, and He did for us all the things this context references.
- C. Paul learned this love of God by grace and showed it to the Corinthians (II Cor 12:15).
- D. In spite of us not loving God, He loved us anyway, and He killed His Son for us anyway.

And sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

- A. There was nothing lovable about us. We hated Him. We had nothing to offer Him at all.

1. Instead of loving someone that loves us back, as we love ... He loved rebel enemies.
 2. Paul wrote truth: *But God commendeth His love toward us, in that ...* (Romans 5:8).
- B. **Propitiation.** The action or act of appeasement, conciliation; atonement, expiation.
1. The term appears but three times in our English Bibles; Paul used it once (Rom 3:25).
 2. John used it before to define God's love for His elect by sending His Son (1 Jn 2:2).
 3. As sinners, we must be reconciled to God. An atonement is needed. A propitiation.
 4. Jesus by a substitutionary death on the cross reconciled us to God for eternal peace.
- C. Sin created a problem. God hates sin. He must judge sin. He cannot fellowship sinners.
1. He should have left us in our vile vomit as rebel sinners, but He saved us from us.
 2. With His Son as our propitiation, we are reconciled to God by this perpetual Priest.
 3. Remember how Paul elevated this role of Jesus above His death (Rom 5:10; 8:34).
 4. His death forever settled our legal reconciliation, but there is more work with God.
 5. He is able to save to the uttermost any that come unto God by Him (Heb 7:25-28).

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Beloved.

- A. The affectionate apostle continued terms of endearment through his epistle for appeal.
 1. It is proper, if adopted children of God, the family of God, and household of faith.
 2. He used *beloved* five times; he used *little children* seven times. What an example!
- B. In the N.T. culture of the times, believers greeted with kisses. Let us not be too different.
- C. If God loved us and adopted us, then we are truly beloved, and we ought to love others.
- D. The term *beloved* repeated over and over should show you the inspired mood by God.

If God so loved us.

- A. This conditional statement is absolutely certain, but let the inspired condition grab you.
- B. Do you know the most important word in this clause? It is the little adverb Grasp it.
 1. **So.** In the way or manner described, indicated, or suggested; in that style or fashion.
 2. The conditional *if* is powerful – did God love us by the extreme measures in context?
 3. He surely did. Therefore, the result specified next must be incredibly extreme also.
- C. Let us be clear about His love – intentional, objects, the cost, purpose, unreciprocated.
 1. No love like His love – He chose to love to display His glory without need or reason.
 2. No love like His love – He chose the objects to be evil, vile, rebel, sinful enemies.
 3. No love like His love – He gave His only Son He loved dearly for torture and murder.
 4. No love like His love – He paid the cost to free them from justice for eternal sonship.
 5. No love like His love – He loved in spite of being hated before and neglected after.

We ought also to love one another.

- A. For this lesson, the example of God's love, we are to so love the brethren (I John 3:16).
- B. Do you know the most important word in this clause? It is the adverb *also*. Grasp it.
 - 1. **Also.** In this or that very manner, even thus. In the very manner of something else; in like manner, in the same way, likewise, similarly.
 - 2. The conditional *if* is powerful – God did love us by extreme measures, so we should.
 - 3. It is our duty and privilege before God to love one another exactly as He loved us.
- C. Let us be clear about our love – intentional, objects, the cost, purpose, unreciprocated.
 - 1. Our love like His – is a choice without need or reason other than His Bible command.
 - 2. Our love like His – gladly condescends to any of low estate that offend or irritate us.
 - 3. Our love like His – has no bounds on what we will do for others no matter the cost.
 - 4. Our love like His – has the goal to perfect the person to be the very best they can be.
 - 5. Our love like His – never thinks or worries whether the love is reciprocated or not.

Brotherly Love by the Spirit of God – Verses 12-13

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

No man hath seen God at any time.

- A. This is a true statement, and it is part of another lesson here that we should love others.
 - 1. Do not be distracted by appearances of the Angel of the LORD in the O.T., no matter the terminology that confuses you; no man saw God (Gen 32:24-32; Hosea 12:3-5).
 - 2. This same apostle wrote similarly in his Gospel that no man can see God (John 1:18).
 - 3. Paul said invisible Jehovah cannot be seen (I Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Hebrews 11:27).
 - 4. God told Moses directly that no man could see His face and survive (Exodus 33:20).
 - 5. But do not despair, for Jesus Christ is the express image of God (Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).
- B. Rejoice in the fact that your God is an invisible Spirit, entirely unlike all pagan deities.
 - 1. Greece had its Parthenon, Rome its Pantheon, Islam its crescent moon, and so forth.
 - 2. Pagans never understood Israel's worship, for it appeared to have no God like theirs.
 - 3. David answered them perfectly – our God is in the heavens (Ps 115:1-8; 135:5-6).
- C. John's lesson is this – since you have not seen God, how do you know He is with you?
 - 1. We depend so much on our sight ... so men say, *Seeing is believing* ... like Thomas.
 - 2. If we have not and cannot see Him, and yet want to assure ourselves of Him, how?
 - 3. We have not seen Him or the book of life, so how shall we know we are His sons?
 - 4. The incredible relationship of the LORD Jehovah with His children is not by sight

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us.

