

Introduction to First John

Recipients

The recipients are those “who believe in the name of the Son of God” (1Jn 5:13). Some are addressed as “little children” (1Jn 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21), “young children” (1Jn 2:13, 18), “young men” (1Jn 2:13, 14), “fathers” (1Jn 2:13, 14); all are “beloved” (1Jn 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11) and “brethren” (1Jn 2:7; 3:13). They are believers in Christ, “children of God” (1Jn 3:1, 2) representing the full spectrum of spiritual maturity from babes in Christ, requiring the milk of the Word, up to spiritually mature fathers, entrusted teachers of the Word of God. The epistle refers to other believers (1Jn 2:19) who had left the fellowship of those who, like John, have been entrusted with the message of Christ (“that which was from the beginning,” 1Jn 1:1). Some who had left the fellowship had been trusted leaders in the church but then became false teachers and described as “spirits of antichrist” (1Jn 2:18). Among other errors, these false teachers had disavowed that Jesus is the Christ (1Jn 2:22-23) and specifically taught that the Christ had not come in the flesh (1Jn 4:2-3).

In any case, the recipients had heard the gospel message firsthand from John, being one of the original witnesses who heard, saw, and handled the Word of Life, Jesus Christ (1Jn 1:1-2). John encourages these believers to continue in fellowship with these original witnesses, as well as with the Father and the Son (1Jn 1:3) so their joy will be filled full (1:4).

Author, Date and Place

The author does not identify himself in this epistle. Although the author might seem to be reluctant to speak of himself, the tradition of the early church attributes this epistle to John the Apostle (as well as Second and Third John and also the Gospel which bears his name). John rarely referred to himself in any of his writings. In his gospel account, he refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (Jn 21:20; cf. 13:23). In the openings of Second and Third John he identifies himself as “the elder,” expecting his audience to know his identity. In the opening of First John, he states that he was among the eye-witnesses who heard, saw, and examined the Word of Life, the Son of God made in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. The similarities in language and style between First John and the Gospel of John affirm the long-held tradition of the church that John is the author of First John.

The date of the writing of this epistle is late in the first century, probably not before AD 85 but not much later than AD 90. Irenaeus indicates that John the Apostle wrote his gospel after he moved to Ephesus in Asia, an event which probably occurred after AD 75. Church tradition reports that his Asian disciples asked him to record his gospel, which probably happened between AD 80 and 85. Having had his account of the gospel for some time, John’s disciples then needed to be reminded of the essential principles of living as a Christian.

Purpose

The epistle of First John cannot be properly understood without the context of John’s gospel. John states the purpose for writing his gospel: “but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (Jn 20:31). Having taught his disciples about Jesus Christ and how to have life in His name, John then writes his epistle for two main purposes: “that which we have seen and heard we are reporting to you, that you also may be having fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ; and these things we are writing unto you that your joy may be filled full” (1Jn 1:3-4).

Contents

John writes because of his concern for some of his disciples who have not remained in fellowship with him and, therefore, they are no longer in fellowship with the Father and with Jesus Christ. John knows that, because of their departure from this fellowship, their joy will not be filled full at Christ’s coming. Thus, John writes to remind them of the exclusiveness of this fellowship: to maintain fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, a child of God must walk in the light, must confess his sins and seek forgiveness (whenever he sins), must continue in the words of Christ (which they had heard from the beginning of Christ’s

ministry), must obey Christ's commands (especially His command to love one another), and must continue to confess that Jesus is the Christ (the Son of God who came in the flesh).

The practical result of departing from this fellowship is that a believer would lose many privileges which God has given to him. John details some progressively negative results. If a believer hates his brother, he continues to walk blindly in darkness instead of walking in God's light (1Jn 2:9-11). If a believer loves the world and the world's things, there is no room in him for the love of the Father (1Jn 2:15-17). If he produces unrighteousness instead of the righteousness of the Law of Christ, a believer will lose his privilege of being called a "child of God" (3:1-12). If a believer continues to hate his brother, he is abiding in (Covenant) death instead of abiding in everlasting life (3:13-24). If a believer does not abide in Christ and obey His commands, he might not distinguish the spirits of God from the spirits of antichrist or distinguish the spirit of truth from the spirit of straying away (4:1-6). If a believer does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love (and be in fellowship with) God whom he has not seen (4:7-21). If a believer does not love those begotten ("true" sons) of God and does not demonstrate his love for God (by keeping His commandments), then he will not overcome the world because he is not one begotten (a "true" son) of God (5:1-5). If a believer stops believing in Jesus Christ, he does not have the Son of God abiding in Him, nor does he have everlasting life abiding in him (5:6-15). Although some of these exhortations are also stated positively to encourage faithful believers, these negative warnings are directed to believers who have become unfaithful and also to faithful believers so that they will not become unfaithful.

Underlying John's pastoral teaching, his points are directed to refute the false doctrine of those false teachers (spirits of antichrist) who are misleading others away from his fellowship. John's epistle builds upon four foundational points of doctrine. First is the witness that Christ, the Word of life, came in the flesh (of which they are witnesses), and yet, Christ is eternal, since He "was with the Father" (1:1-2). Second is the reality that if a believer is to continue in fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, he must also be in fellowship with those who teach what Christ taught from the beginning (1:3). Third is the promise that a believer's joy (at the Bema Seat of Christ) will be filled full if he continues to believe and obey Christ and, thereby, maintains fellowship with God the Father (1:4). Fourth is the fact God is light and in Him is not darkness, none at all (1:5).

John also refutes the following false doctrines: 1) that a believer may ignore the light of Christ's commands and still be in fellowship with God the Father (1:5-6); 2) that a believer may be in fellowship with the Father and yet be out of fellowship with those who teach what Christ taught (1:7; 5:4-13, 20); 3) that a believer might have no sin and that some might not sin at all (1:8-10; 5:16-19); 4) that Christ's sacrifice made propitiation for only the sins of believers but not for the sins of the whole world (2:2); 5) that a believer may be in fellowship with the Father and yet not keep His commandments (2:3-4; 5:1-3); 6) that a believer may abide in God's light and yet hate his brother (2:7-11; 3:13-24; 4:7-21); 7) that a believer may love the world and its things and at the same time love the Father (2:15-17); 8) that a believer may deny that Jesus is the Christ (or that He came in the flesh) and still abide in the Father (2:18-27; 4:1-6); 9) that a believer may be begotten of God and yet not produce righteousness (2:28-3:12); 10) that a believer may worship idols without consequence (5:21).

John teaches his followers how to maintain their fellowship with God the Father. 1) Understanding that God is light, believers should walk in the light, not in darkness (1:5-2:27). 2) Knowing that God's children should be intimate with Him, believers are to keep Christ's commandments (2:3-14). 3) Believers are not to be loving the world, but are to produce the will of God (2:15-17). 4) Being anointed by the Holy Spirit, believers should perceive the truth (2:18-23). 5) Believers are to be letting "what we heard from the beginning" to be abiding in us, so they can be abiding in the Son and the Father (2:24-27).

Next John teaches his followers to recognize the marks of one who is in fellowship with God the Father. 1) A believer in fellowship with God is producing righteousness (2:28-29). 2) A believer in fellowship with God is being called a child of God (3:1-3). 3) A believer in fellowship with God is not producing sin while abiding in Christ (3:4-9). 4) A believer in fellowship with God is keeping His commandments (e.g. "love your brother") (3:10-23). 5) A believer in fellowship with God is confessing that Christ came in the flesh (3:24-4:6). 6) A believer in fellowship with God will have God's love matured in him (4:7-4:19)

Finally John teaches his followers what results from maintaining fellowship with God the Father. 1) Maintaining fellowship with God results in a believer loving God without His commands being a burden (4:20-5:3). 2) Maintaining fellowship with God results in a believer overcoming the world by believing in Jesus Christ (5:4

-13). 3) Maintaining fellowship with God results in a believer having confidence that when he prays God is hearing him (5:14-17). 4) Maintaining fellowship with God results in a believer knowing that he is in Him who is the true God and everlasting life (5:18-20).

Outline of 1 John

Prologue (1:1-4)

- A. The Word of Life (1:1-2)
- B. Dual Purposes for Writing Letter (1:3-4)

I. How to Continue in Fellowship (1:5-2:27)

- A. Walking in the Light (1:5-2:2)
- B. Keeping Christ's Commandments (2:3-14)
- C. Not Loving the World (2:15-17)
- D. Perceiving the Truth (2:18-23)
- E. Letting "What We Heard from the Beginning" to be Abiding in Us (2:24-27)

II. What are Marks of Fellowship (2:28-4:6)

- A. Producing Righteousness (2:28-29)
- B. Being Called Children of God (3:1-3)
- C. Not Producing Sin While Abiding in Christ (3:4-9)
- D. Loving your Brother (Keeping His Commandments) (3:10-23)
- E. Confessing that Christ Came in the Flesh (3:24-4:6)

III. What are Results of Fellowship (4:20-5:20)

- A. Having God's Love Matured in Us (4:7-4:16)
- B. Having Boldness (not Fear) in the Day of Judgment (4:17-19)
- C. Loving God (His Commands are not a Burden) (4:20-5:3)
- D. Overcoming the World by Believing Jesus Christ (5:4-13)
- E. Having Boldness of Speech and He is Hearing us (5:14-17)
- F. Knowing that we are in Him who is the True God and Everlasting Life (5:18-20)

Epilogue (5:21)

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A. Life 1:1, 2 (2x)

B. Light 1:5, 7 (2x); 2:8, 9, 10

C. Love 2:5, 15; 3:1

A' Life 2:26; 3:14, 15

C' Love 3:16, 17; 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16 (3x), 17, 18 (3x); 5:3

A'' Life 5:11 (2x), 12 (2x), 13, 16, 20

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24 possibilities (“when/who/what/if evers”)

1. Whenever we are saying that we are having fellowship with Him, but we are walking in darkness, we are lying and are not producing the truth (1:6).
2. But whenever we are walking in the light as He is in the light, we are having fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing us from every sin (1:7).
3. Whenever we are saying that we are having no sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us (1:8).
4. Whenever we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9).
5. Whenever we are saying that we have not sinned, we are causing Him to be a liar, and His Word is not in us (1:10).
6. But whenever anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (2:1).
7. Now by this we are knowing that we have known Him, whenever we are keeping His commandments (2:3).
8. But whoever is keeping His word, truly in him the love of God has been matured (2:5).
9. Whenever one is loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him (2:15).
10. For if they were of us, they should have remained with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that they are not all of us (2:19).
11. If ever what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also shall be abiding in the Son and in the Father (2:24).
12. If ever you perceive that He is righteous, you are knowing that everyone produces righteousness has been begotten of Him (2:29).
13. Yet we have perceived that whenever He is made manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (3:2).
14. But whoever has this world’s life, and sees his brother having a need, and shuts up his affections from him, how is the love of God abiding in him? (3:17).
15. For if ever our heart knows something against us, God is greater than our heart, and He is knowing all things (3:20).
16. Beloved, whenever our heart does not know something against us, then we are having boldness toward God (3:21).
17. And whatever we might be asking we are receiving from Him, because we are keeping His commandments and are producing those things that are pleasing in His sight (3:22).
18. Whenever we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love is being matured in us (4:12).
19. Whoever might be confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, God is abiding in him, and he in God (4:15).
20. Whenever someone says that I am loving God, and is hating his brother, he is a liar (4:20).
21. Whenever we should request anything according to His will, He is hearing us (5:14).
- 22 & 23. And whenever we have perceived that He is hearing us, whatever we should request, we have perceived that we are having the requests which we have requested of Him (5:15).
24. Whenever anyone might perceive his brother sinning a sin which is not leading to death, he shall be requesting, and He shall give him life (5:16).

1 John

1 That which was from the beginning,^a which we have heard, which we have seen, that which our eyes looked upon and our hands handled, concerning the Word^b of life^c—² the life^c was manifested, and we have seen and are witnessing^d and are reporting^e to you that everlasting life^c which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we are reporting^e to you, in order that you also may be having fellowship^f with us, and indeed our fellowship^f *is* with the Father and with His Son^g Jesus Christ; ⁴ and these things we are writing to you in order that your joy^h may be filled full;ⁱ

⁵ So this is the promise^j which we have heard from Him; and we are proclaiming^k

^a ἀρχή —beginning, origin; first person in a series, leader (see text box below)
^b λόγος —word uttered by a living being, decree, command, declared thought, doctrine (Mt 5:32, 37; 7:24, 26, 28; 8:8, 16; Jn 1:1, 14; 2:22; 5:24, 38; 8:31; 1Jn 1:1, 10; 2:5, 7, 14; 3:18; 5:7; 3Jn 10; Rev 1:2; 19:13; 20:4)
^c ζωή —life, of everything living, of the fullness of life as God intended (Mt 7:14; 18:8, 9; 19:16, 17, 29; 25:46; Lk 1:75; Jn 1:4; 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:26, 39, 40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47, 48, 51, 53, 54, 63, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2, 3; 20:31; Acts 2:28; Rom 2:7; 5:10, 17, 18, 21; 6:4, 22, 23; 7:10; 8:2, 6, 10, 38; 11:15; 1Jn 1:1, 2; 2:25; 3:14, 15; 5:11, 12, 13, 16, 20; Rev 2:7, 10; 3:5)
^d μαρτυρέω —to be a witness (Mt 23:31; Lk 4:22; Jn 1:7; Acts 6:3; 1Tim 5:10; Heb 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39; 1Jn 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 8, 9, 10; 3Jn 3, 6, 12)
^e ἀπαγγέλλω —to bring/

to you that God is light^l and in Him is no darkness, not at all.

report a message (Mt 2:8; 8:33; Heb 2:12; 1Jn 1:2, 3)
^f κοινωνία —share what one has in anything, fellowship, intimacy, partnership (Acts 2:42; Rom 15:26; 1Cor 1:9; 10:16; 2Cor 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; 13:14; Gal 2:9; Eph 3:9; Phil 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; Phm 1:6; Heb 13:16; 1Jn 1:3, 6, 7)
^g υἱός —son, male offspring; one having the characteristics of his “father” or following another (Mt 5:9; 45; Jn 12:36; Rom 8:14, 19; Gal 3:7, 26; 4:6, 7; Heb 2:10; 12:5, 6, 7, 8; Rev 21:7; throughout 1Jn always refers to Jesus Christ)
^h χαρά —joy, gladness (Mt 2:10; 13:20, 44; 25:21, 23; 28:8; Lk 2:10; Jn 15:11; 16:20, 21, 22, 24; 17:13; Acts 20:24; Rom 14:17; 15:13; 2Cor 1:24; Gal 5:22; Phil 2:2; 4:1; 1Th 2:19, 20; Heb 13:17; 1Jn 1:4; 2Jn 12; 3Jn 4)
ⁱ πληρώω —to fill until full; to fulfill (Mt 1:22; 2:15; 3:15; 5:17; 13:48, 23:32; Mk 1:15; Jn 3:29; 15:11; Acts 5:3; 13:52; Rom 15:13, 14; Eph 3:19; Phil 2:2; Col 1:9; 4:12; 1Jn 1:4; 2Jn 12; Rev 3:2)
^j ἐπαγγελία —a promise, message (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39; 7:17; Rom 4:13, 14, 16, 20; 9:4, 8, 9; 15:8; Gal 3:14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 29; 4:23, 28; Eph 1:13; 2:12; 3:6; 6:2; 1Tim 4:8; Heb 4:1; 6:12, 15, 17; 7:6; 8:6; 9:15; 10:36; 11:9, 13, 17, 33, 39; 2Pet 3:4, 9; 1Jn 1:5; 2:25)
^k ἀναγγεῖν —to proclaim, announce (Mk 5:14, 19; Jn 4:25; 5:15; 16:13, 14, 15, 25; Acts 14:27; 15:4; 16:38; 19:18; 20:20; Rom 15:21; 1Pet 1:12; 1Jn 1:5)
^l φῶς —light, fire (Mt 4:16; 5:14; 16:6, 23; 10:27; 17:2; Mk 14:54; Lk 2:32; 16:8; Jn 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 3:19, 20, 21; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9, 10; 12:35, 36, 46; 1Jn 1:5, 7; 2:8, 9, 10)

1:1-4 Prologue

1:1 That which was from the beginning— the neuter pronoun directs the readers attention to the consistent message of the gospel of Christ (specifically the Gospel of John) which is **concerning the Word of Life**. That message (*Logos*) is “life.” The humanity of Christ is emphasized: “The *Logos* was made flesh and dwelt among us . . .” (Jn 1:14). The author is one of the witnesses who personally observed this message (the *Logos*; cf. Jn 1:1-2) firsthand through the senses of hearing, sight, and touch. There is a progression of intimacy from hearing to seeing, from seeing to examining (“look upon”), and from examining to handling. This sets the stage for the main idea of intimacy with God, especially, the fellowship of children with their Father and with His Son (the *Logos*). Christ is **the Word of Life**, referring to the covenantal choice which God sets before believers: “life” or “death” (Dt 30:15, 19), that is, fellowship with God or its loss.

- the beginning**— points in time referred to as “beginnings”
- 1) the beginning in eternity past when the Word was with God (Jn 1:1-2; 1Jn 2:13, 14; cf. Jn 6:64; 2Th 2:13)
 - 2) the beginning of creation (Mt 19:4,8; 24:21; Mk 10:6; Heb 1:10; 2Pet 3:4; cf. Jn 8:44; 1Jn 3:8)
 - 3) the beginning of the gospel of Christ (Mk 1:1; Lk 1:2; Heb 2:3; 1Jn 1:1; 2:7, 24; 3:11; 2Jn 5; cf. Jn 2:11; 8:25; 15:27; 16:4; Heb 5:12; 6:1)
 - 4) the beginning of the church and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15; Col 1:18)
 - 5) the beginning of sorrows, that is, the tribulation (Mt 24:8, 21; Mk 13:8, 19)
 - 6) the beginning of an individual’s faith in Christ (Heb 3:14)

1:2 the life was manifested— the humanity of Jesus Christ, “the Word made flesh” (Jn 1:14). The life of Christ is here being equated with everlasting life. Jesus explained, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me” (Jn 14:6). The life which Christ lived is the life which the believer is meant to live, so that he can have fellowship (and live) with the Father. **That everlasting life which was with the Father and was manifested to us** emphasizes Christ’s deity (Jn 1:1-2).

1:3 reporting . . . in order that you also may be having fellowship with us— the purpose of the report concerning the Word of life and everlasting life is so that these believers may continue having fellowship with them, with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. The basis of this fellowship is belief in Christ which results in justification by faith. Fellowship can only continue if a believer walks in the Light (1Jn 1:7). If fellowship is broken, there is a remedy (1Jn 1:9). These are not tests of whether or not one is a “true believer” or

has “genuine salvation” (such descriptions cause much confusion; either one is a believer or not). The author’s purpose is to help believers to continue their fellowship with God. Fellowship (κοινωνία) refers to the partnership God offers those who will do His will (obey His commands); accordingly, they will share in His rewards. If they lose this fellowship, this does not mean that they are not “true” believers, just that they are not true disciples (Jn 8:31).

