

# The Book of 1<sup>st</sup> John

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#### A. Introduction to the Book

##### 1. Historical Background

###### a. Author

- 1) Not specified in text.
- 2) The Church Fathers Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian ascribe this letter to the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee.
- 3) Additional testimony from the early Church consistently denotes John as the author.
- 4) No one questioned John as the author until the 18<sup>th</sup> century advent of “higher criticism”.
- 5) Internal evidence in the text points to John as the author.
  - a) Word and phrase usage.
  - b) Similarity to John’s Gospel.
  - c) Eyewitness of the Lord.
- 6) Conclusion: The Apostle John is the human author (the Holy Spirit is the divine author).

###### b. Date of Writing

- 1) Difficult book to date.
- 2) Addresses issues that arose at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- 3) Internal evidence indicates this letter was written after his Gospel was penned (85-95 A.D.).
- 4) No reference to persecution under Domitian (95 A.D.).
- 5) Written prior to the Book of Revelation (95-96 A.D.).
- 6) Conclusion: Written 90-95 A.D.

###### c. Audience

- 1) The Book of Revelation indicates that John still had oversight over multiple local churches in Asia Minor (see map on next page).
- 2) Anonymity indicates audience would recognize who wrote the letter.
- 3) Prior to his exile to Patmos John resided in Ephesus where he actively wrote.
- 4) Not targeted to a specific audience like 2 & 3 John or Paul’s letters to Corinth.
- 5) Conclusion: Written in Ephesus to the church of Ephesus and others in Asia Minor that were under John’s “umbrella” of apostolic ministry.



- d. Canonicity
  - 1) Accepted by his audience as being revelation from God.
  - 2) Numerous Church Fathers (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, etc.) attested to its authenticity.
  - 3) Cited by many Church Fathers (Polycarp, Hermas, Tertullian, etc.).
  - 4) Every early canon attests to its authenticity as Scripture.
  - 5) Conclusion: The 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John is God breathed and inspired Scripture and belongs in our Bible.
2. Character of the Letter
  - a. Written to address certain heresies that had arisen within the early Church.
  - b. Written to a general audience of believers rather than a specific local church.
  - c. Gives no indication that the believers were under any sort of external persecution.
  - d. Problems within the body of believers had caused some to depart.
  - e. No O.T. quotations indicates a focus on addressing distortions that had arisen from the blending of secular thinking (philosophy) with the writings of N.T. authors.
3. Main Themes
  - a. Fellowship
    - 1) With God.
    - 2) With fellow believers.

- b. Attributes of God
  - 1) God is Light.
  - 2) God is Love.
- c. Attributes of Jesus
  - 1) He is the Christ.
  - 2) He is eternally God.
  - 3) He is truly human.
  - 4) He is the propitiation for the sins of the entire world.
  - 5) He is our advocate.
- d. Abiding in the Light and in the Love of God.
- e. Eternal life
  - 1) Assurance that we have eternal life.
  - 2) Exhortation to live accordingly.
- f. The world is hostile to believers.
- 4. Problems in the Church
  - a. Second and Third Generation Christians
    - 1) Waning enthusiasm.
    - 2) Weary of higher standard of N.T. sainthood/priesthood.
    - 3) Practices becoming “habit”.
    - 4) Separation from society.
  - b. Blending of Christian tenets with contemporary Greek philosophy.
  - c. False teachers had arisen from within the flock.
- 5. Heresies Addressed
  - a. Early Gnostic Beliefs
    - 1) Matter is inherently evil.
    - 2) Spirit is inherently good.
    - 3) God could not have created the universe since it is made up of matter (“aeon” theory).
    - 4) The human body is a prison from which our spirit (rational self) must be released through a secret, mystical knowledge (*gnosis*) and an elaborate ritual which only Gnostics can supply.
    - 5) Ascetic tendencies.
    - 6) Uninhibited sin tendencies.
    - 7) Delusion of being sinless.
    - 8) Disruption of fellowship by creating classes of believers.
    - 9) Cerinthus’ teaching that denies the incarnation – Jesus was a human who was only temporarily the Christ because the Christ “spirit” descended upon him at the baptism and then left him before the crucifixion.
  - b. Docetism (offshoot of Gnosticism)
    - 1) The flesh is inherently evil.
    - 2) Denies incarnation – Christ did not have a physical body.
    - 3) He was God who came as an apparition and only appeared to be human and suffer/die on the cross.

- c. Denial of the Messiahship of Jesus
  - 1) Source: Jewish believers.
  - 2) Reflects a struggle to accept the suffering Christ.
  - 3) Rooted in a focus upon the temporal salvation of Israel.
- B. Outline of the Book (given with detail below)
- C. Introduction (1:1-4)
  - 1. Christ witnessed. (1:1)
    - a. Use of neuter pronoun ὃ (ho) here (and v. 3) is an abstract rather than a personal reference to Jesus Christ.
      - 1) A personal reference would have used the masculine pronoun ὃς (hos).
      - 2) Instead, this is a collective pronoun that refers to all that He is (compare with 1 Cor 15:10).
      - 3) Included in this abstract view of Christ are: His deity, His manifested humanity, His eternal life, His voice, His physical body, His message, etc.
    - b. “What was from the beginning”
      - 1) The use of the being verb ἦν (ēn = was) rather than ἐγένετο (egéneto = became) indicates this is a reference to the deity of Christ which has always existed (John 1:1; 1 John 2:13-14).
      - 2) This “beginning” corresponds to the beginning of John 1:1 and predates the beginning of creation in Genesis 1:1.
      - 3) Other beginnings in 1 John must be understood in their own context.
    - c. “what we have heard”
      - 1) The use of the 1st person plural “we” includes all the apostles as witnesses.
      - 2) The perfect tense of ἀκούω (akouō = hear) emphasizes the ongoing effects of having heard the teachings of Christ.
    - d. “what we have seen with our eyes”
      - 1) The perfect tense of ὁράω (horáō = see) emphasizes the ongoing effects of having seen Christ and the effects of His ministry.
      - 2) The phrase “with our eyes” clarifies the visual use of the verb ὁράω which can also mean to know.
    - e. “what we have looked at”
      - 1) The verb θεάομαι (theáomai = look at) describes an intense and thorough examination process.
      - 2) The aorist tense emphasizes the reality of the apostles’ observation of Christ and all that He has done.
    - f. “and touched with our hands”
      - 1) The verb ψηλαφάω (psēlapháō = feel) means to handle something - much more thorough than a simple touch.
      - 2) The phrase “with our hands” rules out any understanding other than actual physical contact.
      - 3) The aorist tense emphasizes the reality of the apostles’ contact with Christ’s physical body.
    - g. “concerning the Word of Life”

- 1) The phrase “Word of Life” is a title for Christ incorporating two key words from John’s Gospel (John 1:1, 4).
  - 2) Both the person of Christ and the message He delivered in revealing the Father are expressed in this title.
  - 3) This phrase removes any doubt about the subject matter at hand – all that encompasses the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- h. Principles of 1 John 1:1
- 1) The apostles heard, saw, closely observed and even touched Jesus – He is undeniably true humanity.
  - 2) He is also eternally existent, undiminished Deity.
  - 3) By stating the undeniable evidence of the incarnation of the Christ, John has begun to refute the false teaching which had infested the early Church.
  - 4) Jesus Christ is the Word – He reveals the Father to us (John 14:6-10).
  - 5) Jesus Christ is the Life – eternal life which we also have in Him.
2. Christ manifested. (1:2)
- a. Verse 2 is an intervening clause between verse 1 and verse 3.
  - b. This verse removes any possible doubt about the incarnation by highlighting His manifestation.
  - c. “and the life was manifested”
    - 1) The “life” is a reference back to the title “Word of Life” from v 1.
    - 2) The word for life is ζωῆ (zōē), not the word for physical life: βίος (bios) or soul life: ψυχή (psuchē).
    - 3) The N.T. use of ζωῆ consistently refers to the life we have in Christ.
    - 4) The verb φανερόω (phaneroō = reveal) signifies that something already in existence, but not previously seen, was made manifest.
  - d. “and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life”
    - 1) The perfect tense of ὀράω (have seen) which was used in verse 1 is repeated here and again in verse 3.
    - 2) This repetition of the exact same word forms a clear connection between clauses in this long sentence.
    - 3) The present tense of the verbs μαρτυρέω (martureō = bear witness, testify) and ἀπαγγέλλω (apaggellō = announce, report, proclaim) indicate the ongoing nature of the apostles’ communication concerning our Savior Jesus Christ.
    - 4) Given that most of the apostles had already died when this letter was written, their ongoing communication was being made through the N.T. Scriptures already written.
    - 5) The truth of the incarnation of Christ has been witnessed and is being proclaimed to this day through the testimony of the N.T. authors.
    - 6) Jesus Christ has been described as the Word of Life, the life manifested, and now the eternal life (1 John 5:11, 13, 20).
    - 7) Jesus Christ is the true “I am” (John 8:18, 24, 28; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8 compare with Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8).

- e. “which was with the Father and was manifested to us”
  - 1) “Which” is a feminine pronoun referring back to the feminine noun ζωή (life).
  - 2) This life, this eternal life, the eternal Son of God, was with the Father from the very beginning.
  - 3) The reality of the earthly manifestation of eternal life in the person of Jesus Christ cannot be overemphasized.
- f. Principles of 1 John 1:2
  - 1) This verse makes it very clear that the One who was manifested to them, whom they had personally witnessed (v. 1), was with the Father in heaven before He became flesh (John 1:14).
  - 2) This means that Jesus is the Son of the living God – the eternal life – sent from heaven by God the Father (Heb 3:1).
  - 3) This also means that Jesus is the Christ; He did not become the Christ.
  - 4) Extra credit: Did the hypostatic union become a reality when Jesus was born in Bethlehem? Or did His human soul and spirit exist before He became flesh? (see Col 1:15).
- 3. Christ proclaimed. (1:3a)
  - a. The proclamation mentioned in verse 2 is expanded here to include all that was personally witnessed by the apostles (v. 1).
  - b. “what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also”
    - 1) The words “we have seen” (v. 1 & 2), “we have heard” (v. 1) and “we proclaim” (v. 2) are repeated in the Greek in identical form here in verse 3.
    - 2) This phrase is used to pull together all of what was described in verses 1 and 2 in order to link the upcoming purpose clause with all that is being proclaimed.
- 4. Goal of apostolic writings. (1:3b-4)
  - a. “so that you too may have fellowship with us”
    - 1) The word for fellowship is κοινωνία (koinōnia = close association).
    - 2) This type of association involves mutual interests as well as sharing.
    - 3) Acts 2:42; Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 1:9; 10:16<sub>x2</sub>; 2 Cor 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; 13:14; Gal 2:9; Phil 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; Philem 6; Heb 13:16; 1 John 1:3<sub>x2</sub>, 6, 7.
  - b. “and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”
    - 1) The word used here for ‘our’ is ἡμέτερος (hēmeteros = our) which is a possessive adjective.
    - 2) The classic Greek usage of ἡμέτερος is emphatic in nature.
    - 3) This adjective is used in only 7 out of almost 400 such possessives in the N.T.
    - 4) This word is used here to emphasize that the believers receiving John’s letter are included in this statement.
  - c. Principles of 1 John 1:3
    - 1) This verse states that the testimony of the apostles in proclaiming Christ is intended to bring about the fellowship of the saints.
    - 2) Fellowship with one another is based upon fellowship with God.

- 3) Believers that have fellowship with God will enjoy fellowship with one another, regardless of whether or not they have anything else in common.
- d. Principles of 1 John 1:4
  - 1) In verse 4 we see a second purpose given for the apostles' writings.
  - 2) There is a text question about whether this should be "our" or "your".
  - 3) Given that verse 3 just grouped the audience of the letter together with the apostles, "our" is more natural here.
  - 4) The joy (χαρά, chara) of the believer is a common theme of the N.T. Scriptures.
  - 5) We are supposed to rejoice always (2 Cor 6:10; Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16).
  - 6) The word for complete (πληρόω, plēroō) describes the full measure of joy the believer can experience.
- e. "These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete."
  - 1) Your spiritual leaders care about your happiness (2 Cor 1:24; Phil 1:25).
  - 2) Your spiritual leaders derive joy from your walk with God (3 John 4).
  - 3) True Christian joy is possible only when in fellowship with God.
  - 4) When we are enjoying fellowship with God (and with one another) we will grow in our capacity for happiness.
  - 5) God desires for us to be filled up (and even overflowing) with His joy.
  - 6) Experiencing God's joy is not based on circumstances of life (Phil 4:11-13).
  - 7) Experiencing God's joy is not based on emotions or even feeling well.
  - 8) Experiencing God's joy is based on our relationship with Him and spending as much time as possible in fellowship with Him.
- D. Abiding part 1 (1:5-2:17)
  1. God is Light. (1:5)
    - a. "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you"
      - 1) The normal Greek word for message is λόγος (logos = word), but here we have ἀγγελία (aggelia = announcement, proclamation, report, news).
      - 2) The only other N.T. use of ἀγγελία is found in 1 John 3:11.
      - 3) The use of ἀγγελία indicates that this message (report) has been delivered with the expectation that the recipients would proclaim (preach) it to others.
      - 4) This report came from Christ Himself.
      - 5) The apostles were faithful to deliver the report (ἀναγγέλλω, anaggellō) in their preaching and their writings.
    - b. "that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all"
      - 1) Light describes righteousness while darkness describes unrighteousness.
      - 2) The Light of God shines in the darkness (John 1:5) exposing the unrighteousness of men (John 3:19-21).
      - 3) Jesus describes Himself as the life giving Light of the world (John 8:12) upon whom we must believe to become sons of righteousness (John 12:35, 36).
    - c. Principles of 1 John 1:5
      - 1) God has delivered a message to us (the Bible) and, just like the apostles, we are expected to proclaim it to others.

- 2) Pure light (absolute righteousness) is part of God's perfect essence.
  - 3) That no darkness (unrighteousness) can be found in Him highlights how we fall short of His glory and must receive His perfect righteousness through faith in Christ (Rom 3:21-24).
2. Walking in the Light. (1:6-7)
- a. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him"
    - 1) To "say" indicates a mode of thinking which could include making an overt verbal claim of fellowship.
    - 2) This is a 3rd class conditional – one may or may not be guilty of this thinking.
  - b. "and *yet* walk in the darkness"
    - 1) The word "yet" was added by the NASB translators because of the obvious contrast of the two statements.
    - 2) The verb περιπατέω (peripateō = walk around, conduct one's life) indicates an ongoing pattern of living – a state.
    - 3) This state of living in the darkness describes experiential unrighteousness in the life of a believer.
  - c. "we lie and do not practice the truth"
    - 1) To assert that unrighteousness in our lives is compatible with God's perfect righteousness is pure falsehood.
    - 2) This includes self-deception – we lie to ourselves about our condition of sin.
    - 3) Not only is this type of thinking at odds with truth, but the believer's actions serve to deny the truth of God's word.
    - 4) God wants us to know His word and live accordingly.
  - d. "but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light"
    - 1) This verse counters the false claim made in verse 6 by describing a true walk in harmony with God.
    - 2) God is said to be in the Light because He eternally exists in the sphere of righteousness and truth.
    - 3) When our walk is in accordance with God's righteousness and truth, we walk in His Light.
    - 4) When we allow sin and falsehood to enter into our lives, we are out of phase with God and walk in darkness.
  - e. "we have fellowship with one another"
    - 1) This statement refers to fellowship between the believer and God.
    - 2) We must walk in God's Light to have fellowship with Him.
    - 3) As we learned in verse 3, when we are in fellowship with God we will also enjoy fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - f. "and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin"
    - 1) The "blood" of Jesus refers to the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.
    - 2) Note that the phrase Jesus His Son links the human name of the Savior with the title Son of God.