- A. John's lesson is this – since you have not seen God, how do you know He is with you?
 - 1. If we have not and cannot see Him, and yet want to assure ourselves of Him, how?
 - 2. We have not seen Him or the book of life, so how shall we know we are His sons?
- B. Loving one another, so contrary to human nature, proves Jehovah God living inside us!
 - 1. The incredible relationship of the LORD Jehovah with His children is not by sight.
 - 2. It is perfectly fine we have not seen Him; He lives inside us, if we love each other.
 - 3. We have not, will not, cannot see God; but we can see His presence by loving others.
 - 4. We have not, will not, cannot see God; but we can feel His power by loving others.
- C. The matter here is one of faith over feelings, so you must believe God against all else.
 - 1. Love is a trait of God, not men or devils, so loving others proves God living in you.
 - 2. For yourself, compare your nature against God's to realize He must be living in you.
 - 3. For others, know that their selfish neglect of others for themselves is a Godless soul.
 - 4. If we do not love, we hate; if we hate, we are murderers; if murderers, we are lost.
- D. God dwelling in us is the simple and repeated fact of the Comforter living in believers.
 - 1. Jesus promised the apostles He would send the Comforter to stay with them forever.
 - 2. This great gift of God's presence was given by God to Jesus to believers at Pentecost.
 - 3. Your physical body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; He is in you (I Cor 6:19-20).
 - 4. John had introduced this point earlier, and we can multiply the witnesses (I Jn 3:24).
- E. You can know about God, but who cares, so do the devils. Know Him by mutual love.
 - 1. Bible reading is a mental exercise of reading comprehension to apprehend God facts.
 - 2. Loving others is evidence of a relationship by which God influences your very soul.
 - 3. The more you love others, His greatest command, the greater fellowship with Him.
 - 4. His presence, power, influence are largely of love, and it is by love we embrace Him.

And his love is perfected in us.

- A. God's love for us is perfected in us when it fully changes us to love others like He did.
 - 1. His love turned the world upside down; now He teaches and gives us power to love.
 - 2. With Him dwelling in us, showing the fact by loving others, He perfects us by love.
 - 3. Loving others is the bond of perfectness, so embrace His love for others (Col 3:14).
- B. You can sing about God's love for you, but who cares, for most have no true clue of it.
- C. The real evidence of God's love being for you and you learning it is to thus love others

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us.

- A. Eternal life includes the essential union of God with a person in both directions as here.
 - 1. Eternal life has eternal and legal union in God's plan and Christ's death (Ep 1:3-6).
 - 2. Eternal life includes a vital connection as seated in Jesus Christ above (Eph 2:4-7).
 - 3. Eternal life includes a vital connection with that Christ living in us (I Cor 6:19-20).
 - 4. From these three phases of salvation comes the practical phase of conscious union.
 - 5. God and His Son love and dwell with the obedient, who love others (Jn 14:21-23).
- B. Fellowship with God and His Son for joy was the goal from the beginning (I Jn 1:4-5).
 - 1. What is fellowship? God living in us, and we in Him, by constant mutual exchanges.
 - 2. Fellowship, or intimate friendship, cannot be stated more personally and powerfully
- C. Grasp another *hereby*! Something else you should *know*! Brotherly love proves sonship.
 - 1. The *hereby* in this verse references the previous verse that love proves God in us.
 - 2. Since we cannot see God, how do we know we have union and fellowship? By love!
 - 3. Our evidence of salvation is not faith, baptism, or tongues, but loving the brethren.
- D. Do not ever settle for anything less in your relationship and religion with GOD Jehovah.
 - 1. Mental assent is nothing; it was mocked by Jesus and apostles as proof of nothing.
 - 2. Outward service or worship without love in the heart by and from God is profane.
 - 3. The difference between Saul and David toward God and toward men is very large

Because he hath given us of his Spirit.

- A. The very plain statement here was taught earlier but not quite as plainly (I John 3:24).
 - 1. We know God dwells in us and we in Him by loving others by Holy Spirit power.
 - 2. There is nothing here about feelings or speaking in tongues, but love of the brethren.
 - 3. We cannot and would not love others for Christ's sake without God taking us over.
- B. The reason we love is because we are born of the Holy Spirit as taught early (I Jn 4:7).
- C. But greater than regeneration is the Spirit's internal work (I Thes 4:9-10; Phil 2:12-13).
 - 1. The fruit of the Spirit in your life is choosing to live the Spirit's way (Gal 5:16-25).
 - 2. Is it first in Paul's list by chance? Is it the topmost stones in Peter's (II Peter 1:5-7)?
- D. For much more about various continuing ministries of the Spirit from Ephesians ... **The Holy Spirit (in Ephesians)**

Faith and Love Prove Eternal Life – Verses 14-16

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

And we have seen.

