



1, 2, 3 JOHN & JUDE

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INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

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Biography:

Chuck was born in 1933. He and his wife Loretta have been married 60 years. They have 3 children, 5 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. He is an alumnus of Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, where he majored in actuary science and minored in accounting. He graduated from the Bear Valley School of Preaching of Denver in 1974. He has served on the administrations of York College and the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver. He served both as an instructor and as director in the Southwest School of Biblical Studies in Austin, Texas. In the fall of 1986 he helped start World Video Bible School where he serves as an instructor and trustee.

FIRST JOHN INTRODUCTION

I. Authorship.

A. External evidence.

1. The first clear allusion is by Polycarp.
2. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and others affirm that John is the author.

B. Internal evidence.

1. The writer does not name himself, but speaks as an eye-witness and as if his information was first-hand.
2. The epistle contains an unmistakable air of authority. He writes in categorical, almost dogmatic, terms. There is no disputing the truth of what he says. He condemns error in no uncertain terms!
3. "Johnannine" thought pervades the epistle, which would be expected if John the apostle was the author.

II. Occasion and Background.

A. Attacks of Gnosticism.

1. The strongest kind of attack Satan can bring against the church is an internal one.
2. When the church begins to produce division rather than harmony hard times are coming on that congregation.
3. This was the case in the last half of the first century and even more so in the following two centuries.
4. The church had segments of believers who were causing strife and division by their teachings and beliefs.
5. A very destructive force during this time (and is still present today) is known as Gnosticism.

B. Early stages of Gnosticism.

1. The Gnostics felt they possessed special knowledge which was not generally known in the churches.
2. When one believed that knowledge is the key to salvation, he and such doctrine were "Gnostic."
3. Gnostics believed that all matter is evil.
 - a. They believed the world was created by a lesser deity; this is called the "theory of emanation." There was "the god" who created a lesser god and this lesser god created a lesser god, etc., etc., until the least of all gods was created. This "least" god is called "Jehovah."
 - b. They believed that man's body was evil, but had a divine spirit.
 - c. They also believed that sin is ignorance, so knowledge brought you away from sin.
4. The Gnostics did not believe in a bodily resurrection, but believed at death their spirits entered into the "spirit world."
5. Three main bodies of Gnostics:
 - a. Ebionites - denied the deity of Christ.
 - b. Docetists - denied the humanity of Jesus. They taught that He was only a vision (He could not leave footprints in the sand, etc.).
 - c. Cerinthians - taught that Jesus was just the ordinary son of Mary and Joseph, that God put the Divine Christ into Him at baptism, then took away the Divine Christ at His crucifixion.
6. Consequences of the Gnostic belief:
 - a. Asceticism - the punishing of the body.
 - 1) Forbade marriage.
 - 2) Extended fasts.
 - 3) Poverty vows.

- b. Epicureanism - the body is evil, therefore is not responsible for its acts. The body commits the sin. Epicureans were also called "Libertines."
- c. Perfectionism.
 - 1) With a "second experience of grace" the Gnostic was above sin. Therefore it was impossible for him to sin. (Compare the Church of God, Mormonism, etc.)
 - 2) This caused a discrimination toward less knowledgeable brethren.

C. There was an inadequate sense of sin.

III. Purpose.

- A. With the rising interest in a merging of Christianity with the higher forms of paganism, there was a pressing need for the presentation of adequate Christian antidotes to combat the danger.
- B. Nowhere else in the New Testament is the combination of faith, love and obedience so clearly brought out.
- C. John's own four-fold reason:
 - 1. That we may have joy (1:4).
 - 2. That we may not sin (2:1).
 - 3. That we might be on guard against error (2:26).
 - 4. That we might know we have eternal life (5:13).

IV. Form and Destination.

- A. Form: The epistle has no introductory material, no greetings, no thanksgiving and no concluding solutions as do contemporary letters.
- B. Destination: The epistle was written to a group of people, possibly in more than one Asiatic community, with whom the author was personally acquainted and who were threatened with the same infiltration of false teachings.

V. Relation to the Fourth Gospel.

- A. It has the same abstract ideas as “light,” “life,” “love,” etc.
- B. The same antithetical parallelisms such as “to have sin,” “to abide,” etc.
- C. Both have the same background of thought and the same emphasis.

VI. Date: The writing is from Ephesus about 90-95 A.D.

VII. John’s “six-way test” to see if we are walking in the light:

- A. Admit you are a sinner (1:8-10).
- B. Obey God’s will (2:4).
- C. Imitate Christ (2:6).
- D. Love others (2:9).
- E. Hate the world (2:15-17).
- F. Live righteously (2:29).

VIII. Major themes in 1st, 2nd and 3rd John:

- A. The assurance of salvation.
 - 1. One of John’s main purposes in 1st John is to give believers assurance (1 Jn 5:13).
 - 2. The need for assurance is needed by all Christians.
 - a. This is especially true for new converts.
 - b. The ability to live the victorious Christian life depends upon this assurance.
 - 3. We reject the false teaching of “once saved always saved;” we do not dare to reject the biblical doctrine of assurance.
 - 4. There are four grounds of assurance in this letter:
 - a. The Holy Spirit has been given to us (1 Jn 4:13).
 - b. Our confession of Christ (1 Jn 4:14-16).