- we are reporting/proclaiming to you:**
- 1) That which was from the beginning . . . the Word of life . . . that everlasting life which was with the Father and was manifested [in the flesh] to us (1Jn 1:1-2).
 - 2) in order that you also may be having fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1Jn 1:3) and in order that your joy may be filled full (1Jn 1:4).
 - 3) that God is light and in Him is no darkness, not at all (1Jn 1:5)

1:4 in order that your joy may be filled full— the second purpose is that their joy may be “filled full” (cf. Jn 15:11). This is not just so that they might be rejoicing. In the NT, joy is often used in connection to Christ’s Coming, and specifically, concerning His rewarding of His servants—either they “enter into His joy” (Mt 25:21, 23) or, conversely, they are filled with grief and “ashamed before Him as His coming” (1Jn 2:28; cf. Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; Heb 13:17).

1:5 this is the promise— the preceding, specifically, the Word of life, everlasting life, and fellowship with God the Father, **this is the promise which we have heard from Him**. In most translations, this word is always translated “promise” throughout the NT. Some translators have taken this word to refer to the “message” that follows, instead of the preceding “promise” (cf. 1Jn 2:25).

and we are proclaiming to you— the third doctrine of the prologue which will become foundational for the epistle’s teaching is **that God is light and in Him is no darkness, not at all**. A similar statement is made in the Psalms: “The Lord is my light and my salvation” (Ps 27:1; cf. 36:9). The prophets foretold that Christ would be a “light to the Gentiles” (Isa 42:6; 49:6; cf. 60:3). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (Jn 8:12; cf. Jn 1:4, 7-9; 9:5; 12:35-36; Acts 26:23; 2Cor 4:6; 1Pet 2:9; Rev 22:5). Thus, Paul encouraged believers to “walk as children of light” and “not as fools” (Eph 5:8-15; cf. Lk 16:8; Jn 12:35-36; Rom 13:12; 2Cor 6:14; Col 1:12-13; 1Th 5:5). Likewise, Christ’s disciples are to be light to the world (Mt 5:14; Acts 13:47). “He who produces the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been worked in God” (Jn 3:18-21). Important doctrine contradicting the “hidden truth” discovered by believers who are no longer believing that Jesus is the Christ.

⁶Whenever we are saying that we are having fellowship^a with Him, but we are walking^b in darkness, we are lying^c and are not producing^d the truth.^e ⁷But whenever we are walking in the light^f as He is in the light,^f we are having fellowship^a one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing^g us from every sin.^h ⁸Whenever we are saying that we are having no sin,^h we are leading ourselves astray,ⁱ and the truth^e is not in us. ⁹Whenever we confess^j our sins,^h He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and

^c ἀλήθεια –truth, what is true (Mt 22:16; Mk 5:33; 12:14, 32; Lk 20:21; 22:59; Jn 1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23, 24; 5:33; 8:32, 40, 44, 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:7, 13; 17:17, 19; 18:37, 38; Rom 1:18, 25; 2:2, 8, 20; 1Cor 13:6; 2Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7; Eph 1:13; 1Jn 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21; 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6; 2Jn 1, 2, 3, 4; 3Jn 1, 3, 4, 8, 12)

^f φῶς –light, fire (Mt 4:16; 5:14, 16; 6:23; 10:27; 17:2; Mk 14:54; Lk 2:32; 16:8; Jn 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 3:19, 20, 21; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9, 10; 12:35, 36, 46; 1Jn 1:5, 7; 2:8, 9, 10)

^e καθάρζω –to cleanse [a stain] (Mt 8:2, 3; 11:5; 23:25, 26; 2Cor 7:1; 1Jn 1:7, 9)

^h ἀρπαζω –no share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; a sin, error, violation of the law (Mt 1:21; 9:2; 26:28; Jn 1:29; Rom 3:20; 4:7, 8; 5:12; 8:10; 1Cor 15:3; 2Cor 11:7; Col 1:14; 1Jn 1:7, 8, 9; 2:2, 12; 3:4, 5, 8, 9; 4:10; 5:16, 17; Rev 1:5)

ⁱ πλανῶ –to lead astray, into error, to deceive (Mt 18:12, 13; 22:29; 24:4, 5, 11, 24; 1Jn 1:8; 2:26; 3:7; Rev 2:20)

^j ὁμολογῶ –to say the same thing, to confess, profess (Mt 7:23; 10:32; 1Jn

to cleanse^g us from all unrighteousness.^k ¹⁰Whenever we are saying that we have not sinned,^l we are causing^d Him to be a liar,^m and His wordⁿ is not being in us.

2 My little children, these things I am writing to you, so that you might not be sinning.^l But whenever anyone does sin,^l we have an Advocate^o with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2** And He Himself is the propitiation^p for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.^q

^k ἀδικία –a violation of a law, not righteous (Lk 13:27; 16:8, 9; Jn 7:18; Rom 1:18, 29; 2:8; 1Jn 1:9; 5:17)

^l ἀρπαζω –to not share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; to sin, err, violate the law (Mt 18:15, 21; 27:4; Lk 15:18, 21; Jn 5:14; 8:11; 9:2; Rom 2:12; 3:23; 5:12, 14, 16; 1Jn 1:10; 2:1; 3:6, 8, 9; 5:16, 18)

^m ψευδότης –a liar, a false or faithless person (Jn 8:44, 55; Rom 3:4; 1Tim 1:10; Titus 1:12; 1Jn 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10)

ⁿ λόγος –word uttered by a living being, decree, command, declared thought, doctrine (see margin, p. 5)

^o παράκλητος –called to one's side; an advocate, defender, helper (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1Jn 2:1)

^p ἱλασμός –an appeasing, propitiation (1Jn 2:2; 4:10)

^q Jn 3:16

^a κοινωνία –share what one has in anything, fellowship, intimacy, partnership (Acts 2:42; Rom 15:26; 1Cor 1:9; 10:16; 2Cor 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; 13:14; Gal 2:9; Eph 3:9; Phil 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; Phm 1:6; Heb 13:16; 1Jn 1:3, 6, 7)

^b περιπατέω –to make one's way; to live, conduct oneself (Mt 4:18; 9:5; 11:5; Mk 7:5; 12:38; Jn 7:1; 8:12; 11:10, 54; 12:35; Rom 6:4; 8:1, 4; 13:13; 14:15; 1Cor 3:3; Heb 13:9; 1Jn 1:6, 7; 2:6, 11; 2Jn 4, 6; 3Jn 3, 4; Rev 21:24)

^c ψεύδομαι –to lie; to deliberately speak falsehoods; to deceive by lying (Mt 5:11; Acts 5:3, 4; Rom 9:1; 2Cor 11:31; Gal 1:20; Col 3:9; 1Tim 2:7; Heb 6:18; James 3:14; 1Jn 1:6; Rev 3:9)

^d ποιῶ –to do, make, produce, cause, perform (Mt 1:24; 3:3, 8, 10; 4:19; 5:19; 32, 36, 44, 46, 47; 6:1, 2, 3; 7:12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 26; 1Jn 1:6, 10; 2:17, 29; 3:4, 7, 8, 10, 22; 5:10; 3Jn 5, 6, 10; Rev 1:6; 2:5; 21:5, 27; 22:2, 14, 15)

I. How to Continue in Fellowship

A. Walking in the Light 1:5-2:2

1:6 Whenever we are saying . . . –this phrase introduces three errant claims of believers (1:6, 8, 10) which are antithetical to what “we have heard from Him” (1Jn 1:5). **Having fellowship with Him** is defined by its antithesis, **walking in darkness**. Here, to walk in darkness means to live in the absence of the light provided by God. Light was one of God's provisions on the first day of creation (Gen 1:3-5); however, the Light specifically referred to here is the “true light” provided by the Messiah (Jn 1:4-9; cf. Heb 1:1-2). **Lying** is the opposite of **producing the truth**. Christ commanded His disciples to always speak the truth, “Let your communication be: yes, yes; no, no” (Mt 5:37). The meaning of the word ποιῶ is not “to practice [a habit]” but “to produce [fruit],” like an author writes a poem or a tree bears fruit. Jesus said that “every excellent tree produces good fruit, but a worthless tree produces corrupt fruit” (Mt 7:17). Note, John sets the word “truth” in (antithetical) parallel to the old Law of Moses (Jn 1:14).

1:7 But whenever we are walking in the light– “whenever” indicates another possibility: “walking in the light” is the antithesis of the previous-mentioned state of “walking in darkness” (1:6) and is the preferred state for a believer. **As He is in the light** describes the continuing state of God's existence (1Jn 1:5; cf. Rev 21:23; 22:5). While a believer is in this state (**walking in the light**) two things are true: 1) **we are having fellowship one with another**, and 2) **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing us from every sin** (cf. v.9).

1:8 that we are having no sin– This second errant claim denies the universally negative consequences of Adam's sin upon all humanity (as a new creation, sin is no longer in them). Those believers who make this claim **are leading [them]selves astray**. This claim undermines Paul's teaching in Romans 6 and 7 that sin resides in the flesh of every believer and remains a problem. In these circumstances, the **truth of Christ is not in [the errant believer]**, and he is leading himself astray.

1:9 Whenever we confess our sins– to confess sin is not just to feel guilty or sorry, but “to say the same thing” (ὁμολογῶ) which God says about sin. **He is faithful** means that God is keeping His word, His New Covenant promise to forgive sins (Jer 31:31-34) based on the sacrifice of Christ (1Jn 1:7). Even when we are not faithful, God

is faithful to Himself and keeps His word for His own name's sake (2Tim 2:11-13). God is not a “crooked judge” who does only what is convenient (Lk 18:1-8), but He will set things right because this is the right thing to do. Two types of wrongdoing are included here. **To forgive us our sins** means to remove from us the errors of our ways. **To cleanse us from all unrighteousness** means to purify us from our violations of God's Law so that we can once again be holy and of service to Him. A believer's sin can interrupt God's fellowship with His child, but cannot change the fact that he has been justified by faith. Continuing in sin not only puts a stop to a believer's fellowship with God, it can also change a believer's future status, affecting what rewards and privileges he will receive in the Kingdom of God.

1:10 saying that we have not sinned– this is a believer's denial of personal sin since he has become a new creation. By denying that he sins, he **causes [God] to be a liar**, in his own mind and the minds of those who hear him. Such a denial, however, proves that **His word is not being in [him]**, because **His Word**, declared unto us from the beginning, has not remained in [him] and changed him.

2:1 these things I am writing to you, so that you might not be sinning– one of the author's purposes is to keep these believers from sinning. God has made provision for the believer to have power over sin; first, by actively obeying Christ's commands (1Jn 3:4-9), and second, by not yielding one's body as instruments of unrighteousness (Rom 6:12-14; cf. 1Cor 15:33-34; Titus 2:11-12).

whenever anyone does sin– Even though believers are “new creations” (2Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15), as long as they are living in bodies corrupted by sin they will still be able to sin (Rom 7:14-25; cf. 6:5-14). **Advocate**– God has appointed Christ as the believers' defense attorney (Heb 4:14-5:11), to quash Satan's accusations (Rev 12:10).

2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins– the Advocate does not deny our guilt, but also submits that **propitiation** (atonement of sin, cf. Lk 18:13; Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 9:5; 1Jn 4:10) has already been made through His own sacrifice on the cross. Christ's propitiation **for our sins [was] not for ours only, but also for the whole world** (cf. Jn 1:29; 3:16; 4:42; 6:51; 12:47; 1Tim 2:6; 4:10; Heb 2:9; 1Jn 4:14). Some try to deny this fact by changing the definition of “world” or limiting the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice. If Christ's sacrifice did, in fact, propitiate the sins of the whole world, why are unbelievers still condemned? John answers this question in his gospel: “When [the Holy Spirit] has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe on Me” (Jn 16:8-9; cf. Jn 17:21;

³ Now by this we are knowing^a that we have known^a Him, whenever we are keeping^b His commandments.^c ⁴ The one saying, “I have known^a Him,” and is not keeping^b His commandments,^c he is a liar,^d and the truth^e is not in him. ⁵ But whoever is keeping His word,^f truly^g in him the love^h of God has been matured.ⁱ By this we are knowing^a that we are in Him. ⁶ The one saying he is abiding in Him, he himself ought^j also to walk^k just as He walked.^k

⁷ Brethren, I am not writing a new^l commandment^c to you, but an old commandment^c which you had from the beginning. The old commandment^c is the word^f which you heard from the beginning. ⁸ Again, a new^l commandment^c I am writing

5:42; 6:15, 69; 7:17, 26, 27, 49, 51; 8:27, 28, 32, 43, 52, 55; 10:14, 15, 27, 38; 14:7, 9; 17:3, 7, 8, 23, 25; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 18, 29; 3:1, 6, 16, 19, 20, 24; 4:2, 6, 7, 8, 13, 16; 5:2, 20; 2Jn 1; Rev 2:17)

^b τηρέω –to attend to carefully, to guard, keep (Mt 19:17; 23:3; 27:36, 54; 28:4, 20; Mk 7:9; Jn 2:10; 8:51, 52, 55; 9:16; 12:7; 14:5, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 20; 17:6, 11, 12, 15; Acts 15:5, 24; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5; 3:22, 24; 5:2, 3, 18)

^c ἐντολή –a command, order, charge (Mt 5:19; 15:3, 5; 19:17; 22:36, 38, 40; Lk 1:6; 18:20; 10:18; 12:49, 50; 13:34; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 7, 8; 3:22, 23, 24; 4:21; 5:2, 3; 2Jn 4, 5, 6; Rev 14:12; 22:14)

^d ψεύστης –a liar, a false or faithless person (Jn 8:44, 55; Rom 3:4; 1Tim 1:10; Titus 1:12; 1Jn 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10)

^e ἀλήθεια –truth, what is true (Mt 22:16; Mk 5:33; 12:14,

32; Lk 20:21; 22:59; Jn 1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23, 24; 5:33; 8:32, 40, 44, 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:7, 13; 17:17, 19; 18:37, 38; Rom 1:18, 25; 2:2, 8, 20; 1Cor 13:6; 2Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7; Eph 1:13; 1Jn 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21; 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6; 2Jn 1, 2, 3, 4; 3Jn 1, 3, 4, 8, 12)

^f λόγος –word uttered by a living being, decree, command, declared thought, doctrine (see p. 5)

^g ἀληθῶς –truly, of a truth, in reality, most certainly (Mt 14:33; 26:73; 27:54; Jn 1:47; 4:42; 6:14, 55; 7:26, 40; 8:31; 17:8; 1Th 2:13; 1Jn 2:5)

^h ἀγάπη –love, affection, benevolence (Mt 24:12; Lk 11:42; Jn 5:42; 13:35; 15:9, 10, 13; 17:26; Rom 5:5; 1Cor 13; Eph 1:4; 1Jn 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16, 17; 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18; 5:3; 2Jn 3, 6; 3Jn 6)

ⁱ τελειόω –to make complete, add what is lacking, accomplish, fulfill, bring to an end, mature (Lk 2:43; 13:32; Jn

4:34; 5:36; 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:9; Phil 3:12; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; James 2:22; 1Jn 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18)

^j ὀφείλω –to owe [a debt], to have a duty (Mt 18:28, 30, 34; 23:16, 18; Rom 13:8; 15:1, 27; 1Cor 7:3, 36; Heb 2:17; 5:3, 12; 1Jn 2:6; 3:16; 4:11; 3Jn 8)

^k περιπατέω –to make one’s way; to live, conduct oneself (Mt 4:18; 9:5; 11:5; Mk 7:5; 12:38; Jn 7:1; 8:12; 11:10, 54; 12:35; Rom 6:4; 8:1, 4; 13:13; 14:15; 1Cor 3:3; Heb 13:9; 1Jn 1:6, 7; 2:6, 11; 2Jn 4, 6; 3Jn 3, 4; Rev 21:24)

^l καινός –recently made, fresh, novel, [replacing something worn-out] (Mt 9:17; 13:52; 26:28, 29; Mk 1:27; Lk 22:20; Jn 13:34; 1Cor 11:25; 2Cor 3:6; 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 2:15; 4:24; Heb 8:8, 13; 9:15; 1Jn 2:7, 8; 2Jn 5; Rev 2:17)

^a γινώσκω –to get knowledge (learning or understanding) by experience, to

become intimate with someone (Mt 1:25; 6:3; 7:23; Jn 1:10, 48; 2:24, 25; 3:10;

Rom 11:15). In any case, God’s provision for man’s salvation which Christ paid for on the cross is not forced upon an unbeliever; if the unbeliever does not receive Christ, Christ’s payment is not accredited to him. Thus, the unbeliever is not justified by faith and therefore remains condemned, because he does not believe in Christ.

B. Keeping Christ’s Commandments 2:3-14

2:3 Now by this we are knowing that we have known Him, whenever we are keeping His commandments– uses two senses of the word γινώσκω (“know”). The first meaning is “to get knowledge (learning or understanding) by experience” The second meaning is “to become acquainted or intimate with someone” (describes degrees of friendship and intimacy; e.g., a man with his wife). Translating this verse more exactly: “Now by this we are understanding that we have become intimate with Him, whenever we are keeping His commandments.” The idea of τηρέω (“keeping”) is “to attend carefully, to guard from harm or loss” (Mt 19:17; 1Jn 5:18; cf. inheritance, 1Pet 1:4; angels, Jude 6; garments, Rev 16:15). This duty of a disciple involves more than mere compliance with His commandments (Mt 28:20), it points to the larger issue of carefully maintaining the terms of the New Covenant in order to obtain its blessings.

2:4 The one saying . . . is a liar, and truth is not in him– the phrase “the one saying” introduces a specific example of an errant believer known by the audience. To be a **liar** is to break another of Christ’s Commandments (truth, Mt 5:33-37). John uses the term “**truth**” as a code word (a metonymy) referring to the New Covenant; “the Law was given through Moses, but grace [5th Commandment] and truth [4th Commandment] came through Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17).

2:5 But whoever is keeping His word– set in parallel with “keeping His commandments.” Not theoretical knowledge, but experience.

truly in him the love of God has been matured– Christ’s Commandment of Love (Mt 5:43-48; cf. Jn 13:34-35) is the measure of one’s “true” (ἀληθῶς) spiritual maturity (cf. Jn 8:32-33). This Greek word speaks of reality; for example, when Christ walked on the water, the disciples realized: “Truly You are the Son of God” (Mt 14:33). This test demonstrates the reality of a believer’s spiritual maturity: whether or not he is **keeping** Christ’s commandments.