- 3) Some manuscripts contain the phrase Jesus Christ His Son, but the obvious declaration of Jesus as the God-man remains.
  - 4) This clearly refutes any false claims that Jesus was a mere man.
  - 5) The verb καθαρίζω (katharizō = make clean, purify) is used here as a present active indicative.
  - 6) This means that there is a continual cleansing/purification being described.
  - 7) This is describing the crucifixion of the sin nature on the cross (Rom 6:6) which renders it effectively powerless and allows us to be able to say no to sin (Gal 5:24) and continually portray Christ in our lives (Gal 2:20).
- g. Principles of 1 John 1:6-7
- 1) We are Light in the Lord, so we should walk as children of Light (Eph 5:7-16).
  - 2) We ought to walk worthy as saints in Light, knowing we have been rescued from the domain of darkness through faith in Christ (Col 1:10-14).
  - 3) The blood of Christ has redeemed us once-and-for-all (positional: Acts 20:28; Rom 5:9; Eph 1:7; Rev 5:9) from the domain of darkness and provides ongoing cleansing (experiential: Titus 2:14; see also 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 3:3) from the defilements of sin in our lives.
  - 4) This continual cleansing keeps us pure by making provision (a) for us to avoid sin through the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit and (b) for us to be restored to fellowship if we succumb to the temptation to sin (1 John 1:9).
3. Dealing with sin. (1:8-2:2)
- a. "If we say that we have no sin"
    - 1) This is similar to the phrase in verse 6 where we "say" (to ourselves and others) something that is not true.
    - 2) In verse 6 the false claim was about fellowship with God, but here it is a denial of the reality of sin in our lives.
    - 3) The noun ἁμαρτία (hamartia = missing the mark, sin) in the singular often represents a state of sinfulness.
    - 4) The phrase "have sin" used here refers to the fact that we do possess a sinful nature and sometimes surrender to sin.
  - b. "we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us"
    - 1) Here we see the same "lie" from verse 6 in the form of self-deception.
    - 2) This self-deception inhibits our ability to respond to the Holy Spirit's work in convicting us of our sins.
    - 3) When we walk in the Light of God's truth, we readily recognize and admit sin in our lives.
    - 4) If we deny or overlook our personal sins, then God's truth is no longer the prevailing principle in our walk.
  - c. "If we confess our sins"

- 1) The verb ὁμολογέω (homologeō = agree, admit, confess) means that we are in agreement with God concerning the sinfulness of our thoughts, words, and/or actions.
  - 2) This agreement involves an admission of the sinfulness of our sins to God.
  - 3) This admission of our sins is in the form of a private, personal prayer.
  - 4) No public declaration is necessary nor do we need a priest to intercede (since we are priests).
  - 5) It is necessary for us to acknowledge the guilt of our sins, but feeling guilty for our sins has no part in this.
  - 6) We also do not need to ask God to forgive us our sins nor promise to make restitution for our sins.
  - 7) God has set the conditions for being restored to fellowship – we admit our sins and He has promised to cleanse us on the basis of the efficacious work of Christ on the cross.
  - 8) In this verse we have the word “sins” in the plural which is a reference to our personal sins themselves rather than the condition or state of sinfulness.
- d. “He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins”
- 1) God’s provision of forgiveness is based upon His faithfulness, not ours.
  - 2) The noun δίκαιος (dikaios = just, fair, righteous) indicates that God is not violating His perfect righteousness and justice in forgiving us.
  - 3) Because the spiritual death of Christ on the cross paid the penalty of sin on our behalf, God’s forgiveness of our sins is completely compatible with His perfect righteousness and justice.
  - 4) The verb ἀφίημι (aphiēmi = dismiss, send away, pardon, forgive) is used here in the aorist indicating a singular act of forgiveness of sins.
  - 5) In other words, this forgiveness is a singular restoration to fellowship which lasts until we sin again.
- e. “and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- 1) As with forgiveness (ἀφίημι - aphiēmi) the verb for cleansing (καθαρίζω - catharizō) is used here in the aorist indicating a singular act of purification from unrighteousness.
  - 2) The noun ἀδικία (adikia = wickedness, an act in violation of what is right) is used here to describe sins we have committed against God which we were unaware of at the time of confession.
  - 3) God forgives the sins we do confess and, based on His faithfulness and the sacrifice of His Son, takes care of all the other sins which we have committed.
- f. “If we say that we have not sinned”
- 1) As in verses 6 and 8 we see a false way of thinking and/or verbal claim.
  - 2) The Greek verb for sin (ἁμαρτάνω, hamartanō) is used here in the perfect tense which describes an action in the past with present ongoing results.
  - 3) This describes a carnal believer who needs to confess, but is denying the reality of sin in his/her life.
- g. “we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

- 1) We do not have the power to make God be anything.
  - 2) This usage is identical to 1 John 5:10 which explains that we “make God a liar” when we do not believe Him and His word – we make Him out to be a liar.
  - 3) The word of God abides in us when we believe His truth and live accordingly (1 John 2:14).
  - 4) If we reject God’s word then it will not abide in us (John 5:38) because it has no place in our hearts (John 8:37).
- h. Principles of 1 John 1:8-10
- 1) A prideful attitude which denies the reality of sin in our lives is nothing more than delusion (self-deception) and rejection of the truth.
  - 2) The blood of Christ continually keeps us clean by giving us the power to avoid sin (v. 7) and cleanses all our unrighteousness in the event that we do succumb to temptation.
  - 3) The word of God (through the ministry of the Holy Spirit) actively exposes the unrighteousness in our lives and calls for us to acknowledge our sins before God, but if we reject the testimony of His word by claiming that we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar.
- i. “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.”
- 1) The noun τεκνίον (teknion = little born ones) is used here as a term of affection, expressing John’s love and concern for these believers.
  - 2) This term is related to the much more common word τέκνον (teknon = child), but has a distinctly different meaning.
  - 3) The eight N.T. uses of τεκνίον (teknion) are all penned by the apostle John and each one represents a tender address by a teacher to his disciples (John 13:33; 1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).
  - 4) Here we see the purpose of what was written in the preceding six verses.
  - 5) The point of highlighting the dark reality of sin in the believer’s life is not to engender discouragement, but rather to encourage believers to repent from their sins and strive to live a holy life.
- j. “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”
- 1) The first half of this verse emphasized the ongoing provision for purification (sin avoidance) described in 1 John 1:7.
  - 2) This clause addresses the stark reality that all of us will inevitably sin and fail to remain pure (holy) as God desires.
  - 3) The noun παράκλητος (paraklētos = one who appears on another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper, comforter) is used by Jesus Christ to refer to the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).
  - 4) In this verse John uses παράκλητος (paraklētos) to describe the intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ on our behalf (Rom 8:34; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:25).
  - 5) Jesus comes to our defense as Satan continually makes accusations against us in the courtroom of God (Rev 12:10).

- 6) The Bible speaks of a Roman legal advocate named Tertullus whom the Jews employed when they brought charges against Paul before Felix the governor (Acts 24:1).
- 7) Poem (author unknown):  
*I hear the accuser roar  
 Of ills that I have done;  
 I know them well, and thousands more,  
 Jehovah findeth none.  
 Though the restless foe accuses –  
 Sins recounting like a flood,  
 Ev'ry charge our God refuses;  
 Christ has answered with His blood.*
- 8) Note that John uses the term Father here in order to highlight that the believer's personal sins do not negate the familial relationship.
- 9) Jesus is the Righteous One who qualifies to be at the right hand of God (Isa 53:11; Acts 3:14; 5:31; 7:52; 22:14).
- k. "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins;"
- 1) The noun ἱλασμός (hilasmos = means of appeasing, propitiatory sacrifice) is used here to describe the Father's satisfaction with the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross.
  - 2) This is the critical piece of evidence needed to refute the charges being levied against us.
  - 3) We see this noun ἱλασμός (hilasmos) again in 1 John 4:10 where we learn that the love of God is demonstrated through the propitiation for our sins.
  - 4) Related words ἱλαστήριον (hilastērion - Rom 3:25) and ἱλάσκομαι (hilaskomai - Heb 2:17) also describe the conciliatory nature of the blood of Christ.
- l. "and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world."
- 1) The phrase ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου (holou tou kosmou = whole world) in this verse firmly establishes that Jesus Christ died for everyone (Heb 2:9).
  - 2) The adjective ὅλου (from ὅλος, holos) means all, entire, complete or whole and leaves no room for selective exclusion based on theological bent.
  - 3) Jesus Christ died for everyone and is declared to be the Savior of all men (1 Tim 4:10) – there is no other Savior – even though not everyone will believe on Him and be saved.
  - 4) This is pictured in the Passover – the lamb was slaughtered, but then the blood must be applied to the doorposts and lintel of the house (Exodus 12).
  - 5) This is also pictured in the offerings on the Day of Atonement – the animals were slain, but then the blood must be sprinkled on the mercy seat (Lev 16).
- m. Principles of 1 John 2:1-2
- 1) The goal of John's writing about sin was to encourage believers to live a life characterized by sinless consistency.

- 2) If we as believers stumble and sin the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, comes to our defense in the heavenly courtroom.
  - 3) The Father is satisfied with the work of Christ at the cross on our behalf, so we will find a favorable verdict.
  - 4) The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ was made on behalf of all men, but only those who believe on Him will have His blood applied to their lives.
  - 5) When unbelievers stand before the Great White Throne their deeds (works) are judged, not their sins, and omission from the book of life is the basis for eternal condemnation (Rev 20:11-15).
4. Coming to know God by keeping His Word. (2:3-6)
- a. “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.”
    - 1) The pronoun “this” refers to the phrase “if we keep His commandments” at the end of the verse.
    - 2) John uses this type of expression many times in this letter (vv. 2:3, 5; 4:2, 6, 13; 5:2).
    - 3) These two uses of γινώσκω (ginōskō = know, understand, comprehend, learn about, perceive, realize, recognize) are the first of 25 uses by John in this letter.
    - 4) John is highlighting true knowledge in the life of the believer in contrast to the false Gnostic concept of knowledge.
    - 5) This phrase describes a personal recognition that one knows God and has developed a closeness with Him.
    - 6) Him/His could be referring to Christ or the Father, but making a distinction is not important since this intimacy is with all members of the Godhead.
    - 7) The “if” in this final clause is a 3rd class conditional in the Greek – maybe yes, maybe no.
    - 8) The verb τηρέω (tēreō = guard, hold onto, preserve, observe, fulfill) is used here in the present tense to describe consistent observance of God’s Word.
    - 9) The noun ἐντολή (entolē = order, mandate, command) is used here to include all of the imperatives and requirements for living a holy life specified in God’s Word.
    - 10) Related Scriptures: 1 Kgs 6:12; 9:6; Ne 1:5, 9; Ps 78:7; 119:61; Luke 1:6; 1 Cor 7:19; 1 John 3:21-23; 5:3
  - b. “The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;”
    - 1) Here we have μὴ (mē = negation) plus a present active participle of τηρέω (tēreō) indicating a failure to consistently observe God’s Word.
    - 2) This verse makes a statement similar to the three “If we say” verses in chapter one (vv. 6, 8, 10).
    - 3) When we are close to God (know Him) we will live a life consistently shaped by God’s truth which abides in us.
  - c. “but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.”

- 1) In the Scriptures God's "word" and "commandments" are often used interchangeably.
  - 2) Here the use of "word" rather than "commandments" indicates a broader obedience characterized by going beyond only what is commanded.
  - 3) The phrase "love of God" could be...
    - a) Objective - The believer's love for God.
    - b) Subjective - God's love for the believer.
    - c) Qualitative - God's type of love.
  - 4) In chapter 5 verses 1-3 this same phrase means a believer's love for God.
  - 5) Since this phrase is used here in parallel with a believer knowing God, the believer's love for God is the primary meaning of this phrase.
  - 6) God's love for the believer is also in view here because the believer's love for God is in response to God's love (1 John 4:19 cf. 1 John 4:10).
  - 7) God's type of love is also pictured here because this is ἀγάπη (agapē) love.
  - 8) The adverb ἀληθῶς (alēthōs = really, truly) is used here for emphasis.
  - 9) The verb τελειόω (teleioō = complete, fulfill, bring to full measure, make perfect, mature) is used here to describe the love in us that comes from a fully developed relationship with God.
  - 10) We will take a more detailed look at the concept of love being perfected in us when we get to chapter 4 (see vv. 12, 17-18), but for now we need to understand that as God's word is transforming our thinking, the capacity for love is growing in us.
- d. "By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."
- 1) John's usage of "in Him" and "abides in Him" is not the same as Paul's usage of the phrase "in Christ".
  - 2) Paul describes our permanent position in God's Son with all its attendant privileges and blessings.
  - 3) John describes our fellowship with God and the fruitfulness that results (John 15:1-10).
  - 4) Abiding in Christ describes sustained fellowship with Him and is critical in achieving true intimacy with God.
  - 5) The verb μένω (menō = remain, abide, continue, persist) is used here in the present tense to describe continual fellowship with Christ.
  - 6) When we sin we are no longer abiding in Christ, but as born-again believers we are ever "in Christ".
  - 7) The verb ὀφείλω (opheilō = owe, be indebted, be obligated) is used here in the sense of what "should" be (Rom 15:1, 27; 1 Cor 9:10; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:13; Heb 5:12; 1 John 3:16; 4:11; 3 John 8).
  - 8) Walking just as He walked involves pleasing God through keeping His commandments (John 8:29; 15:10).
  - 9) As we consistently fellowship with God, His word in us produces Christ-like behavior (Gal 2:20; 1 Pet 2:21).

- e. Principles of 1 John 2:3-6
  - 1) Coming to know God describes a closeness with Him that comes about through knowing His word.
  - 2) This produces in us a desire to please God through obeying His word.
  - 3) This desire is a manifestation of His love being perfected in us.
  - 4) This willing obedience which comes about as an extension of our love for God is definitive evidence that we are being conformed to the image of Christ.
  - 5) When this heart attitude of love and obedience characterizes our thinking, we know we are abiding in Christ.
  - 6) Thus, when we abide in Christ keeping His commandments is not burdensome.
- 5. Loving one another. (2:7-11)
  - a. “Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning;”
    - 1) John now explains that the lesson he is emphasizing is not new to his audience.
    - 2) For example, the message of God’s love in us being expressed outwardly to our brethren was given in O.T. Scriptures (Lev 19:18).
    - 3) Some manuscripts do not include the phrase “from the beginning”, but as we develop this passage we will see that, in this context, “the beginning” is a reference to the incarnation of Christ.
  - b. “the old commandment is the word which you have heard.”
    - 1) Even though commandment is singular, John explains that this encapsulates all of the lessons which we have been taught from God’s word.
    - 2) When connected back to the previous section of this chapter, this means we ought to willingly obey all of the teaching we have received (heard).
  - c. “On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you”
    - 1) The adverb πάλιν (palin = back, again, furthermore, on the other hand) is used as a marker of contrast or alternative aspect as in Mt 4:7, Lk 6:43 and 1 Cor 12:21.
    - 2) John now explains that, in a sense, what he is writing is new.
    - 3) Christ himself declares the love of the brethren to be a new commandment in John 13:34-35.
    - 4) The key to understanding this is the phrase “even as I have loved you” because now that the Christ has come we have His example to follow.
    - 5) With the incarnation of Christ we have received a superior revelation (Heb 1) and His demonstration of ἀγάπη love during His earthly ministry and at the cross serves as an example of genuine divine love and shines new light on the significance of loving one another.
    - 6) As we continue to abide in Christ the love that was evident in Him will become evident in us also.

- 7) Love becomes the operating principle of our lives as we fellowship with God and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ.
- d. “because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.”
- 1) The noun σκοτία (skotia = absence of light, ignorance of spiritual truth) appears in the New Testament 16 times, 14 of which are in John’s writings.
  - 2) A similar word σκότος (skotos) is more commonly used for darkness, both physical and spiritual in meaning.
  - 3) John is referring to spiritual darkness in this passage and gives this concept particular emphasis with 5 uses total, 3 occurring in verse 11 alone.
  - 4) The contrast here is with the Light as we see in many of John’s other uses (John 1:5; 8:12; 12:35, 46; 1 John 1:5).
  - 5) The world is growing darker and darker as time goes on, but this is referring to darkness in believers.
  - 6) The darkness in the life of the believer is not already gone (past away), but is passing away as the believer undergoes spiritual growth.
  - 7) When Jesus Christ came into the world His Light exposed the darkness.
  - 8) His genuine (true) Light shines to this day in the lives of believers.
  - 9) His Light shines in our souls and as the darkness of our old nature passes away we gain the capacity for divine love.
- e. “The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now.”
- 1) Once again we see a false claim being made by a believer.
  - 2) If you are harboring hatred, you are actively sinning and are walking in the darkness rather than in the Light.
  - 3) This specifically references hating a fellow believer, but applies to anyone.
  - 4) The phrase ἕως ἄρτι (heōs arti = until now) indicates that a believer will remain in the darkness until such time as he recognizes the hatred in his thinking, changes his mind about continuing in this mental attitude sin, and confesses the sin to God.
- f. “The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”
- 1) True love for the brethren is more than just an absence of hate.
  - 2) This love is a mental attitude based on the integrity of the soul which sets aside self interest and focuses on benefiting others without regard to merit or “who deserves it” (1 Cor 13:5).
  - 3) This sacrificial, integrity love sums up the commandments of God and is the fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:8-10).
  - 4) If we are fulfilling the law through this type of love then we will show no partiality in our thinking (Jas 2:8-9).
  - 5) For this type of love to characterize our thinking we must be abiding in Christ, in His Light and in His love.
  - 6) Carnal believers are walking in the darkness and their thinking is characterized by selfishness which is incompatible with ἀγάπη love.

- 7) When we demonstrate genuine love for the brethren, we will go out of our way to avoid presenting obstacles to our fellow believers (Rom 14:13; 1 Cor 8:13).
- 8) When we are grounded in truth, we will not easily be tripped up in our own walk (Ps 119:165; 2 Peter 1:10).
- g. “But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness”
  - 1) This verse restates verse 9, but places emphasis on the ongoing walk in the darkness.
  - 2) Connecting this back to chapter 1, we see that harboring hatred puts us on a course of life that excludes fellowship with God (1 Jn 1:6).
- h. “and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”
  - 1) When we are out of fellowship with God we lose our sense of purpose and direction and we waste time wandering about aimlessly.
  - 2) The blindness that results from being out of fellowship reminds us of the darkness of unbelievers (Jn 12:35).
  - 3) The believer will experience partial or total blindness (and subsequent loss of spiritual direction) depending on the length of time spent in carnality.
- i. Principles of 1 John 2:7-11
  - 1) God’s commandment to love one another has been around from the beginning.
  - 2) The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ provides the greatest example of sacrificial, integrity love for us to follow in our own lives.
  - 3) As we allow God’s word to perform its work in us, our thinking will begin to be characterized by the unselfish attitude of ἀγάπη love.
  - 4) If we walk in the darkness, our thinking will become self-centered and our actions self-serving.
  - 5) The longer we languish in our sins the more bitterness we develop in our souls as our capacity to love is diminished.
  - 6) This heart attitude blinds us to the needs of others and causes us to lose our way in our spiritual walk.
  - 7) The solution:
    - a) Keep close tabs on your own walk and confess sins as necessary.
    - b) Deal with problems in your life that inhibit walking in the Light.
    - c) Spend time in the word of God so the Holy Spirit can renew your thinking.
    - d) Monitor your own growth to see if God’s thinking is becoming apparent in your own approach to life.
    - e) Pay attention to any evidence which reveals that you are not functioning in the sphere of love.
6. Spiritual growth. (2:12-14)
  - a. “I am writing to you, little children”
    - 1) This is the word τέκνία (teknia) which we saw back in 1 John 2:1.
    - 2) As before, this is an affectionate term addressing the recipients of this letter.