- c. Love for the brethren (1 Jn 4:16-21).
- d. Obedience to the will of God (1 Jn 5:1-5).

B. "Sin unto death."

1. "Sin unto death" is an expression which indicates sin so serious that one cannot recover from its effects (Jn 11:4).
2. The reference is not to a particular *act* of sin but to an *attitude* toward one's sin.
 - a. Murder, adultery, homosexuality and all other sinful deeds can be forgiven (1 Cor 6:9-11),
 - b. But one must acknowledge his sin and desire to be forgiven.
3. John has shown that Christians can be cleansed from any sin we will confess (1 Jn 1:9).
4. The sin which is fatal is, then, unconfessed sin - deliberate disobedience and defiant transgression.
 - a. This agrees with the teaching of Hebrews 10:26.
 - b. This passage, Matthew 12:31-32 and Hebrews 6:4-6 refer to the same sort of willful impenitence.
5. One can pray for God to forgive the sins of a *penitent* Christian, but there is no such promise on behalf of the *impenitent* person.

C. Christian hospitality.

1. Hospitality is commended to Christians (Heb 13:1-2).
 - a. The "strangers" were brothers and sisters in the Lord who had previously been unknown to one.
 - b. The difficulties of travel in the first century made this care a necessity.
2. Traveling evangelists were particularly in need of such hospitality.
 - a. The recipients of John's last two letters were known for such kindness (3 Jn 5-8).

- b. But John warned against receiving and encouraging any teacher who “abides not in the doctrine of Christ” (2 Jn 10-11).
- 3. With our society being so insensitive and impersonal, we need to revive this practice again!

FIRST JOHN - OUTLINE

I.	Introduction.....	1:1-4
II.	God is Light	1:5-2:29
III.	God is Love	3:1-5:12
IV.	Conclusion.....	5:13-21

FIRST JOHN - EXPANDED OUTLINE

I.	Introduction.....	1:1-4
A.	Proof of the Manifestation of the Word.....	1:1-3
B.	Purpose in Writing	1:4
II.	God is Light.....	1:5-2:29
A.	Conditions of Fellowship with God.....	1:5-7
B.	Sin and Forgiveness.....	1:8-10
C.	Jesus Our Advocate	2:1-2
D.	Tests of the Christian.....	2:3-6
E.	Commandments Old and New.....	2:7-11
F.	Little Children, Fathers and Young Men Addressed	2:12-14
G.	Love of the World Forbidden.....	2:15-17
H.	Warnings Against Antichrist.....	2:18-29
III.	God is Love	3:1-5:12
A.	God's Love for Man	3:1-2
B.	Origin and Characteristics of Sinful Conduct	3:3-12

C.	Love and Hatred Contrasted.....	3:13-24
D.	Spirit of Truth and Spirit of Error Contrasted.....	4:1-6
E.	Brotherly Love Commanded	4:7-21
F.	Tests of Faith and Love	5:1-12
IV.	Conclusion.....	5:13-21
A.	Additional Object in Writing.....	5:13-15
B.	The Sin Unto Death	5:16-17
C.	Divine Assurances	5:18-21

FIRST JOHN EXPOSITION

I. INTRODUCTION 1:1-4

A. PROOF OF THE MANIFESTATION OF THE WORD 1:1-3

I. From the beginning. Either -

- a. The beginning of time (Jn 1:1) or
- b. The beginning of the gospel (2:7,24).
- c. The preferred is “a,” compare John 8:58 – “Before Abraham was I am.”

Heard...Seen...Looked upon...Handled. Notice the increase in the intensity of this proof.

John refutes the theory of the Docetics who believed that Jesus never, at any time, had a flesh and blood body but was only a phantom.

They refused to believe God could ever lower Himself to the taking of human flesh and blood upon Himself.

John insists that the Jesus whom he had known was actually a man living amongst men.

The Lord was not a mere influence, nor a shadowy phantom, but a living, vibrant, tangible person whose voice John had heard, whose body he had seen. and whom he had touched with his own hands.

We have heard. ἀκηκόαμεν, perfect, indicative, active.

The perfect tense expresses an act in the past with lasting results.

It indicates a revelation has been made in terms which men can understand and the results are abiding.

We have seen. ἐωράκαμεν, perfect, indicative, active - the same as “we have heard.”

Compare Luke 1:2; Matthew 13:16-17; Luke 10:23-24; 24:39.

We have looked upon. ἐθεασάμεθα, aorist, indicative, middle had beheld *for themselves!*

This is a calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the viewer.

Also inherent in the meaning of this word is the idea of contemplating with pleasure, looking with delight and finding satisfaction in the object being contemplated.

That which...the word of life. This part of the sentence begins in the neuter which shows the subject is a “what” (the gospel) and is later personified as a “who” (Jesus Christ).