By this we are knowing that we are in Him– this is more than “knowing that we have become intimate with Him” (meaning that we have been in fellowship with Him in the past); very important, it is knowing that we are presently abiding in fellowship with Him (shorthand for fellowship: “**are in Him**,” and “abiding in Him,” 2:6).

2:6 The one saying he is abiding in Him– another specific example of the claims of a believer known by the audience. This one claims to be **abiding** (μένω) in Christ. This concept of “abiding” means “to

remain, not to depart” and often describes where one lives. In this context, it means not to leave the fellowship of the Apostle John and thereby, to remain in the fellowship of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (1:3). Previously, Christ introduced this concept of abiding/remaining in Him to His disciples. Believers are to produce fruit, but the only way they can do this is by remaining in Christ, as a branch lives attached to the vine (Jn 15:1-11). In this same passage, Jesus warns that those who do not remain in Him will be cast out (Jn 15:6). John connects the idea of a believer remaining in Christ with Christ’s words abiding in the believer (Jn 15:7). Thus, disciples who keep His commandments will abide in His love (Jn 15:10). Jesus then says something similar to what John writes in his introduction: “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn 15:11; cf. 1Jn 1:4). A believer’s joy will be made manifest when Christ judges his works. At that time, the faithful servants will “enter into the joy of [their] Lord.”

he himself ought also to walk just as He walked– this is an obligation (“ought”) of a believer, his duty; it is the definition of being a disciple, to walk in the steps of one’s master. Salvation is not just freedom from the corruption and bondage of the world system; salvation brings with it a duty to serve God, to walk in the light. The Israelites were repeatedly told to walk according to the Old Law given by Moses (Ex 16:4; Deut 5:33; 8:6; 10:12; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16; 1Kgs 3:14; 11:38; Ps 128:1; Jer 7:23; Zech 3:7). New Testament believers are to walk according to the New Law given by Jesus Christ and be His disciples: “That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom 8:4; cf. Mk 7:5; Jn 8:12; 12:35; Rom 6:4; 8:1; Gal 5:16, 25; 6:16; Eph 2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:2,8; Phil 3:16, 17; Col 1:10; 2:6; 1Th 2:12; 4:1; 1Jn 1:6, 7; 2:6; 2Jn 6; 3Jn 4). Like Christ, we also should do God’s will: “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (Jn 6:38). This is the essence (and test) of fellowship: “Can two walk together, unless they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

2:7 I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning– John is having some fun here, playing with the meanings of “old” and “new.” In the Apostles’ writings, “new” usually refers to something associated with the New Covenant. Here, John responds to the idea that nothing “new” should be add to the New Covenant message which they had heard from the beginning. Usually, “old” refers to the Old Covenant, but here John uses “old” to refer to the New Covenant message “which they had heard from the beginning” from Christ.

2:8 a new commandment I am writing to you, which thing is true in Him and in you– the **new commandment** is **true** in that it is “not hidden,” but is evident in **[Christ] and in you** (those who obey).

to you, which thing is true^a in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away,^b and the true^c light is already shining.^d

⁹The one saying he is in the light and is hating^e his brother, is in darkness until now. ¹⁰The one loving^f his brother is abiding in the light, and there is no stumbling block^g in him. ¹¹But the one hating^e his brother is in darkness and is walking^h in darkness, and he has not perceivedⁱ whither he is going, because the darkness blinded^j his eyes.

¹²I am writing to you, little children,^k because your sins have been forgiven you because of His name.

¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you have been knowing Him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,^l because you have overcome^m the evil one.ⁿ

I am writing to you, young children,^o because you have known the Father.

¹⁴I wrote to you, fathers, because you have been knowing Him who is from the beginning.

I wrote to you, young men,^l because you

^a ἀληθής –true, truth; *lit.* not hidden (Mt 22:16; Jn 3:33; 4:18; 5:31, 32; Jn 7:18; Phil 4:8; 1Jn 2:8, 27; 3Jn 12)

^b παράγω –to lead past, mislead (Mt 9:9, 27; 20:30; Mk 2:14; 15:21; Jn 8:59; 9:1; 1Cor 7:31; 1Jn 2:8, 17)

^c ἀληθινός –true, genuine [has the nature corresponding to the name] (Lk 16:11; Jn 1:9; 4:23, 37; 6:32; 7:28; 15:1; 17:3; 19:35 1Th 1:9; Heb 8:2; 9:24; 10:22; 1Jn 2:8; 5:20; Rev 3:7, 14; 6:10)

^d φαίνω –to bring forth into the light, cause to shine, appear (Mt 1:20; 2:7, 13, 19; 6:5, 16, 18; 9:33; 13:26; Jn 1:5; 5:35; Phil 2:15; Heb 11:3; 1Jn 2:8)

^e μισέω –to hate, to pursue with hatred; to love less, slight (Mt 5:43, 44; 6:24; 10:22; 24:9, 10; Lk 1:71; 6:22, 27; 14:26; 16:13; 19:14; 21:17; Jn 3:20; 7:7; 12:25; 15:18, 19, 23, 24, 25; 17:14; Rom 9:13; Eph 5:29; 1Jn 2:9, 11; 3:13, 15; 4:20)

^f ἀγαπάω –to love, have a preference for, wish well to (Mt 5:43, 44, 46; 6:24; 19:19; 22:37, 39; Mk 10:21; Lk 7:5, 42, 47; Jn 3:16, 19; 35; 8:42; 10:17; 11:5; 12:43; 13:1, 23, 34; 14:15, 21, 23, 24, 28, 31; 15:9, 12, 17, 23, 24, 26; 19:26; 21:7, 15, 16, 20; Rom 8:28; Heb 12:6; 1Jn 2:10, 15; 3:10, 11, 14,

are strong,^p and the word of God is abiding in you, and you have overcome^m the evil one.ⁿ

18, 23; 4:7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 19, 20, 21; 5:1, 2; 2Jn 1, 5; 3Jn 1; Rev 3:9)

^g σκάνδαλον –a noose, a snare, occasion to stumble (Mt 13:41; 16:23; 18:7; Lk 17:1; Rom 9:33; 11:9; 14:13; 16:17; 1Cor 1:23; 1Jn 2:10)

^h περιπατέω –to make one's way; to live, conduct oneself (Mt 4:18; 9:5; 11:5; Mk 7:5; 12:38; Jn 7:1; 8:12; 11:10, 54; 12:35; Rom 6:4; 8:1, 4; 13:13; 14:15; 1Cor 3:3; Heb 13:9; 1Jn 1:6, 7; 2:6, 11; 2Jn 4, 6; 3Jn 3, 4; Rev 21:24)

ⁱ εἶδω –to see, to perceive (Mt 2:2, 9, 10, 11, 16; 5:1, 16; 6:8, 32; 7:11; Jn 1:26, 31, 33, 39, 46, 47, 48, 50; 1Jn 2:11, 20, 21, 29; 3:1, 2, 5, 14, 15; 5:13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20; 3Jn 12, 14)

^j τυφλώω –to make blind, *fig.* to darken the mind (Jn 12:40; 2Cor 4:4; 1Jn 2:11)

^k τεκνίον –(diminutive of τέκνον, offspring) little children (Jn 13:33; Gal 4:19; 1Jn 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21)

^l νεανίσκος –a very young man (probably 14-28 years

of age; –ίσκος makes it a diminutive of νεανίας which describes men 24-40 years of age) boy, lad, young attendant, servant (Mt 19:20, 22; Mk 14:51; 16:5; Lk 7:14; Acts 2:17; 5:10; 1Jn 2:13, 14)

^m νικάω –to overcome, conquer, prevail (Lk 11:22; Jn 16:33; Rom 3:4; 12:21; 1Jn 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5; Rev 2:7, 11, 17; 3:5, 12, 21; 5:5; 6:2; 11:7; 12:11; 13:7; 15:2; 17:14; 21:7)

ⁿ πονηρός –(adj) toil and hardships; corruption, physical disease [see Mt 7:17, results of sin], ethical evil (Mt 5:11, 37, 39, 45; 6:13, 23; 7:11, 17, 18; 12:34, 35, 39, 45; 13:19, 38, 49; 15:19; 20:15; 22:10; 25:26; 1Jn 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18, 19; 2Jn 11; 3Jn 10; Rev 16:2)

^o παιδίον –(diminutive of παῖς, child, slave) young child (Mt 2:8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21; 14:21; 18:2, 3, 4, 5; Mk 10:15; Lk 18:16, 17; Jn 4:49; 16:21; 21:5; 1Cor 14:20; 1Jn 2:13, 18)

^p ισχυρός –(adj) strong, mighty (Mt 3:11; 12:29; 14:30; 1Cor 1:27; 4:10; 10:22; Heb 5:7; 1Jn 2:14)

because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining— a play on a word meaning “to pass away” or “to mislead.” The true, that is, genuine light has been shining ever since Christ appeared (Jn 1:9).

2:9 one saying he is in the light and is hating his brother, is in darkness until now— although this believer claims to be walking in the light (having fellowship with God), since he is hating his brother, he is actually walking in darkness until now. To which commandment is John referring? Although some point to Christ’s additional commandment to “love one another” (Jn 13:34-35), the initial emphasis here is on “not hating your brother” and more closely matches Christ’s emphasis in the First Commandment of Unity (Mt 5:21-26). Is it possible for a believer to walk in darkness? Yes; Paul told believers to stop “walking like the Gentiles” (Eph 4:17) and instead of being partners with those walking in darkness, they should walk as children of light (Eph 5:7-8). Furthermore, instead of walking foolishly, they should be wise and “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph 5:15-17; cf. 1Th 4:1-8). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. [The disciple] who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (Jn 8:12).

2:10 The one loving his brother is abiding in the light— the believer who wants to “remain” in the light, that is, in fellowship with God, will continue loving his brother, that is, remain in fellowship with his brother (cf. Commandment of Unity, Mt 5:21-26).

and there is no stumbling block in him— in His Commandment of Wisdom (Mt 5:27-30), Christ warned those who would be His disciples about stumbling blocks which would “offend” (σκανδαλιζώ) them or “cause them to stumble” (Mt 5:29, 30). Christ said that it would be better to remove whatever causes you to stumble than to be cast outside of the Kingdom of God onto the trash-heap of Gehenna.

2:11 walking in darkness, and he has not perceived whither he is going— the light of God’s truth brings understanding; on the other hand, suppressing God’s truth (Rom 1:18) causes foolish hearts to be darkened (Rom 1:21).

because the darkness blinded his eyes— it is not Satan blinding the eyes of the believer (as he does the mind of the unbeliever, 2Cor 4:4), but the darkness (after having seen the light). Similarly, Peter admonishes believers, “[you who] have been given . . . exceedingly great and precious promises [and have] escaped the corruption that is the world through lust, but for this very reason, [you should give] all

diligence to add to your faith virtue . . . For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins” (2Pet 1:4-9).

2:12-14 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you because of His name— the first stanza in a poem which presents a progressive parallelism in its descriptions and tenses. Four terms are employed to address the audience. The first term, τεκνίον (“little children”), describes “small offspring;” its diminutive form emphasizes that, as “babies,” they rely on their caregivers. At this point, there is little or no spiritual maturity, only that one’s sins have been forgiven, because he has been justified by faith and reconciled to God the Father (Rom 4:1-8).

I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning— Western logic might address fathers third (last), but a chiasmic structure places its emphasis at its center. Emphasized is that the fathers have known (and continue to know) Christ, who “was in the beginning with God” (Jn 1:1-2), and His life has declared the Father (Jn 1:16-18). A mature “father” has become intimate with Jesus because he “walk[s] just as He walked” (1Jn 2:6).

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the wickedness— a middle stage of a believer’s spiritual maturity, being νεανίσκος (“young men”) describes the age of apprentices in the family business who have not yet been “placed as sons” (υιοθεσία). They are actively working in the Father’s business. They have been tempted by the evil one and have (and continue to) overcome.

I am writing to you, young children, because you have known the Father— describes the initiation of spiritual maturity when a new believer begins to understand his duty to obey God’s commands. Here, “young children” (παιδίον, its root παῖω means “to strike”) refers to children who can respond to child-training (Heb 12:5-10, “instruction, chastening, discipline, correction”), having grown from being “little children” (τεκνίον, “infants”), who cannot. Every believer is reborn as a new creation, a child into God’s family, and is immediately known by God, having the right to call Him “Father” (Abba). A believer’s fellowship with the Father will continue as long as he remains obedient; if ever he sins, he can confess it, be cleansed, and thus remain in fellowship with God (1Jn 1:9).

¹⁵ Do not love^a the world^b or the things in the world.^b Whenever one is loving^a the world,^b the love^c of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world^b—the desires^d of the flesh,^e the desires^d of the eyes,^f and the pride^g of life^h—is not of the Father but is of the world.^b ¹⁷ And the world^b is passing away,ⁱ and the desires^d of it; but he who is producing^j the will^k of God is abiding forever.

¹⁸ Young children,^l it is a last^m hour;ⁿ and as you heard that antichrist^o is coming,^o even now many have become antichrists,^o by which we know that it is a last^m hour.ⁿ

^a ἀγαπάω –to love, have a preference for, wish well to (see p. 8)

^b κόσμος –a harmonious order, arrangement, system; the world, universe (Mt 4:8;

5:14; 13:35, 38; 16:26; 18:7; 24:21; 25:34; 26:13; Jn 1:9, 10, 29; 3:16, 17, 19; 4:42; 6:14, 33, 51; 7:4, 7; 8:12, 23, 26; 9:5, 39; 1Jn 2:2, 15, 16, 17; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 14, 17; 5:4, 5, 19; 2Jn 7; Rev 11:15; 13:8; 17:8)

^c ἀγάπη –love, affection, benevolence (Mt 24:12; Lk 11:42; Jn 5:42; 13:35; 15:9, 10, 13; 17:26; Rom 5:5; 1Cor 13; Eph 1:4; 1Jn 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16, 17; 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18; 5:3; 2Jn 3, 6; 3Jn 6)

^d ἐπιθυμία –desire, craving [from θυμός] (Mt 4:19; Lk 22:15; Jn 8:44; Rom 1:24; 6:12; 7:7, 8; 13:14; Gal 5:16, 24; Eph 2:3; 4:22; 1Jn 2:16, 17; 4:2, 3; 1Jn 7; Jude 16)

^e σὰρξ –flesh, the body (Mt 16:17; 19:5, 6; 26:41; Jn 1:13, 14; 1Tim 3:16; Heb 2:14; 1Pet 1:24; 4:1; 1Jn 2:16, 4:2, 3; 2Jn 7; Jude 7, 8, 23)

^f ὄφθαλμός –the eye (Mt

5:29, 38; 6:22, 23; 7:3, 4, 5; 1Jn 1:1; 2:11, 16; Rev 1:7, 14)

^g ἀλαζονεία –boasting, pride (James 4:16; 1Jn 2:16)

^h βίος –life [its period or course] (Mk 12:44; Lk 8:14, 43; 15:12, 30; 21:4; 1Tim 2:2; 2Tim 2:4; 1Jn 2:16; 3:17)

ⁱ παράγω –to lead past, mislead (Mt 9:9, 27; 20:30; Mk 2:14; 15:21; Jn 8:59; 9:1; 1Cor 7:31; 1Jn 2:8, 17)

^j ποιέω –to do, make, produce, cause, perform (see p. 6)

^k θέλημα –what one wishes, one's will, desire, pleasure (Mt 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31; 26:42; Gal 2:10; Eph 1:1, 4, 5, 9, 11; 2:3; 5:17; 2Tim 2:26; Heb 10:36; 1Pet 4:2; 1Jn 2:17; 5:14; Rev 4:11)

^l παιδίον –(diminutive of παῖς, child, slave) young

child (see p. 8)

^m ἔσχατος –extreme, last in a series (Mt 5:26; 12:45; 19:30; 20:8, 12, 14, 16; 27:64; Jn 6:39, 40, 44, 54, 7:37; 8:9; 11:24; 12:48; Acts 1:8; 1Jn 2:18; Jude 18)

ⁿ ὥρα –a certain, definite time or season (Mt 8:13; 9:22; 10:19; 14:14; 15:28; 17:18; 20:3, 5, 6, 9, 12; 24:36, 42, 44, 50; 25:13; 26:40, 45, 55; 27:45, 46; Jn 1:39; 2:4; 4:6, 21, 23, 52, 53; 5:25, 28, 35; 7:30; 8:20; 11:9; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:25; 17:1; 1Jn 2:18)

^o ἀντίχριστος –/lit, anti + anointing; an adversary of the Messiah (1Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2Jn 7)

I wrote to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning—the only progression in this stanza is in its tense going from present active (“am writing”) to aorist (“wrote”). These fathers already had the gospel of John which had introduced them to Christ and taught them to know **Him who is from the beginning**. This is the goal of spiritual maturity, to know Christ: “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, established in your faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving” (Col 2:6; cf. Phil 3:10-14). Here, John uses the word πατήρ (“father”) to refer to mature believers; whereas Paul, in his writings, might use υἱός (“sons,” Rom 8:14; 2Cor 6:18; Gal 3:26; 4:6, 7; cf. Heb 2:10; 12:5, 6, 7, 8). John reserves use of the term υἱός to refer to mature believers for only one occasion—to describe when a mature “son” will receive inheritance and authority from God the Father (Rev 21:7) on the day of “son placement” (υἱοθεσία, Rom 8:23; cf. Rom 8:15; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5).

I wrote to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God is abiding in you, and you have overcome the evil one—the progress in the spiritual maturity of these young men is that they are becoming “strong” in their faith; they are learning discipline, becoming well-fitted to endure affliction while bearing the name of Christ. They are fit because they have been trained and continue to abide in the Word of God (that which they heard from the beginning). Thus, they are able to continue overcoming the wickedness of this world.

Stages of Spiritual Maturity in 1 John

1. τεκνίον –**little children** (babies) who have their sins forgiven (2:12)
2. παιδίον –**young children** (children under instruction) who have known (and continue to know) God the Father (2:13)
3. νεανίσκος –**young men** (apprentices) who are strong, in whom the Word of God is abiding, who have (and continue to) overcome evil (2:14)
4. πατήρ –(mature) **fathers** who have known Him who is from the beginning [and therefore lead the training and discipleship of others] (2:14)

C. Not Loving the World 2:15-17

2:15 Do not love the world—the poem (presented above) has described those believers at four different stages of spiritual maturity who are walking in the light; now, John will describe believers who walk in darkness and fail to do the will of God. The verb ἀγαπάω (“to love”) describes one’s preference of one (thing) over another. Jesus taught this principle saying, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be loyal to

one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt 6:24). John explains: “**Whenever one is loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**” One activity excludes the other, there is not room for both in the heart of a believer.

