

Bible Study Series....

*"Knowledge, Truth,
&
Fellowship in Christ"*

A STUDY ON 1, 2, 3 JOHN

12 LESSONS

**PREPARED BY:
PAUL E. CANTRELL**

2005

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Lesson One

“Introduction to 1, 2, 3 John”

The handout is to encourage you to study ahead of time—before coming to class. The chapters have been broken down into sections to make it easier to follow. Please make notes of the things you want to discuss. This first lesson is more of an introduction to these three letters of John.

AUTHORSHIP OF 1, 2, 3 JOHN

It is generally believed that the Apostle John not only wrote these three letters but also the Gospel of John and Revelation. However, John nowhere states that he is the writer. But there is an abundance of external evidence that verifies his authorship. Time of writing of all five books are generally dated from 80 to 96 AD.

OCCASIONS FOR WRITING THESE THREE LETTERS

Historical references are made to John being located in the area of Ephesus and of Asia Minor from about 70 AD onward. He probably left Jerusalem about the time of its destruction. He may have been one of the Apostles to help Christians to know when to leave the city. Teachers were arising in the churches who were not content with just the message of the Apostles. The first were the Jewish converts who tried to bind circumcision and the Law on Gentiles. But once the Temple was destroyed—this would help to deal with such teachers. But others were also trying to mix their teachings with other philosophies. They also desired to make their own following. John does not name these people, but does give much about them in his writings. He uses such expressions as the following to identify them:

- False teachers or prophets (4:1)
- Anti-Christ (2:22-25; 2:18; 4:3; 2 John 7)
- Deceivers (2 John 7)

He strongly indicated that their teachings resulted in the denial of both the Father and the Son (2:22; 2 John 9). These teachers were taking advantage of the hospitality of Christians as they traveled about advocating their doctrines. John said, ***“Try the spirits”*** (1 John 4:1). If they don’t bring the true doctrine of Christ—don’t accept them into your house or bid them God speed. (2 John 10). This and his other writings were for the purpose to help Christians to deal with these false concepts.

IDENTIFICATION OF THEIR FALSE TEACHINGS

When we compare the N.T. writings with early church history—we can get a good insight as to what they were teaching and who they were. Paul stated in his letters:

- That men would arise in midst of church to draw away disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-32)
- That some would depart from the faith giving heed to doctrines of demons. (1 Tim. 4:1-5).
- That all of this would eventually lead to a great apostasy. (2 Thess. 2:1-12).

And history reveals that it was well underway by the last half of the 2nd century. Various names have been connected with these heresies: **Cerinthus** (who lived in Ephesus the same time John did), **Marcion, Valentinus, Arius, Sabellius, Apollinaris, Nestorius**, etc., were some of the prominent names among this number. Names have been given to identify these doctrines: **Ebionites, Docetists, Arians, Antinomianism, Apollinarians, Nestorians**. The general term “**Gnostic**” is used to identify these various sects.

Gnosticism was really trying to make Christianity conform to the mold of the Oriental, Greek, and Jewish philosophies to be acceptable to them all. Emphasis was placed on knowledge—“*The knowing ones.*” The Greek word means “knowledge.” They exalted their knowledge and insights above the Apostles. There was an arrogance, pride, superior intellectual attainments pointed out by these false teachers.

INDICATIONS IN PAUL’S WRITINGS

The Apostle Paul wrote much earlier than John (Possibly 52-67 AD). But there were indications in some of his letters that the churches were already having to face up to this admixture of doctrines that John dealt very strongly with. Following are some indications:

1. 1 Corinthians:
 - a) Exaltation of man’s wisdom. (Chs. 1-2)
 - b) Fleshly indulgences. (Chs. 3,6)
 - c) Denial of the Resurrection. (Ch. 15)
2. Colossians:
 - a) Philosophy, vain deceit, tradition of men, rudiments of the world. (2:8)
 - b) Worshipping of angels. (2:18)
 - c) Abstinence. (2:21-23)
 - d) Binding of the Law of Moses. (2:16)
3. 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus:
 - a) Fables, endless genealogies, vain janglings. (1 Tim. 1:3-6)
 - b) Departures, asceticism, abstinence. (1 Tim. 4:1-5)
 - c) Science falsely so-called. (1 Tim. 6:20)
 - d) Predictions. (2 Tim. 3:1-8)
 - e) Turned to fables. (1 Tim. 4:1-4)
 - f) Jewish fables, commandments of men, professed they know God, but in works deny Him. (Tit. 1:14-16)
 - g) Foolish questions, genealogies, contentions, strivings about the Law—heretics. (Tit. 3:9-11)

All five of John’s works (1, 2, 3 John, Gospel of John, and Revelation) indicate similar and further growth of these false teachings.

BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE Gnostics

1. They advocated that the world was created by a lesser Deity, who was a fallen spirit (generally identified with the God of the O.T.)
2. Man's body—which is matter—is evil!
3. But God's Spirit was breathed into his body that kept him from being totally evil.
4. Sin was defined as ignorance of man's true condition (Christian Science approach).
5. Salvation was to possess a true knowledge of the Gnostic Gospel.
 - a) When a person was baptized, he could become enlightened.
 - b) He is spiritually resurrected—becomes spiritual.
6. They denied the bodily resurrection of man.
7. Sin was thus a matter of indifference.
 - a) It is not the body, but the spirit that is saved.
 - b) It doesn't matter what the body does—This led to licentiousness.
8. Asceticism was a means of spiritually communing with God.
9. At death—this knowledge of the Gnostic Gospel allowed the spirit to return to the spirit world.
10. A critical part of this heresy was the denial of Jesus, Himself.
 - a) Since matter is evil—God could not possibly have become flesh.
 - b) Some kind of mystical explanation had to be advocated to solve this dilemma.
 - c) All efforts to explain the incarnation became a denial of Scripture.
 - d) They denied that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary.
 - e) They denied that God could die on the cross as a man.
 - f) Thus, Jesus was not the Son of God, but a mere man.
 - g) The "Christ" came on Him at His baptism and left Him at His death.
 - h) Or—that Christ only appeared to be here—He was a phantom.
 - i) The term, Docetism (from Dokeo, to appear) was used to identify these teachers.
 - j) This group left the church and formed a separate sect. (2:19)
11. Since all matter is inherently evil and only the spirit can be good:
 - a) The spirit is imprisoned in this evil body.
 - b) The chief aim was to free or liberate the spirit from the body.
 - c) Only by ascending to the heights of knowledge could the spirit be delivered.
 - d) This brought about elaborate secret rituals coupled with painful, arduous and disciplined investigation and research into the mystical infinite wisdom of God.
 - e) All men could not do this—only the ELETE, the Gnostics.
 - f) This would tend to destroy fellowship with God's people.

JOHN'S DEALINGS WITH THESE HERESIES

1. He gives assurance of fellowship with God & the conditions of such.
 - a) The concept of fellowship is discussed 20 or more times in this letter.
 - b) The first chapter is very clear on this issue.
2. He emphasizes that we can KNOW we have fellowship with God & that we have eternal life.
 - a) John uses this term some 35 times or more.
 - b) And he also tells us HOW we may know these things with certainty.

3. He deals with Jesus coming in the flesh.
4. He shows who has fellowship with God and who does not.
5. He deals with sin, righteousness, darkness, love, hate, faith, fear, etc.

A STUDY OF GREEK TENSES

1. Greek tenses do not easily translate over into English with one-word translation.
2. It has led to wrong teaching on the part of those who are not studious enough.
3. An over-all study of the Scriptures could have avoided a lot of this problem.
4. But a knowledge of the Greek tenses could also.
5. There are 3 tenses in the Greek language that will help to clarify the problem:
 - a) The Aorist Tense records an event (a single act) in time, but time is not a factor.
 - b) The Present Tense records an action in progress (continued action).
 - c) The Perfect Tense records a completed action with existing results.
6. Illustration:
 - a) Present Tense (xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) An act continuing.
 - b) Aorist Tense (x) A single act.
 - c) Perfect Tense (x) An act with results that follows.
7. A passage to illustrate:
 - a) 1 John 3:6—“*Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not....*”
 - b) Both verbs are in the present tense—indicating continued action.
 - c) Thus, “*Whoever continues to abide in Him, does not keep on sinning....*”
 - d) That is, “*habitually as he did before his conversion.*”
 - e) If he had been trying to say that a Christian CANNOT sin at all, he should have used the Aorist Tense.
 - f) Expanded translation: “*He who has taken up his abode in Christ, and settled down to a permanent existence in him, has terminated his former manner of life and has ceased the practices then characteristic of him.*”
 - g) In other words, the hold of sin has been broken in his life.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. We have entitled this study—“*Knowledge, Truth, and Fellowship in Christ.*”
2. Doubt must be dealt with or the Christian will turn away from Christ.
3. Assurance is critical if we are to be faithful Christians and maintain our fellowship with God.