Names of the Gospel:

- a. Word of life (Phil 2:16).
 - b. Word of God (Acts 4:31; 6:2,7; 11:1; 13:5,7,44; 16:32; Phil 1:14; 1 Thess 2:13; Heb 13:7; Rev 1:2,9; 6:9; 20:4).
 - c. Word of the Lord (Acts 8:25; 12:24; 13:49; 15:35; 1 Thess 1:8; 2 Thess 3:1).
 - d. Word of hearing - word preached (Heb 4:2).
 - e. Word of the kingdom (Mt 13:19).
 - f. Word of the gospel (Acts 15:7; Col 1:5).
 - g. Word of His grace (Acts 14:3; 20:32).
 - h. Word of salvation (Acts 13:26).
 - i. Word of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19).
 - j. Word (preaching) of the cross (1 Cor 1:18).
 - k. Word of truth (2 Cor 6:7; Eph 1:13; Col 1:5; 2 Tim 2:15).
 - l. Word of righteousness (Heb 5:13).
 - m. Form of sound (health-giving) words (2 Tim 1:13 cf: 2:8).
2. This is a parenthetical statement explaining verse 1.

That eternal life. τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον - *the life, the eternal one.*

This is Jesus Christ! (cf: Jn 11:25).

3. Fellowship. κοινωνία. True believers are those who dwell in Christ and in His fellowship which embraces all the members of the body of Christ.

There is nothing vague or merely sentimental about this fellowship; it involves:

- a. Obedience to the commands of Christ and
- b. Faithfulness to His teaching communicated through His apostles.

Those who abandon the apostolic teaching and fellowship sever themselves from fellowship with the Father and the Son!

This word (κοινωνία) and its cognates are not found in John's gospel, but are present in the ideas which he expresses.

Compare John 13:8; 14:23; 15:1-16; 17:21,23.

B. PURPOSE IN WRITING 1:4

4. Joy. This joy can be full only when Jesus and His gospel are shared:

- a. Both with the saved and
- b. With the lost and dying.

II. GOD IS LIGHT 1:5-2:29

A. CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD..... 1:5-7

5. God is light. This is not the same as:

- a. "God is *the* light," or
- b. "God is *a* light,"
- c. But simply, "God *is* light."

It describes God's essence!

The key to this is light always stands for something good and positive, never for something evil.

The Old Testament speaks of God as dwelling in "thick darkness" (cf: Ex 20:21; 1 Kgs 8:12; Psa 97:2).

This is because His light is so unapproachable (1 Tim 6:16) that it is hidden from men behind the cloud of the “shekinah.”

It must also be remembered that God is spirit and only the eyes of spirit beings can behold Him.

A man’s character will be determined by the character of the god whom he worships.

This phrase tells us:

- a. Of God’s splendor and glory. There is nothing so glorious as a blaze of light piercing the darkness.
- b. That God is self-revealing. There is nothing secretive, shy or underhanded about Him.
- c. Of God’s purity and holiness. There is none of the darkness which would conceal any hidden evil in God.
- d. Of God’s guidance. It is one of the functions of light to show the way.
- e. Of the revealing quality in the presence of God. Flaws and stains which are hidden in the shade are made obvious in the light. The imperfections of a man’s life are seen in the presence of God.

In Him is no darkness. Throughout the New Testament darkness stands for the exact opposite of the Christian life.

Darkness:

- a. Stands for the Christ-less life. It represents the life a man had before he met Christ or the life he lives if he strays away from Him.

Compare 2:8; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5; Jn 8:12; 1 Pet 2:9.
- b. Is hostile to the light - they are natural enemies. Darkness seeks to obliterate light (Jn 1:5).
- c. Stands for the ignorance of life apart from Christ (Jn 12:35-46).
- d. Stands for the chaos of life without God. Without God’s light the world is a chaotic mess in which life has neither order, sense, nor survival (cf: 2 Cor 4:6).

- e. Stands for the immorality of the Christ-less life (cf: Rom 13:12; Jn 3:19).
- f. Is characteristically unfruitful. No fruit of the Spirit can grow in darkness (Eph 5:11).
- g. Is connected with lovelessness and hate (2:9-11).
- h. Is the abode of the enemies of Christ and the final goal of those who will not accept Him (Eph 6:12; 2 Pet 2:9; Jude 13).

No darkness at all. οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία - a very emphatic double negative; “no, not even one tiny particle of darkness” is the idea.

Literature outside the Bible uses the terms “light” and “darkness” as ethical terms.

In the Qumran literature men are ruled either by:

- a. The prince of light or
 - b. The angel of darkness,
- and practice either:
- a. Truth and righteousness or
 - b. Falsehood and iniquity.

6. If Ἐὰν. This is the first of five third class conditional sentences (vv. 6,7,8,9,10) and each is followed by an aorist subjunctive or a present subjunctive.

In other words, these are things we ourselves do, not something brought upon us.

Walk. περιπατῶμεν, present, subjunctive, active - to walk about, to conduct one's life.

Walk in darkness. The direct opposite of the Libertines' teaching. They viewed life in darkness as being perfectly consistent with the evil body - all physical things being evil (Sublett).