2:16 For all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father—referring to the world system and its trappings which, since man sinned, have developed in an ungodly direction and are presently under the power of Satan (1Jn 5:19; cf. Jn 12:31; 14:30). Then, John specifically refers to three anti-God accessories of worldly philosophy.

the desires of the flesh—although “burning desires” (lusts) are not necessarily evil, **the flesh** has been corrupted by sin and results in selfishness; it cannot be trusted because fleshly appetites can enslave us (Rom 6:12-14, 19; 7:5). “The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and [vv] . . . so that you cannot produce the things you desire” (Gal 5:17),

the desires of the eyes—focuses on the sin of covetousness, seeing and desiring to have what does not belong to us and being willing to do whatever it takes to get it.

the pride of life—pride was the sin which caused Satan’s fall. A braggart defines himself by his expensive possessions, his smart investments, his high rank, and his prestigious work. The result is a self-sufficiency which does not rely on God.

2:17 the world is passing away—a play on words: “the world and its desires are ‘misleading’ us.” Peter confirms that the world and everything in it will be destroyed by fire (2Pet 3:10-13).

he who is producing the will of God is abiding forever—the contrast here is that the desires of the flesh will end when Earth is destroyed, while the one **producing the will of God is abiding [in His fellowship] forever.**

D. Perceiving the Truth 2:18-23

2:18 Young children, it is a last hour—certainly, the world is passing away, thus it is “a” last hour (not “the” last hour). The time between Christ’s First Coming and His return is generally referred to as “last days” (Isa 2:2; Acts 2:17; 2Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; James 5:3; 2Pet 3:3). The Jews had looked forward to this messianic age. In his Gospel, John reports that this “hour” had come (Jn 2:4; 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:25, 32; 17:1).

and as you heard that the Antichrist is coming—one sign of the end time is that the person described as “**the Antichrist**” will during the tribulation become the evil ruler who under Satan’s influence seeks to set up a world empire in opposition to God (Dan 8:9-12; 9:26-27; 11:30-45; 12:11; Mt 24:15; 2Th 2:3-10; Rev 13:1-8; 19:19-20; 20:10).

even now many have become antichrists, by which we know that it is a last hour—another sign of the end time is that false christs and false teachers will appear (Mt 7:15-16; 24:23-25; Mk 13:22; Acts 20:29-30; 2Pet 2:1; cf. Rom 16:17-18; Gal 1:7-8; Eph 4:14-15; 5:11; Col 2:8; 1Tim 1:3-4; 6:3-5; 2Tim 4:2-4; Titus 3:10-11; 1Jn 4:1-3; Jude 4).

¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they were of us, they should have continued to abide with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest that they are not all of us.

²⁰And you are having an anointing^a from the Holy One,^b and you have perceived all things. ²¹I did not write to you because you have not perceived the truth,^c but because you have perceived it and because no lie^d is of the truth.^c

²²Who is a liar,^e if *it is* not the one denying^f that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist,^g the one denying^f the Father and the Son. ²³Every one denying^f the Son is not having^h the Father either; the one confessingⁱ the Son is having^k the Father also.

²⁴Therefore, you, let that which you heard from the beginning be abiding in you. If ever what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also shall be

^a χρίσμα —anything smeared [with oil], anointed (1Jn 2:20, 27); root: χρίω —to anoint, *lit.* to touch with the hand (Lk 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; 2Cor 1:21; Heb 1:9)

^b ἅγιος —(adj) holy [one], set apart [for God] (Mt 1:18, 20; 3:11; 4:5; 7:6; Jn 1:33; Acts 1:8, 16; 1Jn 2:20; 5:7)

^c ἀλήθεια —truth, what is true (see margin, p. 6)

^d ψεύδος —a lie a conscious intentional falsehood (Jn 8:44; Rom 1:25; Eph 4:25; 2Th 2:9, 11; 1Jn 2:21, 27; Rev 21:27; 22:15)

^e ψεύστης —a liar, a false or faithless person (Jn 8:44, 55; Rom 3:4; 1Tim 1:10; Titus 1:12; 1Jn 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10)

^f ἀρνέομαι —*lit.* to say...not, to deny, contradict (Mt 10:33; 26:70, 72; Lk 12:9; 22:57; Jn 1:20; 18:27, 27; Acts 3:13, 14; 7:35; 2Tim 2:12, 13; Titus 1:16; 2Pet 2:1; 1Jn 2:22, 23; Rev 3:8)

^g ἀντίχριστος —*lit.*, anti + anointing; an adversary of the Messiah (1Jn 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2Jn 7)

^h ἔχω —to have, own, pos-

abiding in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise^j which He promised us—everlasting life.

²⁶These things I wrote to you concerning the ones who are leading you astray.^k

²⁷But the anointing^a which you received from Him is abiding in you, and you are having no need^l that anyone should teach^m you; but as the same anointing^a is teaching^m you concerning all things, and is

sess (Mt 1:18, 23; 3:4, 9, 14; 5:23; 1Jn 1:3, 6, 7, 8; 2:1, 7, 20, 23, 27, 28; 3:3, 15, 17, 21; 4:16, 17, 18, 21; 5:10, 12, 13, 14, 15; 2Jn 5, 9, 12; 3Jn 4)

ⁱ ὁμολογέω —to say the same thing, to confess, profess (Mt 7:23; 10:32; 1Jn 1:9; 2:23; 4:2, 3, 15)

^j ἐπαγγελία —a promise, message (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39; 7:17; Rom 4:13, 14, 16, 20; 9:4, 8, 9; 15:8; Gal 3:14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 29; 4:23, 28; Eph 1:13; 2:12; 3:6; 6:2; 1Tim 4:8; Heb 4:1; 6:12, 15, 17;

7:6; 8:6; 9:15; 10:36; 11:9; 13, 17, 33, 39; 2Pet 3:4, 9; 1Jn 1:5; 2:25)

^k πλανάω —to lead astray into error; to deceive (Mt 18:12, 13; 22:29; 24:4, 5, 11, 24; 1Jn 1:8; 2:26; 3:7; Rev 2:20)

^l χρεία —need, necessity, duty (Mt 3:14; 6:8; 9:12; Jn 2:25; 13:10, 29; 16:30; Heb 10:36; 1Jn 2:27; 3:17)

^m διδάσκω —to teach, instruct by discourse (Mt 4:23; 5:2, 19; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 15:9; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55; 28:15, 20; Jn 7:14, 28, 35; 1Jn 2:27)

2:19 They went out from us— they were in fellowship, then, voluntarily, they left the fellowship of John (and the Father and the Son).

that they might be made manifest that they are not all of us— how should “us” be defined? Generally, those believers who abide (remain) in fellowship with the Father; specifically, those believers who “should be called children of God” (1Jn 3:1). It is possible that the phrase, **they are not all of us**, implies that some (**not all**) who left might eventually come back into the fellowship. John later expresses one of the important reasons a believer should abide (“remain in fellowship”) in Him: so “that when He is made manifest, we might be having boldness and might not shrink in shame from Him in His coming” (1Jn 2:28).

2:20 And you are having an anointing from the Holy One— those who had left claimed higher knowledge than John and the Apostles. John explains that all of them, even the “little children” in the congregation have been anointed by the Holy Spirit (contrast w/ Rom 8:17).

I did not write to you because you have not perceived the truth, but because you have perceived it— the Holy Spirit enables someone to be taught by God (Isa 54:13; Jer 31:34; Jn 6:45). When someone believes the gospel and receives that which was heard from the beginning” (1Jn 1:1), he has been enabled to **perceive the truth**. This does not mean that a believer has a built-in “truth detector.”

2:21 because no lie is of the truth— the source of truth (e.g. the New Law) is the character of God. God has revealed truth to them and no lie comes from the God of truth (cf. Jn 1:17).

2:22 Who is a liar, if it is not the one denying that Jesus is the Christ— a rhetorical question followed by its answer. The liars are denying that (Jesus) Christ came in the flesh (1Jn 4:2-3; 2Jn 7).

This one is the antichrist, the one denying the Father and the Son— God gave witness of the Son (Jn 5:31-36; 8:18; 1Jn 5:9); thus their false teaching is in opposition to God and makes a mockery of the commands which He gave through Jesus Christ. A believer can “walk in darkness,” “not produce the truth” and even “lead himself astray” (1Jn 1:6-8). These are not tests of so-called “genuine believers,” these are stumbling blocks of which believers must be warned.

2:23 Every one denying the Son is not having the Father either— to “have (ἔχω, “posses”) the Father” refers to being in fellowship with the Father which necessarily includes fellowship with the Son. In fact, such fellowship is available only through the Son (Jn 14:6; 1Tim 2:5; Heb 2:10; 4:14-16; 5:8-9; 7:18-19, 25; 8:6; 12:2, 23-24).

the one confessing the Son is having the Father also— denying the Son is contrasted with **confessing the Son**. Telling others “Jesus is the Christ” is necessary to have fellowship with God now and in the Kingdom of God (Mt 10:32-33; Lk 12:8; Rev 3:5; cf. Jn 9:22; 12:42).

E. Abiding in “What You Heard from the Beginning 2:24-27

2:24 Therefore, you, let that which you heard from the beginning be abiding in you— direct address with a command describing their responsibility to continue in the truth which they **heard from the beginning**. Similarly, Christ charges His disciples to abide in Him as the true vine (Jn 15:1-4) The Word is active, “alive and powerful,” but we must continue to read and “study” the Word if it is to “renew our hearts” (Rom 12:1-2; 2Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12). Although the Word is alive and changing the believer, it is not changing, but remains that which we have **heard from the beginning**.

If ever— a possibility which is expected of believers.

2:25 And this is the promise which He promised us—**everlasting life**— if the believer fulfills his responsibility, then God will keep His promise. **Everlasting life** is the gift given by God to everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ (Jn 3:16) and actually begins when a believer is made a new creation (2Cor 5:17). The question is whether or not the believer will “fill” his everlasting life “full” of joy (1Jn 1:4; cf. Mt 25:21, 23; Jn 10:10; 15:11).

2:26 These things I wrote to you— the Aorist tense denoting action without reference to time. He has written to them earlier, and he is writing to them now to warn them of the danger they are facing if they depart from God’s fellowship by following these false teachers.

the ones who are leading you astray— this participle describes the false teachers who, having left the fellowship, are **leading [them] astray** by teaching that Christ is not the only way to come to the Father. Earlier, John warned believers not to lead themselves astray by thinking that they have no sin (1Jn 1:8); later he will warn them against being led astray by one who does not produce righteousness (1Jn 3:7; cf. Mt 7:15-20).

2:27 But the anointing which you received from Him is abiding in you— a benefit of remaining in fellowship with the Father is that the anointing of the Holy Spirit continues to reside within the believer. The active presence of the Holy Spirit is able to instruct the believer concerning the truth. What is the truth? That which they had heard from the beginning which is necessary for a believer to have fellowship with the Father. Is this letter from John teaching them new truth? No, in that he is reminding them of the truth which Christ taught. Yes, in that, if they are out of fellowship, they might not be listening to the Holy Spirit within. The Holy Spirit does not add to God’s Word, but is a witness to its truth.

true,^a and is not a lie,^b and even as it taught you, you shall be abiding in Him.

²⁸ And now, little children,^c be abiding in Him, that whenever He is made manifest, we might be having boldness^d and might not shrink in shame^e from Him in His coming.^f ²⁹ If ever you perceive that He is righteous,^g you are knowing that everyone producing^h righteousnessⁱ has been begotten^j of Him.

3 Be perceiving what manner of love^k the Father has given to us, that we might be called^l children^m of God! Therefore the world is not knowingⁿ us, because it did not knowⁿ Him. ² Beloved,^o now we are children^m of God; and it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be, yet we have perceived

^a ἀληθής –true, truth; *lit.* not hidden (Mt 22:16; Jn 3:33; 4:18; 5:31, 32; Jn 7:18; Phil 4:8; 1Jn 2:8, 27; 3Jn 12)

^b ψεύδος –a lie a conscious intentional falsehood (see margin, p. 7)

^c τέκνιον –little children [diminutive of τέκνον, offspring] (see margin, p. 8)

^d παρρησία –*lit.*, all + speech, meaning speaking freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; 2Cor 7:4; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35; 1Tim 3:13; 1Jn 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14)

^e αἰσχύνω –to disfigure, dishonor, make ashamed (Lk 16:3; 2Cor 10:8; Phil 1:20; 1Pet 4:16; 1Jn 2:28)

^f παρουσία –presence, coming arrival (Mt 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1Cor 15:23; 16:17; 2Cor 7:6, 7; 10:10; Phil 1:26; 2:12; 1Th 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2Th 2:1, 8, 9; James 5:7, 8; 2Pet 1:16; 3:4, 12; 1Jn 2:28)

^g δίκαιος –just, righteous,

observant of the law (Mt 1:19; 5:45; 9:13; 10:41; 13:17, 43, 49; 20:4, 7; 23:28, 29, 35; 25:37, 46; 27:19, 24; Jn 5:30; 7:24; 17:25; Eph 6:1; 1Jn 1:9; 2:1, 29; 3:7, 12)

^h ποιέω –to do, make, produce, cause, perform (see margin, p. 6)

ⁱ δικαιοσύνη –the virtue, quality, or state of one who is righteous [δίκαιος] (Mt 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:33; 21:32; Lk 1:75; Jn 16:8, 10; Rom 1:17; 1Jn 2:29; 3:7, 10)

^j γεννάω –to be begotten of [men who father children] (Mt 1:2, 16, 20; Lk 1:35; Jn 1:13; 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 18:37; Acts 13:33; 1Cor 4:15; 2Tim 2:23; Heb 1:5; 5:5; 1Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)

^k ἀγάπη –love (see margin, p. 9)

^l καλέω –to call, to invite, to bear a title (Mt 1:21, 23, 25; 2:7, 15, 23; 4:21; 5:9, 19; 9:13; 10:25; 20:8; 21:13; 22:3, 4, 8, 9, 43, 45; 23:9, 10; 25:14; 1Jn 3:1)

^m τέκνον –offspring, children (Mt 2:18; 3:9; 7:11; 9:2; 10:21; 11:19; 15:26; 18:25; 19:29; 21:28; Jn 1:12; 8:39; 11:52; Rom 8:16, 17, 21; Phil 2:15; 2Pet 2:14; 1Jn 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2; 2Jn 1, 4, 13; 3Jn 4)

ⁿ γινώσκω –to get knowledge (learning or understanding) by experience, to become intimate with someone (Mt 1:25; 6:3; 7:23; Jn 1:10, 48; 2:24, 25; 3:10; 5:42; 6:15, 69; 7:17, 26, 27, 49, 51; 8:27, 28, 32, 43, 52, 55; 10:14, 15, 27, 38; 14:7, 9; 17:3, 7, 8, 23, 25; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 18, 29; 3:1, 6, 16, 19, 20, 24; 4:2, 6, 7, 8, 13, 16; 5:2, 20; 2Jn 1; Rev 2:17)

^o ἀγαπητός –beloved, dear, favorite (Mt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Lk 3:22; 9:35; 20:13; 1Jn 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; 3Jn 1, 2, 5, 11)

II. Marks of Fellowship A. Producing Righteousness 2:28-29

2:28 And now, little children, be abiding in Him— another imperative, revealing it is within their power to remain in fellowship with the Father.

that whenever He is made manifest, we might be having boldness and might not shrink in shame from Him in His coming— like the other NT writers, John expects the soon return of Christ. The word παρρησία often denotes boldness in one's witness for Christ, but here it is boldness in Christ's presence (see note for 5:14). The question is whether a believer will have bold confidence when standing before Christ or whether he will hide in shame (or if this verb is passive instead of middle, will he be put to shame). The word παρουσία ("coming") is normally used of the arrival of a government official and the celebrations which accompany his arrival.

2:29 If ever you perceive that He is righteous— this possibility is expected: a believer should perceive that Christ was righteous (that He did God's will). This understanding is the key to Christlikeness.

you are knowing that everyone producing righteousness has been begotten of Him— with this perception comes the understanding that a begotten son (see "true son" below) of God, having godly character formed in him, produces righteousness. Every believer is supposed to produce righteousness. In fact, belief in Christ makes a believer righteous (he is given a gift of righteousness in justification by faith). However, after becoming a child of God, a believer earns righteousness by doing the will of God (which for NT believers means obeying the Law of Christ, cf. Mt 5:19-20; Gal 6:2). Perception of this positive mark allows one to recognize others who have been begotten of Him (a "true son," cf. 1Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; cf.

υιοθεσία, Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5). However, when a believer is immature, sinning, walking in darkness, or loving the world, he is not imitating Christ, the "only begotten" (cf. 1Jn 4:9) Son of God, and is not being a "true son" (one begotten of God).

B. Being Called Children of God 3:1-3

3:1 Be perceiving what manner of love the Father has given to us that we might be called children of God— although written as an imperative, in a way, John is asking if we understand this great truth. How could God's love be expressed in any greater terms than to invite ("call") believers to be His children? The word ἵνα points to the purpose of God's love: **that we might be called children of God**. The verb is in the Subjunctive mood which denotes "possibility and potential" (this is a third class condition: the purpose might not come into being if the conditions are not met).

Therefore the world is not knowing us, because it did not know Him— since we are offspring of God, the world has no desire to be intimate friends with us. The world lives in darkness and those who walk in darkness cannot enjoy fellowship with those who are like God, for "God is light and in Him is no darkness, not at all" (1Jn 1:5). "What fellowship can light have with darkness?" (2Cor 6:14). To have fellowship with (walk in) darkness, a believer has to leave God's fellowship. Persecution by the world might be unpleasant, but approval by the world should be feared. The world is not a friend of God nor of His children (Jn 15:18-25; 17:14-16).

3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God— calling them "Beloved" John is practicing what he is preaching. "Now" (νῦν with a present tense verb = "soon," Lk 2:29; Jn 12:31; 16:5; 17:13; Acts 26:17, or can state a conclusion based on present circumstances, Lk 11:39; Col 1:24; 1Jn 2:28). The fact is that a believer is already a new creation, having been reborn as offspring ("a child") of God. As soon as someone is reborn as a baby (τέκνιον) in God's family, he is forgiven of his sin and has fellowship with God the Father (1Jn 2:12). As a "young" believer (παιδίον) begins to obey and grow in his spiritual life, he becomes more intimate with ("knows") the Father (1Jn 2:13).

and it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be, yet we have perceived that whenever He is made manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is— anticipates the day that Christ will appear in glory, when believers will be changed to be like Him and share His glory (Jn 17:1-5, 24; Rom 8:18-30; 1Cor 15:49; Phil 3:20-21). This privilege that we are now "called" offspring of God does not minimize the fact that we are not yet like Him and that we still need to be transformed. Nonetheless, there remains a question as to what we shall be, . . . whenever He is made manifest, we shall be like Him—but to what degree? The degree to which a believer is transformed in this life will become permanent when Christ appears and judges his works (1Cor 3:9-15; Rev 22:11-12).