Lesson Two

“True Fellowship With God”

(1 John 1:1-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. John’s approach:
 - a) Jesus, the Word of Life, was made flesh and dwelt among men. (Jn. 1:1, 14)
 - b) He did so that man might be able to enjoy a relationship with Deity.
 - c) But this relationship is dependent upon sin being dealt with in man’s life.
2. Ch. 1 is divided into three sections:
 - a) (1-4)—John’s witness of Jesus.
 - b) (5-7)—True fellowship with God
 - c) (8-10)—Dealing with Sin.

DISCUSSION**I. JOHN’S WITNESS OF JESUS. (1-4)**

1. **What is “*that which?*”**
 - a) Neuter gender, not masculine as might be expected.
 - b) Possibly emphasizing the physical aspect—not his personhood.
 - c) Jesus is called, “*The word of life*” (verse 1)
2. **What “*beginning*” is intended?**
 - a) John 1:1-2—“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.*”
 - b) Probably referring to the beginning of creation.
 - c) Whatever or whoever John is speaking about had his existence before creation.
3. **What 4 avenues of physical evidence does John mention?**
 - a) John said that he heard, saw, looked upon, and touched “*the word of life.*”
 - The Word of life became flesh—was real—just like we are.
 - He was visible, physical, and able to be touched and heard to speak.
 - John testified to all of these facts!
 - b) The Word (logos), the complete expression of Deity, became flesh and dwelt among us!
4. **What does it mean, “*the life was manifested?*”**
 - a) This Word of life was manifested—revealed to the sight of men.
 - b) John was bearing witness to what he saw and experienced.
 - c) This life was eternal.
5. **Who or what is that “*eternal life?*”**
 - a) Obviously referring to Jesus, the Son of God.
 - b) One who had been in the beginning, but now had a beginning in human form on earth.
6. **What is the significance of the phrase, “*which was with the Father?*”**
 - a) This life was with the Father (throughout eternity)
 - b) Co-existence with the Father.
 - b) But manifested to us—came in human form—just like us.
7. **What does the word “*fellowship*” mean?**

- a) John had been declaring this message of Deity becoming flesh so that they could have fellowship together in this great knowledge.
- b) Fellowship—The idea of togetherness, communion between one another, joint participation in, etc.
- c) Several expressions will be used to denote this concept in this letter:
 - 1:6,7—fellowship
 - 2:5—in Him
 - 2:6—abide in Him
 - 2:19—of us, or not of us
 - 2:23—to have or not to have the Father
 - 2:24—abide in son & in Father
 - 2:28—in Him
 - 3:1—children of God
 - 3:6—abides in Him
 - 3:10—not of God
 - 3:24—Abides in Him
 - 4:2—of God
 - 4:3—not of God
 - 4:4—of God
 - 4:6—of God
 - 4:12—God abides in us
 - 4:13—we abide in Him, and He in us
 - 4:15—God abides in him, and he in God
 - 4:16—abides in love abides in God, and God in him
 - 5:20—in Him who is true
- d) But John’s fellowship was with the Father and the Son.
- e) Thus, those who have fellowship with John would also have fellowship with the Father and the Son.
- f) The purpose of John’s preaching & writing:
 - To make known to man that eternal life is possible
 - That fellowship with Deity is possible
 - That our joy may be full through correct knowledge, understanding, and fellowship with the Word of life.

8. What is the basis of our fellowship with God?

- a) A true, accurate knowledge of the Word of life.

9. Why is John writing about Jesus?

- a) So, mankind can have that accurate knowledge of the Word of life.

II. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD EXPLAINED (5-7)

1. What does the concept of “*light*” include?

- a) John’s knowledge came from Jesus—from Him who is the Word of life.
- b) Jesus said that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- c) Light:

- Sums up the divine fullness of His intellectual side.
 - Love sums up the divine fullness of His moral side.
- d) God is:
- The author of light. Jas. 1:17
 - The creator of light. Gen. 1:3
 - Bathed in perpetual light. (1 Tim. 6:16) (He is unapproachable)
 - The light in which Christians are to walk. 1 Pet. 2:9
2. **Why is there no darkness in God?**
- a) Light depicts enlightenment—knowledge.
 - b) Darkness depicts misunderstanding—lack of knowledge—ignorance, superstition, etc.
 - c) The Devil & his agents are “**rulers of darkness.**” (Eph. 6:12)
 - d) His domain is the “**power of darkness.**” (Col. 1:13)
 - e) To walk in sin is to walk in darkness. (Eph. 5:8)
 - f) No darkness in God because:
 - He has all knowledge (omniscient)
 - Two negatives—no darkness, not at all—He does not walk in sin.
3. What about those who claim to have fellowship with God, but walk in darkness?
- a) We lie and do not practice the truth!
 - b) Man, not God, is the liar! (Rom. 3:4)
 - c) He doesn’t know what he is talking about—he is ignorant of his true condition.
 - d) If he walks in darkness—he is not walking in truth.
4. Upon what basis can we have fellowship with God?
- a) We must walk in the light as He is in the light.
 - b) Walk in God, in God’s ways, in righteousness, in truth, in enlightenment.
 - c) To have this special relationship with God—cannot walk in way of darkness.
 - d) CONTINUED ACTION VERBS!!!
5. Why do we need our sins cleansed if we are walking in the light?
- a) To walk in light does not mean perfection!
 - b) Because—when we walk in light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.
 - c) The Christian needs continual cleansing day by day.
6. What is the condition for having our sins cleansed?
- a) Such is conditioned upon our walking in the light day by day.
 - b) When we turn from such a walk—lose our cleansing.
 - c) This concept will be dealt with more in Ch. 3.
7. Can sinful man have fellowship with God?
- a) Yes, if he will become enlightened and turn and walk in light.
 - b) This fellowship is not by our merit, but by the blood of Jesus.
 - c) Yet, no walking in light—no fellowship with God.
8. How can sinful man walk in light?
- a) Must be taught truth.
 - b) Must accept this truth.
 - c) Must make a diligent effort each day to walk in that truth.

III. DEALING WITH SIN (8-10) (Sin & Forgiveness)

1. Who could truthfully say they have no sin?
 - a) **Religious groups have still taught sinless perfection—even today!**
 - b) **The Gnostics reasoned:**
 - **The body is sinful—and always will be—hopeless.**
 - **But the spirit can be saved and not sin any more.**
 - **Resulted in indulges of the flesh. (Rev. 2:14-15, 20)**
 - c) **Who could truthfully say, “I have no sin?”**
 - **The one saved by the blood of Christ.**
 - **The one continually cleansed by the blood of Christ.**
2. What are the two characteristics of the person who says they have no sin?
 - a) **We have deceived ourselves or allowed ourselves to be deceived.**
 - b) **We have not understood, nor do we speak truth.**
3. Upon what basis can the Christian be forgiven?
 - a) **Confess our sins.**
 - b) **Give recognition, open acknowledgment of sin.**
 - c) **Infers repentance and admission of sin.**
 - d) **Continuous process of confessing of sins.**
 - e) **If we stop confessing—he stops forgiving.**
 - f) **Terms used inner-changeable:**
 - **Forgive us—pardon us—put the wrong done away.**
 - **Cleanse—washing away—putting away from us.**
 - g) **Unrighteousness—All acts, thoughts, actions contrary to that which is right according to the standard (Word of God).**
 - h) **God is faithful—He will do what He promises!**
 - i) **God is just—His forgiveness is based on justice (Jesus dying in our stead).**
4. What about those who claim they have not sinned?
 - a) Not sinned:
 - One who is unwilling to admit specific sin;
 - Or, one unable to find “a sin” he is guilty of.
 - b) Such people:
 - Make God out to be a liar.
 - Shows that he has not received or has rejected the teaching of God’s Word.

CONCLUSION

1. These verses thoroughly establish man’s need of forgiveness.
 - a) Not only as one outside of Christ;
 - b) But, as one in Christ...needs continual cleansing.
2. God does not condone sin, nor His people walking in the way of sin.
3. But He has made provisions for our weaknesses!

QUESTIONS FOR SPECIAL DISCUSSION

1. Can we be forgiven when we sin willfully?
2. Are we forgiven of sins committed unknowingly or in ignorance?
3. Is forgiveness conditioned upon confession of each sin?
4. If we do not confess our sin, are we lost?
5. Can we still be in the light and sin?
6. Can we make a distinction between the kind of sins (verse 7 and 9)?
7. If we must confess all sins to be forgiven, how is it possible to keep up with and enumerate them?
8. Discuss Rom. 8:1 in this connection!