Darkness stands for several things:

Ignorance

John 12:35

Immorality	John 3:19
Unfaithfulness	Ephesians 5:11
Separation from God	Matthew 25:30
Hostility to light	John 1:5
Lovelessness	1 John 2:9

Types of darkness:

Mental	Ephesians 4:18
Natural	Romans 13:12
Material	Ephesians 4:18
Prophetic	Joel 2:2
Eternal	Jude 13
Spiritual	1 John 1:5

We lie. ψευδόμεθα - to deceive, speak falsely, speak deceitfully.

Four times in this letter John bluntly accuses false teachers of being liars:

- a. Here and
- b. 2:4 - John is laying down very clearly the truth that the man who says one thing with his lips and another thing with his life is a liar.

The person who professes to love Christ but deliberately disobeys Him is guilty of a lie.
- c. 2:22 - the man who denies Jesus is the Christ is a liar.

Jesus asks, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:13).
- d. 4:20 - the man who says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar.

If there is bitterness in a man's heart toward any other it is proof he does not really love God.

It is necessary for those who would adhere to the apostolic teaching and fellowship to be reminded that orthodoxy of doctrine is no substitute for righteousness in life.

Compare John 3:20-21; 11:9f; 12:35f; 8:12; 12:46; 1 John 2:11.

Do not practice the truth. οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

This is not something which exercises only the mind, it is something which exercises the whole personality and being.

Truth is not only the discovery of abstract things, it is concrete living.

It is not only thinking, it is acting!

Christianity is something to be followed; the Bible is the book to be obeyed.

It is possible for intellectual eminence and moral failure to go hand in hand.

For the Christian truth is something that is first discovered and then must be obeyed.

A Christian's relationship to truth:

Hold to it	Romans 1:18
Obey it	Romans 2:8
Walk according to it	3 John 4
Do not resist it	2 Timothy 3:8; James 1:18-20
Do not err in it	James 5:19
Love it	2 Thessalonians 2:10

7. Walk. περιπατῶμεν - the same as verse 6. The present tense shows it must be a continuous walk, "If we *keep on walking* in the light."

Those walking in darkness do not know where they are going and are unable to chart their courses. They stumble against one another and fall into confusion.

On the other hand, those who walk in the light can see one another and avoid such encounters.

But where spiritual light is concerned (Jer 10:23) much more than this is obvious. Those who live in the light in which God dwells are not only kept from getting into one another's way, but they actively enjoy fellowship with each other because each enjoys fellowship with God Himself.

The emphasis here is not:

How far we walk, or

How fast we walk, but

Where we walk.

With one another. ἀλλήλων. The fellowship of Christians is the visible sign and proof of fellowship with God Himself.

The blood of Jesus Christ. This positively establishes:

- a. The reality of the body and blood of Jesus.
- b. The suffering and death which He experienced on the cross.
- c. The efficacy of the blood which He shed.

Cleanses. καθαρίζει, present, indicative, active. This is a continual process which matches our continual “walking about” in the light.

All sin. πάσης ἀμαρτίας - not merely the conscience, but *all* sin!

Sins of every type and kind committed any time and any place.

God does not do His work only half-way as men tend to do!

B. SIN AND FORGIVENESS 1:8-10

8. No sin...deceive ourselves. But some Gnostic would say, “What is it to us if the blood of Jesus is not available to cleanse us from sin? We have no sin!”

OR - if some claim (because they have the Holy Spirit) to have gone beyond good and evil and have reached a stage of spiritual development where moral principles are no longer relevant, they are self-deceived.

Compare Revelation 12:9.

The truth is not in us. Notice what is said about Satan in John 8:44, “he...abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.”

9. Confess. ὁμολογῶμεν - to say the same thing, to speak together, to confess.

The picture here is of a conversation between God and the sinner. The sinner finally sees the truth of his condition and then confesses that God is right!

The Christian’s relationship with God is a personal one. Any time we want an audience with Him we have it. We may address God anytime from anywhere.

This is present, subjunctive, active - “If we *keep on confessing* our sins.”

Faithful and just. The point made here is that God, because He is righteous, never breaks His word.

God promises mercy over and over in the Bible for the soul which comes to Him with a penitent heart (cf: Psa 143:1).

God will never hate or turn away the contrite heart and He will never break His word.

If we truly confess our sins, He will forgive!

Confession to God must be specific in nature! To confess "I have sinned" is not a confession at all. Your confession must be as specific as you can make it.

Even in public confession – we have heard people go before the congregation and confess only that they "have sinned." We are left wondering what we should be praying for and how we can help them.

And: God wipes the *entire slate* clean!

Not only does He forgive the confessed sins but, based on our walking in the light and being penitent, He will also forgive the sins we have overlooked in asking for His forgiveness.

10. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar. Why?

Because God said, "...all have sinned" (cf: Rom 3:23).

To deny we have sin is to claim we can get by on our own merits.

His word is not in us. Compare 5:10; John 5:38; 8:37.

John has just condemned the man who:

- a. Claims he is so far advanced in knowledge and in his spiritual life that sin has ceased to matter for him.
- b. Evades responsibility for his own sins or claims sin has no affect on him.
- c. Has never even realized he is a sinner.

The difference between the believer and the non-believer is not that one never falls, but the believer gets up after his fall and begins walking toward the light again.