- b. “because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake.”
  - 1) While we certainly benefit from the forgiveness of our sins, the purpose for God’s gracious forgiveness is to glorify His Son, Jesus Christ.
  - 2) Scriptures often speak of how God’s blessing to us is for His name’s sake (Ps 23:3; 25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 106:8; 109:21; 143:11; Isa 43:25; 48:9-11; Jer 14:7, 21; Ezek 20:9-14; 36:22; Dan 9:19; Rom 1:5).
- c. “I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.”
  - 1) This is πατέρες (patēres) referring to the more spiritually mature believers in this context.
  - 2) This phrase is repeated in verse 14.
  - 3) This phrase highlights the intimacy with God mature believers enjoy as they fellowship with Him and obey His word.
- d. “I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.”
  - 1) This is νεανίσκοι (neaniskoi) referring to spiritually adolescent believers in this context.
  - 2) This phrase is repeated in verse 14 with additional information.
  - 3) These adolescent believers are able to overcome the evil one (Satan) because God is greater than he that is in the world (1 Jn 4:4).
  - 4) They overcome the world and all of its negative influences (which are from Satan) through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Jn 5:4-5) because He has overcome the world (Jn 16:33).
- e. “I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.”
  - 1) There is a shift to the aorist here which brings into view previous letters John sent to these churches.
  - 2) This is παιδία (paidia) referring to spiritually very young believers in this context.
  - 3) This phrase highlights that even baby believers understand their spiritual parentage.
  - 4) Baby believers know their Father, but we spend the rest of our earthly lives coming to know Him.
- f. “I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.”
  - 1) This phrase reiterates the statement from verse 13, emphasizing the relationship more spiritually mature believers have with eternal God.
  - 2) John’s previous letters recognized the spiritual growth of these believers and this letter recognizes that growth as ongoing.
- g. “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”
  - 1) This phrase reiterates the statement from verse 13, adding how strong these adolescent believers are and the source of their strength.
  - 2) We gain strength in our spiritual walk as the word of God abides in us and performs its work renewing our minds (Rom 12:1-2).

- 3) Our strength is in the Lord, in His grace (2 Tim 2:1) and in the strength of His might (Eph 6:10).
- 4) We are told to be strong (1 Cor 16:13).
- h. Principles of 1 John 2:12-14
  - 1) This passage highlights believers in various phases of growth, but God desires for every believer to grow toward maturity.
  - 2) All believers can have fellowship with God through forgiveness of sins – spirituality ≠ maturity.
  - 3) Newborn believers realize they have a heavenly Father, the One who sent His Son to save them.
  - 4) Adolescent believers have grown in the word of God and are aware that they need to use the strength of God to achieve victory against the World-Flesh-Devil.
  - 5) More mature believers have grown in the word of God and developed an intimate relationship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
  - 6) Sadly, most believers today never grow beyond childhood spiritually.
  - 7) As believers who are growing and maturing in the word of God, we should recognize our “parenting” role to encourage the growth of other believers, those in the flock and those we come in contact with elsewhere (1 Cor 4:15).
7. Not loving the world. (2:15-17)
  - a. “Do not love the world nor the things in the world.”
    - 1) The two verbs for love in this verse are ἀγαπάω (agapaō) and the one noun translated love is ἀγάπη (agapē) which are the same words used in the N.T. to describe the type of love God has for mankind.
    - 2) As we learned in our study of the *World, the Flesh and the Devil*, the Greek word κόσμος (kosmos) in this passage refers to the Satanic system which stands in opposition to God and His perfect plan.
    - 3) The ‘things in the world’ are simply all the elements that comprise the system which Satan has influence over – including angelic forces, governments, businesses, other human institutions, and so on.
  - b. “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”
    - 1) This is a third class conditional in the Greek meaning some believers will choose to love the world rather than devote themselves to God.
    - 2) The phrase “loves the world” does not refer to the love God has for fallen mankind (John 3:16ff).
    - 3) This refers to a misplaced devotion to things within Satan’s κόσμος system rather than loving God and one another (Rom 12:2; James 4:4).
    - 4) As we saw back in verse 5, the phrase “love of the Father” can mean...
      - a) The believer’s love for the Father.
      - b) God’s love for the believer.
      - c) God’s type of love.

- 5) This is coupled with knowing the Father in the previous verses, so the believer's love for God is in view.
  - 6) Preoccupation with worldly things also stifles the process of God's love working in and through us.
  - 7) When we are living for the world system, we are not functioning in the operational sphere of love.
  - 8) Our failures in this regard do not negate our Father's gracious and merciful love for us (Eph 2:4).
- c. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life"
- 1) The word "for" is the conjunction ὅτι (hoti) which is used here as a marker of causality and should have been translated "because".
  - 2) Although we are "in the world" the phrase "all that is in the world" uses a neuter adjective (all) and article (that) to refer back to the "things in the world" from verse 15.
  - 3) The word "life" is the noun βίος (bios) which can mean physical life itself or the means to sustain life (i.e. a living).
  - 4) In Luke 15:12, 30; 21:4 this word refers to "possessions" or "wealth".
  - 5) The appeal of world system is...
    - a) The lust (desire) of the flesh.
    - b) The lust (desire) of the eyes.
    - c) The pride produced by worldly success (fame, wealth, status, etc.).
  - 6) The lust of the flesh speaks of an internal influence: the carnal desires spawned by the sin natures which dwell within our fleshly bodies.
  - 7) The lust of the eyes speaks of an external influence: the alluring things in this world which we don't possess that can lead us to longing and envy.
  - 8) The pride produced by worldly success speaks of another external influence: the alluring things in this world which we do possess that can lead us to become conceited.
- d. "is not from the Father, but is from the world."
- 1) Satan's κόσμος system, not our Heavenly Father, is the source of the appeal to this pride and these lusts.
  - 2) Eve fell for Satan's temptation by giving in to these lusts (Gen 3:6).
  - 3) Jesus Christ did not fall for Satan's temptation even though he made attempts to incite these lusts and pride within Him (Luke 4:1-13).
- e. "The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts;"
- 1) The world as it is today under the control of Satan is passing away (1 Cor 7:31).
  - 2) The lusts for approbation, money, power, drugs, illicit sex, etc. that can consume anyone will pass away.
- f. "but the one who does the will of God lives forever."
- 1) First and foremost, the will of God for your life is that you become part of His family by believing on His Son (Mark 3:35; John 3:16).

- 2) The word “lives” is the verb μένω (menō) which we have previously seen means to remain or abide.
  - 3) If we are living for the will of God rather than for our lusts (1 Pet 4:2) we will be abiding in Christ.
  - 4) Our obedience to the will of God must be true obedience from the heart (Eph 6:6).
- g. Principles of 1 John 2:15-17
- 1) Our ἀγάπη love should be directed toward God, our brothers and sisters in Christ and the unbelievers in this lost and dying world.
  - 2) This world, with all its attendant appeals to our sin nature, attempts to attract our attention and devotion.
  - 3) There are normal, God intended needs of the flesh (appetite, sleep, warmth/cool, sex within marriage, etc.), but our fallen sin nature distorts these needs with its lusts.
  - 4) The world appeals to these lusts with various kinds of “eye candy”.
  - 5) The world also appeals to the sin nature by feeding our pride, telling us how we “deserve” things.
  - 6) Our own successes in life can feed our pride if we fail to recognize that God provides the means for every accomplishment.
  - 7) When we recognize that this world and all the things in it are passing away, we will see that it makes more sense to focus on eternal things.
  - 8) The knowledge that we will spend all eternity with God motivates us to do His will while here on Earth.
  - 9) For the unbeliever to do the will of God, step one is to believe in Christ.
  - 10) For the believer to do the will of God, step one is to abide in Christ by being in fellowship, filled with the Holy Spirit, thereby producing works that are pleasing to God.
- E. Characteristics of the antichrists. (2:18-23)
1. “Children, it is the last hour;”
    - a. John uses the term παιδία (paidia) here as he did in verse 13 to refer to spiritually immature believers.
    - b. Part of the process of maturing in the word of God is becoming oriented to the shortness of time and the imminent return of Christ.
    - c. It is also possible (even likely) that some of the more mature believers in the churches to which John addressed this letter were immature in their thinking concerning the reality that we are in the “last hour”.
    - d. The phrase “last hour” is used here in a way equivalent to “last days” (2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; Jas 5:3; 2 Pet 3:3), “later times” (1 Tim 4:1) and other similar phrases (Jas 5:8; 1 Pet 4:7).
    - e. The “last hour” imminence has been true for all readers of John’s letter.
  2. “and just as you heard that antichrist is coming”
    - a. John acknowledges that these believers have had teaching about the Antichrist.

- b. John is the only N.T. author that uses the term ἀντίχριστος (antichristos) to refer to the one who will come in the power of Satan during the Tribulation.
- c. The word antichrist can mean either (a) one who is *against* Christ or (b) one who is a *substitute* for Christ.
- d. The Antichrist will defiantly stand against Christ and will attempt to be a substitute for Him.
- e. Antichrist is the most common word used today, but the Bible refers to him more often with other terms...
  - 1) The Beast (Rev 13:1-4; 15:2; 16:13; ...)
  - 2) The Serpent's Seed (Gen 3:15)
  - 3) The Little Horn (Dan 7:8, 11, 20-26)
  - 4) The Coming Prince (Dan 9:26-27)
  - 5) The King (Dan 11:36-45)
  - 6) The Man of Lawlessness (2 Thess 2:3)
  - 7) The Son of Destruction (2 Thess 2:3)
- f. The word "coming" is a present tense of the verb ἔρχομαι (erchomai = to come) used to indicate an activity which will take place in the future.
- g. The Antichrist had not yet come in John's time and is still yet to come.
- 3. "even now many antichrists have appeared;"
  - a. Here the focus shifts from the end-times appearance of the Antichrist to the ongoing reality that many false teachers have arisen (and will continue to arise) who deny the true identity of the Christ (verse 22).
  - b. These false teachers exhibit the same characteristics of deception and hostility toward Jesus Christ that the Antichrist will possess.
  - c. Some even go so far as to claim to be the Christ (Matt 24:5).
- 4. "from this we know that it is the last hour."
  - a. The presence of false teachers in our midst serves as a continual reminder that the dispensation of the Church can come to an end at any moment.
  - b. These false teachers are "types" of the Antichrist and remind us that we live in the times that lead up to the 70th week of Daniel - the Tribulation of Israel.
  - c. The existence of the Church for almost 2000 years does not alter God's prophecy concerning Israel.
  - d. The signing of the covenant, the reign of Antichrist, the sealing of the 144,000, etc. are going to happen.
  - e. Some false teachers claim that the events of Revelation are in the past, that the Church has replaced Israel and will usher in the "eternal state" by preparing the world for God's kingdom on earth.
  - f. This false teaching denies who Jesus Christ is as the One who will come with sword in hand to carry out judgment and perform His own preparation for the millennial kingdom and His earthly reign.
- 5. "They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us;"
  - a. The phrases "from us" and "of us" are both the Greek phrase ἐξ ἡμῶν (ex hēmōn) used four times in this verse and literally translates "from us".

- b. This is a play on words - that they may have departed “from us”, but were not truly “from us”.
  - c. The “us” being referenced here includes the apostles and the saints in the churches John is writing to – the same “us” we saw at the end of chapter one.
  - d. These individuals had departed from the company of the saints, although they had never been part of the true fellowship of the saints because they had never known the true identity of Jesus Christ.
6. “for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us;”
- a. This is a second class conditional – assumed to be false.
  - b. Once again we see the phrase ἐξ ἡμῶν (ex hēmōn) reiterating that these individuals were never actually part of the Body of Christ.
  - c. The word “remaining” is a pluperfect of μένω (menō) which is the “abiding” verb we have already seen in this letter.
  - d. These false teachers had departed, but never had been “abiding” in fellowship with (μετά) these saints.
7. “but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”
- a. The phrase “they went out” is not in the Greek, but the use of the word ἀλλά (alla = but) indicates a contrast to “remaining” and implicitly refers to the start of the verse.
  - b. The phrase “it would be known” is the verb φανερόω (phaneroō = reveal) in the passive meaning “to be revealed” or “to appear” and here in the subjunctive means “it might be made known”.
  - c. The inclusion of the word “all” here pulls into view all of the false teachers that had departed, but not everyone who had left the churches were among these false teachers.
  - d. For the fourth time in this verse we see this phrase ἐξ ἡμῶν (ex hēmōn) meaning that, in their departure, these false teachers made it known that they were not true believers.
8. “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.”
- a. The noun χρῖσμα (chrisma = anoint) is used only here and in verse 27, from which we understand that this “anointing” refers to the Holy Spirit.
  - b. The most common word in the N.T. for anoint is ἀλείφω (aleiphō).
  - c. ἀλείφω (aleiphō) means to apply liquid such as oil or perfume (Matt 6:17; Mark 6:13; Luke 7:38, 46).
  - d. Our word χρῖσμα (chrisma) comes from the verb χρίω (chriō).
  - e. χρίω (chriō) is always used in the N.T. to refer to the figurative sense of anointing – God setting someone apart for service (Lk 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; 2 Cor 1:21; Heb 1:9).
  - f. Our Savior’s title of Christ is the word χριστός (christos) which comes from χρίω (chriō) and means the “anointed one”, the Messiah, the One sent by God the Father to save the world.

- g. The Holy One mentioned here is Jesus Christ, who has sent the Holy Spirit (John 15:26) to indwell every believer (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13) and guide us into the truth (John 16:13).
- h. As the Holy Spirit guides us into the truth, we are able to recognize that which is false, that which is contrary to the Word of God such as the teaching of these “antichrists”.
  - i. There is a text question here:
    - 1) If the adjective for “all” in the Greek is πάντες (pantes) [masculine], then it refers to the people – y’all.
    - 2) If it is πάντα (panta) [neuter], then it would be “you know all things” (KJV).
  - j. My faith conviction is that πάντες (pantes) is correct.
    - 1) John has already talked about the immaturity of some of these believers.
    - 2) The statement “you all know” flies in the face of the Gnostic teaching.
- 9. “I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it”
  - a. These believers had been grounded in truth which should have helped them recognize the false teaching of these “antichrists”.
  - b. John is reminding them that the Word of God already resident in their souls and the Holy Spirit who dwells within them both serve to protect them from doctrinal error.
- 10. “and because no lie is of the truth”
  - a. The word “because” here is ὅτι (hoti) which is very versatile and is used to specify content (that), to indicate the beginning of verbal quotations (not translated), and to mark a causal statement (because).
  - b. The first two occurrences of ὅτι (hoti) in this verse are causal in nature, but this use makes more sense as a marker of content (that).
  - c. This would read “you know it (the truth) and that no lie is of the truth.”
  - d. Just as these false teachers were not “of us” (v. 20), no lie is “of the truth.”
  - e. The lies specifically being referred to here are the ones being spread by these “antichrists”, but the principle is universal.
- 11. “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?”
  - a. The denial that Jesus is the Christ is a lie propagated by Satan himself (John 8:44).
  - b. This lie has blinded the Jews who have failed to recognize that Jesus is the Messiah they were looking for.
  - c. One of the lies these false teachers have been spreading is that Jesus was a mere man who received the “Christ spirit” at His baptism and then this divine presence left Him before the cross.
  - d. The word “denies” occurs three times in verse 22 and 23 and each time is the participle ἀρνούμενος (arnoumenos) which is a present tense verb indicating an ongoing denial (i.e. rejection).
- 12. “This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”
  - a. John cuts to the very heart of the false teaching – the denial that Jesus is the Son of God.

- b. The fact that God the Father sent His Son to dwell among us on earth in the flesh is one of the core truths of the gospel.
  - c. These antichrists rejected this truth because they held to the Gnostic belief that all matter (including the flesh) is inherently evil, so God could not dwell in the flesh.
  - d. There are many modern cult religions (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Moonies, etc.) that reject the deity of Jesus.
  - e. A popular mantra of unbelievers is that "Jesus was a good man." to which we could respond, "Jesus described Himself as the Son of God. Was He a liar?"
13. "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father;"
- a. Remember that this denial is continual in nature – a rejection.
  - b. Since the Father and the Son are one (John 10:30), if you reject the Son you have rejected the Father.
  - c. Muslims try to make the claim that they believe in the same God that Christians do, but they have rejected Jesus as the Son of God and have placed their faith in a false god.
  - d. Just as Peter denied knowing Jesus, born again believers can (and do) have moments of weakness and deny their faith in Christ during intense testing, especially when faced with death.
  - e. It is important to note, however, that such a believer is certainly not abiding in Christ and, therefore, not abiding in the Father (does not have the Father).
14. "the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."
- a. The verb ὁμολογέω (homologeō) means to "agree" and is used here to mean acknowledgment just as it is in 2 John 7.
  - b. True belief is at the core of this kind of acknowledgment.
  - c. In order to "have the Father", one must believe in His Son whom He sent to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).
15. Principles of 1 John 2:18-23
- a. We live in the "last hour" and know that the Antichrist is coming in the Tribulation.
  - b. We have the blessed assurance that Jesus will come for His bride before this takes place (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9).
  - c. However, many antichrists have come and will come in the spirit of the Antichrist (1 John 4:3; Jude 4).
  - d. This reality serves as a reminder that we are in the "last hour" and that the Rapture of the Church could occur at any moment.
  - e. False teachers of this ilk had arisen within the churches that John was overseeing in his apostolic ministry.
  - f. These deceivers had departed, but John comforts the believers in these churches noting that these frauds were never in the true fellowship.
  - g. The Holy Spirit who dwells within each and every one of us (called the anointing here) protects us from the lies of false teachers.
  - h. All believers can know God's truth and His truth in our souls gives us the ability to recognize the lies.

- i. John highlights the serious nature of this false teaching – rejecting that the Son of God came in the flesh.
  - j. This rejection denies the virgin birth, the hypostatic union, etc. and nullifies the basis for the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.
  - k. If you do not honor Jesus as the Son of God, you cannot honor the Father who sent Him (John 5:23).
  - l. Anyone who rejects Jesus as the Christ has rejected God the Father (Luke 10:16) and is not born again unto eternal life (1 John 5:1).
- F. Abiding part 2 (2:24–28)
- 1. Abiding in the Word. (2:24)
    - a. “As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.”
      - 1) John begins this sentence with ὑμεῖς (humeis = y’all) bringing the focus back from the activities of the false teachers to the readers and what they need to be doing.
      - 2) The verb “let abide” is a present, active, 3rd person imperative – in order to obey this we must actively and continually dwell upon the teaching we have been given and apply it to our lives.
      - 3) The phrase “that which you have heard from the beginning” connects back to the statement in verse 7 and refers to “the word which you have heard” – the full body of truth that these believers have received.
    - b. “If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.”
      - 1) He who “abides in Him” (v. 6) must obey this command so that God’s word truly abides in him (v. 14).
      - 2) To further refute the false teaching of the “antichrists”, John makes it very clear that we abide in both the Son and the Father.
    - c. Principles of 1 John 2:24
      - 1) It is imperative that we allow the word of God to dwell richly in our souls (Col 3:16).
      - 2) God’s word abiding in us will result in a manner of living characterized by truth which brings joy to those who are our spiritual leaders (3 John 3, 4).
      - 3) We must continually pay attention to the things we have learned so that we do not drift away (Heb 2:1).
      - 4) All believers, starting with pastors, must hold fast to sound doctrines in order to refute any who might contradict the truth (Titus 1:9).
      - 5) Fellowship and abiding both require that we walk in the Light, but abiding in the Son and the Father (and the Holy Spirit) comes about as a result of God’s word abiding in us.
      - 6) When we abide in the Word, and His word abides in us, our desires will be aligned with God’s will and our prayer life will reflect that (John 15:7).
      - 7) We cannot have fellowship with God the Father and abide in Him unless we have fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ and abide in Him (1 John 1:3; 2:23, 24).