Lesson Three

“How Does One ‘Know’ God?”

(1 John 2:1-14)

INTRODUCTION

1. To advocate that one can walk in the ways of sin continuously and not lose one’s relationship with God is unthinkable!
 - a) But such was evidently being advocated by the Gnostics.
 - b) They were saved—and nothing they could do could cause them to be lost.
2. Same things are advocated today:

“We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul....All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger....The way a man lives has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of his soul.”
3. This is advocated by one of the more prominent old line denominations in this country.
4. Let’s see what John had to say about this—by inspiration of God.

DISCUSSION**I. JESUS CHRIST, OUR ADVOCATE (1-2)**

1. **Who are the little children John is addressing?**
 - a) An affectionate term (Older to the younger)
 - b) Children of God.
2. **What is his strong admonition to them?**
 - a) That you sin not!
 - b) You have been redeemed from sin—don’t continue in it.
 - c) Sin breaks our fellowship with God.
 - d) So, avoid sin at all cost—even isolated acts!
3. **But if a man does sin, what is his standing before God?**
 - a) If any man sin...shows the possibility of such.
 - b) But the case is not hopeless—do not despair.
 - c) Don’t deny sin...confess it...turn to Jesus for forgiveness.
4. **What is an advocate?**
 - a) Lawyer, attorney—one who represents another in a court of law.
 - b) “Paraclete”—Consoler, comforter, one along side of us to plead our case before God.
 - c) Jesus is our paraclete—mediator—1 Tim. 2:5
5. **What does propitiation mean?**
 - a) Hilamos—appeasement—to conciliate.
 - b) Christ is our means of appeasement before God.
 - c) Means of setting aside our guilt of sin.

6. For whom did Jesus die?

- a) For all sinners—"sins of whole world"
- b) No one exempt.
- c) But we can reject it.

II. KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS (3-6)

1. How does a Christian know he knows God?

- a) "Now by this..."---by what?
 - By what he is about to say.
 - We can know that we know him.
 - We can be sure that we have this relationship with God.
 - This is our assurance.
 - No room for doubt—certainty.
- b) What is it?
 - "If we keep his commandments."
 - Present tense—continuation.
 - Tit. 1:16
 - Which commands?

2. What about the person who claims to know God, but is disobedient?

- a) Whoever makes a profession before others saying, "I know him"
- b) That claims a close relationship with God.
- c) And does not obey or keep his commandments.....continue to obey!
- d) He is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (Jn. 8:44).

3. In whom is the love of God perfected?

- a) It is perfected, brought to its full fruition, mature.
- b) In the one who keeps God's word.
- c) Highest goal of love is to obey God. (1 Jn. 5:3)
- d) This is the way we know we are in Him!

4. If a person claims he abides in God, what should he be doing then?

- a) He ought to walk as God walks.
- b) Walk in the light as God is in the light.
- c) Walk in continuous obedience to commands of God.

III. DANGER OF HATE (7-11)

1. In what sense is a command "old" and yet "new?"

- a) To love God is an old command (Deut. 6:5).
- b) And yet it is a new command in a sense (Jn. 13:34).

2. What "beginning" is in mind here?

- a) Possibly the beginning of the old covenant (Deut. 6:5).
- b) Could be beginning of Christian age also....Jesus taught it.

3. Why is it a new commandment?

- a) New in the sense of how it is shown by God. (death of Jesus)
- b) New in the sense of how God's people are to show it.

- c) The new system is the light that shines brightly over the old system.
- d) Jesus is the true light that now shines.
- 4. What is said of one who hates his brother?**
 - a) He abides in darkness, not light!
 - b) He invalidates his claim of walking in the light.
 - c) One cannot hate his brother and walk in light.
- 5. What is said of one who loves his brother?**
 - a) He abides in the light.
 - This is his true condition.
 - Love goes with light—hate with darkness.
 - b) No occasion of stumbling in him.
 - He will not be caught up in sins against his brother.
 - He will not cause his brother to stumble.
- 6. What 4 things are said of the one who hates his brother?**
 - a) He is in darkness (in a state of darkness)
 - b) He walks in darkness (continues in such)
 - c) He knows not where he is going (lost his sense of direction).
 - d) His eyes have been blinded by the darkness. (Fails to see the enormity of sin).

IV. WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT (12-14)

- 1. Why were the “little children’s” sins forgiven?**
 - a) John seems to be portraying Christians in three categories:
 - Little children—babes in Christ—new Christians.
 - Young men—developed some in the faith
 - Fathers—mature in the faith.
 - b) Teknia—children in comparison to adults.
 - c) Paidia (v. 13)—infancy, in need of teaching.
 - d) Babes in Christ.
 - e) Their sins were forgiven for His name’s sake.
 - Recently forgiven by the blood of Christ.
 - Through Jesus—His name. (1 Jn. 2:1; Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12)
 - f) In v. 13—because you have known the Father.
 - In the sense of becoming his children.
 - They came into a relationship with the Father.
- 2. In what sense did the fathers know God?**
 - a) Older—more mature among the group.
 - b) Their long and faithful discipleship is recognized.
 - c) They had known Jesus (Deity) from the beginning.
 - Examined evidence for Jesus’ deity.
 - Thoroughly convinced.
- 3. How had the young men overcome the wicked one?**
 - a) Terms used figuratively—otherwise—no women in church.
 - b) They were no longer babes, but growing strong in the Lord.
 - c) Had proven themselves against the wiles of Satan and overcome him.
 - d) You did not succumb to his seductions.)1 Jn. 3:8, 10; 5:4)

- e) Also in v. 14—because you are strong.
- f) Strength comes from exercising...fighting the battles of life.
- g) Also in v. 14—because the word of God abides in you.
- h) They were studying, learning, letting God's Word take root in their hearts and lives.
(Eph. 6:10; Col. 3:16; Ps. 119:11)

CONCLUSION

1. Sin must be dealt with in our lives.
2. It can still destroy us if we do not.

Lesson Four

“Love of the World Leads One Away from God”
(1 John 2:15-29)

INTRODUCTION

1. We know God and are known of God when we continually walk in His commandments.
2. We cannot walk in hate and be acceptable with God.
3. We have to make a decision, Jesus is either Lord of my life or not!
4. We have a choice—to love God or to love the world—which one is it with you?

DISCUSSION

I. LOVE OF THE WORLD (15-17)

1. If one loves the world, what about his relationship to the Father?

- a) Does God love the world? (Jn. 3:16)
- b) Why does God love the world and tells us not to love the world?
- c) In what sense are we not to love the world? (Col. 3:1-3)
- d) In what sense are we not to love the things that are in the world?
- e) What happens if we love the world and the things in it?
 - The love of the Father is no longer in us.
 - Our affections, desires, are in the wrong place.
 - James 4:4; 2 Cor. 6:17-18; Matt. 6:24; Rom. 8:5
 - The love of God does not abide in his heart.

2. How is love of the world shown?

- a) Lust of flesh:
 - The flesh has natural desires.
 - How they are satisfied depends upon our outlook, attitudes, inner man.
 - The real problem is not the flesh, but the heart of man. (Matt. 15:18-20)
 - This desire of the heart exhibits itself in works of the flesh. (Gal. 5:19ff).
 - It is to love the wrong maxims or principles by which to measure one's life, or to govern one's life.
 - To set our affections on that which is only for this life.
- b) Lust of the eyes:
 - Desires awakened through the appeal of sight.
 - To satisfy the wrong desires from sight.
 - To look upon beauty is not wrong—it is the evil intent involved that makes it wrong.
 - Wrong cravings for wrong things.
- c) Pride of life:
 - Trust in our own power and resources.
 - Not accepting dependence upon God.
 - Trust in wrong thing or person.
- d) These things do not come from the father.

3. Who abides forever?

- a) The world and the things of the world will pass away.
- b) Pleasures for a season. (Heb. 11:25)

- c) But the one who does the will of God abides forever.

II. THE COMING OF THE ANTI-CHRIST (18-26)

1. How many anti-Christ's are there?

- a) "Little children"—addressing them all as an older to younger.
b) Anti-Christ's—many!! Not just one.
- John said many had already come exhibiting the spirit of anti-Christ.
 - Many outside the church had denied Jesus as being the Christ.
 - But now, there are those who are denying such in the church.
- c) Pseudo-Christ—One who puts himself as the Christ. (Matt. 24:5, 24; 2 Thess. 2:3-4)
d) Characteristics of Anti-Christ's:
- Stands in opposition to Christ.
 - They were part of the fellowship, but left. (2:19)
 - They denied Jesus as being the Christ. (2:22)
 - He also denies the Father and the Son.
 - Confesses that Jesus the Christ did not come in the flesh. (4:3)

2. What is meant by "we know it is the last time?"

- a) We know that critical times are upon us.
b) Great struggles ahead within the church.
c) 3 Words for time in Greek:
- Chronos—duration or succession of time.
 - Kairos—With reference to events.
 - Hora—Fixed date or period.
- d) Hora is used here—fixed period in mind of God.
e) This is the last event in a succession of events.
f) Or, last period of time.
g) Something was identifying this period as being upon them.