C. JESUS OUR ADVOCATE2:1-2

1. My little children. Τεκνία μου - a tender term, no reference to age is intended (also vv. 12,28).

In verses 14,18 παιδία is used. There it is used of the younger as opposed to the older, especially in the faith.

That you may not sin. Since Jesus lived a sinless life we would be foolish to think a life of sin would glorify Him. Only a life of obedience will please Him. What does this do for the Gnostic teaching that the body may sin all it wants but the soul will remain pure?

We have. ἔχομεν, present tense - "We keep on having."

Jesus is our "ever present" remedy for sin - those isolated acts of sin which we commit through weakness, ignorance and inadvertence.

An advocate. παράκλητον - an attorney or lawyer.

Jesus is our comforter and representative before the Father.

Compare John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7.

The righteous. δίκαιον. Any advocate who needed intercession for himself could not hope to influence the Great Judge on behalf of others.

These verses not only testify to the *presence* of sin in the life of a believer, but they also show the *provision* for the forgiveness of sin that God has provided.

2. He Himself is. Emphatic! Also present tense which shows Christ is our propitiation right now!

Propitiation. ἱλασμός - to satisfy, appease, render favorable, to cover, to conciliate.

The idea is that Jesus has satisfied the wrath of God by being the covering for our sins.

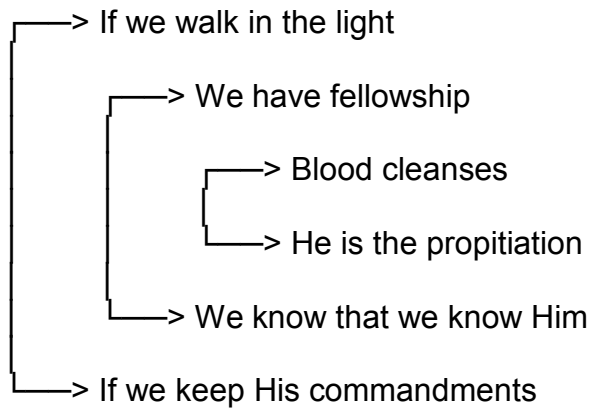
The whole world. ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου - a free offer BUT conditional!

Compare Hebrews 2:9; 5:8-9; 2 Peter 3:9.

This verse fully destroys the Calvinistic doctrine of "Limited Atonement."

D. TESTS OF THE CHRISTIAN.....2:3-6

3. Notice the close tie between this verse and 1:7 -



If we keep. ἐάν...τηρῶμεν, present, subjunctive, active - to guard or to keep for oneself.

This carries the idea of holding fast and guarding something in our memory.

This is third class conditional, “If we will *keep on keeping* His commandments.”

Compare John 14:15; Titus 1:16.

The Gnostics had much to say about their knowledge of God the Father.

But, since the knowledge of God is mediated through Christ, to know the Father you must know the Son!

Those who boasted of their knowledge of God could prove it only by their obedience to Christ.

4. He who says. This beginning phrase is also used in verses 6 and 9.

They all stress the importance of matching the profession with practice.

The verbs are in the present tense, “He who keeps on saying I know Him, and keeps on not keeping His commandments, keeps on being a liar, and the truth keeps on being not in him.”

John addresses two types of Gnostics here:

- a. Some, especially the Greeks, saw God as an intellectual exercise only.

They could say, “I know god,” without being conscious of any obligation to that god at all.

- b. Others had had an emotional, mystical experience and would say, “I am in God and God is in me.”

They, too, had not seen God in terms of commandments or obedience at all.

John shows all that the only way we can show we love God is by our obedience to Him.

Intellectual effort and emotional experience are not neglected in the gospel, but they must come together in works in order to make their belief (faith) complete (Jas 2:20).

Compare 1:6; John 8:44.

- 5. Word. This is used here as a synonym for “commandments.”

Just as our knowledge of Him is to be tested by our obedience, so is our love for Him.

It is the same test which proves both.

Also see 5:1-3.

Perfected. τετελείωται, perfect, indicative, passive - to bring to a goal, to perfect.

Sin is just the opposite – it has no perfection because it has no end, no goal, no aim. Why? Because sin is ἀμαρτία, a transgression which wanders from its aim, it “misses the mark.”

True love for God is not expressed in special knowledge, sentimental language or mystical experience but in obedience.

The proof of love is loyalty.

When you find yourself hating or disliking someone, sincerely pray for them – it is difficult to hate someone whom you are sincerely praying for.

- 6. Abides in Him. This is dealt with in greater detail in John 15:1-17.

Ought. ὀφείλει, present, indicative, active - morally obligated, must. This is no “option” BUT a “necessity”!

E. COMMANDMENTS OLD AND NEW.....2:7-11

- 7. No new commandment. οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν.

There are two words for “new.”

- a. Νέος - new in respect to time; that which has recently come into existence.
- b. Καινός - new with respect to quality, not time.
- c. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between these words. See Trench’s book for a full discussion.

Brethren...beginning. The word “brethren” shows this is addressed to Christians, so then the word “beginning” refers to the beginning of this Christian age.

Compare 3:11; John 13:34-35.

8. A new commandment. ἐντολὴν καινὴν. If new, compared to what?

See Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:28ff.