- A. God reminded us of the importance of His words, not His word, His words. Love them.

1. Do you love every word of God? His words here are incredible in meaning and value.
 2. Love His words (Job 23:12; Pr 30:5; 8:8-9; Luke 4:4; I Cor 2:13; II Tim 1:13; *Mary*).
- B. Here is a shift from joint exhortation for brotherly love to apostolic privilege and proof.
1. The previous three lessons were equal for John as writer and readers (I John 4:7-13).
 2. Note the plural pronouns – us, us, we, we, us, our, us, we, we, us, us, we, we, us, us.
 3. The context in all three lessons is simple gospel facts true for both writer and reader.
 4. But the context here excludes readers (or most) for mainly the apostles like our John.
 5. They only saw and testified this lesson based on eyewitness knowledge (I Jn 1:1-3).
 6. They were eyewitnesses (Acts 1:21-22; 2:32; 10:39-41; I Cor 15:1-9; 9:1; Heb 2:3).
 7. Not only were they eyewitnesses, but they heard Him, touched Him, ate with Him.
 8. Christianity has great evidence for its truthfulness as honest examiners will discover.
 9. But depravity, God's judgment, Satan's blinding, or false religious lies destroy most.
- C. Do not miss the lesson – the example God gave of love has solid evidence and witnesses.
1. The greatest event in all human history is the invisible God sending His Son to die.
 2. The middle of three previous lessons is the issue declared here by John (I Jn 4:9-11).
 3. John just used three arguments to teach us brotherly love – a key by God's example.
 4. Our religion's details have much evidence and proof through eyewitness accounts.
 5. The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news and glad tidings of God sending His Son.
- D. While the apostles saw displays of Father and Son (and Spirit), we cannot (I John 4:12).
1. We believe by their testimony the triune God in operation, though not seeing Jesus.
 2. There is no harm to God's approval of us, if we believe on Jesus anyway (Jn 20:29).
 3. Though no man has ever seen God, we prove Him in us by brotherly love (I Jn 4:12).

And do testify.

- A. Not only were the apostles eyewitnesses, but they declared their witness (I John 1:1-3).
- B. Men foolishly believe the witness of men, but these were true (Romans 3:4; I John 5:9).
- C. The apostles testified what they saw and added miracles (Heb 2:3-4; Mark 16:19-20).
- D. God confirmed their testimony as true directly by His works and also by their miracles.

That the Father sent the Son.

- A. The apostles were eyewitnesses to the fact God the Father sent Jesus His Son to earth.
 1. This is not an abstract, conceptual, or vague theological notion, but personal reality.
 2. God Jehovah formed a Son of Man and sent Him on a mission to die for you and me.
- B. Consider direct observation – His father Joseph and mother by angels and His testimony at 12 after displaying incredible wisdom in God the Father's law, and converted siblings like James; God the Father sending the Holy Spirit on Him at baptism; unprecedented miracle power over bodies, spirits, lunches, storms, thoughts, death; transfiguration on a mountain with God's identification of Him to three of the

apostles; testimonies by devils Jesus was God's Son (Matt 8:29); prayers to God as His Father, Jesus speaking to God on the cross with incredible phenomena; burial with tomb and proven resurrection in specified time, ascension to the Father in heaven with angelic escort; etc.

To be the Saviour of the world.

- A. Everything Jesus taught His apostles about His role to die was confirmed to their eyes.
- B. Consider Moses' brass serpent and being lifted up (John 3:14-15; 10:17-18; 12:32-33).
- C. Consider His commission to the apostles after they witnessed Him die (Luke 24:46-48).
- D. This use of the word "world" can be no greater than those actually saved – God's intent.
 - 1. Vague words heretics trust are denied by His plain promise (Jn 6:39; 10:27-29; 17:2).
 - 2. God's plan and Christ's death are very limited (Rom 8:28-39; Eph 1:3-6; II Tim 1:9).
 - 3. For much more about God's love and Christ's death for the elect only ... here, here.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Whosoever shall confess.