Four Terms Describing Christ's Coming:

1. παρουσία— the presence (arrival) of a government official and the celebrations which accompany his arrival; specifically refers to Christ's second coming in glory to rule the earth (1Jn 2:28; alluded to in 1:4; 3:2; 4:17).
2. φανερόω— to appear, to manifest; can refer to any manifestation of Christ whether in the flesh, in His glory, or otherwise (Mk 16:12, 14; Jn 1:31; 21:14; Col 3:4; 1Tim 3:16; 2Tim 1:10; Heb 9:26; 1Pet 1:19-20; 5:4; 1Jn 1:2; 2:28; 3:2, 5, 8; cf. Mt 24:30; Mk 16:9)
3. ἀποκάλυψις— a laying bare, making naked, [expose, disclose]; Christ's revelation (Lk 2:32; 1Cor 1:7; 1Pet 1:7, 13; 4:13; Rev 1:1)
4. ἐπιφαίνω— to show or give light; Christ becomes the light of the world (Lk 1:79; Titus 2:11; 3:4; ἐπιφάνεια, 2Th 2:8; 1Tim 6:14; 2Tim 1:10; 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; cf. Acts 2:20)

that whenever He is made manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And every one having this hope^a in Him is purifying^b himself, just as He is pure.^c

⁴ Every one producing^d sin^e also is producing^d lawlessness,^f for sin^e is lawlessness.^f ⁵ And you have perceived that He was manifested so that He might take away^g our sins,^e and in Him there is no sin.^e ⁶ Every one abiding in Him is not sinning.^h Every one sinning^h has not yet seenⁱ Him nor has known^j Him.

⁷ Little children, let no one be leading you astray.^k The one producing^d righteousness^l is righteous,^m just as He is righteous.^m ⁸ The one producing^d sin^e is of the adversary,ⁿ for the adversaryⁿ is sinning^o from the beginning.^p For this *purpose* the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy^q the

^a ἐλπίς —expectation, hope (Acts 2:26; 16:19; 23:6; Rom 4:18; Heb 3:6; 6:11, 18; 7:19; 10:23; 1Jn 3:3)

^b ἁγνίζω —to cleanse, purify [ceremonially; morally] (Jn 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18; James 4:8; 1Pet 1:22; 1Jn 3:3)

^c ἄγνός —sacred, pure [from carnality], chaste (2Cor 7:11; 11:2; Phil 4:8; 1Tim 5:22; Titus 2:5; James 3:17; 1Pet 3:2; 1Jn 3:3)

^d ποιέω —to do, make, produce, cause, perform (Mt 1:24; 3:3, 8, 10; 4:19; 5:19, 32, 36, 44, 46, 47; 6:1, 2, 3; 7:12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 26; 1Jn 1:6, 10; 2:17, 29; 3:4, 7, 8, 10, 22; 5:10; 3Jn 5, 6, 10; Rev 1:6; 2:5; 21:5, 27; 22:2, 14, 15)

^e ἁμαρτία —no share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; a sin, error, violation (see margin, p. 6)

^f ἀνομία —lit., no + law; the condition of one without law; violation or contempt of the law (Mt 7:23; 13:41; 23:28; 24:12; Rom 4:7; 6:19; 2Cor

6:14; 2Th 2:7; Titus 2:14; Heb 1:9; 8:12; 10:17; 1Jn 3:4)

^g αἰρῶ —to lift up, bear, carry away (Mt 4:6; 9:6, 19; 11:29; 13:12; 14:12, 20; 15:37; 16:24; Jn 15:2; 19:15, 31, 38; Eph 4:31; Col 2:14; 1Jn 3:5)

^h ἁμαρτάνω —to not share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; to sin, err, violate the law (Mt 18:15, 21; 27:4; Lk 15:18, 21; Jn 5:14; 8:11; 9:2; Rom 2:12; 3:23; 5:12, 14, 16; 1Jn 1:10; 2:1; 3:6, 8, 9; 5:16, 18)

ⁱ ὁράω —to see [with the eyes] (Jn 1:18, 34; 3:11, 32; 4:45; 5:37; 6:2, 36, 46; 8:38, 57; 9:37; 14:7, 9; 15:24; 19:35; 20:18, 25, 29; Acts 7:44; 1Jn 1:1, 2, 3; 3:6; 4:20; 3Jn 11; Rev 18:18)

^j γινώσκω —to get knowledge (learning or understanding) by experience, to become intimate with someone (Mt 1:25; 6:3; 7:23; Jn 1:10, 48; 2:24, 25; 3:10; 5:42; 6:15, 69; 7:17, 26, 27, 49, 51; 8:27, 28, 32, 43, 52, 55; 10:14, 15, 27, 38; 14:7, 9; 17:3, 7, 8, 23, 25; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 18, 29; 3:1, 6, 16, 19, 20, 24; 4:2, 6, 7, 8, 13, 16; 5:2, 20; 2Jn 1;

Rev 2:17)

^k πλανᾶω —to lead astray, into error, to deceive (Mt 18:12, 13; 22:29; 24:4, 5, 11, 24; 1Jn 1:8; 2:26; 3:7; Rev 2:20)

^l δικαιοσύνη —the virtue, quality, or state of one who is righteous [δικαίος] (see margin, p. 11)

^m δίκαιος —just, righteous, observant of the law (see margin, p. 11)

ⁿ διάβολος —slanderer, false accuser (Mt 4:1, 5, 8, 11; 13:39; 25:41; Jn 6:70; 8:44; 13:2; 1Jn 3:8, 10; Jude 9; Rev 2:10; 12:9, 12; 20:2, 10)

^o ἁμαρτάνω —to not share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; to err, violate the law (see margin, p. 12)

^p ἀρχή —beginning, origin; first person in a series, leader (see note, p. 5)

^q λύω —to loose, untie, set free, undo, destroy (Mt 5:19; 16:19; 18:18; 21:2; Jn 1:27; 2:19; 5:18; 7:23; 10:35;

3:3 And every one having this hope in Him— applies to those believers who have the hope of being like Christ when He appears.

is purifying himself, just as He is pure— here, John states the contingency of the third class condition presented in 1 John 3:1 (“that we might be called children of God”), the believer must act to **purify himself** (of course the Holy Spirit who dwells inside believers was given to help us, Jn 14:1, 26; 15:26; 16:7; cf. 1Jn 2:1). The continuing action of **purifying** oneself refers to the maturation (progress of discipleship) of a believer as he conforms to the image of Christ. One who has this hope will commit himself to walking in the light and maintaining his fellowship with the Father. How does a believer purify himself? Peter explains that purification comes through obedience: “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart” (1Pet 1:22). Being a child of God and having the hope of becoming like Christ when He comes provide motivation for the believer to obey God’s will now, during this lifetime (2Cor 7:1; Phil 3:12-14).

C. Not Producing Sin While Abiding in Christ 3:4-9

3:4 Every one producing sin also is producing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness— “sin” can be defined as not meeting the standard expected by the law: Paul says, “I would not have known sin except through the law” (Rom 7:7; cf. 5:12-14). “**Lawlessness**” describes the rejection of God’s Law, a disregard for His commands (will) as having no authority over someone. John explains that the one **producing** [the fruit of] **sin** is to some degree also **producing lawlessness**. Thus to disobey God’s commandment to “love one another” is to break all of His commandments (James 2:10) and become lawless. This is true of the New Covenant Law just as it was of the Old.

3:5 And you have perceived that He was manifested so that He might take away our sins— these believers already understand this truth: Christ died to **take away** their sin. Before Christ’s death, a believer’s sin was not imputed to him (Rom 4:7-8); however, Christ lived a sinless life so that when He died, He could bear the sins of the world and **take away our sins**.

and in Him there is no sin— although He bore away our sin, sin has never existed in Christ.

3:6 Every one abiding in Him is not sinning— as long as a believer remains (abides) in fellowship with God, he is not sinning (cf. v. 9).

Every one sinning has not yet seen Him nor has known Him— the believer who continues to commit sin has not **seen** Christ’s life (does not understand the promise given unto us, 1Jn 1:1-5), and most definitely has not **known Him** as an intimate friend (cf. Jn 15:14-15).

Although natural human eyes have not seen God the Father, Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh (Jn 1:14, 18; cf. Jn 14:8-9; Col 1:15, 19). Jesus explains, “I am the way the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by Me” (Jn 14:6). He continues: “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him” (Jn 14:7). How is this true? They have seen the Father working through Christ’s actions (Jn 14:9-12). As they love Christ and keep His commandments, the Spirit of Truth dwells in them (Jn 14:15-21).

3:7 Little children, let no one be leading you astray— John directs this warning toward the believers, especially the **little children** (immature believers) in his fellowship. It is a clear warning of the possibility that a believer can be deceived by a lie and thereby lose his fellowship with the Father and the rewards prepared for him.

The one producing righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous— if a believer wants to examine himself to see if he is abiding in Christ (in fellowship with the Father), a mark of fellowship is **producing righteousness**. Jesus Christ remained in fellowship with the Father and did the Father’s will, and so, He is **righteous**. As long as a believer is in fellowship with the Father and obeying His will, he is producing **righteousness** and is righteous just as Christ is righteous. **Righteousness** is the product of doing God’s will, which is more specifically revealed in God’s Law. Jesus warned His disciples that their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if they desire to enter the Kingdom of God (Mt 5:20). An unrighteous person (unbeliever) cannot produce righteousness.

3:8 The one producing sin is of the adversary— producing sin is in direct contrast with producing righteousness (1 Jn 2:29; 3:7). Although the word ποιέω is often misinterpreted as “to habitually practice,” it actually describes fruition, “to cause or produce.” Those who are not doing God’s will are **producing sin** and are (often unwittingly) in league with the devil (i.e., Peter, Mt 16:22-23). Although the devil is the original source of sin, a believer’s unchecked desires can also produce sin (James 1:13-15).

for the adversary is sinning from the beginning— here the beginning refers to the creation in Genesis 1 (not to the moment in time when Lucifer was created in a state of goodness).

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the adversary— while Christ was promising the gift of the Holy Spirit, He proclaimed the judgment (eventual defeat) of Satan (Jn 16:11). Christ has given us the victory over the principle of sin and death which dwells in our fleshly bodies (Rom 7:13-8:2; 1Cor 15:55-57).

works^a of the adversary.^b ⁹Every one having been begotten^c of God is not producing^d sin^e because His seed^f is remaining in him; and he is not able^g to be sinning because he has been begotten^c of God.

¹⁰Manifest in this are the children^h of God and also the children^h of the adversary:^c Every one not producing^d righteousnessⁱ is not of God, likewise the one not loving^j his brother. ¹¹For this is the message^k that you heard from the beginning, that we should be loving^j one another. ¹²Not as Cain *who* was of the evil one and murdered^l his brother. And why did he murder^l him? Because his works^a were evil but his brother's works were righteous.ⁿ

¹³Do not marvel,ⁿ my brethren, if the world is hating^o you. ¹⁴We have perceived

6, 9, 13, 19, 22, 23, 26; 3:1, 2, 8, 15; 20:12, 13; 22:12)
^b διάβολος –slanderer, false accuser (see margin, p. 12)
^c γεννώω –to be begotten [of men who father children] (Mt 1:2; Jn 1:13; 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 18:37; 1Cor 4:15; 2Tim 2:23; 1Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)
^d ποιέω –to do, make, produce, cause, perform (see margin, p. 12)
^e ἀμαρτία –no share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; a sin, error, violation (see margin, p. 6)
^f σπέρμα –seed [from which anything springs] (Mt 13:24, 27, 32, 37, 38; 22:24, 25; Jn 7:42; 6:33, 37; Acts 3:25; 1Jn 3:9)
^g δύναμι –to be able, have power, be capable (Mt 3:9; 5:14, 36; 6:24, 27; 7:18; 8:2; 9:28; 10:28; Jn 5:19, 30, 44; 6:44, 52, 60; 1Jn 3:9; 4:20)
^h τέκνον –offspring, children (see margin, p. 11)
ⁱ δικαιοσύνη –the virtue, quality, or state of one who

that we have departed^p from death^q to life^r because we are loving^k the brethren. The one not loving^j a brother is abiding in death.^q ¹⁵Every one hating^o his brother is a

is righteous [δίκαιος] (see margin, p. 11)
^j ἀγαπάω –to love, have a preference for, wish well to (see margin, p. 8)
^k ἀγγελία –message, announcement (1Jn 3:11)
^l σφάζω –to slay, put to death by violence (1Jn 3:12; Rev 5:6, 9, 12; 6:4, 9; 13:3, 8; 18:24)
^m δίκαιος –just, righteous, observant of the law (see margin, p. 11)
ⁿ θαυμάζω –to wonder, marvel (Mt 8:10, 27; 9:8, 33; 15:31; 21:20; 22:22; 27:14; Jn 3:7; 4:27; 5:20, 28; 7:15, 21; Gal 1:6; 2Th 1:10; 1Jn 3:13)
^o μισέω –to hate, to pursue with hatred; to love less, slight (Mt 5:43, 44; 6:24; 10:22; 24:9, 10; Jn 3:20; 7:7; 12:25; 15:18, 19, 23, 24, 25; 17:14; Rom 9:13; Eph 5:29; 1Jn 2:9, 11; 3:13, 15; 4:20)
^p μεταβαίνω –to pass over, depart, remove [a thing] (Mt 8:34; 11:1; 12:9; 15:29; 17:20; Lk 5:24; Jn 7:3; 13:1; Acts 18:7; 1Jn 3:14)
^q θάνατος –separation of the soul from the body, death of the body; *metaph.* loss of that life which is worthy of the name (Mt 4:16; 10:21; 15:4; 16:28; 20:18; 26:38, 66; Mk 7:10; 9:1; Jn 5:24; 8:51, 52; 11:4, 13; 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; 1Jn 3:14; 5:16, 17; Rev 1:18)
^r ζωή –life, of everything living, of the fullness of life as God intended (see margin, p. 5)

^a ἔργον –business, work, employment (Mt 5:16; 11:2; 23:3, 5; 26:10; Mk 13:34; Jn 3:19, 20, 21; 4:34; 5:20, 36; 6:28, 29; 1Jn 3:8, 12, 18; 2Jn 11; 3Jn 10; Rev 2:2, 5,

3:9 Every one having been begotten of God is not producing sin because His seed is remaining in him– this is the crux of the passage: when a believer has become **one having been begotten of God** (a “true son”), the reason why he is **not producing sin** is because **God’s seed is remaining in him**. [Remember, one who is “born again” (Jn 3:1-16) is “in Christ . . . a new creation” (2Cor 5:17; cf. 2Pet 1:4).] One **begotten of God** has **God’s seed remaining in Him**. What is God’s σπέρμα (“seed”) which remains in the “true son”? In the “Parable of the Soils” (Mt 13:3-10; 18-23), the seed is the “word” of God (Mt 13:19, 20, 21, 22, 23). Peter likewise explains that a believer has “been born again, not of corruptible seed [σπορά] but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1Pet 1:23; cf. Heb 6:5). The verb form of σπορά is σπειρώ which means “to scatter seed” (Mt 13:3, 4, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23).

and he is not able to be sinning because he has been begotten of God– this book begins with correction of those believers who do not admit their sin or that they could sin (1Jn 1:8-10). John writes to believers so that they might not sin (1Jn 2:1), and later, he concludes with an instruction to pray for other believers when they do sin (1Jn 5:16-17). Obviously, if believers do sin (attested by personal experience), then what is John teaching? He is teaching that a believer who has been **begotten of God** will be in fellowship with Father, will know His will, and will actively produce righteousness; in doing so, he will become purified, and, while doing so, he will **not be able to be sinning**. Yes, believers are to produce righteousness, but everyone must understand that justification by faith is what made them righteous in God’s eyes. Although a believer’s sin is not imputed to him (Rom 4:7-8), during this lifetime his body remains infused with sin’s corruption and he is able to sin (Rom 7:14-24).

D. Loving Your Brother (Keep His Commandments) 3:10-23

3:10 Manifest in this are the children of God and also the children of the adversary– being “offspring of something” is a common metaphor (i.e. a foul-mouthed man or woman is “a son of a sailor”). This type of metaphor simply means that one is connected with, imitates, or obeys his metaphorical “father” (cf. kingdom, Mt 8:12; man, 8:20; bridechamber, 9:15; wisdom, Mt 11:19; Jerusalem, Lk 13:34; Gal 4:25; world, Lk 16:8; light, Lk 16:8; Jn 12:36; Eph 5:8; resurrection, Lk 20:36; perdition, Jn 17:12; wrath, Eph 2:3; 6:4). While believers are in fact offspring of God through spiritual rebirth, Satan has no offspring, except metaphorically—only those who obey him or follow him into sin. Thus, one’s actions reveal if he is obedient to God (his actual father) or if he is obedient to Satan. If a believer is not being obedient to God the Father, he certainly is not in fellowship with Him.

Every one not producing righteousness is not of God, likewise the one not loving his brother– “manifest in this are . . . the children of the adversary”: they are **not producing righteousness** and/or they are **not loving [their] brother**. The context is that of a believer producing righteousness so that he is not ashamed at Christ’s coming (1Jn 2:28-29). John has not forgotten that “as many as received Him to them gave He the power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12). Here he is teaching that, although justified by faith, the believer who is not doing these things is still acting like a child of the adversary (and therefore will be ashamed at Christ’s Coming).

3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another– this is the doctrine which Christ preached from the beginning, see Matthew 5 (cf. Mt 7:15-20; Jn 13:34-35). Believers obeying the Father’s **message** (His will) are children of God.

3:12 Not as Cain who was of the evil one– Satan has no natural offspring, only metaphorical offspring based on their obedience to his desires. John answers the question why was Cain of the evil one?

Because his works were evil but his brother’s works were righteous– this is a judgment based on **works**, and not based on whether one has believed in Christ. Generally, sons do the **work** of their father. Satan was a murderer from the beginning; when Cain imitates his **evil works**, he shows that Satan is “his father” (cf. Jn 8:40-47).

3:13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world is hating you– at a critical point in his argument, John reminds us that this whole passage is directed toward believers (**brethren**). He has admonished them not to do Satan’s work and now is warning them that if they do God’s work, this world system will hate them, just as it hated Christ. Many believers, faithful to God’s will, have been persecuted and even killed (Heb 11:36-40).

3:14 We have perceived that we have departed from death to life because we are loving the brethren– John continues to answer the question of verse 10 (“how children of God are manifested”—this is not “whether one is justified by faith”), and now he states the answer in a positive way. The phrase **we have departed from death to life** is reminiscent of the Israelites who chose covenant **life** instead of covenant **death** and therefore entered their inheritance in the Promised Land (Dt 30:15-20). How do believers **perceive** that they have life leading to this type of inheritance? **because we are loving the brethren**. Note that John does not say “if we love the brethren, we have passed from death to life” (cf. Jn 5:24).