2. Abiding in the promise of eternal life. (2:25-26)
  - a. “This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.”
    - 1) We have been given a promise of eternal life based upon faith in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:11-13).
    - 2) Jesus Christ Himself gave us this pledge (John 3:15, 16; 6:47).
    - 3) Jesus Christ is also the one who gives eternal life to us (John 17:2).
    - 4) When we abide in the promise of eternal security, we are freed up to move forward in our Christian walk.
    - 5) If we truly embrace this promise of eternal life, we ought to be motivated to abide in the Son and the Father as much as possible.
  - b. “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”
    - 1) We now see that these “antichrists” were attempting to confuse these believers by undermining the promise of eternal life.
    - 2) Trying to make someone doubt his salvation, eternal security, etc. is the first step in leading someone away from the truth.
    - 3) These false teachers sought to substitute their own promise of “higher knowledge” for God’s promise of eternal life in His Son.
  - c. Principles of 1 John 2:25-26
    - 1) We have been given a promise of eternal life through faith in Christ.
    - 2) It is one thing to possess eternal life and quite another thing to live your life as someone who possesses eternal life.
    - 3) In order to avoid having our faith shaken by those who would deceive, we must stand on the promises of God – we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ and we are currently in possession of eternal life.
3. Abiding in Christ and looking for His coming. (2:27-28)
  - a. “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you”
    - 1) Once again John begins this sentence with ὑμεῖς (humeis = y’all) bringing the focus back to the readers and the Holy Spirit in them.
    - 2) We receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit from Jesus Christ Himself.
    - 3) The Holy Spirit abides in all born again believers (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16).
    - 4) No sin we commit will drive away the Holy Spirit who dwells within us: He remains in us convicting us of our need to repent and confess.
  - b. “and you have no need for anyone to teach you;”
    - 1) This statement does not refute the need for Bible teachers (Eph 4:11).
    - 2) In fact, John is serving in the role of Bible teacher for these believers through the writing of this letter.
    - 3) Instead, this is a direct refutation of the claim made by the “antichrists” that these believers need some type of “higher knowledge” which only they can provide.
  - c. “but as His anointing teaches you about all things,”
    - 1) The One who teaches us about all spiritual matters is the Holy Spirit.

- 2) Jesus, the Teacher (John 13:14), spoke of the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry (John 14:26).
  - 3) The twin blessings of the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit and completed canon of Scripture enable us to open our Bibles at any time and study God's word on our own.
  - 4) In Bible class under the authority of a gifted pastor-teacher it is no different – it is the Holy Spirit who reveals all things to us, even the deep things of God (1 Cor 2:10).
- d. “and is true and is not a lie,”
- 1) Here we have another vivid contrast in this letter – truth versus error.
  - 2) The Holy Spirit will always guide us into truth, not error, so it is critical that we submit to Him for learning and applying doctrine.
- e. “and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”
- 1) The word “it” is derived from the verb ἐδίδαξεν (edidaxen = he/she/it has taught) and refers back to “His anointing” – God the Holy Spirit.
  - 2) The Greek phrase μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ (menete en autō) appears here and in verse 28 where it is translated “abide in Him” – an imperative.
  - 3) This form of the Greek verb (μένετε) can be either an indicative or an imperative.
  - 4) This phrase is best understood as indicative, restating what we have previously learned in verse 24.
  - 5) The pronoun “Him,” as we shall see in verse 28, refers to Jesus Christ.
- f. “Now, little children, abide in Him,”
- 1) John once again uses the term of affection τέκνία (teknia = little born ones) to include all of the recipients of this letter.
  - 2) This time the phrase μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ (menete en autō) is clearly used as an imperative immediately followed by a ἵνα (hina) purpose clause.
- g. “so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.”
- 1) The Greek phrase ἐὰν φανερωθῆ (ean phanerōthē) does not express the idea of “if He appears” here, but rather the uncertainty of when He will appear.
  - 2) The two phrases “He appears” and “His coming” are both references to the return of Christ at the Rapture of the Church (1 Cor 15:50-52; 1 Thess 4:16-18; 1 John 3:1-3).
  - 3) The confidence we may have before Jesus Christ at His coming is based on the grace of God with us as we walk in obedience (1 Cor 15:10).
  - 4) If we live our lives loving His appearing and looking forward to that moment with anticipation we will receive a reward (2 Tim 4:8).
  - 5) If we do not consistently abide in Him and instead spend our lives focused on our own selfish interests, we will be ashamed when He returns.
  - 6) The shame we experience will be inversely proportional to the consistency with which we walk in the Light and abide in Christ.
- h. Principles of 1 John 2:27-28

- 1) We have been given an anointing of the Holy Spirit who abides in us to help us distinguish between truth and error.
- 2) The Holy Spirit teaches us all things related to our spiritual life.
- 3) If the lessons we have learned from God's word abide in our hearts, we will abide in Christ.
- 4) Just as our salvation is by grace, our abiding is a function of God's ongoing outpouring of His grace.
- 5) When Jesus Christ appears in the air to claim His Bride, we will either be embarrassed by the life we have lived or confident and thrilled to see Him because we know we have been abiding in Him.
- 6) If we have lived a life of obedience and happen to be carnal when our Savior returns, we will experience shame, but only minimally so.
- 7) Whatever shame/embarrassment we experience, it will be short lived.

G. Characteristics of the children of God. (2:29-3:24)

1. Begotten of God, we are His children. (2:29-3:1)

- a. "If you know that He is righteous,"
  - 1) This refers to an understanding of the absolute righteousness of God as opposed to relative righteousness.
  - 2) This "if" is a third class conditional, meaning some believers may not understand the doctrine that God is inherently and perfectly righteous.
  - 3) The word for "know" here is οἶδα (oída = know, recognize) followed by ὅτι (hoti = that) which is a phrase meaning that this is a very well understood doctrine – a given.
  - 4) John mentions this fundamental doctrine 3X in 1 John (1:9; 2:1; 3:7).
- b. "you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him."
  - 1) The second word for "know" in this verse is γινώσκω (ginōskō = know, come to know, find out) which, in this context, refers to knowledge that is acquired through experience.
  - 2) The particle καί (kai = and, also, even) is often used as a connective word, but is used here adverbially.
  - 3) In the phrase "born of Him" the "Him" is a reference to God the Father (1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1\*, 4, 18).
  - 4) The verb γεννάω (gennaō = become the parent of, give birth to, produce) is used here in the same way as in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:3-8).
  - 5) This is a spiritual birth based upon faith alone, without which no one can do anything to produce true righteousness (Isa 64:6; Phil 3:8-9).
- c. "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us,"
  - 1) The adjective ποταπός (potapos = what kind/sort of) usually refers to type or class (Mt 8:27; Lk 1:29; 7:39; 2 Pt 3:11), but in certain contexts is emphatic and can be understood to mean "how great" (Mk 13:1).

- 2) The verb “has bestowed” is the perfect tense of δίδωμι (didōmi = give/grant) which means that the love of God bestowed upon us at the moment of salvation remains effective for us today.
  - 3) God loved us even before we were born again (Rom 5:8; Eph 2:4-5), but His love was “bestowed on us” at the moment we believed upon Jesus Christ and His perfect righteousness and justice were satisfied.
- d. “that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are.”
- 1) The conjunction ἵνα (hina = so that, in order that) is being used to introduce a clause explaining the result of the Father’s amazing love.
  - 2) The phrase “children of God” is repeated in verse 2 and again in verse 10 where it is contrasted with “children of the devil.”
  - 3) The word used for children is τέκνα (tekna), the third different word for children we have seen in 1st John:
    - τεκνία (teknia) – vv. 2:1, 12, 28
    - παιδιά (paidia) – vv. 2:13, 18
  - 4) The use of τέκνα (tekna) as opposed to παιδιά (paidia) is to highlight the status as members of God’s family rather than the immaturity of youth.
  - 5) This verb is a passive subjunctive which highlights that not all people are, in fact, children of God.
  - 6) The phrase καὶ ἐσμέν (kai esmen) “and such we are” at the end of this sentence is not in many of the manuscripts, but is in agreement with v. 2 – the recipients of this letter are children of God.
- e. “For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”
- 1) The preposition phrase διὰ τοῦτο (dia touto = because of this) “for this reason” could be looking back, but is followed by a ὅτι (hoti) clause that gives the reason (John 5:16, 18; 8:47; 10:17; 12:18).
  - 2) The “world” is ὁ κόσμος (ho kosmos) referring to Satan’s κόσμος system which clouds the thinking of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4).
  - 3) Both words for “know” in this verse are forms of γινώσκω (ginōskō = know, come to know, find out) meaning that one must understand God in order to understand us.
- f. Principles of 1 John 2:29 – 3:1
- 1) God is righteous and only those who are born of Him can reflect His perfect righteousness in their lives.
  - 2) Unbelievers can give honor to God by living according to the divine institutions (marriage, family, etc.), but do so by their own effort.
  - 3) We receive the righteousness of God by grace through faith (Rom 3:21-26) so all of the glory goes to God and we cannot take any credit because human effort (works) can never produce righteousness before God (Rom 3:27-28).
  - 4) When we walk in the power and righteousness of God we display a righteousness which is beyond our own and demonstrate our eternal relationship with God the Father.
  - 5) However, believers can (and often do) display unrighteousness.

- 6) Based solely upon what Jesus Christ has done and in demonstration of His indescribable love, God has declared that those who believe in His Son are now His children with full status as sons.
  - 7) Every believer (regardless of status, power or position in this world) is a member of the Royal Family of God.
  - 8) This truth, if nothing else, should motivate us to love and respect one another despite our differences.
  - 9) Unbelievers do not have the ability to understand spiritual things (1 Cor 2:14), so they do not understand God or His children.
  - 10) Unbelievers know us as Christians by name, but do not grasp what being a child of God is truly about.
  - 11) Unfortunately, many believers also do not understand the true nature of our relationship with God and help to promote the erroneous idea that Christianity is just another religion among many in the world.
  - 12) Because we are misunderstood by the world, the world will hate us (John 15:19) and we will be mistreated because of their ignorance of God (John 15:21).
2. Purity in anticipation of His appearing. (3:2-3)
- a. “Beloved, now we are children of God,”
    - 1) John uses ἀγαπητοί (agapētoi = dearly loved, beloved) as a term of affection six times in this letter (1 John 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11).
    - 2) These believers are beloved of God, but John loves these believers and openly expresses this to them.
    - 3) The adverb νῦν (nun = now) is given in contrast to οὐπω (oupō = not yet) which appears in next phrase of this verse and makes it clear that, even though the recipients of this letter had not yet been fully glorified, they were already fully children of God.
  - b. “and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.”
    - 1) The verb φανερώω (phaneroō = to cause to be seen/known) is used in many verses in this immediate passage (1 John 2:28; 3:2(x2), 5, 8).
    - 2) This word is used twice in this verse and is best understood to mean “appear” or “become visible” (sensory) rather than “reveal” (cognitive) in both instances.
    - 3) Our present position as believers is nothing short of amazing, but our ultimate sanctification, glorification, etc. which will be realized in the eternal state is beyond comparison (2 Cor 4:17; Rom 8:18).
  - c. “We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”
    - 1) The phrase οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) “we know” is a phrase meaning that this is very well understood (like v. 2:29).
    - 2) As in v. 2:28 the phrase “when He appears” refers to Jesus Christ’s coming at the Rapture.

- 3) When our Lord and Savior appears at the Rapture, we will receive our resurrection bodies and will be conformed to His image (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; Phil 3:21).
  - 4) Jesus is the Son of God who came in the flesh (John 1:14) – we do not become God in our glorified state nor does any creature made by God ever become God.
  - 5) The adjective ὅμοιος (homoios = like, similar) is so important here – we will be “similar to Him” in that we have our new bodies, but we will never be the same as He is.
  - 6) Scriptures using ὅμοιος (homoios): Matt 13:31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52; 20:1; 22:39; Luke 6:47-49; 7:31-32; 12:36; Acts 17:29; Gal 5:21; Jude 7
  - 7) As believers we see Christ unveiled and are becoming more like Him day-by-day (2 Cor 3:18), but when we see Him in His glorified state the transformation will be complete.
- d. “And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
- 1) The noun ἐλπίς (elpis = expectation, hope) means “looking forward to a thing with confidence regarding fulfillment”, not hope as in merely “wishing it could be so”.
  - 2) Our confident expectation of future glorification is *fixed* or *focused* upon Jesus Christ, not upon ourselves and some false sense of self-worth.
  - 3) The verb ἁγνίζω (hagnizō = purify) is sometimes used of ritual purification (John 11:55; Acts 21:24-26), but here refers to reality with regards to the soul (James 4:8; 1 Peter 1:22).
  - 4) Jesus is absolutely and infinitely holy as God and He kept Himself free from sin in His humanity, so He is the perfect example of purity (see also 1 Pet 1:15-16).
- e. Principles of 1 John 3:2-3
- 1) As born again believers, we have the amazing, undeserved blessing of living the remainder of our earthly lives as children of God.
  - 2) The Scriptures give us a glimpse of what our glorified bodies will be like, but we have not seen them yet.
  - 3) We fully understand that when Jesus Christ returns, we will receive our resurrection bodies and be glorified as He is now.
  - 4) When we see our Lord and Savior face-to-face, our knowledge of God will become more full (1 Cor 13:12).
  - 5) Our expectation in these things to come is a “living” hope (1 Pet 1:3).
  - 6) Living a pure life does not produce hope for the future – instead, the confidence we have in the promises concerning our future produces motivation for purification now.
  - 7) Paul also taught that our motivation for purification is a response to the promises of God (2 Cor 7:1).

- 8) This passage counters some of the false teaching of the time which claimed that believers need not be concerned about holy behavior.
3. Righteousness vs. sin. (3:4-10a)
    - a. “Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.”
      - 1) This verse rightly equates ἁμαρτία (hamartia = missing the mark, sin) with ἀνομία (anomia = a disposition for violating rules, lawlessness) – a negation of νόμος (nomos = law).
      - 2) Lawlessness describes rebellion against God’s law and, thus, His character (Matt 7:23; 13:41; 23:28; 24:12; Rom 4:7; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:14; 2 Thess 2:3, 7; Titus 2:14; Heb 1:9; 10:17).
      - 3) By describing sin as lawlessness, John creates a vivid contrast to the purity mentioned in verse 3.
      - 4) This contrast illustrates that sin is not consistent with our new birth.
    - b. “You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.”
      - 1) As is vv. 2:29 and 3:2 we have οἶδα (oida = know, recognize) followed by ὅτι (hoti = that) which is a phrase meaning that this is a very well understood doctrine.
      - 2) John now shifts from a focus on the future appearance of Christ to the historical reality of His incarnation (v. 1:2) and the purpose of His coming in the flesh.
      - 3) The verb αἶρω (airō = take away, remove) refers to the removal of the penalty for our sins since in His death He paid the price of our guilt (John 1:29; see also Psalm 103:12).
      - 4) John is also teaching that maturing believers are not sinless, but when properly oriented they will sin less and, as such, sins will be “removed” from their lives.
      - 5) This verse restates the purity of our Savior mentioned in verse 3, but specifically highlights His sinless character as an example for us to follow.
    - c. “No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.”
      - 1) The NAS translators “converted” the negation in this verse from the main verbs (sins, has seen, has known) to the subjects (everyone).
      - 2) The verse literally says, “Everyone who abides in Him does not sin; everyone who sins has not seen Him and has not known Him.”
      - 3) This verse clearly states that when we are abiding in Christ we do not sin.
      - 4) Abiding in Christ is commanded (v. 2:28), so it is not automatic for believers.
      - 5) This verse presents a vivid contrast with abiding as it also clearly states that when we are sinning we have not seen and have not known Christ.
      - 6) John has previously made it crystal clear that believers do sin (vv. 1:8, 10) and this verse teaches us about what happens when we succumb to sin.
      - 7) Both ὀράω (horaō = see) and γινώσκω (ginōskō = come to know) are in the perfect tense meaning past completed action with present ongoing results.

- 8) John used γινώσκω (ginōskō) to communicate an intimacy with God in 1 John 2:13-14 and is using it in a similar sense here.
- 9) When we are sinning as believers, we have taken our eyes off of Christ, we have lost intimacy (fellowship) with Him, and we no longer abide in Him.
- d. “Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;”
  - 1) The verb for deceives is πλανᾶω (planaō) means to “lead astray” or “cause to wander” and refers to being led astray from the truth.
  - 2) This prohibition is expressed by the negation of the present imperative of πλανᾶω (planaō) which means to stop an ongoing activity.
  - 3) John is addressing pre-Gnostic teaching which confused imputed righteousness (positional) with experiential righteousness.
  - 4) This teaching falsely claimed that the believer could commit sins without consequence and was disrupting the fellowship of the saints.
  - 5) This verse reinforces verse 3 by highlighting the righteousness of Christ and the importance of demonstrating that in our daily walk.
- e. “the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.”
  - 1) The phrase ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου (ek tou diabolou) is similar to the phrase Jesus used in John 8:44, but He adds the very important words τοῦ πατρὸς (tou patros = your father).
  - 2) John explains his point by stressing that the very source of sin itself is the devil who committed the very first sin (Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:12-17) and aided in the fall of man (Gen 3:1-6).
  - 3) When a believer sins, the character of Christ is not being demonstrated, but instead the character of the adversary who is the sinner of sinners is what the world will see.
- f. “No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him”
  - 1) The NAS translators “converted” the negation in this verse from the main verb (born) to the subjects (everyone).
  - 2) This literally says, “Everyone who has been born of God does not sin.”
  - 3) This phrase is similar to the phrase we saw in verse 6, but instead of emphasizing our spiritual condition, it focuses on the new birth which produced a new nature within us.
  - 4) The phrase “has been born” is a perfect participle, indicating that this spiritual birth occurred sometime in the past and has present, ongoing results – our new nature which does not sin.
  - 5) This phrase explains why the new nature, which was born of God, is incapable of sinning.
  - 6) This “abiding” is dependent upon God and is, therefore, permanent.
  - 7) The word σπέρμα (sperma = seed, descendants, genetic character or nature) refers to God’s nature in us.
  - 8) Peter uses σπορά (spora = seed) in a similar way in 1 Pet 1:23.