3. Why did certain ones go out from their number?

- a) The anti-Christ's went out (ek) from the church.
b) They became apostates.
c) Reasons:
- They were not of us.
 - At one time they did hold to the same truths.
 - But now...they have turned from that Truth to deny Jesus Christ.
 - Thus, they are no longer of the same spirit of the Christian.
 - So they would be made manifest.
 - Their leaving made it clear that they no longer had same spirit.
 - No longer respected Christ, nor his authority over them.

4. What is the "unction" from the Holy One?

- a) Chrisma—a special gift or anointing.
b) John 16:13; 1 Cor. 12:10; 1 Jn. 4:1
c) It enabled them to know all things—whether true or false.
d) Made it possible to discern who was a false teacher and refute him.

- e) Early Christians did not have written word—needed gifts to protect them against false teachers until Word completed.
- 5. Did they not know the truth that John was writing to them?**
 - a) Yes—they knew it.
 - b) But because of danger of leaving this truth...he was warning them.
 - c) A lie does not come out of truth.
- 6. Who is a liar?**
 - a) The one who denies that Jesus is the Christ.
 - b) The Gnostics denied both the Deity of Jesus & the Humanity of the Christ.
- 7. Who is an anti-Christ?**
 - a) The one that denies that Jesus is the Christ.
 - b) And thereby denies both the Father and the Son who stated such.
 - c) He shows his true spirit by denying Jesus to be the Christ. (Jn. 5:23)
- 8. What if one denies the Son?**
 - a) He does not have the Father either.
 - b) One who denies the Son by the way he lives.
 - c) He does not have a relationship with the Father.
 - d) To reject the Son is to reject the one who sent Him. (Jn. 1:18; 15:23)
- 9. Upon what basis can they continue in the Father and the Son?**
 - a) Let what you heard preached at the beginning abide in you.
 - b) The truth you heard about Jesus being the Christ.
 - c) Hold fast to such.
 - d) Fellowship is conditional...abiding in the doctrine of Christ.
- 10. What had been promised to them?**
 - a) Been promised eternal life...life that has no end.
 - b) Life without death...immortality!
 - c) Conditioned upon abiding in the Truth.
 - d) We have eternal life in promise at present.
- 11. Why had John written these things?**
 - a) To warn them of these false teachers—so they would not be seduced to turn from the truth they were taught at first.
 - b) The dangers were real.

III. HIS CONFIDENCE IN THEM (27-29)

- 1. Why did they not need anyone to teach them?**
 - a) They had the anointing (Gifts of the Spirit)
 - b) They had already been taught the truth.
 - c) They did not need a new teacher to teach new ideas (lies).
 - d) That is what these anti-Christ's were doing.
- 2. In what should they abide?**
 - a) In Jesus the Christ.
 - b) How? By continuing in what they had been taught.
- 3. Why abide in Him?**
 - a) He admonished them to abide in Jesus.
 - b) So that when he shall come again...they would be ready.

- c) They would have confidence, boldness, and assurance at His coming.
- d) To stand unafraid in His presence—showing they were prepared.
- e) No feeling of guilt.

4. Who is born of God?

- a) You know that God is righteous.
- b) You also know that the one who practices righteousness is of God.
- c) They are born of God.
- d) A righteous life shows they are imitating their Father!

CONCLUSION

1. The dangers of turning from God are real.
2. The pull of the world is strong.
3. And there are teachers who can deceive God's people into turning to that which is from the world and not from God.

Lesson Five

“Children of God and Sin”

(1 John 3:1-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. John begins this chapter with emphasis upon our great privilege—to be sons of God.
2. Then, he comes back to his theme—“How sons of God should act!”
 - a) They should live righteous lives.
 - b) They should not live in the way of sin continually.
 - c) They must allow the Word of God to have full sway in their lives.

DISCUSSION

I. WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD. (3:1-3)

1. How has God’s love been shown? (v.1)

- a) “Behold”---Take notice—be impressed with—fix gaze upon with awe.
- b) “What manner of love”—quality of love—Glorious, sublime, immeasurable.
- c) God’s love shown by letting us be called sons of God.
 - A special relationship that the world does not have.
 - Special privileges---blessings.

2. Why does the world not know Children of God? (v. 1)

- a) The world did not give recognition to Jesus as the Son of God.
- b) Neither does it give recognition to Christians as children of God. (John 15:18-19)
 - If we were of the world, the world would love us.
 - But it hates us instead because we are not identified with them.
- c) The world’s failure to recognize us does not change the fact!

3. What future promise is given to Children of God? (v. 2)

- a) When Jesus appears (returns for us)—we shall be like Him.
- b) We do not know the exact nature of our future existence.
- c) Our heavenly state is not clearly set out.
- d) We have “earthly descriptions” of that glorious estate.
- e) Phil. 3:20-21—Our bodies will be changed.

4. What should this hope motivate us to do? (v. 3)

- a) He purifies himself, even as he is pure.
- b) This hope is our motivation to live clean, pure, godly lives.
- c) “Keeps on purifying himself”
- d) Something we do!

II. GOD’S CHILDREN DO NOT CONTINUE IN A LIFE OF SIN. (3:4-10)

1. What is sin? (v. 4)

- a) It is something we “commit” or do, or fail to do!
- b) Sin is defined as Lawlessness—Not living within framework of God’s Law.
- c) Being an outlaw.
- d) The Law is a means of guidance in right living.
- e) “ANOMIA”—no law—to act as though there is no law.

- f) Sin (hamartia)—to miss the mark—all diversion from doing right.
- g) It is to habitually walk in disobedience to God's Law.
2. **What Law is under consideration here?**
- a) God's Law.
- b) Gentiles—law written in their hearts.
- c) Jewish Law—given by revelation from God.
- d) New Covenant—given through Jesus Christ for all men to follow now.
3. **Who was manifested to take away our sin? (v. 5)**
- a) Manifested—made know to us.
- b) Purpose of Jesus' coming to deal with our sin.
- c) To take it away by forgiveness. (Matt. 1:21)
- d) But also to turn us from sin in our lives. (1 Jn. 2:1)
- e) Jesus lived perfectly—did not give in to sin in his life.
- f) He did right on all occasions.
4. **Who does not sin? (v. 6)**
- a) The one who habitually abides in God.
- b) The one who continues in righteousness is a child of God.
- c) ***“Whoever continues to abide in him, does not keep on sinning.”***
- d) That is, habitually as he did before his conversion.
- e) If he was trying to say that a Christian can't sin at all, he should have used the Aorist tense.
- f) Expanded translation: ***“He who has taken up his abode in Christ, and settled down to a permanent existence in Him, has terminated his former manner of life and has ceased the practices then characteristic of him.”***
- g) The hold of sin has been broken in his life.
5. **What about the one who sins? (v. 6)**
- a) Contrast of two persons:
- One who habitually does righteousness.
 - One who habitually does unrighteousness.
- b) ***“Whoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him”***
- To see in the sense of realizing who He really is.
 - And to know in the sense of having a close relationship with Him.
 - ***“Whoever continues to abide in him does not keep on living a life of sin...whoever does keep on living a life of sin, does not see him or know him.”***
 - The outcome of a life of sin has unpleasant results.
 - It is one who habitually sins.
- c) The one who continues in sin, does not have a relationship with God.
- Whether it is talking about one who has never become a Christian.
 - Or, one who has, but has turned back to habitually walking in sin.
 - He is no longer in a right relationship with God.
6. **Who is a righteous person? (v. 7)**
- a) If it is NOT possible for a Christian to turn away from God—why worry about being deceived?
- Such was being done.
 - Advocated—***“You can keep on sinning, and still be right with God.”***
 - ***“You can please God by living an ungodly life.”***