The one not loving his brother is abiding in death– the opposite of the previous statement. Likewise, the phrase “**his brother**” refers to a fellow believer. To “**abide in death**” is similar to “abide in darkness” (outside the gate/door), it is a result of broken fellowship (death = separation from God).

murderer,^a and you have perceived that every murderer^a is not having everlasting^b life^c abiding in him.

¹⁶By this we have known the love^d of God, because for us He laid down^e His life.^f And we also ought^g for the brethren to be laying down^e our lives.^f ¹⁷But whoever has this world's^h life,ⁱ and sees his brother having a need,^j and shuts up^k his affections^l from him, how is the love^d of God abiding in him?

¹⁸My little children, we should not be loving,^m in wordⁿ nor in tongue,^o but in work^p and in truth.^q ¹⁹And by this we are knowing that we are of the truth,^q and

^a ἀνθρωποκτόνος –man-slayer, murderer (Jn 8:44; 1Jn 3:15)

^b αἰώνιος –age-long, never ending, everlasting (Mt 18:8; 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46; Heb 5:9; 6:2; 9:12, 14, 15; 13:20; 1Pet 5:10; 2Pet 1:11; 1Jn 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13)

^c ζωή –life, of everything living, of the fullness of life

as God intended (see margin, p. 5)

^d ἀγάπη –love, affection, benevolence (Mt 24:12; Lk 11:42; Jn 5:42; 13:35; 15:9, 10, 13; 17:26; Rom 5:5; 1Cor 13; Eph 1:4; 1Jn 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16, 17; 4:7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18; 5:3; 2Jn 3, 6; 3Jn 6)

^e τίθημι –to set, place, put/lay down, establish, make,

appoint (Mt 5:15; 12:18; 24:51; Acts 5:2, 4, 15, 18, 25; 19:21; 20:28, 36; Rom 4:17; 9:33; Heb 1:2, 13; 1Jn 3:16)

^f ψυχή –the breathe of life, life, a living being, soul (Mt 2:20; 6:25; 10:28, 39; 11:29; 12:18; 16:25, 26, 20:28; 22:37; 26:38; Jn 10:11, 15, 17, 24; 12:25, 27; 13:37, 38; 15:13; Col 3:23; Heb 4:12; 6:19; 10:38, 39; 12:2; 13:17; James 1:21; 1Pet 1:9; 2:11; 1Jn 3:16; 3Jn 2)

^g ὀφείλω –to owe [a debt], to have a duty (Mt 18:28, 30, 34; 23:16, 18; Rom 13:8; 15:1, 27; 1Cor 7:3, 36; Heb 2:17; 5:3, 12; 1Jn 2:6; 3:16; 4:11; 3Jn 8)

^h κόσμος –a harmonious order, arrangement, system; the world, universe (see margin, p. 9)

ⁱ βίος –life [its period or course] (Mk 12:44; Lk 8:14, 43; 15:12, 30; 21:4; 1Tim 2:2; 2Tim 2:4; 1Jn 2:16; 3:17)

^j χρεία –need, necessity, duty (Mt 3:14; 6:8; 9:12; Jn 2:25; 13:10, 29; 16:30; Heb 10:36; 1Jn 2:27; 3:17)

our hearts shall be confident^f before Him. ²⁰For if ever our heart knows *something* against^s us, God is greater^t than our heart,

^k κλείω –to shut, obstruct (Mt 6:6; 23:13; 25:10; Jn 20:19, 26; 1Jn 3:17)

^l σπλάγχνον –bowels; *metaph.*, affections (Lk 1:78; Acts 1:18; 2Cor 6:12; 7:15; Phil 1:8; 2:1; Col 3:12; 1Jn 3:17)

^m ἀγαπάω –to love, have a preference for, wish well to (see margin, p. 8)

ⁿ λόγος –word uttered by a living being, decree, command, declared thought, doctrine (Mt 5:32, 37; 7:24, 26, 28; 8:8, 16; Jn 1:1, 14, 2:22; 5:24, 38; 8:31; 1Jn 1:1, 10; 2:5, 7, 14; 3:18; 5:7; 3Jn 10; Rev 1:2; 19:13; 20:4)

^o γλῶσσα –the tongue, *metaph.*, a language (Mk 7:33, 35; 16:17; Lk 1:64; 16:24; Acts 2:3, 4, 11, 26; James 1:26; 3:5, 6, 8; 1Jn 3:18)

^p ἔργον –business, work, employment (see margin, p.

13)

^q ἀλήθεια –truth, what is true (Mt 22:16; Mk 5:33; 12:14, 32; Lk 20:21; 22:59; Jn 1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23, 24; 5:33; 8:32, 40, 44, 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:7, 13; 17:17, 19; 18:37, 38; Rom 1:18, 25; 2:2, 8, 20; 1Cor 13:6; 2Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7; Eph 1:13; 1Jn 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21; 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6; 2Jn 1, 2, 3, 4; 3Jn 1, 3, 4, 8, 12)

^r πείθω –to persuade, to induce one by words to believe, to win favor; Passive and Middle: to be persuaded, to trust (Mt 27:20, 43; 28:14; Mk 10:24; Lk 11:22; 16:31; 18:9; 20:6; Acts 5:36, 37, 40; 26:28; Rom 2:8, 19; 8:38; James 3:3; 1Jn 3:19)

^s καταγινώσκω –lit., to know against; to find fault, blame; accuse (Gal 2:11; 1Jn 3:20, 21)

^t μείζων –greater, stronger (Mt 11:11; 12:6; 13:32; 18:1,

3:15 Every one hating his brother is a murderer—this doctrine reflects Christ's teaching in the first Commandment of the New Covenant (Mt 5:21-26). The New Covenant standard is that a child of God is to be like God, by becoming Christlike. Thus, just as one's "hand" can produce unrighteousness, so can his "heart." To be angry at or hate another believer (**brother**) is likened to murder.

having everlasting life abiding in him—this describes living as a new creation in this lifetime. A believer can have fellowship with the Father only by walking in the light (1:6-2:2), by keeping Christ's commandments (2:3-14), by loving the Father, not the world (2:15-17), by perceiving the truth 2:18-23), and by letting what he heard from the beginning to be abiding in him (2:24-27). As he does all this **everlasting life is abiding in him** (and he is filling it full of joy). On the other hand, a believer who lives a life characterized by sin will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1Cor 6:7-11; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-7).

3:16 By this we have known the love of God, because for us He laid down His life—the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross was the ultimate demonstration of the **love of God** for mankind (Jn 3:16).

And we also ought for the brethren to be laying down our lives—the New standard is applied to believers: to act like Christ, we have a "duty" to **lay down our lives**. This is not a matter of convenience, but a description of sacrifice, just as Christ **laid down His life**.

3:17 But whoever has this world's life, and sees his brother having a need, and shuts up his affections from him—some translate βίος ("life") as "goods." John recently used this word in the phrase "the pride of life" to describe a self-sufficient braggart boasting of his possessions (1Jn 2:16). Instead of boasting of one's possessions, a believer is to use his possessions (the fullness of this present **life**) to meet the needs of his brothers (believers).

how is the love of God abiding in him? obviously, the love of God is not abiding in a believer who is unwilling to make such a "small" sacrifice (one's possessions, compared to giving one's life—on a cross). The author of Hebrews describes believers who became partners with him in his afflictions by giving sacrificially to meet his needs: "You became companions of those who were so treated. For

you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession in heaven" (Heb 10:33-34). The love of God was abiding in them.

3:18 My little children, we should not be loving, in word nor in tongue—when James described dead (inactive) faith, he also said that words (spoken prayers and blessings) were not sufficient: "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:15-17).

but in works and in truth—"Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

3:19 And by this we are knowing that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him—by doing as Christ commanded, a believer can know that he is complying with the terms of the New Covenant ("of the truth," cf. Jn 1:17). Furthermore, when a believer comes **before Him** (God's presence whether in prayer or at Christ's Coming), his **heart** can be confident, he has a clear conscience because he has been doing the will of God.

3:20 For if ever our heart knows something against us—this shows once again that it is possible for a believer who is a new creation to be drawn away by his own lust and commit sin (James 1:13-14; 1Jn 1:6, 8). Whenever a believer sins, his heart is then able to "find fault" because of his sin and can cause guilt, doubt, fear, and even unbelief.

God is greater than our heart, and He is knowing all things—our heart is not the ultimate judge; God is. His knowledge and understanding is greater than our conscience (our heart).

II. Marks of Fellowship (1 John 2:28-4:19)

A. Producing Righteousness 2:28-29

B. Being Called Children of God 3:1-3

C. Not Producing Sin While Abiding in Christ 3:4-9

D. Keeping His Commandments (Love your Brother) 3:10-23

E. Confessing that Christ Came in the Flesh 3:24-4:6

and He is knowing^a all things. ²¹ Beloved, whenever our heart does not know *something* against^b us, then we are having boldness^c toward God. ²² And whatever we might be requesting^d we are receiving^e from Him, because we are keeping^f His commandments and are producing^g those things that are pleasing^h in His sight. ²³ And this is His commandment: that we should believeⁱ on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and should be loving one another, even as He gave^j us commandment.

²⁴ Now he who is keeping^f His commandments is abiding in Him, and He in him. And by this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, by the Spirit^j whom He gave^k to us.

4 Beloved, do not believeⁱ every spirit,^j but be testing^l the spirits,^j whether it is of God; because many false-prophets^m have gone out into the world. ² By this you are knowing the spirit^j of God: every spirit^j which is confessingⁿ that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh^o is of God, ³ And every spirit^j which is not confessingⁿ that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh^o is not of

^a γινώσκω –to get knowledge (learning or understanding) by experience, to become intimate with someone (Mt 1:25; 6:3; 7:23; Jn 1:10, 48; 2:24, 25; 3:10; 5:42; 6:15, 69; 7:17, 26, 27, 49, 51; 8:27, 28, 32, 43, 52, 55; 10:14, 15, 27, 38; 14:7, 9; 17:3, 7, 8, 23, 25; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 18, 29; 3:1, 6, 16, 19, 20, 24; 4:2, 6, 7, 8, 13, 16; 5:2, 20; 2Jn 1; Rev 2:17)

^b καταγινώσκω –lit., to know against; to find fault, blame; accuse (Gal 2:11; 1Jn 3:20, 21)

^c παρρησία –lit., all + speech, meaning speaking freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; 2Cor 7:4; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35; 1Tim 3:13; 1Jn 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14)

^d αἰτέω –to ask [for oneself], for something to be given [not done]; to request [of one's will] (Mt 5:42; 6:8; 7:7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 14:7; 18:19; 20:20; 21:22; 27:20, 58; Jn 15:7; 1Jn 3:22; 5:14, 15, 16)

^e λαμβάνω –to take with the hand, receive (Mt 5:40; 7:8; 8:17; 10:8, 38, 41; Jn 1:12, 16; 3:11, 27, 32, 33; Heb 10:26; 11:8, 11, 13; James 1:27; 1Pet 4:10; 1Jn 2:27; 3:22; 5:9; 2Jn 4, 10; 3Jn 7)

^f τηρέω –to attend to carefully, to guard, keep (Mt 19:17; 23:3; 27:36, 54; 28:4,

God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world.

⁴ You are of God, little children, and

20; Mk 7:9; Jn 2:10; 8:51, 52, 55; 9:16; 12:7; 14:5, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 20; 17:6, 11, 12, 15; Acts 15:5, 24; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5; 3:22, 24; 5:2, 3, 18)

^g ποιέω –to do, make, produce, cause, perform (see margin, p. 12)

^h ἀρεστός –pleasing, agreeable (Jn 8:29; Acts 6:2; 12:3; 1Jn 3:22)

ⁱ πιστεύω –to believe, to think to be true, to credit, (Mt 8:13; 9:28; 18:6; 21:22, 25, 32; 24:23, 26; 27:42; Jn 1:7, 12, 50; 2:11, 22, 23, 24; 3:12, 15, 16, 18, 36; 1Jn 3:23; 4:1, 16; 5:1, 5, 10, 13)

^j πνεῦμα –movement of air, wind; a spirit (Mt 1:18, 20; 3:11, 16; 4:1; 5:3; 10:1, 20; Jn 1:32, 33; 3:6, 8, 34; 4:23, 24, 6:63; 7:39; James 2:26; 4:5 5:10; 1Jn 3:24; 4:1, 2, 3, 6, 13; 5:6, 7, 8; Jude 19, 20)

^k δίδωμι –to give (Mt 4:9; 5:31, 42; 6:11; 7:6, 7, 11; Jn 13:34; 14:16, 27; 1Jn 3:1, 23, 24; 4:13; 5:11, 16, 20; Rev 1:1; 2:7, 10, 17, 21, 23)

^l δοκιμάζω –to test, prove, examine (Lk 12:56; 14:19; Rom 1:28; 2:18; 12:2; 1Cor

3:13; 2Cor 13:5; Gal 6:4; Eph 5:10; Phil 1:10; 1Th 2:4; 1Tim 3:10; 1Jn 4:1)

^m ψευδοπροφήτης –one who acts the part of a prophet but utters falsehoods (Mt 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mk 13:22; Lk 6:26; Acts 13:6; 2Pet 2:1; 1Jn 4:1; Rev 16:13)

ⁿ ὁμολογέω –to say the same thing, to confess, profess (Mt 7:23; 10:32; 1Jn 1:9; 2:23; 4:2, 3, 15)

^o σάρξ –flesh, the body (Mt 16:17; 19:5, 6; 26:41; Jn 1:13, 14; 1Tim 3:16; Heb 2:14; 1Pet 1:24; 4:1; 1Jn 2:16, 4:2, 3; 2Jn 7; Jude 7, 8, 23)

3:21 Beloved, whenever our heart does not know something against us– on the other hand, it is possible for a believer to live in obedience (walk in the light in fellowship with the Father) so that his heart is not accusing him.

then we are having boldness toward God– living in fellowship with God makes a tremendous difference in the life of a believer; when in fellowship (complying with God's will) one can act boldly in God's presence (e.g., Moses as he interceded for the Israelites).

3:22 And whatever we might be requesting we are receiving from Him, because we are keeping His commandments and are producing those things that are pleasing in His sight– this promise cannot be separated from its conditions. A believer's boldness before God and the expectation of receiving those things for which he asks are contingent on the believer **keeping His commandments and producing those things that are pleasing in His sight** (this is a description of doing God's will, cf. Jn 8:28-29). This is not to say that God will never grant a request from a believer who is being disobedient in some way, but that only an obedient believer has the right to speak boldly in His presence.

3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and should be loving one another, even as He gave us commandment– these two commandments are recorded by John in his gospel (Jn 6:29, 40; 13:34; 14:1, 11; 15:12, 17; 20:31). This is the first occurrence of πιστεύω (“believe”) in this epistle because justification by faith is not a main theme of the epistle, remaining in fellowship with God is the main theme.

E. Confessing that Christ Came in the Flesh 3:24-4:6

3:24 And by this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, by the Spirit whom He gave to us– the presence and witness of the Holy Spirit is another mark of being in fellowship with the Father. The Holy Spirit's presence is evident when a believer confesses that Jesus is the Christ who came in the flesh (1Jn 4:2). When a believer is born again as a child of God (new creation) the Spirit is given and abides in him; furthermore, a believer can know that he is “in Him,” that is, in fellowship with Christ when he is keeping Christ's commandments (1Jn 2:5); here, John is explaining that those believers who continue

to believe that Jesus is the Christ have the Holy Spirit's witness that Christ continues to abide “in us.”

4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God– on the other hand, John warns them about the false teachers who claim to have received further spiritual revelation from a spiritual messenger, but their new information (that Christ is not the only way to come to the Father) is not sound doctrine and John warns **do not believe** them. John suggests a “test” to determine the source of a spirit.

because many false-prophets have gone out into the world– just fifty years after Christ's death, false prophets are already at work undermining the truth of Christ. In this age, the test for truth is not signs, but whether a message contradicts what God has said in His Word. Unfortunately, the “success” of the false prophets was probably presented as evidence of their authenticity (same as today).

4:2 By this you are knowing the spirit of God: Every spirit which is confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God– here is the test: the **spirit of God** can be identified because he **confesses [the truth] that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh**.

4:3 and every spirit which is not confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God– just to be clear, the opposite statement is made. It seems that a similar statement, denying that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, was part of the new revelation being taught by the false teachers. Jesus was not a mere human who was adopted by God the Father, neither did the Spirit of Christ merely come and indwell Jesus for a time, leaving at His death. Jesus Christ was the pre-existent Son of God who came as a human to die as a substitutionary sacrifice and so become the Savior of the world.

And this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and is now already in the world– the same spirit of antichrist currently at work among John's disciples will also bring to power the final oppressive dictator who will rule during the Great Tribulation (Rev 13:1-8).

4:4 You are of God, little children– even the youngest (most immature) believer is of God (a new creation), has been called, and been given the power to become a child of God (Jn 1:12; 1Jn 3:1-3).

have overcome^a them, because greater^b is He who is in you than he who is in the world. ⁵They are of the world, because they are speaking^c of the world, and the world is hearing them. ⁶We are of God, the one knowing God is hearing us; *the one* who is not of God is not hearing us. By this we are knowing the spirit^d of truth^e and the spirit^d of straying^f away.

⁷Beloved, let us be loving one to another, because love is of God; and every loving one has been begotten^g of God and is knowing God. ⁸The one who is not loving does not know God, because God is love. ⁹By this the love of God was manifested among us, that God has sent^h His only-begottenⁱ Son into the world, that we might be living^j through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent^h His Son to be the propitiation^k for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if

^a νικάω –to overcome, conquer, prevail (Lk 11:22; Jn 16:33; Rom 3:4; 12:21; 1Jn 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5; Rev 2:7, 11, 17; 3:5, 12, 21; 5:5; 6:2; 11:7; 12:11; 13:7; 15:2; 17:14; 21:7)

^b μείζων –greater, stronger (Mt 11:11; 12:6; 13:32; 18:1, 4; 23:11, 17, 19; Jn 10:29; 14:28; 1Jn 3:20; 4:4; 5:9)

^c λαλέω –to utter a sound, to emit a voice, to speak, talk (Mt 9:18, 33; 10:19, 20; 12:22, 34, 36, 46, 47; 13:3, 13; 1Jn 4:5; 2Jn 12; 3Jn 14)

^d πνεῦμα –movement of air, wind; a spirit (see margin, p. 15)

^e ἀλήθεια –truth, what is true (see margin, p. 14)

^f πλάνη –straying about, wandering (Mt 27:64; Rom 1: 27; Eph 4:14; 1Th 2:3; 2Th 2:11; James 5:20; 2Pet 2:18; 3:17 1Jn 4:6; Jude 11) from πλανάω (1Jn 1:8; 2:26; 3:7)

^g γεννάω –to be begotten [of men who father children] (Mt 1:2; Jn 1:13; 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 18:37; 1Cor 4:15; 2Tim

God so loved us, we also ought^l to be loving one another.