- A. Since God made these incredible facts so obvious and sent witnesses, do you believe it?
- B. This conditional future statement was to reward faith in the apostles' witness of Jesus.
 - 1. John wrote believers, but he wanted to encourage those that had believed the gospel.
 - 2. The apostles in person and by epistles, as here, had proven the Word made flesh.
 - 3. Remember, there were antichrists and seducers of all kinds denying these dear facts.
- C. This epistle, from the beginning all the way to the end, proves Jesus is the Son of God.
 - 1. The opening, just as in his Gospel, declared God the Word becoming Jesus the Son.
 - 2. The final chapter will declare all the witnesses God provided to prove Jesus His Son.
 - 3. The news – Jesus is the Son of God – is the greatest gospel fact to believe and obey.
- D. The verb action in this clause – *confess* – is verbal admission or acknowledgement (Matt 10:32; John 9:22; 12:42; Acts 24:14; Romans 10:9-10; Philippians 2:11; II John 1:7).
- E. The verb tense in the clause – *shall confess* – is clearly future tense in John's sentence.
- F. For more about the grammar of salvation including this and other texts in John ... [Grammar of Salvation](#).

That Jesus is the Son of God.

- A. The desired confession is this certain, glorious, and profound agreement with the gospel.
- B. This epistle, from the beginning all the way to the end, proves Jesus is the Son of God.
 - 1. The opening, just as in his Gospel, declared God the Word becoming Jesus the Son.
 - 2. The last chapter lists the witnesses God gave to prove Jesus His Son (I John 5:4-13).
- C. The news – Jesus is the Son of God – is the greatest gospel fact to believe and obey.
 - 1. What did Peter say about Jesus twice for His great approval (Matt 16:16; John 6:69)?

2. What did Jesus ask the man born blind to believe when meeting later (John 9:35)?
3. What did Martha confess to Jesus at Lazarus' funeral about resurrection (Jn 11:27)?
4. Why did John write his Gospel account of Jesus and things that He did (John 20:31)?
5. What did the eunuch say with all his heart to Philip so as to be baptized (Acts 8:37)?
6. Why do modern Bible versions delete the answer to the previous verse's question?
7. What did the eunuch have to do to be baptized? Why remove the real qualification?
8. What did Saul of Tarsus teach in the Damascus synagogue after baptism (Acts 9:20)?

D. We settle the Sonship controversy simply – hold to it forever – Jesus is the Son of God.

God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

- A. We had this tight relationship of salvation with God used before (I John 3:24; 4:12-13).
- B. The verb action in this clause – *dwelt* – is the absolute vital and practical bond that God has with His children by the presence of His Spirit in them (I John 3:24; Rom 5:5; 8:9).
- C. The verb tense in the clause – *dwelleth* – is clearly the perfect tense in John's sentence.
 1. Verb order does not determine the timing of actions but rather verb tenses show it.
 2. Verb tenses determine order of actions, for the cause of faith is God dwelling in us.
 3. *Whosoever shall confess* = future tense; *God dwelleth* = perfect tense, action done.
 4. The perfect tense means a completed action in the time period under consideration.
 5. We would say today in common speech – *Anyone that confesses has God in Him*.
 6. We cannot and do not confess first – God must change our nature for us to confess.
 7. John will word it differently in a coming verse (I John 5:1); he will write, *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*. Compare earlier (I John 4:7; 3:14).
 8. This present tense believing is the result and after perfect tense being born of God, which a good interlinear will show in the Textus Receptus or text of Stephens (1550).
 9. If you miss it here, regeneration is by your righteousness (I John 2:29). God forbid!
- D. For a study of verbs in your salvation including John, [The Grammar of Salvation](#)

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

And we have known and believed.

- A. Having chased a short diversion for faith in the apostolic witness, he returned to love.
- B. The plural first person need not be apostles only, for it is true of believers (I Jn 4:9-11).
- C. The gospel facts witnessed and declared by the apostles are not ordinary neutral events.
 1. They are proof of a divine transaction of a personal God sending His personal Son.
 2. They are precious proof of a divine intention that God definitely loves some sinners.
- D. Faith is not a foolish belief in things without evidence but rather confidence of evidence.

1. Consider the definition of faith by Paul that is more than wishful thinking (Heb 11:1).
2. Consider how Peter answered Jesus surely about the apostles' faith (John 6:68-69).
3. Consider how Paul used the word *persuade* for his faith (Rom 8:38-39; II Tim 1:12).

The love that God hath to us.

- A. We know and believe God's incredible love to us by the very real gift of His love to us.
 1. We know it by the testimony of the apostles that saw it and bore witness of it to us.
 2. We believe it by God's regenerating grace, Spirit revelation, and proper preaching.
 3. We must embrace it, consider it, understand it, and apply it to love Him in return.
- B. God's love for us is the foundational and initiating relationship causing all other love.
- C. John has explained in these two love chapters that God sending Jesus is proof of love.
 1. Never forget ... we perceive God's love by the death of His beloved Son (I Jn 3:16).
 2. Never forget ... God manifested (revealed) love to us by Jesus' death (I Jn 4:9-11).
 3. Never forget ... the incredible price God paid was for our adoption as sons (I Jn 3:1).
- D. Let us be clear about His love – intentional, objects, the cost, purpose, unreciprocated.
 1. No love like His love – He chose to love to display His glory without need or reason.
 2. No love like His love – He chose to love objects both evil, vile, rebel, sinful enemies.
 3. No love like His love – He gave His only Son He loved dearly for torture and murder.
 4. No love like His love – He paid the cost to free them from justice for eternal sonship.
 5. No love like His love – He loved in spite of being hated before and neglected after.