- b) The one who is righteous is the one who does righteousness.
 - Claims are worthless, if our lives do not support our claims.
 - Don't listen to their teaching—look at their lives.
 - A righteous person is one who continually practices right living.
- 7. Who is of the Devil? (v. 8)**
 - a) The one who continues in a life of sin has the Devil as His father. (Jn. 8:44)
 - b) Sin originated with the Devil—and he continues in the way of sin.
 - c) Parental authority is determined by the one we submit unto. (Rom. 6:16)
 - d) No one should claim to be a child of God and act like the Devil.
- 8. Who sinned from the beginning? (What beginning?) (v. 8)**
 - a) The Devil—He started it all!
 - b) Beginning of his creation by God??
 - c) Beginning of man's existence in the Garden of Eden??
- 9. Why was the Son of God manifested? (v. 8)**
 - a) Jesus was manifested—He came in the flesh! (Made known)
 - b) Purpose—to destroy—weaken, deprive of power, abolish, bring to naught, to stop.
 - c) To stop Satan's purposes, plans, designs, schemes, aims, etc.
 - d) 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:54-55; Rev. 21:3-4
- 10. Who does not commit sin? (v. 9)**
 - a) Whoever is born of God.
 - b) If a person is truly begotten of God, his life is turned around.
 - c) It is not a life of continuing in the way of sin—persistent, continuous, willfully.
- 11. Why does he not commit sin? (v. 9)**
 - a) Because His sin remains in him.
 - b) The Word that turned him to God continues to guide his life. (Col. 3:16)
 - c) The Word is in him, forbids him to sin, controls his life—direct his ways. (Ps. 119:11; Rom. 6:1-2)
- 12. Who is a child of the devil? (v. 10)**
 - a) v. 8—The one who continues in way of sin.
 - b) V. 9—The one who has not been born of God.
 - c) V. 9—The one in which the Word of God does not abide.
 - d) V. 10—The one who does not practice righteousness.
 - e) V. 10—The one who does not love his brother.

CONCLUSION

1. Knowledge of God's Word keeps us from being deceived and walking in sin.
2. Those who walk in sin should not claim to be of God.

Lesson Six

“Love from a Pure Heart”

(1 John 3:11-24)

INTRODUCTION

1. Love of our brethren from a pure heart accompanied by prayer is our means of staying faithful to God.
2. Keeping our relationship with God is something He wants, but we must want bad enough to be obedient in all things.
3. We must keep on praying to this end!

DISCUSSION

I. THE NEED TO SHOW LOVE FOR OUR BRETHREN. (3:11-18)

1. **What message was preached from the beginning (what beginning?) (v. 11)**
 - a) The beginning—when they first heard the message of the Gospel
 - b) The message was—Child of God should love his brother.
 - c) This was a cardinal teaching and characteristic of Christianity.
 - Doing righteousness involves love of brethren.
 - Keep on loving—continuous action.
 - Manifest a spirit of concern for one another.
2. **Why did Cain slay his brother, Abel? (v. 12)**
 - a) Because his works were evil—Disobeyed God about sacrifice.
 - b) Disregarded God’s admonition to deal with sin in his life.
 - c) Cain showed what spirit he was of, by his acts.
 - d) His desire was not to do the will of God.
 - e) He may have been envious of Abel, who was righteous—and acceptable to God.
 - f) He slew him—possibly slit his throat like an animal to be sacrificed.
 - g) Discord among brethren usually springs from a spirit of hate & envy.
3. **What can Christians expect from the world? (v. 13)**
 - a) To be hated like Cain hated Abel.
 - b) The world hates righteous people—because they are righteous.
 - c) They hate us because our lives condemn their ungodly lives.
4. **How does one know he has passed from death to life? (v. 14)**
 - a) Because we love the brethren.
 - b) This is a way of knowing we are God’s people—we act like God.
 - c) We know we have passed out from under the sentence of death.
 - d) We know we have fellowship with God—which is life.
 - e) Divine Sonship can be tested in practicality—LOVE OF BRETHREN.
 - f) If we have gone through a birth process—we will obviously be changed.
 - g) That change is obvious in our actions towards our brethren.
 - h) Continuous—keeps on loving the brethren.
5. **What about the one who hates his brother? (v. 14-15)**
 - a) He abides in death!
 - c) The absence of love is not the cause of death, but the sign of death!

- d) He is a murderer.
 - He has the spirit that leads to actual murder in his heart.
 - He exhibits the disposition of a murderer.
 - Such a spirit leads to wrong doing towards a brother.
- e) He does not have the promise of eternal life. (unending life with God)
- f) Spiritual life and spiritual death does not abide in same heart.
- 6. How do we know God loves us? (v. 16)**
 - a) God has clearly demonstrated His love for us.
 - b) We are able to see its nature, its sacrifice, its extent, its design.
 - c) We know because He laid down his life for us. (Jn. 10:11, 17, 18)
- 7. What attitude should we show to our brethren? (v. 16)**
 - a) We ought to be willing to lay down our lives for our brethren.
 - b) As God proved his, we should be willing to prove our love.
 - c) It must not be an empty claim, but practical.
- 8. In whom does the love of God dwell? (v. 17)**
 - a) When we demonstrate it towards our brothers in Christ.
 - b) The one who sees his brother in need and helps him.
 - c) He does not disregard him & refuse to have compassion upon him.
- 9. How are we to love?**
 - a) Not only in word or in tongue.
 - b) But in deed and in truth.
 - c) Words are needed—our love is reassured by what we say and do.
 - d) We prove what we say when the time comes with proper deeds or actions.

II. THE NEED OF A PURE HEART. (3:19-21)

- 1. How can we know we are of the Truth? (v. 19)**
 - a) When we abide in that truth...we are of the truth.
 - b) When we show our love to our brethren---we show we are of the truth.
- 2. What gives our heart assurance? (v. 19)**
 - a) Our hearts are reassured by our actions.
 - b) Such actions show what kind of heart we have.
- 3. What if our heart condemns us? (v. 20)**
 - a) If we see such a condition and we do not do something about it—our hearts will surely condemn us.
 - b) This is God’s arrangement to help us get straighten out.
 - c) “Conscience.”
 - d) If our heart condemns us...surely God will.
- 3. What if our heart does not condemn us? (v. 21)**
 - a) We can then have confidence towards God.
 - b) Can be assured of our relationship with God.
 - c) Gives us confidence as we approach God.

III. PRAYER AND KEEPING COMMANDMENTS. (3:22-24)

- 1. Who receives of God in prayer? (v. 22)**

- a) Those who keep His commandments.
 - b) Those who do those things that are pleasing in His sight.
 - c) “Keep on asking...keep on receiving”
 - d) We show by our actions that we are in submission to God’s will.
 - e) Our desire is to please Him in all we do and say.
- 2. What two commands are critical? (v. 23)**
- a) Believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ
 - b) Love one another as He gave us commandment.
 - c) Belief is vital—basic—especially that Jesus came in the flesh.
 - d) Need to show this love freely to each other as God desires.
- 3. Who dwells in God? (v. 24)**
- a) Those who keep God’s commandments abide in Him. (Jn. 14:23)
 - b) Keep on keeping God’s commandments.
 - c) Keeps on abiding in Him and He in us.
- 4. How do we know God abides in us? (v. 24)**
- a) By the spirit which he gave us.
 - b) We have the same spirit that God has—spirit of love and right doing.
 - c) By the SPIRIT which He gave us—Acts 2:38.
 - d) God’s Spirit abides in those who keep his Word.

CONCLUSION

1. Faith must be put into action to avail.
2. Love must be put into action if it is real and avails.
3. Prayer keeps us close to God and causes our faith to be strong, as well as our love.

Lesson Seven

“God’s Children Listen to Him”

(1 John 4:1-6)

INTRODUCTION

1. John has mentioned the term “anti-Christ” to identify false teachers that were already trying to undermine the Deity & Humanity of Jesus. (2:18)
2. He deals with the conclusions of their false teachings.
 - a) Sin keeps us from abiding in God.
 - b) Walking in righteousness keeps our fellowship with God.
 - c) Love for brethren keeps our fellowship with one another.
3. He summarizes by saying, The righteous person is:
 - a) The person who does righteousness;
 - b) The person who loves the brethren;
 - c) The person who loves God;
 - d) The person who keeps God’s commandments.
4. He now comes back to identify these false teachers.

DISCUSSION

I. FALSE SPIRITS (TEACHERS). (Vs. 1-3)

1. Why try the spirits? (1)

- a) To see if they are of God or otherwise.
- b) Spirits—Reference to teachers.
- c) Humans are motivated either by the Spirit of God or the Spirit of the Devil.
- d) So, put all to the test.
- e) How were they able to test them?
 - They had the gift of discerning of spirits.
 - They also had been taught earlier what was truth.
- f) Satan is always copying the real—test the teaching!

2. How does one know the Spirit of God? (2)

- a) He gives them a test to determine if the man teaching had the Spirit of God or the Devil.
- b) If they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.
- c) If not, they are a false teacher.

3. Who is not of God? (2-3)

- a) Those unwilling to confess Jesus came in the flesh.

4. What is the spirit of the anti-Christ? (3)

- a) A failure to teach Jesus came in the flesh.
- b) Such teachers show their true spirit—they are against Christ.
- c) Unwilling to abide in truth.