John 13:34 gives the answer - “As I have loved you.”

Also compare John 3:16 with 1 John 3:16.

True. ἀληθὲς - true, genuine.

The word not only expresses that the commandment is true, but it also states that the newness of the commandment to love was actually manifested in Christ.

Darkness is passing away. ἡ σκοτία παράγεται, present, indicative, middle.

The process has already begun and continues as a result of evangelism.

Compare John 3:18-21; 8:12; Matthew 5:14.

9. Is in darkness until now. No one is allowed to imagine that he can get away with a claim to be a lover of God on the ground that this is an inward attitude, invisible to others.

The two commandments of (1) love to God and (2) love to one’s brother are like two sides of a coin; the one is essential to the other.

10. No cause for stumbling in him.

There are two possible meanings:

- a. If we love our brother, there is nothing in us which causes others to stumble or
- b. There is nothing in us which causes us to stumble.

The latter is more likely the meaning as love makes us able to make progress in our spiritual life whereas, hatred makes any progress impossible (cf: Jn 11:9-10).

11. He who hates his brother.

- His existence - in darkness.
- His activity - walks in darkness.
- His state - does not know where he is going (blind).

When one has hatred in his heart, his powers of judgment are obscured and he cannot see the issues clearly.

No one is fit to give a verdict on anything while he has hatred in his heart.

Nobody can rightly direct his own life when hatred dominates him.

F. LITTLE CHILDREN, FATHERS, YOUNG MEN ADDRESSED..... 2:12-14

The mention of fathers, young men and children is to be understood as Christians somewhere in their spiritual growth.

- Children - recent converts.
- Young men - those who have reached maturity and possess greater spiritual strength in the Lord.
- Fathers - those who had been in Christ the longest and had, therefore, attained the greater spiritual growth.

12. For His name's sake.

This means:

- a. On the basis of His name. God, the Father, forgives sin on account of Christ's name and because of His advocacy for our cause (2:1).
- b. Doing something consistent with the character and council of that person (Psa 23:3; 25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 101:21; 143:11; Jer 14:7,11).

13. Fathers...you have known. πατέρες...ἐγνώκατε, perfect tense. "You came to know and now know."

This describes the full and rich experience these had with the Lord.

Young men...you have overcome the wicked one. Perfect, indicative, active which shows they had already overcome and the results of that victory are still present.

Compare Romans 8:37.

Little children...you have known the Father. Perfect, indicative, active - they had come to know the Father and still know Him.

Compare Hebrews 8:11.

14. I have written. This is from the viewpoint of the reader whereas, "I write" in verses 12 and 13 is from the viewpoint of the writer.

Fathers - a repeated assurance of spiritual security.

Young men. Their strength came from the study of God's word (Col 2:16-17).

Read the Bible!

This passage (12-14) sets out God's gifts to all men in Jesus Christ. They are the gifts of:

- a. Forgiveness through Jesus Christ,
- b. Increasing knowledge of God and
- c. Victorious strength.

G. LOVE OF THE WORLD FORBIDDEN2:15-17

15. Do not love the world. The world which God loves is mankind; that which is forbidden for man to love is the evil order of mankind.

Or the things of the world. We are forbidden to love even a specific or particular part of the world.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is applicable here (Lk 15:11-32).

Also compare Matthew 6:24; Romans 8:5; James 4:4; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

The love of the Father is not in him. The love God has for that man has not been completed in that it has not been returned to Him.

The one effective antidote to worldliness is to have one's heart so filled with the Father's love that it has no room for any love that is not compatible with it.

16. This is a description of the world.

These things did not come from God!

The lust of the flesh. ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς.

To be subject to the flesh's desire is to judge everything in this world by purely material standards.

It is to:

- a. Live a life dominated by the senses,
- b. Be gluttonous in food,
- c. Be soft in luxury,
- d. Be a slave to pleasure,
- e. Be lustful and lax in morals,
- f. Be selfish in the use of possessions,
- g. Disregard all spiritual values and
- h. Be extravagant in the gratification of material desires.

The lust of the eyes. ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν.

This is the spirit which:

- a. Can see nothing without wishing to acquire it, and having it,
- b. Flaunts it.
- c. Believes happiness is to be found in the things which money can buy and the eye can see.
- d. Has no values other than the material.

The pride of life. ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου.

To the Greeks this was a man who laid claims to possessions and to achievements which did not belong to him in order to exalt himself.

His conversation was a continual boasting about things which he did not possess and all of his life was spent in an attempt to impress everyone he met with his own nonexistent importance.

Compare the fall of mankind (Gen 3:4) and Jesus' temptation by Satan (Mt 4:1-11).

All of these avenues were used in both.

The first battle was lost, BUT the second battle was won!

<u>In the garden</u>	<u>1 John 2:16</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
Eat forbidden fruit	Lust of flesh	Command stones to become bread
Saw the tree was good for food	Lust of the eyes	All kingdoms of the world His
Be like God knowing good and evil	Pride of life	Throw yourself - angels will bear You up

17. Is passing away. παράγεται, present, indicative, middle - in the process of passing away.

This process is in operation at this present time and will continue until the present evil age is no more.