God is love.

- A. John refers back to the first of three lessons preceding this one about the nature of God.
- B. This is the second time this short phrase is used ... we never want to forget or slight it.
- C. What is its sense and significance? God is a benevolent Being loving enemies and elect.
 1. Refer back to the lesson about the nature of God which should affect us (I Jn 4:7-8).
 2. The greatest degree, intention, and evidence of His love is sending His Son for us.
- D. God's love for us is the foundational and initiating relationship causing all other love.

And he that dwelleth in love.

- A. When we dwell in love – we are affected, altered, consumed, controlled, convicted, directed, motivated, obsessed, ruled, and taught by love – first for God and then others.
 1. Dwelling in love must begin and be dominated by His love for us and ours for Him.
 2. Dwelling in love is living a lifestyle of love like Jesus, Paul, Dorcas, Stephanas, etc.
 3. When we love so much others see us as loving persons, we show a nature like God.
- B. This should be a no-brainer by three lessons John gave perfectly in the preceding verses.
 1. He taught we should love because the nature of God our Father is love (I Jn 4:7-8).

2. He taught we should love by copying the example of His love for us (I John 4:9-11).
3. He taught we should love by the powerful presence of His Spirit in us (I Jn 4:12-13).
- C. When we live a Christian life filled with love, we show God's character, conduct, Spirit.

Dwelleth in God, and God in him.

- A. When we live the love-ruled life of a Christian, it follows and proves union with God.
- B. When we love so much others see us as very loving persons, we show a nature like God.
- C. For love as the greatest evidence/proof of eternal life, *Love Is the Greatest ... Love Is the Greatest – 2017 (6 Sermons)*, *Love is the Greatest (2 Sermons)*.

Love of God Cures Fear of Judgment – Verses 17-19

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

Herein is our love made perfect.

- A. **Herein** = in this thing, matter, or case; in this fact, circumstance, or condition; in this particular = here are the specific details of what perfect love truly is and what it gains.
- B. Understand the three parts of this verse and their order and role to grasp the full benefit.
 1. *Herein* = the basis, cause, or source of perfect love ... and the effect, profit, or result.
 2. Perfect love – by the third part of this verse – is love that copies God's perfect love.
 3. Perfect love – by the second part of this verse – will produce boldness for Judgment.
 4. The order is not the usual – subject, means, result – but rather subject, result, means.
 5. Trusting the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the result is put first for motivation.
 6. Understand this clause perfectly in order to have perfect love for its incredible result.
- C. John used *perfect* for love for love reaching its desired end (I John 2:5; 4:12; 4:17-18).
 1. He used *perfect* to describe completed love reaching its goal, fulfilling its purpose.
 2. God's love reaches complete fulfillment when we obey and love (I John 2:5; 4:12).
 3. Our love reaches complete fulfillment when we love like God loves (I Jn 4:17-18).
 4. It is our love, because it is us loving God and others as He loved and by His Spirit.
 5. This combination of love in three directions done right is His love perfected in us.
- D. Perfect love does two things – *herein* – it matches God's love and it makes us very bold.
 1. What is love made perfect? It loves like God loves, how He loves, and by His Spirit.
 2. Perfect love gives us the fullest benefit and reward by boldness even for Judgment.
- E. When we reach the spiritual perfection of loving like we should, it produces confidence.
- F. The witness of God inside us becomes greater and greater and the evidence outside us.
- G. The Holy Spirit is quenched in carnal Christians; He changes others from glory to glory.

H. Grasp all of perfect love – knowing God’s love for you, loving Him, and loving others.

That we may have boldness in the day of judgment.

- A. Remember, John wrote to give believers full assurance they had eternal life (I Jn 5:13).
- B. From the very beginning of this epistle he identified false professors from true believers.
 - 1. He compared being ashamed before Christ at His coming or confident (I John 2:28).
 - 2. He exalted love in deed and truth to assure hearts for confidence (I John 3:18-21).
- C. Now here he wrote that boldness in the Day of Judgment, which all crave, is possible.
 - 1. With two verses of confidence and one of assurance before, you may have boldness.
 - 2. How do we get this boldness? Because here on earth we love others like He loves.
 - 3. God is love. *Because as he is, so are we in this world.* Copy the nature of the Father.
 - 4. It is not hard, because He showed us how to do it and gave us Spirit power for it.
- D. The way to boldness is very simple by the larger and immediate context – love like God.
 - 1. We prove we are children of God when we love enemies like Him (Matt 5:43-48).
 - 2. By nature we are hateful and hating, so sacrificial love for others’ good is God in us.
 - 3. The more compatible in character and conduct, the greater our assurance (Rom 5:5).
- E. For much more comfort and boldness, sermons, *Assurance of Eternal Life ... Assurance of Eternal Life #1, Assurance of Eternal Life #1.*

Because as he is.