5. How soon would the anti-Christ come? (3)

- a) He was already there when John wrote.

II. GOD’S CHILDREN HEAR THEIR FATHER. (Vs. 4-6)

1. How did God's children overcome "them?" (4)

- a) Because they were "of God."
- b) They had shown their willingness to confess Jesus as come in the flesh.
- c) They had proven it by their godly lives.
- d) But they had refused to be persuaded by their error.
- e) They had overcome them—won a victory over them.
- f) Because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
 - Jesus is stronger than Satan.

2. Who are of the world? (5)

- a) These false teachers.
- b) The world originated their doctrine—not God. (Jn. 8:44)
- c) The world—those who submit to Satan's teaching.
- d) The world will hear them—preach what they want to hear.
- e) Men prefer pleasing falsehoods to unpleasant truth. (2 Tim. 4:1-4)

3. How does one distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error? (6)

- a) The spirit of truth is taught & accepted by those who are of God.
- b) The spirit of error is taught & accepted by those who are of the world.
- c) Jn. 14:17

CONCLUSION

- 1. If you missed out on the introductory material that describes these false teachers, please go back and read up on such—or ask the teacher to give you a copy of that lesson.
- 2. Gnosticism became a plague on the church in the early years in the church.
- 3. As long as the Apostles were alive, they could combat it better, but upon their death—the concept of an Authoritative person to go to was over. They had to depend upon the Word of God that had been given to them. Just as we do today!

Lesson Eight

“True Love and its Results”

(1 John 4:7-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Apostle John has been emphasizing “love” for God and for “brethren in Christ.”
2. He comes back with a very strong emphasis again in these verses.
3. If we are true children of God, we will listen to His Word and be obedient unto it.

DISCUSSION

I. TRUE LOVE AND IT’S RESULTS. (Vs. 7-21)

1. Why should we love one another? (7)

- a) For love is of God
 - Finds its origin in God.
 - Proceeds from God
 - Love exemplifies the Spirit of God.
- b) Everyone that loves is born (begotten) of God.
 - Without love—we do not have identity with God.
 - One shows He has submitted to God by loving.
- c) To truly know God.
 - One has really seen His true Nature.
 - Has a special relationship with Him.

2. Who does not know God? (8)

- a) He who does not love.
- b) If he knew God, he would know love.
- c) For God is love.
- d) Such a person was never properly introduced to God at the beginning.

3. How was God’s love manifested? (9-10)

- a) By sending His only begotten Son into the world—so we could live through Him.
- b) He gives the true, real life—spiritual relationship with God.

4. Why should we love one another? (11)

- a) Because God first loved us.
- a) This love should constrain us to love one another.

5. Who has seen God? (12)

- a) No one.
- b) Not in the full sense of beholding His glory.
- c) Only Jesus!!

6. What is shown when we love one another? (12)

- a) That God abides in us
- b) His love is perfected in us—keeps on maturing in our lives.

7. How do we know God dwells in us? (13)

- a) Because He has given us of His Spirit.

- b) How do we know we have the Spirit of God?
 - The early Christians had the miraculous gifts of the Spirit as a testimony.
 - We know by the fruit that is produced in our lives. (Gal. 5:21-23)
 - c) It is evident that His love has had an impact upon us.
 - d) God is producing in us the right attitudes and actions.
- 8. What is the importance of confessing Jesus as the Son of God? (14-15)**
- a) So God can dwell in us and we in God.
 - b) That we are in harmony with God—His Son—His Word.
 - c) This confessing is not mere lip service, but surrender & obedience.
- 9. Who dwells in God? (12-16)**
- a) V. 12—The one who loves his brother.
 - b) V. 13—By the Spirit He has given us.
 - c) V. 15—Those who confess Jesus is the Son of God.
 - d) V. 16—The one who abides in love.
- 10. Why is it so important that our love be perfected? (17)**
- a) That we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment.
 - b) There will be assurance when we stand before Him in Judgment.
- 11. What does perfect love do? (18)**
- a) Perfect love cast out fear.
 - b) God's love in us helps us to realize that God wants to save us.
 - c) There is no reason for dread or terror.
- 12. What about the person who fears? (18)**
- a) He has not been brought to perfection in love.
 - b) Shows something is wrong with our love.
- 13. Why do we love God? (19)**
- a) Because He first loved us.
 - b) God acted first.
- 14. Who is a liar? (20)**
- a) The one who says, "I love God," and hates his brother.
 - b) How can he love God whom he has not seen; when he hates his brother whom he has seen.
- 15. What two commands are tied inseparably together? (21)**
- a) Love God.
 - b) Love our brother.

CONCLUSION

1. Have you applied the test?
2. Do you truly love God?
3. Without love, we do not have a relationship with God or others.

Lesson Nine

“Love, Faith, and God’s Witness”

(1 John 5:1-13)

INTRODUCTION

1. Chapter 5 brings all things together—draws conclusions.
2. It deals with:
 - a) Belief in Jesus
 - b) The Love of God
 - c) The Love of Brethren
 - d) Keeping God’s commandments
 - e) Assurances of having God’s fellowship
 - f) The assurance of eternal life.
3. It emphasizes the victory that the believer has in Christ.

DISCUSSION

I. LOVE & GOD’S COMMANDMENTS (5:1-3)

1. Who is born of God? (1)

- a) Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ.
- b) He gives evidence by his continued belief that he was truly born or begotten of God.
- c) They had not denied Jesus’ Deity, His humanity, His reality—as others had done.
- d) Thus, showing their continued faith.
- e) Must understand—this continued faith is shown by continued obedience to God.

2. If we love God, whom else do we love? (1)

- a) Those who keeping on loving God—keep on loving God’s children.

3. How do we know we love God’s children? (2)

- a) We need assurance—to be sure.
- b) This assurance comes through an active faith.
- c) “When we love God, and keep His commandments.”
- d) To love God is to keep His commandments.
- e) Thus, by doing what God teaches us toward our brother, we show our love for them.
- f) Obedience is included in the terms: Faith and Love.
- g) Love for God and our brethren are inseparable.
- h) Obedience to God and Love for God are also inseparable.

4. What is the love of God? (3)

- a) We demonstrate our love for God by an obedient spirit.
- b) Keeping on carefully, watchfully doing God’s will in our lives.

5. How do we look upon God’s commands? (3)

- a) As not being grievous or burdensome.
- b) Love lightens the load of duty—makes it easier. (Gal. 6:2)
- c) A loving spirit and understanding always make work lighter!

II. FAITH AND VICTORY (5:4-5)

1. Who overcomes the world? (4)

- a) Those born of God.
- b) God's purpose in our lives—helps us to be victorious in life.
- c) This is the reason why His commandments are not burdensome:
 - We see the good that comes from such.
 - We see the ultimate victory and the reward.
 - Privations, hardships, difficulties lead to victory.

2. What is the victory that overcomes the world? (4)

- a) Our faith.
- b) Stresses the conquering power of faith.
- c) The world is trying to defeat us—turn us from God's way & truth.
- d) Our strong faith gives us the ability to:
 - Resist temptations
 - Avoid the entanglements of the world
 - To reject false teachers
- e) Heb. 11—God's Hall of fame—Bible heroes of faith.

3. Who overcomes the world? (5)

- a) He who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.
- b) Keeps on believing in Jesus.
- c) This continued faith makes us victorious over all the world throws at us.
- d) We escape:
 - The guilt of sin
 - The pollution of sin
 - The power of sin
 - The penalty of sin.

III. GOD'S WITNESS TO US OF ETERNAL LIFE. (5:6-13)

1. Who came by water and blood? (6)

- a) Jesus Christ.
- b) The water is believed to have reference to His baptism by John.
 - He was baptized by John.
 - John stated that he knew He was the Messiah, the Christ, because God told him that the Spirit would descend upon him.
- c) The blood is believed to have reference to His death on the cross.

2. Who bears witness to the truth? (6)

- a) The Spirit bears witness.
- b) He is truth—speaks truth.

NOTE: Verse 7 is believed to be spurious.

- a) Why do Textual scholars believe this verse has been added?
- b) How is the Greek Text determined?
 - By comparing over 5000 Greek Mss.
 - By comparing with early writings by Christians that quote or make reference to the N.T.