Compare Hebrews 1:10-12; Psalms 39:6; 103:15-16.

But he who does the will of God. Compare Matthew 6:24,33.

The man of the world is doomed to disappointment; the man of God is certain of everlasting joy!

H. WARNINGS AGAINST ANTICHRIST 2:18-29

18. It is the last hour. ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.

There are three words in Greek for "time":

- a. Χρόνος - time with reference to duration or succession.
- b. Καιρός - time with reference to events and their succession.
- c. Ὡρα - time with reference to a fixed date or period.

Ὡρα is the word used here.

This word designates a definite period of time - this period being the last in succession as determined by God.

It is, therefore, the Christian dispensation.

The lack of the article in Greek confirms this as opposed to the time now showing on our watches.

Antichrist. ἀντίχριστος. This is either one who comes “instead of Christ” or one “who opposes Christ.

The lack of the article shows this to be a quality or category, not a specific person or group.

Antichrist is not so much a person as a principle, the principle which is actively opposed to God and His Christ and which may well be thought of as incarnating itself in those men in every generation who have proven themselves to be blatant opponents of God.

Compare Matthew 24:5,24-27; Acts 20:29; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 2:1.

Is coming (shall come). ἔρχεται, present, indicative, middle - “He is coming.”

Have come (are there). γεγόνασιν, perfect, indicative, active - have come to be and are.

The idea is of “springing up.” They have sprung up and are springing up.

19. They went out from us. They had been part of the church.

But they were not of us. They were not of the same persuasion.

It seems certain, here in the first century, John is speaking of the Gnostics.

It could be they were never Christians from God’s point of view.

For if. Second class conditional!

That they might be made manifest. φανερωθῶσιν, aorist, subjunctive, passive - made manifest, brought to light, revealed.

“John not only relates the fact of their departure from the fellowship, but discerns a purpose in it. The heretics went out of their own volition, but behind the secession was the divine purpose that they should be ‘made manifest.’ Their departing was their ‘unmasking.’ What is counterfeit cannot remain forever hidden” - *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

20. Anointing (unction). χρίσμα. Miraculous - in order to discern false spirits and would have come by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.

This could not be an ordinary anointing received at baptism because “you know all things.” John is writing to inform them of these things, so this anointing would only apply to the few.

The end result was that they received the truth of God’s word with which they could defeat these false teachers.

Today we must use this same truth, as revealed in the Bible, to defeat error.

21. But because you know it. You already know this, therefore, compare this with what you are hearing from the false teachers.

22. Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

To deny Jesus is indeed to be the master of lies, for to do so is to lose the entire faith and the knowledge which He alone makes possible.

This is a direct assault on the Gnostics!

There are three Scriptural confessions of Jesus:

- a. Son of God (Mt 16:16; Jn 9:35-38).
- b. Lord (Phil 2:11).
- c. Messiah - Christ (1 Jn 2:22).

23. Restatement of verse 22.

“This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with Him we shall also live with Him.
If we endure, we will also reign with Him.

If we deny Him, He will also deny us.

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.”

2 Timothy 2:11-13

Compare Matthew 10:32-33; John 1:18.

24. That = the truth, the gospel.

You heard (you have heard). ἠκούσατε, aorist, indicative, active - to have heard with the idea here of acceptance of what was heard.

If. Third class conditional.

Abide (abide)...abides (remain)...abide (continue). μενέτω...μείνη... μενεῖτε, a play on words in the Greek.

Abide (continue). μενεῖτε, future, indicative, active.

The active voice is significant in that it shows our continually remaining in the Father and Son through our faith and obedience.

Let that abide in you. This tells us we must keep ourselves in the truth. This is a direct contradiction of Calvinism’s “Once saved always saved.”

Truth keeps us in fellowship, see John 15:1-10.

25. Eternal life. The ultimate promise!

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (Jn 17:3).

26. A summary of this section to his “little children” (cf: 2:1).

27. From Him (of Him). ἄπ’ αὐτοῦ - from Him.

You do not need that anyone teach you - anything else for salvation.

And just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

John is telling them they already have all the necessary knowledge needed for salvation.

28. When He appears. φανερωθῆ, aorist, subjunctive, passive.

This is a clear reference to the second coming of Christ, which may be at any time.

Confidence. παρρησίαν - speaking everything, openness, boldness, confidence.

“The word originally meant openness in speaking and came from the political scene. It was soon taken over into the ethical area and was closely connected with the concept of friendship. Philo used the word regarding a slave who had ‘openness,’ ‘confidence’ with his master when he had a good conscience. The person who has been cleansed from sin and continues in love also has ‘freedom of speech’ with his master who is also the ruler of the whole world” - *Linguistic Key to the Greek N.T.*

Compare 2 Timothy 1:7-8.

Ashamed. αἰσχυνθῶμεν, aorist, subjunctive, passive - to be put to shame, to be made ashamed.

The original idea was “to grow pale, to change color because of shame.”

It is used to indicate the effect which the coming of Christ will produce on those who are unprepared to meet Him.

29. Everyone who practices righteousness. Compare Psalm 11:7; Romans 11:22.

Is born. γενένηται, perfect, indicative, passive - to be born.