- A. What is He? He is love (I John 4:8,16). He is benevolent to both enemies and the elect.
- B. What is He? He has and demonstrated love of the greatest degree, sacrificing His Son.
- C. The English grammatical construction *..so* is powerful. We want to be just like Him.
- D. We know by Paul’s life that he was likely the greatest soul lover like God (II Cor 12:15).
- E. Are you like God in the way you love others? If not, why not? If not, when will you?

So are we in this world.

- A. Though in this world and far from heaven where He is, we can love others like He loves.
- B. We must be benevolent to enemies and the brethren for their good like His love for us.
- C. The English grammatical construction *..so* is powerful. We want to be just like Him.
- D. What will you do today to be more like Him? Is it more holiness? No. It is loving others.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

There is no fear in love.

- A. This verse is perfectly appropriate for its immediate context. It is not a new lesson here.
 - 1. The previous verse introduced the terror of Judgment Day (II Cor 5:11; Rev 20:15).

2. The previous lesson showed how to prove union with God, but Judgment is more.
 3. God loves His children – unprecedented, transcendent love that resulted in adoption.
 4. God loves His children – He does not want them afraid – He has done all to end it.
 5. Never accept the pagan, RCC God distortion that God likes you fearful and scared.
 6. Fear proves you lack in love – forgetting His love for you, cheating love to Him, to others.
 7. You must fully believe His love for you, return it with joy to Him, and love brethren.
 8. Wrongful fear is dysfunctional terror, disorientation, joy-stifling, and fruitless error.
- B. Fear is the opposite of boldness, which was just offered as the reward for perfect love.
1. Boldness in the Day of Judgment is the result of growing in all three forms of love.
 2. You must believe His love for you, maximize yours for Him, and love the brethren.
 3. These by power of His Spirit and proof of His word are internal and external comfort.
 4. Dwelling in love as the previous two verses describe will eradicate all fear of God.
- C. This is a great clause to help define fear and love, for they are opposites in many ways.
1. Do you love every word of God? This clause is incredible in meaning and value.
 2. Love His words (Job 23:12; Pr 30:5; 8:8-9; Luke 4:4; I Cor 2:13; II Tim 1:13; *Mary*).
 3. Every word of God is pure and valuable, but some are more profound and profitable.
- D. Fear is a terrible emotion – causing anxiety, doubt, pain, stress, weakness, and worry.
1. For this context, we are ignoring the proper and righteous fear of God and authority.
 2. Fear = the emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil. A state of alarm or dread.
 3. Fear is a very detrimental emotion in lovemaking (fear/pain) or trading (fear/greed).
 4. We will ignore any value in fear here such as slowing down impulsive types to think.
 5. Some men by example, genes, habit, and training are too dull to fully grasp this rule.
 6. Some men are abusive physically, some emotionally, some verbally, some with time, some with praise, some with sex, or combinations. They do not know real, true love.
 7. Those men will never get the full pleasure and profit of their wives that God planned; a wife fearful for any such reason will withhold full love for simple self-protection.
 8. Men should remember two verses, which would cure wifely fear (Pr 5:19; Col 3:19).
 9. A wife causing her husband fear of any kind, since she was made for him, is worse.
- E. Love is a wonderful emotion – causing excitement, hope, joy, peace, purpose, strength.
1. Love received is wonderful, for it removes the pain of insecurity, rejection, revenge.
 2. Love given is wonderful, as it feeds/fuels the soul with desire and energy for another.
 3. Love known and understood is the greatest motivator for positive good in the world.
 4. Love established and not violated will profit another soul beyond your wildest ideas.
 5. Love expressed warms the heart, fires the mind, fuels the soul, energizes the body.
- F. God did not intend everything for love by this clause ... in this context ... but for extra!

G. True knowledge of God from the Bible will remove fear, see *God Distortions ... God Distortions*

But perfect love casteth out fear.