¹²No one has ever looked^m upon God. Whenever we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love is being maturedⁿ in us. ¹³By this we are knowing that we are abiding in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

2:23; 1Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)

^h ἀποστέλλω –to send to a place, send away (Mt 2:16; 10:5, 16, 40; 11:10; 13:41; 14:35; Jn 1:6, 19, 24; 3:17, 28, 34; 4:38; Rom 10:15; Heb 1:14, 1Jn 4:9, 10, 14; Rev 1:14)

ⁱ μονογενής –single of its kind, only-begotten (Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Heb 11:17; 1Jn 4:9)

^j ζῶω –to live [real life worthy of its name] (Mt 4:4; 9:18; 16:16; 22:32; Jn 4:10, 11, 50, 51, 53; 5:25; 6:51, 57, 58, 69; 1Jn 4:9)

^k ἰλασμός –an appeasing, propitiation (1Jn 2:2; 4:10)

^l ὀφείλω –to owe [a debt], to have a duty (Mt 18:28, 30, 34; 23:16, 18; Rom 13:8; 15:1, 27; 1Cor 7:3, 36; Heb 2:17; 5:3, 12; 1Jn 2:6; 3:16; 4:11; 3Jn 8)

^m θεάομαι –to behold, look upon, view attentively (Mt 6:1; 11:7; 22:11; 23:5; Mk 16:11, 14; Jn 1:14, 32, 38; 4:35; 6:5; 8:10; 11:45; Acts 1:11; 1Jn 1:1; 4:12, 14)

ⁿ τελειόω –to make complete, perfect, mature, to accomplish [a goal] (Lk 2:43; 13:32; Jn 4:34; 5:36; 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; Phil 3:12; Heb

and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world— John states the reason why a believer overcomes the evil (of this world and also of Satan): because of his fellowship with the Father (the Spirit abiding within is greater than the spirit of antichrist which is in the world; there really is no contest). The key to everything for a believer is continued fellowship with the Father. Those who overcome and resist false teaching do so because they are in fellowship—the Spirit helps them to discern the truth (1Jn 2:20-21; contrast w/ Rom 8:17).

4:5 They are of the world. Therefore they are speaking of the world, and the world is hearing them— again this is a metaphor, these false teachers were not actually born of the world. The metaphor describes that which/who they follow and obey. Since they are talking about worldly things and accommodate worldly philosophy, as a result, **the world is hearing them**. Thus their fellowship is with the world, not with God.

4:6 We are of God, the one knowing God is hearing us— believers have been reborn as God's children, this is not a mere metaphor but reality: believers are new creations from the incorruptible seed, the implanted Word of God (2Cor 5:17; 1Pet 1:23). **One knowing God** describes someone intimate with God (being in fellowship with Him) not the mere knowledge of God. The Hebrew concept of “hearing” (shama) includes both verbs, hearing and obeying. Those who are in fellowship with God hear and obey His messengers (John and ministry companions in fellowship with him).

the one who is not of God is not hearing us— the false teachers and those believers who are following them, neither hear nor obey John's teaching.

By this we are knowing the spirit of truth and the spirit of straying away— knowing the difference between these two spirits is vital for a believer's continued fellowship with God. A disciple following the **spirit of truth** (hearing and obeying that which we heard from the beginning) will remain in fellowship with God, but a believer who follows the **spirit of straying away** (listening to the world) will depart from God's fellowship (cf. Jn 8:46-47; 10:4-5; 14:15-18; 15:26; 16:13; 18:37; see “spirit of the world,” 1Cor 2:12).

4:7 Beloved, let us be loving one to another, because love is of

F. Abiding in God's Love and Having it Matured in Us 4:7-19

God— this is an explicit requirement of the New Covenant and, as a commandment of the Law of Christ, is based on the character of God. **Every loving one** keeping God's commandments has the love of God matured in him (2:5), is abiding in the light (2:10), can perceive that he has passed from death unto life (3:14), **has been born of God and is knowing God** (4:7). Love of the brethren is the path-

way to intimacy with God the Father and being a “begotten/true son.”

4:8 The one who is not loving does not know God, because God is love— “God is love” (4:8, 16). God's actions are expressions of His love: love of His creatures, of truth, of righteousness, of justice, etc.

4:9 By this the love of God was manifested among us, that God has sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might be living through Him— the ultimate expression of God's love is sending His only Son to be man's Savior. Any father would rather die than watch his son die. So, as giving up Isaac was the ultimate sacrifice for Abraham, sending Jesus to be the Christ was the ultimate sacrifice for God the Father. Christ's sacrifice brings us life and the possibility of living the full life God originally intended for mankind.

4:10 In this is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins— God's action (sending Christ) proved His love for us. Christ died to be the propitiation, to satisfy the penalty which mankind owed because of his sin. Note: we do **not** prove our love [for] God by “loving” God in return.

4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to be loving one another— a believer is to prove his love for God by fulfilling his New Covenant obligation to love the brethren.

Obligations of a Believer (recorded in 1 John)

1. to walk as Jesus walked (1Jn 2:6).
2. to lay down our lives for the brethren (1Jn 3:16).
3. to be loving one another (1Jn 4:11).

4:12 No one has ever looked upon God— those claiming to have special revelation through visions of God are false teachers. Christ is the full representation of God the Father (Jn 1:14, 18; 12:45; 14:9; cf. Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).

Whenever we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love is being matured in us— John is referring to Christ's response to Thomas: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? (Jn 14:10). For proof of this, Jesus explains that His “words” and “works” are done on God's authority, and those who believe Him will do greater works (Jn 14:10-12). The key for us is to have **God abiding in us** so that **His love is being matured in us**. When we do so, we are being like Christ in that others can see God the Father in us (since He is abiding in us and His love is being matured in us).

4:13 By this we are knowing that we are abiding in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit— first of all, we know that we are in fellowship with God because the Holy Spirit (the promised sign of the New Covenant) who has been given to every New Testament believer.

¹⁴And we have looked upon and are witnessing^a that the Father has sent^b the Son to be the Savior^c of the world. ¹⁵Whoever might be confessing^d that Jesus is the Son of God, God is abiding in him, and he in God. ¹⁶And we have known and have believed the love that God is having for us. God is love, and the one abiding in love is abiding in God, and God in him.

¹⁷For this our love has been matured:^e that we may have boldness^f in the day of judgment;^g because as He is, so are we now in this world. ¹⁸No fear^h is in this love; but mature love is casting out fear,^h because fear^h is of having a penalty,ⁱ and the one fearing^h has not been matured^e in love.

¹⁹We are loving Him because He first loved us. ²⁰Whenever someone says that I am loving God, and is hating his brother, he is a liar;^j for how can he who is not loving his brother whom he has seen,^k be loving God whom he has not seen?^k ²¹And this commandment we have from Him: that the one who is loving God should be loving his brother also.

^aμαρτυρέω –to be a witness Acts 6:3; 1Tim 5:10; Heb (Mt 23:31; Lk 4:22; Jn 1:7; 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39;

1Jn 1:2; 4:14; 5:6; 3Jn 3, 6, 12)

^bἀποστέλλω –to send to a place, send away (Mt 2:16; 10:5, 16, 40; 11:10; 13:41; 14:35; Jn 1:6, 19, 24; 3:17, 28, 34; 4:38; Rom 10:15; Heb 1:14, 1Jn 4:9, 10, 14; Rev 1:14)

^cσωτήρ –savior, deliverer [name ascribed to deities] (Lk 1:47; 2:11; Jn 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 1Tim 2:3; 4:10; 2Tim 1:10; 2Pet 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18; 1Jn 4:14; Jude 25)

^dὁμολογέω –to say the same thing, to confess, profess (Mt 7:23; 10:32; 1Jn 1:9; 2:23; 4:2, 3, 15)

^eτελειόω –to make complete, perfect, mature, to accomplish [a goal] (Lk 2:43; 13:32; Jn 4:34; 5:36; 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; Phil 3:12; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; James 2:22; 1Jn 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18)

^fπαρρησία –lit., all + speech, meaning speaking freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; 2Cor 7:4; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35; 1Tim 3:13; 1Jn 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14)

^gκρίσις –a separation, a trial; a selection; a judgment (Mt 5:21, 22; 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:18, 20, 36, 41, 42; 23:23, 33; Jn 3:19; 5:22, 24, 27, 30; 7:24; 8:16; 12:31; 16:8, 11; Acts 8:33; Heb 9:7;

5 Every one believing that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten^l of God, and every one loving the One begetting^l also is loving the one having been begotten^l of Him. ²By this we are knowing that we are loving the children of God, whenever we are loving God and are keeping^m His commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we should be keeping^m His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome.ⁿ

^h10:27; 1Jn 4:17)

^hφόβος –fear, dread, terror (Mt 14:26; 28:4, 8; Mk 4:41; Lk 1:12, 65; 2:9; 5:26; 7:16; 8:37; 21:26; Jn 7:13; 19:38; 20:19; Acts 5:11; 9:31; 19:17; Rom 3:18; 1Cor 2:3; 2Cor 5:11; 7:1, 5, 11, 15; Eph 5:21; 6:5; Phil 2:12; 1Pet 1:17; 2:18; 3:2, 14, 15; 1Jn 4:18)

ⁱκόλασις –correction, penalty, punishment (Mt 25:46; 1Jn 4:18)

^jψεύστης –a liar, a false or faithless person (Jn 8:44, 55; Rom 3:4; 1Tim 1:10; Titus 1:12; 1Jn 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10)

^kὄραω –to see with the eyes; to see with the mind, perceive, know (Mt 8:4; 9:30; 16:6; 18:10; 24:6; Lk

1:22; Jn 1:18, 34; 3:11, 32; 4:45; 6:2, 36, 46; 8:38, 57; 9:37; 14:7, 9; 15:24; 19:35; 20:18, 25, 29; 1Jn 1:1, 2, 3; 3:6; 4:20; 3Jn 11)

^lγεννάω –to be begotten [of men who father children] (see previous page)

^mτηρέω –to attend to carefully, to guard, keep (Mt 19:17; 23:3; 27:36, 54; 28:4, 20; Mk 7:9; Jn 2:10; 8:51, 52, 55; 9:16; 12:7; 14:5, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 20; 17:6, 11, 12, 15; Acts 15:5, 24; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5; 3:22, 24; 5:2, 3, 18)

ⁿβαρῦς –heavy in weight; metaph., burdensome (Mt 23:4, 23; Acts 20:29; 25:7; 2Cor 10:10; 1Jn 5:3)

4:14 And we have looked upon and are witnessing that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world—secondly, although we have not looked upon God the Father (4:12), we have looked upon His Son, and we are testifying to others that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

4:15 Whoever might be confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, God is abiding in him, and he in God—finally, John states his conclusion (v. 15-16) concerning this particular mark of those in fellowship with God the Father (cf. 1Jn 2:23; 3:24; 4:2-3).

4:16 And we have known and have believed the love that God is having for us. God is love, and the one abiding in love is abiding in God, and God in him—knowledge and belief go hand-in-hand.

4:17 For this our love has been matured: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment—a result of becoming a mature believer (having mature love) is that, instead of shrinking in fear (shame), the believer who has kept His commandments can have boldness (of speech) when standing before Christ (judgment of our works, 1Cor 3).

because as He is, so are we now in this world—this is describing these bold, mature believers: it is possible to become a mature believer (be like Christ) even while we are living in this world.

4:18 No fear is in this love; but mature love is casting out fear, because fear is of having a penalty—as one is loving, fear is displaced. The essence of fear is knowing that there will be a penalty. The mature believer does not need to fear because he will not be penalized.

and the one fearing has not been matured in love—if a believer is still fearing judgment, it is a sure sign that he is not yet mature.

4:19 We are loving Him because He first loved us—man responds to God’s love (as he does to all of His provisions for salvation).

III. Results of Fellowship

A. Loving God (His Commands are not a Burden) 4:20-5:3

4:20 Whenever someone says that I am loving God, and is hating his brother, he is a liar; for how can he who is not loving his brother whom he has seen, be loving God whom he has not seen? – it is possible for a believer to hate and lie. If one fails to love a

brother whom he has seen, it is because he is not loving God (because he has “not seen” Him in Christ’s likeness, cf. 1Jn 4:12).

4:21 And this commandment we have from Him: that the one who is loving God should be loving his brother also—Christ’s commandments are central to the life of a believer and to his fellowship with God.

5:1 Every one believing that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God—does not refer to the fact that believing (receiving) Jesus as the Christ places one in God’s family (the main theme of John’s Gospel, Jn 1:12). This verse focuses on events after this fact. Specifically, it contrasts those false teachers who no longer believe that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh with those still in fellowship who continue to believe and are maturing, “true sons” (begotten of God).

and every one loving the One begetting also is loving the one having been begotten of Him—a consequence of one truly loving (in fellowship with) the One begetting (God the Father) is that he will also love (maintain fellowship with) his brother (the one having been begotten of Him) and other “true sons” who also are in fellowship with the Father. (Once again, this is not a test of “spiritual rebirth,” but of fellowship and maturity.)

5:2 By this we are knowing that we are loving the children of God, whenever we are loving God and are keeping His commandments—John playfully reverses what is expected (that we can know that we love God, if we keep His commandments and love our brothers). While both are true, he probably has reversed the expected order because he is emphasizing that loving the brethren is how we prove our love for God.

5:3 For this is the love of God, that we should be keeping His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome—a believer might feel love for God the Father because of all that the Father has done for us; however, just as God’s love was demonstrated to us, we must demonstrate our love for God the Father by our obedience to His commandments. Either we are servants of righteousness or we will be servants of unrighteousness (Rom 6:11-22). The test of whether we are mature and truly love God is whether or not His commandments are not burdensome. When we become mature, true disciples, God’s “yoke [becomes] easy and [His] burden [becomes] light” (Mt 11:30; cf. Jn 8:31-32).

⁴For every one having been begotten^a of God is overcoming^b the world. And the victory,^c that which overcomes^b the world is our faith.^d ⁵Who is the one overcoming^b the world? None other than the one who is believing^e that Jesus is the Son of God.

⁶This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And the Spirit is the One bearing witness,^f because the Spirit is truth.^g ⁷For there are three who are bearing witness^f [in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that are bearing witness^e on earth:] the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are in one.

⁹If we are receiving the witness^h of men, the witness^h of God is greater; for this is the witness^h of God which He has witnessed^f of His Son. ¹⁰The one who is believing^e in the Son of God has the witness^h of God in himself; the one who

^a γεννάω—to be begotten [of men who father children] (Mt 1:2; Jn 1:13; 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 18:37; 1Cor 4:15; 2Tim 2:23; 1Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)

^b νικάω—to overcome, conquer, prevail (Lk 11:22; Jn 16:33; Rom 3:4; 12:21; 1Jn 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5; Rev 2:7, 11, 17; 3:5, 12, 21; 5:5; 6:2; 11:7; 12:11; 13:7; 15:2; 17:14; 21:7)

^c νίκη—victory, overcoming, conquering (1Jn 5:4)

^d πίστις—acceptance the truth of something; religious truths; trust in God to be true/faithful to His word (Mt 8:10; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21; 23:23; Mk 2:5; 4:40; 5:34; 10:52; 11:22; Lk 5:20; 7:9, 10; 8:25, 48; 17:5, 6, 19; 18:8, 42; 22:32; Acts 3:16; Rom 1:5, 8, 12, 17; 1Jn 5:4)

^e πιστεύω—to think to be true; to believe, credit (Mt 8:13; 9:28; 18:6; 21:22, 25, 32; 24:23, 26; 27:42; Jn 1:7, 12, 50; 2:11, 22, 23, 24; 3:12, 15, 16, 18, 36; 4:21, 39, 41, 42, 48, 50, 53; 5:38, 44, 46, 47; 6:29, 30, 35, 36, 40, 47, 64, 69; 7:5; 1Jn 3:23; 4:1, 16; 5:1, 5, 10, 13)

is not believing^e God has made Him a liar,ⁱ because he has not believed^e the witness^h that God has witnessed^f of His Son. ¹¹And this is the witness:^h that God gave us everlasting^j life,^k and this life^k is in

^f μαρτυρέω—to be a witness (Mt 23:31; Lk 4:22; Jn 1:7; Acts 6:3; 1Tim 5:10; Heb 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39; 1Jn 1:2; 4:14; 5:6; 3Jn 3, 6, 12)

^g ἀλήθεια—truth, what is true (Mt 22:16; Mk 5:33; 12:14, 32; Lk 20:21; 22:59; Jn 1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23, 24; 5:33; 8:32, 40, 44, 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:7, 13; 17:17, 19; 18:37, 38; Rom 1:18, 25; 2:2, 8, 20; 1Cor 13:6; 2Cor 4:2; Gal 5:7; Eph 1:13; 1Jn 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21; 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6; 2Jn 1, 2, 3, 4; 3Jn 1, 3, 4, 8, 12)

^h μαρτυρία—a witness, what one testifies (Mt 14:55, 56, 59; Lk 22:71; Jn 1:7, 19; 3:11, 32, 33; 5:31, 32, 34, 36; 8:13, 14, 17; 19:35; 21:24; 22:18; 1Jn 5:9, 10, 11; 3Jn 12)

ⁱ ψεύστης—a liar, a false or faithless person (Jn 8:44, 55; Rom 3:4; 1Tim 1:10;

Titus 1:12; 1Jn 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10)

^j αἰώνιος—age-long, never ending, everlasting [emphasis on measureless] (Mt 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46; Jn 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 1Jn 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20)

^k ζωή—life, of everything living, of the fullness of life as God intended (Mt 7:14; 18:8, 9; 19:16, 17, 29; 25:46; Lk 1:75; Jn 1:4; 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:26, 39, 40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47, 48, 51, 53, 54, 63, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2, 3; 20:31; Acts 2:28; Rom 2:7; 5:10, 17, 18, 21; 6:4, 22, 23; 7:10; 8:2, 6, 10, 38; 11:15; 1Jn 1:1, 2; 2:25; 3:14, 15; 5:11, 12, 13, 16, 20; Rev 2:7, 10; 3:5)

B. Overcoming the World by Believing Jesus Christ 5:4-13

5:4 For every one having been begotten of God is overcoming the world—the active verb is essential to understanding, those who are acting as “true sons” (continuing in fellowship and keeping His commandments) are also overcoming the world and all that is associated with it. The Greek word παν (“all, every”) clarifies how a believer conquers: because he has been **begotten of God** (a “true son”).

And the victory that which overcomes the world is our faith—a believer begins his new life having already overcome the world when, by faith, he became a child of God.