- By comparing with early translations into other languages.
 - By comparing internally—unity, harmony.
 - c) In all of this—the evidence is overwhelming that it should not be in the text.
 - The verse does not appear in any of the early Greek Mss.
 - Its first appearance was in a Greek Mss of the 15th or 16th century.
 - It is omitted in all Ancient versions—including the Vulgate.
 - Early Christian writers do not make reference to it in any way.
- 3. What three bear witness in earth? (8)**
- a) There are three who do:
 - The Spirit—at His baptism—also the powers He performed.
 - The Water—His submission to be immersed in water—God’s approval.
 - The Blood—His death on the Cross.
 - b) All three bear testimony to His coming, His humanity, and yet His Deity.
- 4. What is the witness of God? (9)**
- a) We receive the witness of men all the time.
 - b) How much more should we accept God’s testimony about His Son.
 - c) He has had all of these events recorded as testimony to His Son. (Jn. 20:30-31)
- 5. Who has this witness within himself? (10)**
- a) The one who believes in Jesus has the witness in himself.
 - b) The believer shows that he has received the testimony as true.
 - c) He holds these truths to be reliable.
 - d) We also have the Spirit abiding in us—seen by His fruits.
- 6. Who makes God a liar? (10)**
- a) The one who does not believe God’s testimony.
 - b) It is the same as calling God a liar.
 - c) But upon what evidence is this denial made?
 - d) These Gnostics were doing just this.
 - e) They had rejected the evidence that God had given of His Son.
- 7. What does the record of God say? (11)**
- a) KJV—uses record.
 - b) NKJV—uses testimony.
 - c) All that God has done for man through Christ is to bring us eternal life.
 - d) We presently possess this life with God—even while in the flesh.
- 8. Where is eternal life to be found? (11)**
- a) Only in God’s Son—no other. (Jn. 14:6)
- 9. Who has life? (12)**
- a) The one who has the Son has life.
 - b) Only those who have a relationship with the Son have this life.
 - c) Without the Son—no life.
- 10. Why did John write these things to them? (13)**
- a) So they could be assured of this eternal life.
 - b) Because you have shown that you continue to believe in Jesus as the Son of God.

CONCLUSION

1. We cannot honestly say that we love God and hate our brother.
2. We demonstrate our love for God as well as to our brother.

3. Love is critical in identifying a Child of God, but so is faith!
4. Our faith will give us the victory if it is steadfast.
5. God has given us all the assurance we need to make it to the end successfully.

Lesson Ten

“Prayer and Confident Hope”

(1 John 5:14-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. The writer has stressed the ability for us to know God and to know of our relationship with Him.
2. He has stressed the important of abstaining from sin and disobedience to God.
3. He has stressed keeping the commandments of God.
4. But what helps us to keep God’s commands? FAITH, LOVE, and PRAYER!
5. He has dealt with all three already....but comes back to Prayer again in the last part of this chapter.

DISCUSSION**I. PRAYER AND CONFIDENCE. (5:14-16)**

1. **Upon what basis will God hear our prayer? (14)**
 - a) If we ask anything according to His will.
 - b) God has given us this assurance.
 - c) We should ask according to what He has taught us in His word about prayer.
 - d) Matt. 26:39—“*Not my will, but thine be done.*”
 - e) Matt. 7:7-11
 - f) God gives good gifts—what is good for us.
2. **How do we know we have the request we make of God? (15)**
 - a) If we do not doubt that God hears us—then we know He will give us our request.
 - b) How He answers may be hard to pinpoint.
 - c) But we have the assurance that God hears & answers.
 - d) He may answer in His own wise way.
3. **What is a sin not unto death? (16)**
 - a) To see—something that can be discerned by observation & reason.
 - b) We can see that a sin is either unto death or not unto death.
 - There is a sin not unto death—for which we are to pray—with assurance that life will be given.
 - There is a sin unto death—for which it is useless and futile to pray.
 - c) Any sin can lead unto spiritual death if not repented of.
 - Jas. 5:16
 - 1 Jn. 1:9
 - c) Heb. 6:4-6
 - Once a Christian—but fell away.
 - Impossible to renew to repentance.
 - An attitude of mind & heart that has led the person to renounce Christ openly.
 - d) Heb. 10:26-27
 - Once a Christian—but willingly turns from Christ.
 - There is no other sacrifice to which to turn.

- To openly renounce and turn from the only One who can save.
- e) Mk. 3:29-30
 - See the condition of their hearts.
 - How far they had gone as God's people to reject Christ.
 - To the extent of attributing obvious miracles to the Devil. (Acts 7:51-53)
 - Three views:
 - 1—To ascribe the miracles of Jesus to the power of Satan.
 - 2—They were not guilty of the sin as yet, but were in danger of such.
 - 3—Continued resistance to God's grace to the end.

4. Should we pray about a sin unto death? (16)

- a) No.
- b) One who keeps on sinning—no repentance.
- c) A disposition of heart.
- d) Door is closed to forgiveness.
- e) No value in praying for such.

II. OUR CONFIDANT HOPE. (5:17-21)

1. What is sin? (17)

- a) All unrighteousness.
- b) All sin is not necessarily unto death.
- c) When we deal with these unrighteous acts, confessing and turning from them day by day—not unto death.
- d) Forgiveness gives us confidence in God and in our hope of eternal life.

2. Who does not sin? (18)

- a) The one who is born of God.
- b) We can be assured of such.
- c) The one who stays strong in his faith will not continue in sin.

3. Who is the one that the wicked one cannot touch? (18)

- a) The one who is born of God and keeps himself.
- b) Keeps his faith strong—constantly keeping God's commands.
- c) Satan cannot get a hold in our lives—bring doubt.(1 Peter. 1:5)

4. Who lies in wickedness? (19)

- a) The whole world.
- b) They do not continue in righteousness—but wickedness.
- c) They are lost.

5. Who is the True God? (20)

- a) To know the true, genuine One as opposed to the false one.
- b) Jesus said: *"Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father."*
- c) This relationship with the True God is made possible through Jesus (Jn. 17:3).

6. What admonition did John give? (21)

- a) Keep yourselves from idols.
- b) Don't succumb to seduction, allurements, and pressures towards idolatry.
- c) Don't say, "Lord Caesar" and sacrifice to idols to escape punishment.
- d) Don't get caught up in sin.

CONCLUSION

1. What is an idol? Anything placed before God!
2. That is what these false teachers were doing!
3. Their idol was their own selves!
4. But actual idolatry was all around them and posed also a deep threat to Christians.

Lesson Eleven

“Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ”

(2 John)

The preaching of the Gospel brought about congregations of God’s people all over the known world (Colossians 1:23). Not only would these congregations need continual teaching to help to stabilize them in the faith, but also to equip them to go out and teach others themselves (2 Timothy 2:2). The big “fly in the ointment” would be teachers that would change the doctrine and teach in one or more congregations to lead them astray. So, the Apostles were constantly on guard with churches they were familiar with trying to be sure they abide in the teaching (doctrine) of Christ. If they were not able to be there in person, they may send a Letter that would serve as a stop-gap measure until they could come.

AUTHORSHIP OF 2 JOHN & 3 JOHN

Neither Letter states directly who the writer is, but the evidence both internal and external says that the Apostle John was their writer. The following will give some idea of why this conclusion:

- 1) The close identity of both Letters to 1 John in language and wording.
- 2) Most early writers made this identification.
- 3) The usual custom of John not naming himself in his works.
- 4) The use of the term “the elder” would certainly fit John (about 70-80 years old).
- 5) The authority with which he speaks to correct the troubles among those to whom he wrote.

OCCASION AND DATE OF WRITING OF BOTH LETTERS

There is much discussion over the question of who this elect lady was that John addresses his 2nd Letter to. It was someone that he knew and loved in truth, as well as a person of sincere character. It seemed obvious that there were some things that needed to be dealt with, but he did not want to write about it in a letter for some reason. He planned to visit in the near future. The date of this Letter would possibly be around AD 80-90. The 3rd Letter that was addressed to Gaius would probably be about the same time. The church where Gaius was needed help in dealing with a “strong-arm” man in the church.

PURPOSE OF WRITING 2ND JOHN

Some one or more persons may have informed John of the condition existing where this lady lived, like the third Letter shows what the conditions were like where Gaius lived. The church may have met in this lady’s home. Since false teachers were going about from place to place teaching their evil ways, it was necessary not only to warn against their teaching, but also against even offering food and shelter and thereby become helpers of their evil teachings. Thus, this 2nd Letter would well serve to warn this lady against extending hospitality to such teachers until he, himself, could come and further instruct concerning these matters.

OUTLINE OF 2 JOHN

IDENTIFYING & DEALING WITH FALSE TEACHERS

1. Greetings (1-3)
2. Reason for writing (4)
3. Exhortation to love and obedience (5-6)
4. Identify and action concerning false teachers (7-11)
5. His plan to visit (12-13)

Verse 1 – John Loved God’s people who were in the truth.

- a) The same as saying: “*Whom I love in the Lord.*”
- b) He loved them because of their inherent worth, but as well because of their devotion to truth.
- c) This “elect lady” has shown her faithfulness and loyalty to truth by how she showed hospitality to those traveling.
- d) All who are of the Truth, love those who walk in Truth!
- e) God’s abundant grace, mercy, and peace is accounted unto such people.
- f) John wanted all of God’s people to be faithful to this Truth.