- A. What is perfect love? It is love that completely measures up to God's standard of love.
 - 1. Do not be confused or distracted. Perfect = complete, finished, not lacking anything.
 - 2. What is God's standard? It must be your nature, done like He loves, by His power.
 - 3. There is more – perfect love believes God's love to us and duplicates it (1 Jn 4:16).
 - 4. Perfect love fully believes His love for us, loves Him in return, and loves brethren.
- B. How do I get perfect love? Meet God's standard of love God's way and do not cheat it.
 - 1. Fill your mind and fully believe the eyewitness reports proving God's love for you.
 - 2. Embrace the incredible concept and real display of it by the Father sending His Son.
 - 3. Feed your soul in God's love and practice this epistle's rules to love others His way.
 - 4. Walk in the Spirit. Thank God for His Spirit. Never grieve or quench Him. Rejoice!
- C. What if I am still afraid of Judgment Day? It is your fault and no other. Repent. Grow.
 - 1. You may be cheating the manner of God's love by sending His Son to die for you.
 - 2. You may be cheating by not loving Him like you should for His love (1 John 4:16).
 - 3. You may be cheating in your love of others in the proper way of matching His love.
 - 4. You may be quenching or grieving the Holy Spirit so you have no divine assistance.
 - 5. If you have offended God by lack of love in any relationships – you deserve the fear.
 - 6. Sermons will help from *God Distortions* to *The Love of God* to *Love Is the Greatest*.
- D. Grasp all of perfect love – knowing God's love for you, loving Him, and loving others.
- E. A person immersed and dwelling in these three aspects of love will not have any fear.
- F. For much more comfort and boldness, sermons, *Assurance of Eternal Life ... Assurance of Eternal Life #1*, *Assurance of Eternal Life #1*.

Because fear hath torment.

- A. Fear is painful and debilitating, but love is the opposite – it is comforting and energizing.
- B. If you still fear God and Judgment Day, it is because you are cheating His or your love.
 - 1. You cannot be living in love – God's love for you, yours for Him, yours for others.
 - 2. Real love does not have fear – see previous two clauses – for fear torments the soul.
 - 3. Real love is the most powerful comforting emotion and energy in life without pain.
 - 4. Any fear remaining is due to you cheating. No one else has cheated you. Stop! Love!
- C. Torment is fear in great degree and corrupts the soul; it is entirely contrary to real love.
 - 1. Wrongful fear is dysfunctional terror, disorientation, joy-stifling, and fruitless error.
 - 2. Good fear causes positive motivation, not incompatible with joy (Phil 2:12-13; 4:4).

- 3. The godly know how to combine rejoicing with trembling (Ps 2:11; II Sam 12:20).
- D. Real love = perfect love = what has been described above as God's standard His way.
- E. Reprobates and carnal Christians can create no fear of Judgment by lying self-deceit.
- F. True knowledge of God from the Bible will remove fear, see *God Distortions ... God Distortions*

He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

- A. How many different ways does the Spirit and John have to write it for you to grasp it?
- B. Only perfect love removes all fear, and the greatest and worst fear is that of Judgment.
 - 1. Study this epistle and section of scripture for perfect love (I Jn 2:5; 4:12; 4:17-18).
 - 2. Perfect in love = knowing God's love ... loving Him back ... loving others His way.
 - 3. Laziness or selfishness by example, habit, genes, or training will leave you fearful.
 - 4. Doubts about the integrity and truth of God's words about His love will leave fear.
- C. Reprobates and carnal Christians can created no fear of Judgment by lying self-deceit.
- D. For much more comfort and boldness, sermons, *Assurance of Eternal Life ... Assurance of Eternal Life #1, Assurance of Eternal Life #1.*
- E. True knowledge of God from the Bible will remove fear, see *God Distortions ... God Distortions.*

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

We love him.

- A. Perfect in love = knowing God's love ... loving Him in return ... loving others His way.
- B. Our love of God should be the easiest for many reasons, but due to sin it is not so easy.
 - 1. Jude, an epistle close by, warns you to keep yourself in the love of God (Jude 1:21).
 - 2. Jesus told Pharisees that obsession with details cost them love of God (Luke 11:42).
 - 3. Jesus explained clearly to His apostles that love was obeying Him (John 14:21,23).
 - 4. But Jesus also taught that only obedience would keep Him loving them (John 15:9).
 - 5. The perilous times of the last days have Christians loving pleasure more (II Tim 3:4).
 - 6. When iniquity thrives, as it does today in Christians, love waxes cold (Matt 24:12).
 - 7. You can be hardened by sin to such a degree you could forsake God (Heb 3:12-13).
 - 8. Why did Demas leave Paul? Because he loved this present world (II Timothy 4:10).
 - 9. The church at Ephesus, built by Paul, beloved by this John, lost first love (Rev 2:4).
- C. His love for us is beyond our comprehension ... killing His only Son to adopt vile rebels.
- D. His instruction and means for us to love is enough ... His nature, His example, His Spirit.
- E. Love is a choice – always a choice – only a choice – get intentional (Col 3:2; I Jn 2:15).

Because he first loved us.

- A. Our glorious GOD Jehovah is the First Cause of all things, including the chain of love.

- B. You are nothing, have nothing, and will achieve nothing without His love from eternity.
- C. His love in five phases provided you everything you need to love Him and love others.
- D. His love for us is beyond our comprehension ... killing His only Son to adopt vile rebels.
- E. He conveys His love to you in every part of your heart if you trust His grace (Rom 5:5).
- F. Love is a choice – always a choice – only a choice – get intentional (Col 3:2; I Jn 2:15).