- g. “and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”
  - 1) The new nature within us is utterly incapable of sinning.
  - 2) The old nature within us can do nothing but produce sin and human good – both of which fall short of the righteousness of God.
  - 3) From the moment we believe in Jesus Christ and are born again, we spend the rest of our lives on this earth involved in a tug of war between these two natures (Rom 7:14–25).
- h. “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious:”
  - 1) John contrasts the “natural” behavior of believers versus unbelievers to make it even clearer that it is not alright for the children of God to go on sinning.
  - 2) The phrase “by this” is ἐν τούτῳ (en toutō) and refers to the previous verses, but also to a statement which will follow.
  - 3) The word “obvious” is φανερός (phaneros = seen, visible) which here means “clearly seen”.
- i. “anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God”
  - 1) The word “anyone” is πᾶς (pas = each, every, any) which we have translated “everyone” in verses 4, 6 and 9.
  - 2) As in previous verses, this verse refers to God’s absolute standard of righteousness.
  - 3) Unbelievers and carnal believers will produce sin and human good which are not “of God” and are not at all compatible with His righteousness.
  - 4) Only believers in fellowship with God can produce His righteousness.
- j. Principles of 1 John 3:4–10a
  - 1) This entire passage has been focusing on how bad sin really is and its utter incompatibility with God’s absolute righteousness.
  - 2) Sin is lawlessness – willful rebellion against God’s laws which teach us His standard of righteousness.
  - 3) Sinful behavior is “of the devil” and we appear to the world like his children (rather than the children of God that we are) when we sin.
  - 4) Our Savior came to take away sins and destroy the works of the devil including his tempting of believers.
  - 5) When we are abiding in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, we will not sin.
  - 6) We sin when we take our eyes off of Christ and focus on self.
  - 7) We must be careful not to allow anyone to convince us that sin (in any form) is acceptable before God.
  - 8) When we are born of God He plants His “seed” in us – a new nature that has the characteristics of the Father and images His Son Jesus Christ.
  - 9) This new nature within us cannot sin and produces only that which pleases God.
  - 10) For all of our earthy lives, the spiritual battlefield for believers is within the soul – will we follow our new nature and abide in Christ or will we revert to our old nature and behave like unbelievers, imaging the devil rather than Christ?

4. Love vs. hate. (3:10b-18)
- a. “nor the one who does not love his brother.”
    - 1) The common conjunction καὶ (kai) is used here to introduce an example from the prior phrase, so the word “nor” should be translated “including” (see Matt 8:33).
    - 2) This example serves as a segue into a passage on the importance of love in the believer’s thinking and actions.
    - 3) The verb ἀγαπάω (agapaō = love) is used in the Bible to refer to love that comes from God (1 John 4:7ff).
    - 4) The verb φιλέω (phileō = love) refers to love any human can have based upon compatibility (John 21:15-17).
    - 5) The phrase “his brother” is τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ (ton adelphon autou) which is used here to refer to a fellow believer.
    - 6) The inability to love fellow believers stems from carnality, unresolved bitterness, or spiritual immaturity.
  - b. “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;”
    - 1) The word “message” is the noun ἀγγελία (aggelia = news, report, announcement, proclamation) found only here and in 1 John 1:5 where it referred to God’s Light in a passage on fellowship with Him.
    - 2) As in 1 John 2:24, the phrase “which you have heard from the beginning” refers to the full body of teaching these believers had received since their salvation.
    - 3) The subjunctive verb “we should love” indicates that believers can fail to function in love.
    - 4) Jesus gave the commandment “love one another” to His disciples (John 13:34; 15:12,17) and John uses this phrase 5 times in this letter (3:11,23; 4:7,11,12) to refer to the love of our brethren in Christ.
  - c. “not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother.”
    - 1) John gives an example of what love is not by mentioning Cain who had humanly love for his brother Abel, but was also consumed with jealousy.
    - 2) As in 1 John 2:13-14, John calls the devil πονηρός (ponēros = evil one).
    - 3) Cain, an unbeliever, was like his father the devil and was incapable of ἀγάπη (agapē) love.
    - 4) The verb for “slew” here is σφάζω (sphazō) which means to murder, but in the sense of slaughtering/butchering.
  - d. “And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.”
    - 1) John now examines the basis for the first murder in the human race.
    - 2) Abel, in faith and obedience, had offered a blood sacrifice which was pleasing to God (Gen 4:3-5; Heb 11:4).

- 3) Abel's sacrifice was by God's grace and was an illustration of grace, but Cain, in disobedience, tried to please God through his own human effort – by the works of his own hands.
  - 4) Part of Satan's plan and program is to try to produce "good" independent of God's plan.
  - 5) Truly righteous deeds (divine good) occur only when we obey God.
- e. "Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you."
- 1) The word "surprised" is the verb θαυμάζω (thaumazō = amazed, disturbed, impressed) meaning to be mentally caught off guard.
  - 2) This is a present tense prohibition, which means the activity was already taking place and should be "stop being surprised".
  - 3) Interestingly, this is the only time in this letter that John refers to his audience as "brethren".
  - 4) Just as Cain (in jealousy) hated Abel for obeying God, the world will hate us for following Christ (John 15:18).
- f. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren."
- 1) This starts with the same phrase οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) that we saw in verse 3:2 referring to something which is well understood.
  - 2) The phrase "passed out of" is the perfect tense of the verb μεταβαίνω (metabainō = change location or condition) and is used here to describe the transition that took place at the moment of our salvation.
  - 3) The phrase "passed out of death into life" phrase describes our "move" out of the lost estate of eternal death into our new permanent estate of eternal life (John 5:24).
  - 4) The love we have (and demonstrate) for our brothers and sisters in Christ is evidence of our new position in Christ (John 13:35).
- g. "He who does not love abides in death."
- 1) Loving the brethren does not earn us eternal life, but functioning in ἀγάπη love is evidence of the gift of eternal life we have received from God.
  - 2) When we are abiding in the darkness (experiential/operational death) rather than in the Light, we do not have the capacity to love one another with ἀγάπη love (1 John 2:10).
- h. "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer;"
- 1) Jesus taught the concept of "murder" within our hearts (Matt 5:21-22).
  - 2) The word "murderer" is a rarely used noun ἀνθρωποκτόνος (anthrōpoktonos = man slayer) seen only here (x2) and in John 8:44 where it is used of the devil himself.
  - 3) Even though we have passed from death into life and possess a new nature from God, we can easily fall into this sin of "mental murder".
- i. "and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."
- 1) Here again we see the οἶδα (oida) plus ὅτι (hoti) combination "you know that" indicating something that is assumed to be well understood (axiomatic).

- 2) The statement “no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” does not mean that believers cannot murder (1 Pet 4:15).
  - 3) David committed murder and was “a man after God’s heart” (Acts 13:22).
  - 4) John is simply stating that it should be obvious that murder is incompatible with the new nature of those who have passed from death into life.
  - 5) Everyone knows that murder is wrong, but in this verse John explains that hating someone (and by analogy anger, bitterness, etc.) is just as incompatible with our new nature as committing murder would be.
- j. “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us;”
- 1) The word “know” is the perfect tense of γινώσκω (ginōskō) and is used here to describe the process by which we learned about ἀγάπη love.
  - 2) The conjunction ὅτι (hoti) introduces the means by which we learned.
  - 3) The phrase “laid down” is the verb τίθημι (tithēmi = lay, put, place, set) used here in the sense of voluntarily giving something up (John 10:17-18; 13:37-38; 15:13).
  - 4) We saw the clearest picture of what true sacrificial, integrity love is all about when we learned about Jesus Christ and how He loved us enough to give His life for us, even while we were yet sinners (Rom 5:8).
- k. “and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”
- 1) The helping phrase “ought to” is the verb ὀφείλω (opheilō = owe) which literally indicates an indebtedness or obligation, but is frequently used in the sense of what we “should” do.
  - 2) If we truly function in love the way our Savior Jesus Christ did, we should be willing to sacrifice our own lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ph 2:17; 1 Thess 2:8).
- l. “But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?”
- 1) The word “goods” is the noun βίος (bios = life, means of sustenance) referring to the things of this world we need to live on.
  - 2) The word “sees” is the verb θεωρέω (theōreō = look at, observe) meaning to know about as a result of sustained observation.
  - 3) The phrase “brother in need” refers to a fellow believer who lacks the basic necessities of life.
  - 4) This closely observed brother in Christ is most likely someone from the same local church.
  - 5) The word “closes” is the verb κλείω (kleiō = shut, lock, bar) meaning to shut off, indicating a purposeful change in attitude.
  - 6) The word for heart here is σπλάγχνον (splagchnon = inward parts) referring to affection (2 Cor 7:15; Php 1:8; 2:1).
  - 7) If we cannot show compassion for a fellow believer in need, we fail the very minimum test of ἀγάπη love.
- m. “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

- 1) John shows his affection for his audience by once again using the term τεκνία (teknia) for “little children” even though he gives them a bit of a rebuke.
  - 2) The reference to word (λόγος, logos) and tongue (γλῶσσα, glōssa) means those who talk the talk of Christ-like love, but do not walk the walk.
  - 3) John calls on his audience to prove their love by their actions.
  - 4) This kind of love, if it is genuine, is based on God’s truth and its ability to produce selfless thinking in us.
  - 5) When our faith is alive and active, it will be outwardly visible via the divine good production in our lives through our expression of love to others (James 2:14-17).
- n. Principles of 1 John 3:10b-18
- 1) The true test of fellowship is our heart attitude, not external activities such as church attendance, tithing, appearing religious, etc.
  - 2) We cannot love with God’s kind of love – sacrificial, integrity love –when we are walking in carnality.
  - 3) When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will bear the fruit of love (Gal 5:22) by loving one another.
  - 4) ἀγάπη love means loving people who love you, and people who don’t.
  - 5) ἀγάπη love also means loving people you like, and people you don’t.
  - 6) The mental attitude sin of hate is the spiritual equivalent of murder.
  - 7) Love flows forth from God Himself; hate is the hallmark of the Devil.
  - 8) When we hate one another, we bear the image of Satan, not the image of Jesus Christ who gave His life for us.
  - 9) The world is filled with Satan’s hate, so we should not be surprised when we are hated by those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior.
  - 10) The world may hate believers, but when we love our brethren it is clear evidence of the new life we received.
  - 11) Failing to love one another is clear evidence that our spiritual walk is “dead” because of sin.
  - 12) Hate is mental murder – disdain for another’s life – while the ultimate expression of love is the willingness to sacrifice one’s own life.
  - 13) On the other end of the spectrum, loving one another involves the minimal sacrifice of taking care of a brother or sister truly in need.
  - 14) True ἀγάπη love is formed in us by allowing God’s truth to change our hearts and results in overt deeds.
  - 15) If we harbor hatred for others, our spiritual growth will be stunted until we cast off the root of bitterness by repenting, confessing our sins and then forgiving one another just as He forgave us even though we did not in any way deserve to be forgiven.
  - 16) Likewise, if we harbor hatred for ourselves (self-loathing), our spiritual growth will be stunted until we repent, confess our sins and recognize the completeness of the forgiveness we have in Christ.
5. Confidence before God. (3:19-24)

- a. “We will know by this that we are of the truth,”
- 1) The verb γινώσκω (ginōskō = know, come to know) is used here in the sense of recognition.
  - 2) Once again we see the phrase “by this” which could be followed by the explanation (see v. 16), but here refers back to the previous verses on ἀγάπη love becoming manifest in our lives.
  - 3) One of the ways we will know that we are truly born again and that we are growing in the truth is when we begin to recognize ἀγάπη love in our thinking and in our deeds.
- b. “and will assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us”
- 1) The word “assure” is the verb πείθω (peithō = persuade, convince) used here in the sense of “setting at ease” arising from trust (2 Cor 1:9; Php 1:14; 2:24) and confidence (2 Cor 10:7; Gal 5:10; 2 Thess 3:4).
  - 2) The phrase “in whatever” could be ὅτι ἐάν (hoti ean = that if) or ὅ τι ἐάν (ho ti ean = an indefinite whenever/whatever).
  - 3) The best understanding here is the indefinite “whenever” (cf. 1 Cor 16:2).
  - 4) This phrase refers to the conviction that arises from the soul activity of self-examination in comparison with God’s standards resulting in the recognition of sin in our lives.
- c. “for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.”
- 1) The comparative adjective μείζων (meizōn) can mean larger, more important, more powerful, etc.
  - 2) The phrase “knows all things” tells us that John is referring to the superiority of God’s omniscience over our finite comprehension of things.
  - 3) We can fall into the trap of becoming overly self-condemning, but when we recognize that we are God’s children and that He understands us better than we know ourselves, we can set out hearts at ease.
- d. “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;”
- 1) John once again (v. 2) uses the term ἀγαπητοί (agapētoi = dearly loved, beloved) to remind his audience that they are loved – by John and by God – as members of God’s royal family.
  - 2) The phrase “if our heart does not condemn us” refers to the times when we examine ourselves and find that we are thinking, speaking and acting in the sphere of ἀγάπη love as we know we should.
  - 3) The word for confidence is παρρησία (parrēsia = openness, frankness, confidence) indicating a confidence that results in an unreserved boldness of speech – often used of political figures.
  - 4) The phrase “before God” is literally “toward God” and refers to our fellowship with God.
  - 5) If we have confidence before God, we will not shrink away from Him in shame at His appearing (v. 2:28).
- e. “and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

- 1) The “whatever” here is framed by the statements that follow – that the requests are pleasing to God and aligned with His commandments.
  - 2) These prayers are answered because they are in harmony with God’s will, following the principles of His word and selflessly seeking to please Him.
  - 3) This “because” introduces the qualities that lead to a prayer life in keeping with God’s will, not a way to “earn” a positive response from God.
  - 4) Meaningful Christian obedience stems from fellowship with God, knowledge of His word, and the resultant divine viewpoint thinking.
  - 5) God is not obligated (*quid pro quo*) to answer our prayers in response to our obedience to His word – He answers according to His perfect will.
  - 6) Keeping God’s commandments is pleasing in His sight, but this speaks of always doing what pleases God in every area of our lives.
- f. “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”
- 1) John boils this all down into a single commandment for us to obey.
  - 2) Belief and love are two inseparable components of this commandment.
  - 3) This is the first mention of faith in this letter and, by connecting it with love, John teaches that faith is the basis for loving the brethren.
  - 4) The word “believe” is the aorist tense of πιστεύω (*pisteuō* = consider to be true, believe) indicating that this is faith at gospel hearing leading to salvation.
  - 5) Jesus Christ is more than a “handle” by which we refer to our Savior; His name represents all that He is – the object of saving faith is Christ Himself.
  - 6) “His Son” is a reference to His deity.
  - 7) “Jesus” is a reference to His humanity.
  - 8) “Christ” is a reference to Him as the Anointed One: the Savior of mankind.
  - 9) This literally says, “just as He gave (the) commandment to us” and we have seen in the Gospel of John (vv. 13:34; 15:12, 17) that Jesus did this.
- g. “The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.”
- 1) The phrase “the one who keeps” is a participle of τηρέω (*tēreō* = keep, guard, hold, observe) in the present tense indicating a believer who is continually applying God’s word to the experiences of life (cf. verse 22).
  - 2) As we have learned previously in this study, abiding in Christ is equivalent to fellowship with Christ, walking in the Light, etc. and continual abiding results in confidence before God.
  - 3) Fellowship with God is reciprocal –God Himself engages in personal, intimate fellowship with us when we are in fellowship with him.
- h. “We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”
- 1) As in verse 19, the verb γινώσκω (*ginōskō* = know, come to know) is used here in the sense of recognition.
  - 2) The familiar phrase “by this” refers forward to the end of the sentence.
  - 3) The phrase “has given” is the verb δίδωμι (*didōmi* = bestow, grant, give) in the aorist tense highlighting the one-time giving of the Holy Spirit that took place at the moment of our salvation.

- 4) We are able to recognize that we are in fellowship with God when we see the power of the Holy Spirit working within us.
- i. Principles of 1 John 3:19-24
  - 1) A true heart attitude of ἀγάπη love is utterly selfless and does not take into account a wrong suffered (1 Cor 13:5).
  - 2) When our lives are characterized by genuine ἀγάπη love we will know we are walking in the Light and we will have confidence before God.
  - 3) This confidence before God is based on thoughtful self-examination, not feelings or emotions.
  - 4) If we perceive that we fall short and fail to function in love, our heart will render a guilty verdict against us.
  - 5) We can remain at ease before God even when our heart condemns us because God in His omniscience knows our hearts better than we do and can see love in our hearts even though we may not.
  - 6) Believers can be overly self-critical, but we can overcome that tendency when we recognize that God in His righteous judgment immediately accepts us back into His fellowship as soon as we confess our sins.
  - 7) When we consistently abide in the word of God and endeavor to please God in all aspects of our lives we will have the divine viewpoint necessary to pray with confidence.
  - 8) An effective prayer stems from our confidence before God and is...
    - a) given in Christ's name (John 16:23-24).
    - b) asked in faith (Matt 21:22; Ja 1:6).
    - c) offered with correct motives (Ja 4:2-3).
    - d) in accordance with God's will (1 Jn 3:22; 5:14).
  - 9) We cannot accomplish any of this unless we have kept the basic commandment of God – believe on His Son Jesus Christ.
  - 10) As believers, we follow-through on this commandment by loving one another as He loved us.
  - 11) We have learned about these which abide in the believer...
    - a) the word of God – 2:14
    - b) the Holy Spirit (Anointing) – 2:27
    - c) God's seed (the new creation) – 3:9
    - d) the love of God – 3:17
    - e) God Himself – 3:24
  - 12) We know we are born again and are abiding in Christ when we...
    - a) keep God's commandments – 2:3-4
    - b) practice true righteousness – 2:29
    - c) love the brethren in deed and in truth – 3:14, 18
    - d) are empowered by the Spirit – 3:24
  - 13) God provides everything we need to achieve victory in the Christian life and the confidence we have before Him comes from the knowledge and strength that the Holy Spirit who dwells within us supplies.