Verse 2 – The truth dwells in God’s people.

- a) It got there for two reasons:
 - They opened their hearts to it and saw it was from God.
 - They let it guide their lives according to God’s will.
- b) The Truth does not force its way into our hearts—we must want it there.

Verse 3 – Stresses the Deity of Jesus.

- a) The Father and Son are addressed here as co-equals—God & Lord!
- b) Grace, mercy and peace comes from them both!

Verse 4 – John rejoiced that God’s people were walking in truth.

- a) It is God’s command that we walk in truth.
- b) John not only rejoiced, but rejoiced greatly!
- c) “Walking” indicates continued action—they continued in the Truth.

Verse 5 – Loving one another has been emphasized from the beginning.

- a) To beseech or petition—strong thought!
- b) This emphasis upon loving one another in Christ was started back at the beginning of the church! (John 13:34-35)
- c) In fact, love was emphasized even in the Law of Moses.
- d) Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

Verse 6 – Love is walking according to God’s commandments.

- a) Emotion without obedience is useless.
- b) Love without obedience is hypocrisy.
- c) Duty without love is cold formalism.
- d) Where love does not exist, keeping of God’s commands is irksome and hard.
- e) To the faithful who love the Lord, His commandments are not grievous.

Verse 7 – Many deceivers have gone out into the world.

- a) Traveling preachers was a common thing at this time.
- b) And some of them turned out to be false teachers.
- c) They did not teach that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.
- d) Such are deceivers and anti-Christ.
- e) They set themselves up against Christ by denying what He taught and who He was.
 - “Anti-Christ” (plural)—many of them.
 - “Anti-Christ” (single)—one who is representative.
- f) A deceiver is one who intends to turn a person in another way.
- g) He will use deceptive means to bring it about—under-handed.

Verse 8 – The danger of losing what we have worked for.

- a) We want to receive a full reward.
- b) If so, you must look to yourself and be prepared for these false teachers.
- c) You are in danger of losing all if you listen to these false teachers.
- d) You must exercise ceaseless vigilance against those who would lead astray.

Verse 9 – The need to abide in the Doctrine of Christ

- a) Those who in this doctrine have a continuing relationship with the Father and the Son.
- b) Those who do not abide in the Doctrine of Christ do not have God in their lives.
- c) Not just the teaching about Christ, but the teaching that came through the inspired Apostles—the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).
- d) To deviate from these teachings is to leave sure ground!
- e) A sound church can only come by sound teaching that leads to sound practice of God’s truth.

Verse 10-11 – Don’t encourage a false teacher.

- a) By receiving him into your house.
- b) Nor by special greetings.
- c) Don’t give the impression that you not only agree with him, but that you are willing to help support and encourage his efforts.
- d) John is not forbidding kindness to others—even to false teachers; but he is forbidding any form of action that would help to spread their false teaching.

Verse 12-13 – John’s plan to visit rather than write more.

- a) John’s letter was probably only a temporary measure against such teachers.
- b) His planned was to visit them shortly and further deal with the problem.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **In what did John rejoice?**
2. **What were these false teachers denying?**
3. **Who does not know God?**
4. **How are Christians to treat these deceivers?**
5. **Why didn’t John write more in this letter?**

Lesson Twelve

“How to Walk in Truth” (3rd John)

Where there are people there is always the danger of conflict, differences in views, and a desire to please self above others. This 3rd Letter of John is dealing with this very thing—a man had seemingly taken control over the church and was going to run it the way he wanted it run. He wasn't even respectful of an Apostle, much less some lesser knowledgeable person. This short letter gives a little insight into the conditions in the early church. It shows the warmth among brethren. But it also showed that some were not following the Love of Christ, but sin was reigning in their hearts.

PURPOSE FOR WRITING 3RD JOHN

This 3rd Letter was addressed to **“the well-beloved Gaius.”** Since there are several men by this name mentioned in the Scriptures, it would be hard to know exactly which one it would be. There are several things indicated about him in this letter however:

- 1) He was well-beloved of John.
- 2) He was not altogether wealthy in this world's goods, but was certainly rich towards God.
- 3) He had testimony borne by others that he walked in the truth.
- 4) He had been very hospitable unto traveling preachers in need of help in spite of the efforts of Diotrephes to oppose such men and they who helped. Word had evidently gotten to John (possibly by some traveling preachers) about the troubles that Diotrephes was causing.
- 5) Acts 19:29; 20:4; Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14

This letter was brief, but to the point, and would be followed up by a visit to help deal with Diotrephes. Demetrius may have been the bearer of this Letter to Gaius. The letter not only deals with “pride-problems,” but it placed a strong emphasis upon walking in truth. The outline below is a unique way to look at this letter—seeing the character of three different men.

OUTLINE OF 3RD JOHN

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME EARLY CHRISTIANS

1. Gaius, the well-beloved (1-8)
2. Diotrephes, the dictator of the church (9-11)
3. Demetrius, of good report of all men (12)
4. John's plan to visit (13-14)

COMMENTS ON 3RD JOHN

Verse 1 -- Written to the beloved Gaius.

- a) The word “beloved” shows the esteem with which John held him.
- b) And the main reason for such an outlook towards Gaius was that he loved and walk in the truth.

Verse 2 – John desired his prosperity:

- a) In all things—possibly material and financial would be involved. God has promised to bless and care for His own (Matt. 6:33).
- b) In health—physical health—Good health makes life happier and easier.
- c) As your soul prospers—This qualifies the above. When our soul prosperity keeps up with the other—good will come. When we get lop-sided, bad will come. We need to subordinate the material to the spiritual.

Verses 3-4 – John’s joy to learn that Gaius walked in truth.

- a) It is a walk—a continuous journey to eternity!
- b) His walk was in truth—he loved it, practiced it, faithful in truth.
- c) His love had been exemplified in the past by helping visiting preachers while there and as they traveled further.
- d) To hear of such brought great joy to John.

Verses 5-7 – Others have testified of his service.

- a) Of his love for others.
- b) Different ones had evidently told John of how Gaius had shown his love and concern for visiting brethren.
- c) Now, John was encouraging him to continue to show such in spite of the opposition that he had been receiving from Diotrephes.
- d) One of the reasons why he encouraged their help—they had gone forth in the name of Jesus—for His sake—with the intent of taking nothing from the Gentiles as they would go in to establish a new work (understood).

Verse 8 – Receive and help for such people is good.

- a) By helping them, we become fellow-helpers with them.
- b) Whatever good that is done is also part of my doing.

Verses 9-10 – How to deal with Diotrephes.

- a) These visiting preachers possibly had a letter of recommendation from John.
- b) Gaius gladly received them, but Diotrephes did not.
- c) He refused to recognize John’s Apostleship and request in the letter.
- d) The character and actions of Diotrephes:
 - He had a fondness for being first, the top-dog. The Lord’s teachings forbid such (Matt. 20:25-28).
 - His self-seeking attitude led him to use malicious works against the Apostle John.
 - He refused to receive the brethren which came from John.
 - He even forbade others in the church to do so. Gaius had received them, so Diotrephes had it in for Gaius.
 - Those who refused to bow to his will were expelled from the group. He did not cut them off from Christ, but tried to refuse them fellowship within his group.

- This man was ambitious, unscrupulous, a church boss, oppose to Apostolic authority, opposed to missionary work, and was a servant of Satan in the midst of God's people.
- e) When John comes, he will deal with Diotrephes!
- He will expose him for what he really is.
 - He would be deposed from his "authoritative" position over the church.
 - If he didn't repent, would need to be disfellowshipped by the group.

Verses 11-12 – Don't pattern your life after evil.

- a) John had drawn a sharp contrast between Diotrephes and Gaius.
b) He called upon the church to follow the good examples—not the evil one.
c) Demetrius was also given in the letter as an example to follow.
- Those who knew him ascribed the highest possible praise to him.
 - His love and practice of truth is a witness to him.
 - John also bore witness to his faithfulness.
- d) Those who continue in the good show their identity with God.

Verses 13-14 – John's plan to come in person to see them.

- a) This, again, was the reason why he cut his letter short.
b) But the letter served its purpose ahead of John's visit.

QUESTIONS ON 3RD JOHN

- 1. What report had been given concerning how Gaius walked?**
- 2. What had Gaius done toward others mentioned?**
- 3. How could Gaius be a fellow-helper to the truth?**
- 4. Why had Diotrephes not received John's Letter?**
- 5. How had Diotrephes treated these traveling preachers?**
- 6. When did John hope to see Gaius?**