Love of God Requires Brotherly Love – Verses 20-21

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

If a man say, I love God.

- A. *If a man say* ... never let your profession exceed or contradict your character or conduct.
- B. As John did from the beginning, he rebuked false professors (I John 1:6,8,10; 2:4,6,9).
- C. While this is a separate lesson, it progresses from our love of God due to His love of us.
- D. While God's love for us and our love for God is in context, John pressed brotherly love.
- E. Grasp all of perfect love – knowing God's love for you, loving Him, and loving others.
- F. If you are going to tell God, yourself, and us that you love God, prove it by God's proof.

And hateth his brother, he is a liar.

- A. There is only way to prove you love God and that is to love your brother, a son of God.
- B. What is hating a brother? Neglect him, not loving him like God (I Jn 2:9-11; 3:14-18).
 - 1. Read the rest of this verse. Hatred here by God's inspiration is not loving a brother.
 - 2. Do you grasp hate? The absence of malice is not love; the absence of love is malice.
 - 3. You contradict all God's love is – for you owe him love more than God owes you.
- C. A man loving God will be moved by the nature of God, example of God, Spirit of God.
- D. You lie. You lie to God; He knows it. You lie to yourself and believe it. You lie to us.
 - 1. All liars will have their part in the Lake of Fire; you will be there first for not loving.
 - 2. Your heart is the most deceitful thing alive – lying and corrupt to excuse your sin.
 - 3. It lies to you by Satan's help, like Cain, that you love God while neglecting brothers.

For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen.

- A. How can you not have bowels of compassion for visible souls that are better than you?
- B. Souls around you are visible – their joy, tears, pain, blessings, hardship, needs, sponge.
 - 1. They have dreams, hopes, fears, good events, bad events, and all things like you.
 - 2. They are more important than you because that is one of simple rules of real love.
 - 3. There is nothing in you more lovable than in the souls around you ... truly far less.

4. God knows you love yourself all too well, so He ordered you to love others like that.
- C. Each person you see was made by God, loved by God, saved by God, for you to love!
 1. They are in your church, thus a brother, by choice of God to test your brotherly love.
 2. Here is a reason to love a brother: God intentionally loved him and orders you to it.
 3. The most important dots in your life are not a job but the irritating folks next to you.

How can he love God whom He hath not seen.

- A. Souls around you are visible – their joy, tears, pain, blessings, hardship, needs, sponge.
- B. God is invisible; never seen past, present, or future, thus no sight to stir you (I Jn 4:12).
- C. What moves you to love God, since you cannot see Him? Think about it very carefully.
 1. If you are moved by His words declaring what He did for you, tread very carefully.
 2. His words also say that the most important thing He wants from you is two-fold love.
 3. If you love Him for loving you first, we have loved you in spite of you every day.
 4. There is nothing in you more lovable than in the souls around you ... truly far less.

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

And this commandment have we from him.

- A. Do not tell us about your love of God unless you fully submit to each of His commands.
 1. Cornelius told Peter they expected and wanted all of God's commands (Acts 10:33).
 2. God sent His gospel to tell you of His love for you, but it also tells your duty of love.
 3. You cannot pick and choose what you like or dislike in His word. Are such saved?
- B. Parents, do you teach your children the two commands of love, show it, and enforce it?
 1. The greatest benefit for them is not school, sports, games, gifts ... but love of others.
 2. Selfish, spoiled children that will not truly love in life will result from neglect here.
 3. If they do not learn, know, embrace, and practice great love both ways, you failed.
- C. Love of God without love of brethren is impossible, and love of brethren is commanded.

That he who loveth God love his brother also.

- A. Moses' law required love of brother, or neighbor (Lev 19:18; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14).
- B. But the New Testament calls it a new commandment for much greater emphasis and a greater example both by God and His Son; we have no excuse to do less than the best.
 1. Jesus taught the new commandment repeatedly (John 13:34-35; 16:12,17; Gal 6:2).
 2. The apostles followed Jesus' emphasis (Rom 12:9-10; I Cor 12:14-31; 13:1-7; Gal 5:6; Eph 5:2; I Thess 4:9-10; Heb 6:10; 10:24; 13:1; I Pet 1:22; 3:8; 4:9; II Pet 1:7).
 3. See the extensive notes in this exposition of John's epistle earlier (I John 2:7-11).
 4. For much more of Bible emphasis on individual love, **One Another Duties**.

- C. What is brotherly love? It is a cheerful and fervent burden and desire for the wellbeing of God's children that results in sacrificial and selfless actions to serve them in condescending and personal humility for their comfort in life, encouragement in heart, and perfection before God and Jesus Christ now and at Judgment (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).
- D. The apostle by inspiration of God will carry this doctrine into the next chapter (I Jn 5:1).