#### H. Discerning the spirits. (4:1-6)

1. “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,”
  - a. The root word used here for spirit(s) is πνεῦμα (pneuma = breath, wind, spirit) which is also the word used in 3:24.
  - b. The prohibition “do not believe” is in the form of μή (mē) + the present imperative which means to stop an ongoing activity, in this case “stop believing”.
  - c. The conjunction “but” is ἀλλὰ (alla = on the contrary) indication that John is about to give instruction to contrast what his audience has been doing.
  - d. The word for “test” here is δοκιμάζω (dokimazō = test, prove) meaning that we should verify the power behind the teaching that we hear by measuring it against the standard for approval – the Word of God.
  - e. The Holy Spirit is the One who has been sent to lead us into all truth (John 16:13), so we must be diligent (Acts 17:11) to make sure that He is the spirit empowering the message.
2. “because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
  - a. The word for “false prophets” is ψευδοπροφήτης (pseudoprophētēs = one who prophesies falsely) which is always used in the N.T. to refer to unbelievers who claim to be of God, yet teach false doctrine (Matt 7:15; 24:11; Luke 6:26; Acts 13:6; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 16:13; 20:10).
  - b. There were not just a few, but many of these false teachers and so it is to this day.
  - c. The word for “have gone out” is ἐξέρχομαι (exerchomai = go/come out) which is in the perfect tense highlighting the ongoing influence of these deceivers.
  - d. These beguilers were out in the world and some of them had crept into the churches John was writing to (1 John 2:19; Jude 4).
3. “By this you know the Spirit of God:”
  - a. Our now familiar phrase “by this” once again refers to what follows.
  - b. The verb γινώσκω (ginōskō = know, come to know) is once again used here in the sense of recognition.
  - c. “Spirit of God” is one of the names for the Holy Spirit. Others include...
    - 1) Spirit of the Living God (2 Cor 3:3)
    - 2) Spirit of the Lord (28 vv. in O.T./N.T.)
    - 3) Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9; 1 Pet 1:11)
    - 4) Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7; Php 1:19)
    - 5) Eternal Spirit (Heb 9:14)
4. “every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;”
  - a. The verb “confesses” is ὁμολογέω (homologeō = agree, admit, confess) used here in the sense of acknowledgement in the public realm – “professes”.
  - b. The phrase “has come in the flesh” refers to the hypostatic union (John 1:14; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 John 1:2) and is specifically stated here to refute the early Gnostic heretical teaching about Jesus Christ.
5. “and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God;”
  - a. The verb ὁμολογέω (homologeō) is used in the same sense as verse 2.

- b. The phrase “confess/profess Jesus” means to teach the complete truth about who Jesus Christ is – undiminished deity and true humanity united in One.
- 6. “this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”
  - a. The spirit of the antichrist is the power behind anyone who denies the truth about Jesus Christ (1 John 2:22; 2 John 7).
  - b. John had previously taught about the antichrists, but now he is emphasizing the spiritual power behind their deceit (1 John 2:18-23).
  - c. The Antichrist has not yet come into the world, but the spirit of the antichrist has already appeared through the false prophets/teachers.
- 7. “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them;”
  - a. John once again refers to them as “little children” – τεκνία (teknia = little born ones) – as both a term of endearment and a reminder of their status as born again believers.
  - b. John tells them “you are from God” as a reminder to his audience that, as born again believers, they belong to God’s family.
  - c. As children of God, they have the resources to identify false teaching.
  - d. These believers have overcome the evil one (1 John 2:13) who is the power behind the deceptions of these false teachers.
- 8. “because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”
  - a. The One who is in you is the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Tim 1:14).
  - b. The one who is in the world is Satan who is the ruler of this world (Luke 4:5-7; 1 John 5:19), but is judged and will be cast out (John 12:31; 14:30).
  - c. The word κόσμος (kosmos = world) is used five times in verses 3, 4 and 5, all in the sense of the orderly arrangement of things under the control of Satan and his minions.
  - d. The Holy Spirit is greater than the devil and all his forces combined, but if you quench (1 Thess 5:19) or grieve (Eph 4:30; Isa 63:10) the Holy Spirit through rebellion and sin, then you will not benefit from His wisdom, guidance and strength.
- 9. “They are from the world;”
  - a. In verses 4-6 the shift from 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural to 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural to 1<sup>st</sup> person plural is vivid in the Greek with parallel phrases at the beginning of each verse.
  - b. False teachers had arisen (and arise to this day) from within Satan’s world system.
- 10. “therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.”
  - a. The teaching of these false teachers is in keeping with the source of its power – worldly.
  - b. Today, such teaching includes the prosperity gospel, self-exaltation, Mormonism, Islam, etc.
  - c. Worldly-minded people will readily accept a worldly message.
  - d. Because they are feeding their audience a message they want to hear, these false teachers are quite often very popular.

11. “We are from God; he who knows God listens to us;”
  - a. The “we” and “us” here includes the audience, but the specific message highlights those that proclaim the truth and, in particular, John and the other apostles who penned the N.T. Scriptures.
  - b. God chose the apostles to deliver His message of truth to the world.
  - c. The person who knows God is a believer walking in the Light.
  - d. The word for “listens” is ἀκούω (akouō = hear) which in this context means more than simply hearing the words – it means to “pay attention” to what is said.
12. “he who is not from God does not listen to us.”
  - a. The person who is not from God (and does not know God) is an unbeliever.
  - b. This is a similar use of ἀκούω meaning to “pay attention”.
  - c. Unbelievers will reject the true doctrines of the Bible, unless they respond positively at gospel hearing.
  - d. Carnal believers are from God, but will likewise reject Bible doctrine, unless they respond positively to the convicting ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
13. “By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”
  - a. What seems to be our now familiar phrase “by this” is actually a different expression in the Greek – ἐκ τούτου (ek toutou) – and literally means “from this” referring back to the first part of the verse.
  - b. The verb γινώσκω (ginōskō = know, come to know) is once again used here in the sense of recognition.
  - c. The way people respond to Bible teaching, and in particular the truth about who Jesus Christ really is, tells us a lot about whether or not they are born-again believers.
  - d. In order to be able to distinguish between truth and error we must have the truth implanted in our souls (James 1:22) by diligently immersing ourselves in God’s word on a daily basis.
14. Principles of 1 John 4:1-6
  - a. The spiritual power behind many teachers is not the Spirit of God.
  - b. God asks us to believe some things (His testimony concerning His Son, His promises, etc.) and to disbelieve (reject) other things.
  - c. We should not believe...
    - 1) hateful/vengeful people who mask their true nature with gracious words (Prov 26:23; Jer 12:6)
    - 2) a false Christ (Mt 24:23, 26 || Mk 13:21)
    - 3) factious people (Tit 3:10)
    - 4) false teachers (1 John 4:1)
  - d. The word of God is the objective standard by which we evaluate any message we hear (Isa 8:20).
  - e. Growing toward spiritual maturity protects us from being susceptible to false doctrines (Eph 4:14).
  - f. We must constantly be on the alert for false teachers who might arise among us (2 Pet 2:1).

- g. These false teachers may have the appearance of sheep, but are actually ravenous wolves (Mt 7:15).
  - h. To properly recognize false teachers you must set aside subjective factors such as intelligence, a persuasive personality, etc. and examine the content of the message being taught.
  - i. God blessed us with His word and the indwelling Holy Spirit to help us recognize the truth (John 16:13).
  - j. If someone denies the incarnation (hypostatic union) of Jesus Christ, you will know without a doubt they are not from God.
  - k. If someone denies that the Bible is the inspired word of God, you will know without a doubt they are not from God.
  - l. The spirit of the antichrist is behind any message that tries to get people to evaluate things independently of God's word.
  - m. We cannot resist worldly thinking by studying the various cults – we must rely upon “He who is in you” (the indwelling Holy Spirit).
  - n. It is a mistake to try to “get with the times” by blending the word of God and worldly thinking.
  - o. The truth is not a popular message, but God will always bless His word as it goes forth (Isa 55:11).
  - p. We must keep growing so we can recognize error when we see/hear it.
- I. God's Love perfected. (4:7-5:3)
- 1. Love is from God. (4:7-8)
    - a. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God;”
      - 1) It is from verses 7 and 11 that I have concluded that John uses the word ἀγαπητοί (agapētoi = beloved) to express both his love (v. 7) and God's love (v. 11) for the believers he is writing to.
      - 2) John uses a verb form here known as the hortatory subjunctive whereby he includes himself in the exhortation to love one another.
      - 3) The verb for love here is ἀγαπάω (agapaō): sacrificial-integrity love.
      - 4) The particular emphasis here is for love among the brethren because of the reciprocal capacity to love with ἀγαπάω love.
      - 5) This kind of love is not of this world, but comes from God Himself.
    - b. “and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”
      - 1) As born-again believers we have a new nature with the capacity to love others with God's kind of love.
      - 2) We cannot function in the capacity of our new spiritual nature unless we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
      - 3) To “know God” involves...
        - a) R- relationship (being born again)
        - b) F - fellowship (sinless consistency and confession of sins when necessary)
        - c) F - familiarity (learning God's word)
        - d) I - intimacy (maturity through growth)
    - c. “The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

- 1) John does not mention an object of love which highlights a lack of love in the person's life altogether.
  - 2) This lack of ἀγαπάω love stems from not knowing God (R-F-F-I).
  - 3) This phrase is used only here and in verse 16, but clearly expresses this attribute of God's essence – love is intrinsic in the very nature of God and all that He does.
- d. Principles of 1 John 4:7-8
- 1) God's very nature includes a kind of love which is not found in fallen mankind.
  - 2) God demonstrates His love toward us (Rom 5:8) and, as believers, we can express this kind of love toward others.
  - 3) There are 4 Greek words for love...
    - a) ἔρως (erōs) – sexual love
    - b) στοργή (storgē) – familial love
    - c) φίλος (philos) – compatibility love
    - d) αγάπη (agapē) – God's love:
      - i. sacrificial-integrity love
      - ii. may include στοργή or φίλος love
  - 4) Of these four kinds of love, only αγάπη love never fails (1 Cor 13:8).
  - 5) As believers, our capacity to love with αγάπη love increases as we mature in the Word and develop a more intimate fellowship with God.
  - 6) As believers, we may fail an αγάπη love test because...
    - a) we are not abiding in Christ
    - b) we do not know God (thru His word)
    - c) we lack the maturity necessary to fully understand the depths of God's love and, in turn, express that love to others
  - 7) God is love, which means that love is inherent in all that He does...
    - a) He provides for our needs in love
    - b) He disciplines His children in love
    - c) He judges everything in love
    - d) etc...
  - 8) The phrase “God is love” cannot be reversed to say “love is God” since God is so much more than love – He is eternal, righteous, just, sovereign, true, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, immutable, jealous, long-suffering, merciful, etc.
2. God's Love manifested. (4:9-10)
- a. “By this the love of God was manifested in us,”
    - 1) Our favorite phrase ἐν τούτῳ (en toutō) here refers to a phrase that is to follow and is introduced by the conjunction ὅτι (hoti = that).
    - 2) The phrase “love of God” can be understood three ways...
      - a) objective – the love we have for God
      - b) subjective – the love God has for us
      - c) qualitative – God's kind of love

- 3) The explanation which follows, along with verses 10 & 11, highlights the love God has for us (subj.), but God's kind of love (qual.) is also in view.
  - 4) This is the verb φανερώω (phaneroō = reveal) in the exact same form (aorist passive indicative) that we saw two times in verse 1:2 referring to something that had previously existed, but was now revealed.
  - 5) The αγάπη love which has always been part of the very nature of God can now be seen in the believer.
  - 6) Verses 9b-17a (up to another "by this") describe the love God has for us and His love being perfected in us.
- b. "that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world"
- 1) The phrase "has sent" is the perfect tense of the verb ἀποστέλλω (apostellō = send out, dispatch to achieve an objective) which indicates that the action was completed in the past with present ongoing results.
  - 2) The word μονογενής (monogenēs = only begotten, one and only, one of a kind) is also used to refer to Jesus Christ by John in his gospel (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18) and by the author of Hebrews in typology (Heb 11:17).
  - 3) The phrase "into the world" goes beyond the idea that the Son of God came to the earth because it involves Jesus Christ carrying out His work assignment within Satan's κόσμος (kosmos) system.
- c. "so that we might live through Him."
- 1) The subjunctive mood of the verb ζάω (zaō = live) indicates that not everyone will receive eternal life, only those who believe in Him.
  - 2) Jesus Christ died so that we might live through Him (by grace through faith in Him), for Him (2 Cor 5:15) and all of eternity together with Him (1 Thess 5:10).
- d. "In this is love,"
- 1) Just as in verse 9 the phrase ἐν τούτῳ (en toutō) refers to a phrase that is to follow and is introduced by the conjunction ὅτι (hoti = that).
  - 2) The noun αγάπη (agapē) is preceded by the definite article ἡ (hē) to bring the abstract idea of love into view.
  - 3) The very common verb ἐστίν (estin) which is from εἶμι (eimi = be, exist) highlights the existence of love in the human realm.
  - 4) This concept must be connected back to the opening statement in verse 9 meaning "by this love exists (is) *in us*".
- e. "not that we loved God, but that He loved us"
- 1) John starts by refuting the idea that we somehow manifested αγάπη love on our own – even with God Himself as the object of such love.
  - 2) John then states that God's αγάπη love for us – even while we were sinners dead in our transgressions (Rom 5:8; Eph 2:4-5) – is the basis for the existence of αγάπη love in us.
- f. "and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."
- 1) In using the phrase "sent His son" John refers back to the statement in verse 9b, but now it is shown to be an expression of the love which God has for us.

- 2) As we learned in v. 2:2, Jesus Christ is the propitiation for all sins.
- g. Principles of 1 John 4:9-10
  - 1) God is love, and that love has been expressed by God toward us when He sent His Son into the world.
  - 2) God solved our unsolvable problem:
    - a) we were dead and He gave us life
    - b) we were guilty and He made propitiation for us
  - 3) God's love can thus be manifested in those who have been reconciled to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.
  - 4) We come to know God and His love through the word of God which He has given to us as an expression of His love.
  - 5) God's love is an unselfish love and we will exhibit the same unselfish love as we come to know God.
  - 6) As we develop the capacity for God's kind of love we discover that we can love people we do not like and those with whom we disagree.
  - 7) God and God alone is the source of this kind of love.
  - 8) God is perfecting this kind of love in you who are growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and in so doing are being conformed to His image.
3. Love one another. (4:11-12)
  - a. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."
    - 1) John again refers to his audience as ἀγαπητοί (agapētoi = beloved) to reiterate God's love for them as well as his own love for them.
    - 2) This is constructed as a first class conditional in the Greek which assumes the statement to be true.
    - 3) The word "so" is the adverb οὕτως (houtōs = in this way) highlighting the manner in which God loved us and the way that love was expressed (see John 3:16).
    - 4) The word "ought" is the verb ὀφείλω (opheilō = owe, be obligated) which explains the proper response to God's love, but also indicates that this response involves our volition.
  - b. "No one has seen God at any time;"
    - 1) O.T. Theophanies are manifestations of the pre-incarnate Christ and are better referred to as Christophanies.
    - 2) This is very similar to John 1:18 which tells us that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, "explains" the Father.
  - c. "if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us."
    - 1) This is a third class conditional in the Greek indicating that the "if" statement may or may not be true.
    - 2) The word "abides" is a present active indicative of μένω (menō = remain, stay, abide) indicating an ongoing condition.
    - 3) As with our study on the believer abiding in Christ, this refers to fellowship with God through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

- 4) In the dispensation of the Church all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at all times, but we can lose the filling of the Spirit through the commission of sin.
  - 5) The if/then construction of this sentence does not indicate that God abides in us as a result of the ἀγάπη love we have for one another.
  - 6) Instead, this verse is teaching us that any ἀγάπη love we have for one another comes about as the result of fellowship with God and the filling of the Holy Spirit.
  - 7) The phrase “is perfected” is a perfect passive participle of τελειόω (teleioō = complete, make perfect, bring to full measure, mature) explaining that God the Father is in the process of developing His love in us.
- d. Principles of 1 John 4:11-12
- 1) When we begin to grasp the depth of God’s love for us and the way He has expressed that love to us, we ought to respond by demonstrating His love toward one another.
  - 2) Jesus gave Himself for His enemies that they might become His friends.
  - 3) The enemies of Christ treated Him with utter contempt (and still do).
  - 4) Likewise, we should have love for our brothers and sisters in Christ even when, in our estimation, they act like jerks and/or treat us poorly.
  - 5) We are capable of this kind of love only when God abides in us.
  - 6) God abides in us when we have fellowship with Him (John 15:4).
  - 7) When we have fellowship with God and He abides in us, we bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).
  - 8) God the Father has never been seen, but others see Him abiding in us when we show love for one another.
  - 9) When we show ἀγάπη love to others God’s love is reflected to perfection even though we are imperfect.
  - 10) As we diligently study to present ourselves approved unto God (2 Tim 2:15), the Holy Spirit teaches us the word of God (John 16:13) which is working in us to perfect our capacity for expressing ἀγάπη love (v. 12).
4. Abiding in God. (4:13-15)
- a. “By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”
    - 1) This verse is very similar to 3:24b, but states that the abiding is mutual.
    - 2) Another difference is this phrase “of His Spirit”.
    - 3) This phrase is an example of the partitive use of the preposition ἐκ (ek = from, out of) describing how God has apportioned the Holy Spirit to indwell each believer (John 4:13-14).
  - b. “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”
    - 1) Verse 13 highlighted the Father’s giving of the Holy Spirit and now this verse turns our attention to the Father’s sending of His Son.