5:5 Who is the one overcoming the world? None other than the one who is believing that Jesus is the Son of God—the present active verb switches the readers’ focus from his spiritual birth to the present time and asks the question: “Who is *presently* overcoming the world?” While God made His children “overcomers” when they were born into His family; the question is whether or not they will continue to overcome the world. A believer will continue to be an “overcomer” (having victory over the world) as long as he **is believing that Jesus is the Son of God** (cf. Rom 8:37). Therefore, the false teachers are no longer overcomers.

5:6 This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood—most likely referring to Christ’s baptism (the commendation of the Father) and death (the will of the Father), this emphasizes the historical life and physical death of Jesus Christ. False teachers teach that the Christ came upon Jesus at His baptism and left just before His death (denying that Christ was ever truly human).

And the Spirit is the One bearing witness, because the Spirit is truth—the Holy Spirit bore witness (in the form of a dove) at Christ’s baptism and the Spirit continues to bear witness that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (1Jn 4:2-3) to all those in the fellowship. He is the Spirit of truth whose purpose is to testify of Christ (Jn 15:26; 16:13-15; 17:17-19; 18:37).

5:7-8 For there are three who are bearing witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are in one—how does the Spirit presently bear witness to Christ? Certainly, through the written Word of God, the Holy Spirit “convict[s] the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jn 16:8-11). Generally, the work of the Spirit is to open the understanding (“eyes and ears”) of someone who hears God’s Word proclaimed so that he might receive the truth (1Cor 12:3). God supplies through the Holy Spirit what man cannot

know and understand by himself (natural means).

5:9 If we are receiving the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has witnessed of His Son—God Himself gave witness verbally at the baptism of Christ (Mt 3:17; cf. Mt 17:5) and by the earthquakes and darkness at His death. God also gave witness to Christ through the works Christ performed and the words written in the Scriptures (Jn 5:36-47). God also gave verbal witness to men that He would glorify His name through Christ (Jn 12:28). God’s witness is greater than any man’s witness.

5:10 The one who is believing in the Son of God has the witness of God in himself—those who believe that Jesus is the Christ have received the witness of God the Father who has given the Holy Spirit to indwell every believer (cf. Jn 6:44-45).

the one who is not believing God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the witness that God has witnessed of His Son—the act of not believing God is equivalent to calling God a “liar.” John is directly saying that one (a false teacher) cannot say he believes, knows, is in fellowship with God the Father and yet not believe the truth of God’s witness concerning Jesus Christ.

5:11 And this is the witness: that God gave us everlasting life, and this life is in His Son—John returns to the opening verses of his epistle and the “promise we heard from Him” (1Jn 1:5): “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen, that which with our eyes we have looked upon and with our hands we have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen and are witnessing and are reporting to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us” (1:1-2). Everlasting life is the gift God has promised and gives to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ (3:16). The witness which the Father has given is concerning the Christ, and the Son has made manifest to us the Father and the “life” of fellowship with the Father which has been given to believers.

Results of Fellowship

- A. Having God’s Love Matured in Us, 4:7-16
- B. Having Boldness (not Fear) in the Day of Judgment, 4:17-18
- C. Loving God (His Commands are not a Burden), 4:20-5:3
- D. Overcoming the World by Believing Jesus Christ, 5:4-13
- E. Having Boldness of Speech and He is Hearing us, 5:14-17
- F. Knowing that we are in Him who is the True God and Everlasting Life, 5:18-20

His Son. ¹²The one having the Son is having the life;^a the one not having the Son of God is not having the life.^a ¹³These things I write to you, the ones believing in the name of the Son of God, that you might be perceiving that the life^a you are having is everlasting^b [and that you might *continue* to be believing in the name of the Son of God].

¹⁴Now this is the boldness^c that we are having toward Him, that whenever we should request^d anything according to His will,^e He is hearing us. ¹⁵And whenever we have perceived that He is hearing us, whatever we should request,^d we have perceived that we are having the requests^f

^a ζωή —life, of everything living, of the fullness of life as God intended (see margin, previous page)

^b αἰώνιος —age-long, never ending, everlasting [emphasis on measureless] (see margin, previous page)

^c παρρησία —lit., all + speech, meaning speaking freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; 2Cor 7:4; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35; 1Tim 3:13; 1Jn 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14)

^d αἰτέω —to ask [what one desires], make a request (Mt 5:42; 6:8; 7:7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 14:7; 18:19; 20:22; 21:22; 27:20, 58; Jn 4:9, 10; 11:22; 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16: 23; 24; 1Jn 3:22; 5:14, 15, 16)

^e θέλημα —what one wishes, one's will, desire, pleasure (Mt 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 18:14;

which we have requested^d of Him.

¹⁶Whenever anyone might perceive his brother sinning^g a sin^h *which is not leading* to death, he shall be requesting,^d and He shall give him life to the ones sinning^g a sin not leading to death. There is sin^h leading to death; I am not saying that he

21:31; 26:42; Gal 2:10; Eph 1:1, 4, 5, 9, 11; 2:3; 5:17; 2Tim 2:26; Heb 10:36; 1Pet 4:2; 1Jn 2:17; 5:14; Rev 4:11)

^f αἴτημα —what is asked for, a request, petition (Lk 23:24; Phil 4:6; 1Jn 5:15)

^g ἁμαρτάνω —to not share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; to sin, err, violate the law (Mt 18:15, 21; 27:4;

Lk 15:18, 21; Jn 5:14; 8:11; 9:2; Rom 2:12; 3:23; 5:12, 14, 16; 1Jn 1:10; 2:1; 3:6, 8, 9; 5:16, 18)

^h ἁμαρτία —no share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; a sin, error, violation of the law (Mt 1:21; 9:2; 26:28; Jn 1:29; Rom 3:20; 4:7, 8; 5:12-8:10; 1Cor 15:3; 2Cor 11:7; Col 1:14; 1Jn 1:7, 8, 9; 2:2, 12; 3:4, 5, 8, 9; 4:10; 5:16, 17; Rev 1:5)

5:12 The one having the Son is having the life; the one not having the Son of God is not having the life—describing the current state of fellowship of a believer with God: whether or not a believer is possessing (ἔχω, “having”) the life (promised by the New Covenant) is determined by his continued fellowship with the Son of God.

5:13 These things I have written to you, the ones believing in the name of the Son of God, that you might be perceiving that the life you are having is everlasting—another purpose statement for this epistle. John’s purpose for his Gospel is “that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name (Jn 20:31; cf. 10:10). Since his epistle is written to those who already are the ones believing in the name of the Son of God, this purpose is, based on their continued fellowship with the Father, that you might be perceiving that the life you are having is everlasting. Although we usually emphasize the never-ending quality of this life, this is only one of the many aspects of the life which God intends to be “measureless” (αἰώνιος).

C. Having Boldness of Speech and He is Hearing us 5:14-17

5:14 Now this is the boldness that we are having toward Him, that whenever we should request anything according to His will, He is hearing us—every child of God has access to His throne and should know that God hears his requests (Heb 4:16; 10:19-23). God will grant a believer’s request, if he asks in Jesus’ name (Jn 14:13; 15:16), if the believer is in fellowship with God and obeying His commands (Jn 15:7; 1Jn 3:21-22), and if the request is according to God’s will (Mt 6:10; Mk 14:36; 1Jn 5:14).

[having] boldness—this word for “boldness of speech” is mentioned four times in 1 John and four times in Hebrews. In the second and third occurrences in Hebrews (4:16; 10:19), the believer is encouraged to use his newfound access to God’s throne through the blood of Christ to “boldly speak,” asking for God’s help. However, in the first and last occurrences in Hebrews (3:6; 10:35), the believer’s boldness of speech refers to his responsibility as an ambassador to proclaim God’s gospel of peace (cf. Eph 6:18). The believer is exhorted to hold fast *the boldness* and *the rejoicing* of his hope (Heb 3:6). Both of these activities were previously defined and were well-known to the audience. For definition, one should look at the New Covenant promises spoken by Christ (in Mt 5-7), looking for specific reference to “boldness of speech” and “rejoicing” (found in Mt 5:11-12). This boldness of speech describes those who speak of Christ and are persecuted for His sake; and the rejoicing describes the joy and gladness of those persecuted for Christ’s sake because of their great reward in Heaven. In 1 John, two occurrences of “boldness” concern our prayers (1Jn 3:21-22; 5:14) and two occurrences concern our “boldness” before Christ’s Bema Seat where our works will be judged (1Jn 2:28; 4:17).

5:15 And whenever we have perceived that He is hearing us, whatever we should request, we have perceived that we are having the requests which we have requested of Him—a believer in fellowship with God and asking according to His will (see conditions above) can be confident, at the time of his prayer, that his request

will be granted (cf. Mt 7:7-11; 21:22; Mk 11:24; Lk 11:9-13; Jn 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24; 1Jn 3:22; 5:14).

5:16 Whenever anyone might perceive his brother sinning a sin which is not leading to death, he shall be requesting, and He shall give him life to the ones sinning a sin not leading to death—love for one’s brother demands that a believer should intercede when he sees a brother sinning. Following the example of Christ who laid down His life for us, when we see a brother in need, we should open up our hearts (and worldly goods) to him (1Jn 3:16-18). In a similar way, one is obligated to pray for his brother. Should not the brother pray and make his own confession? Yes, but maybe he does not yet know or understand that he has sinned. The Holy Spirit might have to enlighten him of the truth, so that he can then make his own confession. In any case, we should follow Christ’s example and pray to ask forgiveness on behalf of those who harm us.

There is sin leading to death; I am not saying that he should be praying about that—this can be puzzling to many who do not understand how an ancient covenant works. Death is the penalty for breaking the terms of a covenant (Heb 10:28; e.g. the first generation of Israelites, Numbers 14:11-38; Achan, Joshua 7; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-10). Before the second generation of Israelites entered the Promised Land, God presents this choice: “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants might live” (Dt 30:15-19). “Covenant death” is separation from God and His blessings. For example, soon afterwards, Achan and his family broke the Covenant, and paid for this transgression with their lives. Likewise, soon after the New Covenant was ratified, Ananias and Sapphira willfully broke its terms by lying to the Holy Spirit and paid for their transgression with their lives. The Book of Hebrews warns believers that those who sin willfully, breaking the New Covenant, cannot renew the Covenant, as was done under the Old Covenant, with a fresh sacrifice, but must fear God’s judgment. We should pray for sins not leading to death.

I/we write unto you . . .

1. that your joy may be filled full (1:4)
2. that you might not be sinning (2:1)
3. not a new commandment, but an old one which you had from the beginning a new commandment (2:7-8)
4. because your sins have been forgiven (2:12)
5. because you have been knowing Him who is from the beginning (2:13, 14)
6. because you have overcome the evil (2:13)
7. because you have known the Father (2:13)
8. because you are strong, and the word of God is abiding in you, and you have overcome the evil (2:14)
9. because you have perceived it and that no lie is of the truth (2:21)
10. concerning them who are leading you astray (2:26)
11. who are believing on the name of the Son of God; that you may be perceiving that the life you are have is everlasting (5:13)

should be praying^a about that. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness^b is sin,^c and there is sin^c not *leading* to death.

¹⁸ We have perceived that every one having been begotten^d of God is not sinning;^e but the one begotten^d of God is keeping^f himself, and the evil is not touching^g him.

¹⁹ We have perceived that we are of God, and the whole world is lying in the evil.

²⁰ Yet, we have perceived that the Son of God is coming and has given us an understanding, that we might be knowing the true^h One; and we are in the true^h One, in His Son Jesus Christ, this One is the true^h God and the everlasting life.

^a ἐρωτάω —to question, ask, inquire, beseech (Mt 15:23; 16:13; 21:24; Mk 4:10; 7:26; Lu 4:38; 5:3; 7:3, 36; 9:45; Jn 1:19, 21, 25; 4:31, 40, 47; 5:12; Acts 23:20; Phil 4:3; 1Jn 5:16; 2Jn 5)

^b ἀδικία —a violation of a law, not righteous (Lk 13:27; 16:8, 9; Jn 7:18; Rom 1:18, 29; 2:8; 1Jn 1:9; 5:17)

^c ἁμαρτία —no share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; a sin, error, violation of the law (Mt 1:21; 9:2; 26:28; Jn 1:29; Rom 3:20; 4:7, 8; 5:12-8:10; 1Cor 15:3; 2Cor 11:7; Col 1:14; 1Jn 1:7, 8, 9; 2:2, 12; 3:4, 5, 8, 9; 4:10; 5:16, 17; Rev 1:5)

^d γεννάω—to be begotten [of men who father children] (Mt

²¹ Little children, guardⁱ yourselves from idols. Amen.

1:2; Jn 1:13; 3:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 18:37; 1Cor 4:15; 2Tim 2:23; 1Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)

^e ἁμαρτάνω —to not share [in the prize because of missing the mark]; to sin, err, violate the law (Mt 18:15, 21; 27:4; Lk 15:18, 21; Jn 5:14; 8:11; 9:2; Rom 2:12; 3:23; 5:12, 14, 16; 1Jn 1:10; 2:1; 3:6, 8, 9; 5:16, 18)

^f τηρέω —to attend to carefully, to guard, keep (see v. 21)

^g ἅπτομαι —to fasten to, adhere to; to touch (Mt 8:3, 15; 9:20, 21, 29; 14:36; 17:7; 20:34; Jn 20:17; 1Cor 7:1; 2Cor 6:17; Col 2:21; 1Jn 5:18)

^h ἀληθινός —true, genuine [has the nature corresponding to the name] (Lk 16:11; Jn 1:9; 4:23, 37; 6:32; 7:28; 15:1; 17:3; 19:35 1Th 1:9; Heb 8:2; 9:24; 10:22; 1Jn 2:8; 5:20; Rev 3:7, 14; 6:10)

ⁱ φυλάσσω —to guard, keep watch (Mt 19:20; Mk 10:20; Lk 2:8; 8:29; 11:21, 28; 12:15; 18:21; Jn 12:25; 17:12; Acts 7:53; 12:4; 21:24, 25; Rom 2:26; Gal 6:13; 1Jn 5:21)

5:17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death—unrighteousness is defined as not acting according to what is right in God's eyes (God's will). It would seem obvious that **all unrighteousness is sin**; however, it seems that this might have been a point of doctrine taught by the false teachers, and so, John needs to clarify it. Earlier he clarified that "sin is lawlessness" (3:4) which means that any sin also counts as a violation of God's law. A believer must understand that any wrongdoing, whether willful and deliberate or by mistake, is sin and has consequences. Thankfully, every sin does not **lead to [covenant] death**. We can confess these sins, be forgiven by God, and so, remain in His fellowship (1Jn 1:9), and "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin" (1Jn 1:7).

F. Knowing that We are in Him who is the True God and Everlasting Life 5:18-20

5:18 We have perceived that every one having been begotten of God is not sinning; but the one begotten of God is keeping himself, and the evil is not touching him—John continues to summarize what a believer has/should perceive(d). Certainly, he is comparing his doctrine with that of the false teachers who have departed from his fellowship. **Every one** (believer) who has **been begotten of God** (a "true son," meaning that he is doing God's will and is in fellowship with the Father) **is not sinning** (meaning that he does not produce sin or continue in it). Specifically, he does not walk in darkness, hate his brother, or love the world and its accessories. Such actions are incompatible with a believer's life of fellowship with God. On the other hand, a "true son" is actively **keeping himself** away from any such sins in order 1) to remain in fellowship with God (and Jesus and the Apostles); and 2) to be filled full of joy when Christ returns and judges his works. As he does so, God is protecting him from **the evil** of this world and the forces of darkness; "nothing can separate us from the love of God" (Rom 8:39; cf. 28-39). Thus, the evil cannot cling ("touch") to us; we have the "Teflon" of being new creations.

5:19 We have perceived that we are of God, and the whole world is lying in the evil—the doctrine in this epistle has helped a believer to perceive whether or not he is "of God," that is, a "true son" in fellowship with God and doing His will. Whereas, the whole of this world continues to lie in the darkness of evil which has come about by sin which is "of the evil one" (Satan's power, cf. Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph 2:2; 6:12). Those believers (such as the false teachers) who are in fellowship with the world are not in fellowship with God (1Jn 3:15-17; 4:5-6).

5:20 Yet, we have perceived that the Son of God is coming and has given us an understanding, that we might be knowing the true One; and we are in the true One, in His Son Jesus Christ, this One is the true God and the everlasting life—John affirms the fact of Christ's Second Coming (for His kingdom, but also for believers' judgment). We understand that believers in fellowship have no need to fear Christ's Coming, but rather can anticipate it and the joy it will bring, because we are able to be knowing **the true One** ("true": the **One** whose nature corresponds with His name) and that we are in **the true One**. Here, John ascribes deity to Jesus Christ just as he did in his Gospel. Jesus Christ is God, was with God, and made

all things (Jn 1:1-3); He also is the life which is the light of mankind (Jn 1:4). Jesus Christ has manifest the Father to us (Jn 1:14, 18).

5:21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols—although the term, **little children**, might be affectionate, it also reminds immature believers that the world is full of **idols** which can cause them to stumble. Every believer has a responsibility to guard himself, to keep himself pure, just as Christ is pure (1Jn 3:3). It is possible that the false teachers taught such activities were not sinful. John is certainly pointing out the contrast between God and His Son who are "true" (genuine) and the idols which are false (vanity).

Amen

What John says the believer has/should perceive(d):

1. You are having an anointing from the Holy One, and you have **perceived** all things (2:20)
2. I did not write to you because you have not **perceived** the truth, but because you have **perceived** it and because no lie is of the truth (2:21)
3. If ever you **perceive** that He is righteous, you are knowing that everyone producing righteousness has been begotten of Him (2:29)
4. Be **perceiving** what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we might be called children of God (3:1)
5. Yet we have **perceived** that whenever He is made manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (3:2)
6. You have **perceived** that He was manifested so that He might take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin (3:5)
7. We have **perceived** that we have departed from death to life because we are loving the brethren (3:14)
8. You have **perceived** that every murderer is not having everlasting life abiding in him (3:15)
9. These things I have written to you, the ones believing in the name of the Son of God, that you may be **perceiving** that the life you are having is everlasting (5:13)
10. Whenever we have **perceived** that He is hearing us, whatever we should request, we have **perceived** that we are having the requests which we have requested of Him (5:15)
11. Whenever anyone might **perceive** his brother sinning a sin which is not leading to death, he shall be requesting, and He shall give him life to the ones sinning a sin not leading to death (5:16)
12. We have **perceived** that every one having been begotten of God is not sinning; but the one begotten of God is guarding himself, and the evil is not touching him (5:18)
13. We have **perceived** that we are of God, and the whole world is lying in the evil (5:19)
14. Yet, we have **perceived** that the Son of God is coming and has given us an understanding, that we may be knowing the true One (5:20)

* The one hating his brother is in darkness and is walking in darkness, and he has not **perceived** whether he is going, because the darkness blinded his eyes (2:11)