- 2) John uses the explicit subject ἡμεῖς (hēmeis = we) at the beginning of this verse in order to shift the meaning of “we” to the apostles instead of John and his audience.
  - 3) This is almost the identical phrase we saw in verse 1:2, but here John uses θεάομαι (theaomai = see, look at, behold) in order to connect this verse back to verse 12.
  - 4) The verb ἀποστέλλω (apostellō = send out, dispatch to achieve an objective) makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the Son of God – sent from heaven by God the Father.
  - 5) The perfect tense of ἀποστέλλω highlights the ongoing results of God the Father sending His Son into the world to be its Savior.
  - 6) John once again reminds us that the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the whole world, but only those who believe in Jesus Christ benefit from this (Jn 3:17; 1 Jn 2:2; 1 Ti 4:10).
- c. “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”
- 1) The word “confesses” is ὁμολογέω (homologeō = agree, admit, confess) which entails agreement with God concerning who Jesus Christ is – verbalization is possible, but not necessary.
  - 2) The aorist subjunctive of ὁμολογέω points to the recognition that Jesus Christ is the Son of God the moment a person believes in Him for eternal life.
  - 3) This verse emphasizes recognition of the deity of Jesus Christ whereas verse 2 called attention to His true humanity.
  - 4) The mutual abiding mentioned in verse 13 is not possible unless we have believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who came in the flesh to save the world.
- d. Principles of 1 John 4:13-15
- 1) No one can abide in God (or He in him) unless he first believes in the Son of God who came in the flesh – the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
  - 2) All believers are indwelt by the Spirit, but this abiding occurs when we are filled with the Spirit.
  - 3) Being filled with the Spirit is not a feeling of some kind – it is the reality of fellowship with God.
  - 4) Being filled with the Spirit means that we are under His controlling influence rather than the controlling influence of the old sin nature.
  - 5) In order to consistently be filled with the Spirit we must keep short accounts and confess our sins.
  - 6) Consistent filling of the Spirit and diligent study of the word of God results in spiritual growth and the perfecting of God’s love in us.
5. Love perfected. (4:16-18)
- a. “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.”

- 1) The phrase “have come to know and have believed” is a perfect pairing of γινώσκω (ginōskō = know, come to know, find out) and πιστεύω (pisteuō = consider something true and worthy of trust, believe).
  - 2) The pairing of these verbs teaches us how we learn Biblical truth...
    - a) We come to know by hearing God’s word.
    - b) We believe what we have come to know.
  - 3) The phrase ἐν ἡμῖν (en hēmin) refers to love which God has “in us” rather than His love “for us.”
- b. “God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”
- 1) This is the second time we have seen this statement explaining that ἀγάπη love is intrinsic in the very nature of God and all that He does.
  - 2) We are commanded to love one another, but we cannot do so through dedication or will power – abiding in ἀγάπη love necessitates that we abide in God and He in us.
- c. “By this, love is perfected with us,”
- 1) Our favorite phrase “by this” returns, this time referring back to verse 16.
  - 2) Here we find the phrase μεθ’ ἡμῶν (meth hēmōn) rather than ἐν ἡμῖν (en hēmin) translated “with us” and pointing to the perfecting of love among the brethren.
- d. “so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment;”
- 1) The conjunction ἵνα (hina = so that, in order that) here speaks of a result and should be translated “with the result that” rather than “so that”.
  - 2) This is the confidence/boldness (παρρησία, parrēsia) that we studied previously in verses 2:28 and 3:21.
  - 3) The “day of judgment” here is the Judgment Seat of Christ – an evaluation for approval that every believer is blessed to attend.
- e. “because as He is, so also are we in this world.”
- 1) As in every previous instance in this letter John uses ἐκεῖνος (ekeinos = that one) to refer to Jesus Christ (see vv. 2:6; 3:3, 5, 7, 16).
  - 2) “as He is” means we are compared with the ascended Christ in heaven.
- f. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,”
- 1) The noun φόβος (phobos = terror, fear) is given in contrast to the confidence mentioned in verse 17.
  - 2) The adj. τέλειος (teleios = perfect, fully developed, mature) describes the love found in a mature believer.
  - 3) The phrase “casts out” is a combination of ἔξω (exō = out) and βάλλω (ballō = throw) which means to drive out or expel something.
- g. “because fear involves punishment”
- 1) The word “involves” is the verb ἔχω (echō = have, hold) used here in the sense of “to hold in your thinking, regard, consider” (Matt 14:5; Mark 11:32; Phil 2:29) and conveys the idea of contemplation.

- 2) The noun κόλασις (kolasis = chastisement, punishment) is used only here and in Matt 25:46 and describes a judicial verdict that results in painful punishment.
- h. “and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”
  - 1) Fear and ἀγάπη love are described here as being contrary to each other.
  - 2) We see here that as God’s love is manifested and perfected in us, we are being brought to maturity (perfected) in the process.
- i. Principles of 1 John 4:16-18
  - 1) Part of the process of maturing is the recognition of what God is doing in and through us.
  - 2) No small part of this is recognizing and believing the love which God is perfecting in us day-by-day as we abide in Him and He in us.
  - 3) When we fellowship with God we abide in His love.
  - 4) Abiding in love entails...
    - a) Maintaining fellowship by avoiding sin
    - b) Having a mental attitude shaped by love for others
    - c) Outwardly expressing love for others
  - 5) Consistent abiding in God and His love results in the perfection of His love in us and among us.
  - 6) As we mature in our faith and see God’s love evident in our lives, we acquire an attitude of confident anticipation of the Judgment Seat of Christ.
  - 7) The Judgment Seat of Christ is an evaluation for the approval of the beloved of God and we should not fear that day.
  - 8) When we are abiding in ἀγάπη love and maturing in that love fear is expelled from our thinking.
  - 9) Through faith in Christ we are as He is now having been raised up with Him and seated with Him in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6).
  - 10) Through abiding in Christ we are as He is now in expressing His love for the body of Christ.
  - 11) Jesus Christ represents us in heaven as He ever intercedes on our behalf (Rom 8:34) and we represent Him in the world (2 Cor 5:20) as we become more Christ-like in our walk day-by-day (Gal 2:20; Phil 1:21).
6. The love of God. (4:19-5:3)
  - a. “We love, because He first loved us.”
    - 1) Some manuscripts erroneously add the direct object “Him” here changing the phrase to “We love Him”.
    - 2) This verse amplifies verse 10 by stating that our ability to express ἀγάπη love toward any object begins with God’s love toward us.
    - 3) The word for “first” is πρῶτος (prōtos = first, earliest, foremost) which is an adjective, not an adverb, so this could be translated literally as “He *is* the first one *who* loved us”.
  - b. “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar;”

- 1) This is the same construction as vv. 2:1, 2:15 and 5:16 and should be rendered “if anyone” to be clear that no particular person is in mind.
  - 2) The word “hates” is the verb μισέω (miscō = detest, hate) which describes an active, strong aversion to something or someone.
  - 3) The phrase “his brother” is reference is to another member of the body of Christ.
  - 4) The word for “liar” is ψεύστης (pseustēs = liar) which is the same word used in chapter 2 verses 4 and 22.
- c. “for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”
- 1) The phrase “does not love” describes an active unloving heart attitude and is equated with the “hate” from the first part of the verse.
  - 2) The word “cannot” is the verb δύναμαι (dunamai = to possess the capability) telling us that such a person lacks the ability to love God.
- d. “And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”
- 1) The phrase ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν (tautēn tēn entolēn) in the Greek could mean “this commandment” or “this is the commandment”.
  - 2) As we have seen before (vv. 3:11 & 4:11) love for one another is the proper response for believers, but it is not an automatic response.
- e. “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.”
- 1) This is the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, who was sent from heaven to save us from our lost estate.
  - 2) The phrase “born of God” is literally “begotten of God” and speaks of the new birth and the new father-child relationship we have with God as a result.
  - 3) The phrase “the Father” is literally “the One who begot” which we know to be our Heavenly Father.
  - 4) The second “love” in this verse is the same subjunctive form of the verb ἀγαπάω (agapaō) we had in v. 4:21 and reiterates the proper response of love and literally means “should love”.
- f. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.”
- 1) Our favorite phrase “by this” refers to the message at the end of the verse.
  - 2) The word “observe” is the verb ποιέω (poieō = do, accomplish) meaning to respond to the commandments of God with positive volition resulting in action.
- g. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments;”
- 1) The conjunction γάρ (gar = because, for) introduces a statement that ties together several themes:
    - a) God’s love being perfected in us
    - b) God’s commandments concerning love
    - c) Love’s response to His commandments

- 2) The expression “love of God” refers to God’s type of love in us and our expression of that love.
  - 3) The verb τηρέω (tēreō = keep, guard) is in the present tense describing an ongoing obedience to God’s Word.
- h. “and His commandments are not burdensome.”
- 1) The noun ἐντολή (entolē = order, command) describes a legal order issued by someone in authority.
  - 2) This refers to all that is required of us by the word of God, but most especially the imperatives.
  - 3) The word “burdensome” is the noun βαρῦς (barus = heavy, deep, intense) and is used to refer to that which is extremely demanding often becoming a burden (Matt 23:4, 23; Acts 20:29; 25:7; 2 Cor 10:10).
- i. Principles of 1 John 4:19 – 5:3
- 1) Believers have the capacity to love with ἀγάπη love because God loved us with ἀγάπη love in eternity past.
  - 2) God’s love for us (while we were yet sinners) was demonstrated to us with action – He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross.
  - 3) Everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior is begotten of God (born again).
  - 4) If we are indeed begotten of God then our new birth provides us with a new nature that possesses the ability to love with ἀγάπη love.
  - 5) If our divinely begotten capacity for love produces love for the Father, then we should also love other believers who are begotten of Him.
  - 6) If, instead, we harbor hatred for other believers, we are in a spiritual state lacking the ability to love God.
  - 7) We must abide in God’s love by walking in the Light with sinless consistency in order to love God and other believers as we should.
  - 8) Thus, God’s commandment to love one another requires us to live a life of abiding in God’s love, not sin.
  - 9) When we abide in God’s love, His love in us will be demonstrated through action as we obey God’s commands and we will find it easy to obey His commands (Matt 11:30) including His command to forgive one another (Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3).
- J. Overcoming the world through faith. (5:4-5)
1. “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world;”
    - a. This is not γάρ (gar) as we saw in verse 3, but ὅτι (hoti = that, because) which introduces an explanation as to why obeying God should be easy.
    - b. The word “whatever” is πᾶν (pan) which is a neuter adjective used to refer to the new thing (new self) within believers.
    - c. The word “overcome” is νικάω (nikaō = overcome, conquer, achieve victory against) which is a word describing military victory in battle.
    - d. Our battles are fought and victories are won within the angelic conflict.

- e. The enemy standing against us in full battle array is Satan’s κόσμος (kosmos) system.
- 2. “and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”
  - a. The word “this” refers to the faith mentioned at the end of the verse.
  - b. The noun νίκη (nikē) is a cognate of νικάω (nikaō) and here describes the means for achieving victory – our weapon for battle.
  - c. The phrase “has overcome” is an aorist participle which highlights the incomparable victory which occurred the moment we placed our faith in Jesus Christ.
  - d. As we shall see in the next verse this encompasses saving faith as well as the ongoing faith needed to achieve victory in the day-to-day skirmishes believers inevitably encounter.
- 3. “Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”
  - a. In this verse we have present tense participles (overcomes and believes) describing continual victories being won by means of ongoing faith.
  - b. As we saw previously (in v. 4:15) John describes the object of our faith using a phrase that affirms the deity of Jesus Christ to refute the Gnostic heresies.
- 4. Principles of 1 John 5:4-5
  - a. We are over-comers because we have placed our faith in Jesus who has overcome (John 16:33; Rev 3:21; 5:5).
  - b. When Jesus Christ gave Himself up for our sins He provided for our eternal salvation and that we might be saved from this world (Gal 1:4).
  - c. To be rescued from this present evil age we must continue to exercise faith in Jesus because it is through Him that believers achieve victory (Rom 8:35-37; 1 Cor 15:57; Rev 12:11).
  - d. God the Father is the One who leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Cor 2:14).
  - e. Through application of faith in our daily walk we can use our divine assets to overcome Satan (1 John 2:13-14), the spirit of the Antichrist (1 John 4:4), and all other spiritual forces that empower the world system in which we live (2 Cor 10:4).
  - f. Sometimes in our battles against the world system people are our direct combatants, but we should always keep in mind the true enemy at work (Eph 6:12) and pray for the people involved (Matt 5:44).
- K. The testimony of God about His Son. (5:6-12)
  - 1. It is unanimous. (5:6-10)
    - a. “This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ;”
      - 1) The word “this” serves as a bridge from the phrase “Jesus is the Son of God” in the previous verse to “Jesus Christ” in this verse, highlighting Him as both Son and Messiah.
      - 2) The verb ἔρχομαι (erchomai = come, go) plus the preposition διὰ (dia = through) means to “come through” or “go through” (Mk 7:31), so the phrase “came by” should be translated “went through”.

- 3) Three interpretations of the phrase “water and blood” have been presented...
  - a) Two sacraments of the gospel
  - b) The blood and water of John 19:34
  - c) His baptism and death
- 4) Since John is describing what Jesus Christ went through, it does not make sense to interpret this as referring to rituals of the Church – baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
- b. “not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.”
  - 1) The word for “with” is ἐν (en = in, into, by) which here means “in regard to” (Col 2:16).
  - 2) Notice that ἐν (en) precedes both water and blood indicating two separate events in Jesus’ life, not one event as in John 19:34.
  - 3) Since Christ went through both the baptism (water) and the cross (blood), John is refuting the “Christ spirit” heresy of early Gnosticism.
- c. “It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”
  - 1) The phrase here in the Greek is simply “the spirit,” but this is the Holy Spirit.
  - 2) John has used “testify” twice before (1:2; 4:14), but he refers to testimony ten times in this section.
  - 3) The word “because” is the conjunction ὅτι (hoti) which is better translated here as “since” (just as in John 8:22; 9:17; 19:42).
  - 4) The Holy Spirit cannot lie and bears witness to Jesus Christ (John 15:26).
- d. “For there are three that testify:”
  - 1) John now amplifies his argument by pointing out that the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning Jesus Christ is corroborated by other witnesses (Dt 17:6; 19:15; Mt 18:16; Jn 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19).
  - 2) The phrase “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are in agreement. And there are three that testify on earth” was added in the *Textus Receptus*, but is found to be a scribal addition after going through the process of thorough text criticism.
- e. “the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”
  - 1) At His baptism, John the baptizer testified that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Jn 1:32-34) as spoken by the Father (Mt 3:16 || Mk 1:10 || Lk 3:22).
  - 2) The apostle John testified to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross (John 19:35) and the many events following His death (John 21:24).
  - 3) Many more have given testimony concerning both events in His life.
  - 4) The phrase “in agreement” is literally “for the one thing” which is a Greek idiom for agreement.
- f. “If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater;”
  - 1) This is a 1<sup>st</sup> class conditional clause (assumed true) better translated as “since”.
  - 2) The phrase “testimony of God” is ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ (hē marturia tou theou) which is found only here in this verse in the N.T.
  - 3) The comparative μείζων (meizōn = larger, greater) highlights the *superiority* of testimony that we receive from God about His Son.

- g. for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.”
  - 1) Here the word “this” is αὕτη (hautē) which refers forward to the testimony which is explained in verse 11.
  - 2) The perfect of the verb μαρτυρέω (martureō = witness, testify) refers to the testimony *given* as it does in verse 10.
- h. “The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself;”
  - 1) John now presents a brief parenthetical statement here in verse 10.
  - 2) The object of our faith is given and the deity of Christ is highlighted.
  - 3) The present tense for “believes” here indicates an ongoing faith in Christ which will result in spiritual growth through the study of the word of God.
  - 4) As we receive the word implanted (Jas 1:21) it becomes a testimony within us concerning Jesus Christ.
- i. “the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar”
  - 1) This includes anyone who rejects the testimony of God that Jesus is His Son and that Jesus is the Christ.
  - 2) As we saw in v. 1:10, this means “has made Him out to be a liar.”
- j. “because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.”
  - 1) The phrase “he has not believed” is a perfect active of πιστεύω (pisteuō = consider something true, believe) plus the οὐ (ou) negation indicating a deliberate rejection of God’s testimony.
  - 2) This deliberate rejection is what makes God out to be a liar.
  - 3) We must first believe the testimony of God concerning His Son (the gospel) to come to faith in Christ.
- k. Principles of 1 John 5:6-10
  - 1) Jesus is the eternal Son of God who came in the flesh as the Anointed One (Christ) – a reality before His baptism, during His earthly ministry and while on the Cross.
  - 2) The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus Christ (John 15:26; 16:13-15).
  - 3) All believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit who testifies to us together with our spirit (Rom 8:16) using the word of God (Heb 10:15).
  - 4) All of the valid testimony we have been given about Jesus, whether from men or from God the Holy Spirit Himself, is in agreement that He is the Son of God and the Christ.
  - 5) We can have certainty in what we believe because the word of God is objective and the internal witness of God the Holy Spirit is true.
  - 6) This certainty of faith should lead us to testify about Jesus Christ also.
  - 7) Our testimony concerning Jesus Christ is not simply our opinion because we have the testimony of God concerning His Son within us in the person of the Holy Spirit and the word of God implanted.
  - 8) Anyone who hears and rejects the testimony of God about His Son Jesus Christ has effectively rejected the Father and the Son (Luke 10:16) and has called God a liar.

2. It is life in Him. (5:11-12)
  - a. “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”
    - 1) John now gives the content of the testimony of God about His Son.
    - 2) The statement “God has given us eternal life” is true for all who have believed in Christ (John 3:16).
    - 3) The phrase “has given” is an aorist active indicative of δίδωμι (didōmi = give, grant) underscoring the one time gift we received at the moment of faith.
    - 4) The indirect object of the verb here (us) makes it very clear that each and every person who believes in Jesus Christ is given eternal life.
    - 5) As born-again believers we are “in Christ” and in possession of eternal life that only He can provide.
  - b. “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”
    - 1) John does not mince words here as he gives a blunt statement about who has eternal life and who does not have eternal life.
    - 2) When we compare this verse to John 3:36 we see that “having” the Son is equivalent to believing in Him, but this verse emphasizes relationship.
    - 3) If you do not have the Son through faith in Him, you are without eternal life – no amount of good works, knowledge, etc. will help.
  - c. Principles of 1 John 5:11-12
    - 1) You cannot separate eternal life from the person of Jesus Christ.
    - 2) Everyone who places his faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is given eternal life at that moment and possesses that life forever.
    - 3) Everyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ or that He is the Son of God is without eternal life.
    - 4) Being friendly, charitable, devout, patriotic, religious, scholarly, etc. – none of these result in eternal life.
    - 5) Paul teaches us that believers are *in Christ* (positional truth) and John teaches us that believers *have Christ* (relationship).
    - 6) This position/relationship cannot be lost no matter how we might fail.
- L. Our confidence in Him (5:13-20)
  1. Confidence in our eternal life. (5:13)
    - a. “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,”
      - 1) John uses the phrase “these things I have written to you” to refer to the entire letter we know as 1<sup>st</sup> John.
      - 2) John clearly declares his intended audience to be individuals who have genuine faith in Jesus Christ.
    - b. “so that you may know that you have eternal life.”
      - 1) The phrase “so that” is the conjunction ἵνα (hina = marker of purpose) which tells us John’s goal in writing this letter.
      - 2) The phrase “you may know” is a subjunctive of the verb οἶδα (oida) meaning John wants this doctrine to be very well understood.

- 3) The emphasis here is on the present ongoing possession of eternal life that these believers received as a grace gift at the moment of their salvation.
- c. Principles of 1 John 5:13
  - 1) Our salvation is not based upon any supposed merit on our part, but is entirely based upon the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
  - 2) Our part in the process is nothing more than non-meritorious faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
  - 3) Having placed our faith in Christ, we should become aware of all of the grace blessings God poured out upon us the moment we believed.
  - 4) Of these grace blessings, the gift of eternal life is very significant as it removes the fear of death (Jn 11:25).
  - 5) God wants us to fully understand, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we have been given eternal life and we cannot do anything to lose it.
  - 6) This confidence in the faithfulness of God to preserve our salvation is a key to accelerated spiritual growth.
  - 7) Presuming that our own failures can nullify what God has accomplished in bringing about our salvation shows a lack of grace orientation and will lead to “treading water” in the Christian way of life.
2. Confidence in our prayer life. (5:14-17)
  - a. “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that,”
    - 1) Here the conjunction ὅτι (hoti = that, so that) makes it clear that “this” is referring to the phrase that follows.
    - 2) This is the fourth time we have seen παρρησία (parrēsia = confidence, boldness) in 1<sup>st</sup> John (2:28; 3:21; 4:17).
    - 3) Just as in 1 John 3:21 we have the preposition πρὸς (pros = to, toward) indicating that our confidence is directed toward God.
  - b. “if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”
    - 1) The “if” here is a 3<sup>rd</sup> class conditional which, in this context, would be better translated as “whenever”.
    - 2) The verb αἰτέω (aiteō = ask, ask for) is used here to indicate a prayer request being made to God.
    - 3) The word “anything” is the pronoun τις (tis = anything, anyone) which opens this up to any prayer request made in harmony with God’s will.
    - 4) The phrase “according to His will” is κατά (kata) + the accusative introducing a governing standard.
    - 5) Our confidence is that God is faithful to receive our prayers if we ask in accordance with His will.
  - c. “And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask,”
    - 1) This is an unusual construction in the Greek, but a 1<sup>st</sup> class conditional (assumed true) is implied by the sentence structure.
    - 2) The phrase “we know that” is οἶδμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) indicating a premise that should be well understood.

- 3) This phrase implicitly includes the governing standard “according to His will” from verse 14.
- d. “we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”
  - 1) Once again the phrase οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) indicates a premise that should be well understood.
  - 2) The phrase “we have” is the verb ἔχω (echō = have, hold) describing God’s faithful response meaning our requests have been granted.
  - 3) The word for “request” is αἴτημα (aitēma = that which is asked for) which can be a request (Phil 4:6) or a demand (Luke 23:24).
- e. “If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death,”
  - 1) This is a 3<sup>rd</sup> class conditional clause (maybe yes, maybe no).
  - 2) The word “anyone” is the pronoun τις (tis = anything, anyone) extending this doctrinal concept to every believer, not just elders, deacons, etc.
  - 3) The verb εἶδον (eidon) is the aorist form of ὁράω (horaō = catch sight of, notice, see) referring to that which is personally observed, not information obtained thru gossip.
  - 4) The phrase “his brother” cites a fellow believer.
  - 5) The phrase “committing a sin” is the verb ἁμαρτάνω (hamartanō = miss the mark, sin) plus the cognate noun ἁμαρτία (hamartia) which combine to form an emphatic construct.
  - 6) The phrase “sin ... leading to death” does not refer to some particular type of sin which leads to death, but rather to the ongoing sin problem which, unchecked, could result in the end of one’s earthly life.
  - 7) The word “death” is the noun θάνατος (thanatos = death) which is used for all kinds of death in the Bible, but here refers to the end of physical life.
- f. “he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death.”
  - 1) “He shall ask” is a future tense verb used as a Hebrew idiom to form a command.
  - 2) The Greek word θεός (theos) is not in this verse, so the word “God” has been added by the translators.
  - 3) The phrase “for him” is a very awkward placement of the word αὐτῷ (autō) which could mean “to him” or “for him”, or it could be the indirect object of the verb “will give”.
  - 4) The best way to translate this is “for him” where “him” is the petitioner and that it is for (on behalf of) the petitioner that God will give life to the ones who are sinning, so this becomes “he shall ask and on his behalf He will...”
  - 5) The word “give” is the verb δίδωμι (didōmi = give, bestow, grant) describing the granting of this request.
  - 6) The word “life” is ζωή (zōē) life which refers to spiritual life, not biological life.
  - 7) Here we have a participle of the verb ἁμαρτάνω (hamartanō = miss the mark, sin) in the present tense which describes an ongoing sin problem.

- 8) As before, this death here is physical death, not loss of salvation.
- g. "There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this."
  - 1) The word "sin" is ἁμαρτία (hamartia = sin) which refers back to the ongoing sin problem, not a particular type of sin, so "a sin" should simply be "sin".
  - 2) Again, physical death is in view.
  - 3) The subject in "he should make request" is not explicitly given here, but in context is better translated as "anyone".
  - 4) The phrase "should make request" is ἐρωτάω (erōtaō = request, ask for) which John used to describe Jesus praying 4 times in His high priestly prayer (Jn 17:9x2, 15, 20) as well as elsewhere (Jn 14:16; 16:26).
  - 5) The word "for" is the preposition περί (peri = about, concerning) which, combined with ἐρωτάω (erōtaō) means to inquire about something (Mt 19:7; Lk 9:45; John 18:19).
  - 6) The word "this" the feminine pronoun ἐκείνης (ekeinēs = this, that) which refers back to the feminine noun ἁμαρτία (hamartia = sin).
  - 7) The statement "I do not say that anyone should inquire about this sin" could mean...
    - a) Praying on behalf of the one who is mired in this destructive sin pattern.
    - b) Praying that someone surrendered to sin would suffer the sin unto death.
    - c) Simply inquiring of God about this sin.
  - 8) To help decide which meaning is correct it is important to see that this is not a prohibition against such a prayer (Greek negation – οὐ vs. μή), but is given as a clarification only.
  - 9) So, John is making it clear that the command he gave for prayer is specifically for sinners who are not facing the sin unto death, but does not prohibit prayers for all sinners.
- h. "All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death."
  - 1) As before, this should be translated "sin", not "a sin".
  - 2) The statement "all unrighteousness is sin" is very important, clearly identifying that there is no neutral zone – if something is not righteous before God, it is sin.
  - 3) Again, physical death is in view.
  - 4) John follows his warning about the sin unto death with a reminder that not all sin in the believer's life results in this punishment.
- i. Principles of 1 John 5:14-17
  - 1) Believers should strive to be confident in prayer knowing that God promises to hear us when we pray according to His will.
  - 2) We come to know God's will as we come to know Him through the diligent study of His word.
  - 3) There are two aspects to every prayer – the specific request and the desire motivating the request.
  - 4) God grants requests in three ways...
    - a) Specific request and desire granted.

- b) Request denied, but desire granted.
  - c) Request granted, but desire denied.
- 5) When we follow after the lusts of the flesh we experience operational death (Rom 8:5-8).
  - 6) God's initial response to believers who are operationally dead is to administer discipline (Heb 12:4-11) to bring about repentance (Rev 3:19).
  - 7) Believers can ignore God's hand of discipline, become enslaved to sin, return to their vomit and wallow in the mire (2 Pet 2:19-22).
  - 8) Even in this terrible condition, the human spirit is still alive and able to respond to a convicting message.
  - 9) If we continue in our sin in spite of His attempts to correct our behavior through divine discipline, God may eventually give us over to the lusts of the flesh, perhaps even to the point of our own physical death (Pr 10:27; 11:19; 19:16; 1 Cor 11:30).
  - 10) God wants us to experience living grace and dying grace, but some believers stray so far from the path that their lives end in darkness.
  - 11) If someone is truly facing the sin unto death, then God knows that he will not repent before dying.
  - 12) We are commanded to pray for believers we see who are mired in sin not leading to physical death.
  - 13) Since we cannot know whether or not God has given someone over, we should pray for all believers we see who are enslaved to sin.
  - 14) Through prayer and reproof, the spiritual believer can help restore the one who has been caught up in sin (Gal 6:1-2; 1 Th 5:14; 2 Th 3:15).
  - 15) God does the restoring, raising up the believer and forgiving his sins (James 5:14-16).
  - 16) The restored believer will once again be sowing to the Spirit and reaping eternal life (Gal 6:7-8).
  - 17) Sowing and reaping in this passage refers to the believer's production, not a mechanism for unbelievers to receive salvation (Eph 2:8).
  - 18) Reaping eternal life is related to taking hold of the eternal life to which we have been called (1 Tim 6:12) and refers to a mode of living for believers here on this earth.
  - 19) This is the "life" that God grants to those we pray for (1 John 5:16).
  - 20) In regards to our own dealings with sin, just knowing that it is possible to die the sin unto death should motivate us to recognize sin in our lives as soon as possible and be restored to fellowship with God thru repentance and confession.
  - 21) We must be very careful not to try to rationalize our behavior...
    - a) Everything we do that violates God's standard of righteousness constitutes sin.
    - b) This takes place when we reject God's authority as Lawgiver (Jas 4:12) and insert our own law in place of what God's word delineates for us.

3. Confidence in our safety from the evil one. (5:18-19)
  - a. “We know that no one who is born of God sins;”
    - 1) Here again the phrase οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) highlights a premise that should be well understood.
    - 2) The phrase “no one who is born of God sins” was explained when we did our development of 1 John 3:9.
  - b. “but He who was born of God keeps him,”
    - 1) The conjunction “but” is ἀλλά (alla) which introduces a contrasting statement.
    - 2) The word “keeps” is τηρέω (tēreō = keep, watch over, guard) which, in light of the statement which follows, describes protection.
    - 3) There are several different ways to translate the phrase “He who was born of God protects him” from the Greek...
      - a) “He who was born of God (Jesus) protects him (believer).”
      - b) “he who was born of God (new nature) protects him (believer).”
      - c) “he who was born of God (believer) protects himself.”
      - d) “he who was born of God (believer) – *God* protects him (believer).”
    - 4) There are problems with each of these translations...
      - a) John has not used the phrase “He who was born of God” to refer to Christ in this letter or in his gospel, so it seems strange for him to use this phrase here as choice a) suggests.
      - b) There is a shift from the perfect tense (has been born) to the aorist tense (was born), so it is unlikely that John is referring to the same thing (the new nature) as choice b) suggests.
      - c) The phrase which follows explains that being kept means the evil one is not able to touch the believer, and we know that we cannot protect ourselves from Satan as choice c) suggests.
      - d) It requires a somewhat convoluted reading of the Greek to arrive at the meaning choice d) suggests, so a more natural reading would be preferable.
    - 5) The best way to translate this is to consider the contrast introduced by ἀλλά (alla) whereby John explains that, even though we possess a new sinless nature, we still need Jesus Christ to protect us from Satan.
  - c. “and the evil one does not touch him.”
    - 1) The “evil one”, as before, is a reference to our adversary Satan [1 Jn 2:13-14; 3:12].
    - 2) The word “touch” is ἅπτω (haptō = light, kindle, touch) which here refers to coming into contact with someone for the purpose of causing harm.
    - 3) To fully capture the strength of this statement the translation is going to be embellished just a touch to say, “and the evil one cannot even so much as touch him.”
    - 4) This is a reference to the believer being protected by Christ.

- d. “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.”
  - 1) This is the second of three “we know that” οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) statements used by John as he concludes this letter.
  - 2) The phrase “we are of God” is the identical phrase we saw in 1 John 4:6 referring to believers.
  - 3) John uses the phrase “whole world” which we saw in v2:2 to refer to Satan’s κόσμος (kosmos) system in which we currently live.
  - 4) The word “lies” is κείμαι (keimai = lie, recline) used here to describe a state or condition.
  - 5) The phrase “lies in *the power of* the evil one” is literally “lies in the evil one,” but from the context it is clear that the idea of being under the influence or power of Satan is what John is trying to communicate.
- e. Principles of 1 John 5:18-19
  - 1) At the moment of salvation we receive a new nature that introduces an entirely new perspective toward life for the believer.
  - 2) This new nature does not sin, but as long as we are in these fallen bodies the old nature is still present.
  - 3) The new nature produces things which please God – the fruit of the Spirit (divine good).
  - 4) The old nature produces things which do not please God – the fruit of the flesh (human good and sin).
  - 5) We choose which nature to follow.
  - 6) Even with this new divine nature within us, we are susceptible to the forces of Satan in this world and desperately need God’s protection.
  - 7) Jesus Christ does not allow Satan to directly harm His body and even limits his influence over us.
  - 8) The entire world we live in is under Satan’s influence and power, so we must rely upon God’s wall of fire to keep us safe by walking in Light.
  - 9) The plight of this fallen world under Satan’s influence should be motivation for us to give the gospel.
- 4. Confidence in what we believe. (5:20)
  - a. “And we know that the Son of God has come”
    - 1) This is the third and final instance of the “we know that” οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) phrase in John’s concluding thoughts.
    - 2) The simple statement “the Son of God has come” declares the reality of the incarnation of Christ while affirming His deity.
  - b. “and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true;”
    - 1) The word for “understanding” here is διάνοια (dianoia = ability to reason, intelligence) and denotes the capacity to understand.
    - 2) This phrase, then, translated as “has given us the capacity to understand”, refers to the Holy Spirit’s ministry to the believer.

- 3) The phrase “so that” is ἵνα (hina) introducing the explanation for why the ability to understand has been given to us.
  - 4) The phrase “we may know” is a subjunctive of γινώσκω (ginōskō = come to know, learn) describing the possibility of developing an intimate relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ.
  - 5) While ἀληθινός (alēthinos = true, trustworthy) is one of Jesus Christ’s titles [Rev 3:7; 19:11], the phrase “Him who is true” is a clear reference to God the Father in this verse.
- c. “and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.”
- 1) This phrase tells us that we have been placed into union with both the Father and the Son.
  - 2) This phrase also tells us that when we abide in the Father we abide in the Son also.
- d. “This is the true God and eternal life.”
- 1) The word “this” is a masculine Greek pronoun referring to Jesus Christ.
  - 2) In the statement “This is the true God” John makes one of the most direct statements about the deity of Christ and confirms His equality with the Father [John 17:3].
  - 3) As in the beginning of this letter, John is proclaiming the eternal life (that is, the person of Jesus Christ) who was with the Father and was manifested to us [1 John 1:2].
- e. Principles of 1 John 5:20
- 1) We know, with certainty, that the Son of God came from heaven, took on a body of flesh and dwelt among us here on the earth.
  - 2) We also know that Jesus Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to teach us [John 14:26; 15:26; 1 John 2:27].
  - 3) The goal of the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit is that we will come to know the Father and the Son.
  - 4) God is absolutely true – everything He does is in accordance with truth – so there is no facade about Him nor deception in Him.
  - 5) Unbelievers do not understand the truth of God [1 Cor 2:14], but for believers Jesus is the true vine [John 15:1] and the Father gives us the true bread from heaven [John 6:32], so we should have confidence in our faith and in our eternal life [1 John 5:13].
  - 6) The Father and the Son are One [John 10:30], so when we abide in the Son, we abide in the Father also.
  - 7) Jesus is the eternal life and we have eternal life when we “have” Christ [v 5:12] – our permanent estate the moment we place our faith in Him.
- M. Final exhortation. (5:21)
1. “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”
    - a. We have one final instance of the term of affection τεκνίον (teknion = little born one) which we have seen in 1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4.

- b. The word “guard” is φυλάσσω (phulassō = guard, protect) which means to protect by taking careful measures.
  - c. This is an aorist imperative which indicates that some immediate action needs to be taken by these believers to guard themselves.
  - d. The reflexive pronoun “yourselves” indicates that we are involved (volitionally) in the process of being protected.
  - e. The word “idols” is εἶδωλον (eidōlon = idol) which refers to any fabricated deity, not just physical representations of false gods.
2. Principles of 1 John 5:21
- a. John loves his spiritual family, so he concludes this letter with a stern warning about spiritual idolatry.
  - b. It is not coincidental that this warning follows immediately after the statement that Jesus Christ is “the true God and eternal life.”
  - c. An idol is anyone or anything that becomes a substitute for God and comes between the soul of the believer and the Savior such as...
    - 1) Money/Status/Celebrity/Career
    - 2) Pursuit of Pleasure/Leisure
    - 3) Love Interest/Hero Worship
    - 4) Sports/Shopping/TV/Tech/Hobbies
  - d. Given all the “we know that” verses that precede this warning, John is telling these believers to stand firm in the truth that they have been taught and in so doing to protect themselves against false teaching that can so easily lead us away from the only true God and into spiritual idolatry.