The child exhibits the parent’s character because he shares the parent’s nature.

John has come back to a thought which is never far from his mind. The only way in which a man can prove he is abiding in Christ is by the righteousness of his life. The profession a man makes will always be proved or disproved by what he practices in his life.

III. GOD IS LOVE3:1-5:12

A. GOD’S LOVE FOR MAN3:1-2

1. Behold. John wants to arouse the readers’ attention in order to contemplate this truth.

What manner. Ποταπήν. The word originally meant “of what country,” and always implies astonishment.

Does not know us. The world does not recognize us for what we are - sons of God!

Because it did not know Him. Just as the world did not recognize Him for who He is - the Son of God.

2. It has not yet been revealed (made manifest). This fact, however, does not raise a question regarding our “present” status.

When He is revealed - to be made to appear, to be brought to the light, to be known.

This also refers to the second coming of Christ.

For we shall see Him as He is. When this event occurs, our imperfect conceptions will vanish in the perfect knowledge of Him which will be ours at that time.

This is also to be like Him in body, to possess the immortal nature which He now possesses.

And we will no longer be, as He no longer is, subject to death! (cf: Phil 3:20-21).

B. ORIGIN & CHARACTERISTICS OF SINFUL CONDUCT.....3:3-12

3. Hope. ἐλπίδα - desire, expectation and patiently waiting for the fulfillment.

Purifies. ἀγνίζει, present, indicative, active.

The word originally came from a cult background and meant to withdraw from the profane and to dedicate to a god.

Notice the present tense - “*keeps on* purifying” (cf: 1:7).

This passage shows:

- a. Our salvation is conditional,
 - b. The necessity of abstaining from every form of impurity,
 - c. Encouragement to faithfulness which hope affords and
 - d. Our example for purity is Jesus Himself.
4. Whoever commits. ὁ ποιῶν, present, participle, active - the one continuing to commit.

Sin. ἁμαρτίαν - to miss the mark or target.

The idea is to veer away from that which is right.

Lawlessness (transgression of the law). ἀνομίαν - against law, lawlessness.

This is when one fails to conform to law, whether in positive disobedience or failing to come up to its demands.

It is action contrary to law, whatever the form in which the action takes place.

It embraces sin both positively and negatively.

It includes sins of *omission* as well as sins of *commission*.

The Gnostics taught that their superior knowledge made them immune to the demands of law and that God did not, in their case, impute sin to them even when their conduct was in conflict with God's law.

Compare 2:16; 5:17 Romans 4:15.

5. To take away. ἄρη - to take away, remove completely.

This word has the idea of a burden or load which is lifted in order that it may not crush the one upon whom it rests.

Here it signifies the lifting and carrying away of sins so that they may not be upon us anymore.

It is aorist, subjunctive, active showing was a "once-for-all" process in which the Lord, by one offering of Himself, accomplished His purpose and its efficacy stands forever.

He was manifested. This is the reason Jesus came, lived, died and was resurrected - to take away sin!

Compare 1 Peter 2:22-23; Matthew 1:21; Titus 2:14; John 3:17; Hebrews 9:28.

6. Whoever sins. Some sects of the Gnostics said even the true believer was under obligation to scale the heights and plumb the depths so that he might be truly said to know all things.

The present tense could be rendered, "Whosoever deliberately practices sin has not seen Him and continued seeing Him, nor known Him and continued knowing Him."

7. He who practices righteousness is righteous. No one else but *this one* is righteous.

This is a positive affirmation that character and conduct cannot be separated.

We are righteous first, then our actions prove our righteousness.

This is lifestyle as opposed to “knowledge” just as in James chapter 2.

8. Of the devil. “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?” (Rom 6:16).

For the devil has sinned from the beginning - from the beginning of sin. Satan is the originator of sin!

The devil. The devil made no man, begat no man, created no man; but whoso imitates the devil becomes a child of the devil as if begotten of him (Augustine).

Destroy. λύση, aorist, subjunctive, active - to loose, destroy.

The word suggests destruction by undoing and dissolving that which forms the bond of cohesion.

Compare 2 Peter 3:10; Hebrews 2:14-15.

The works of the devil. These works not only include sin itself, but the consequences of sin - pain, sorrow, misery and death.

The eventual triumph over death will be realized in the resurrection.

Compare 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.

Also at that time all pain, sorrow and misery will be forever terminated for the righteous.

Compare Revelation 21:3-4.

John has just told us several things about sin:

- a. What sin is. It is deliberate law-breaking. Sin is to obey oneself rather than obey God.
- b. What sin does. It undoes the work of Christ. To sin is to bring back into the world what He came into the world to abolish.
- c. Why sin is. It comes from failure to abide in Christ.

- d. Whence sin comes. It comes from Satan.
- e. How sin is conquered. It is conquered because Jesus has broken the power of evil and by His help that same victory can be ours.

9. His seed. σπέρμα αὐτοῦ - God's seed. This is God's word (Lk 8:11).

He cannot sin. οὐ δύναται ἀμαρτάνειν, present, infinitive, active - he cannot continue to live a life of sin as he did before.

God, through John, is demanding a life which is always on the watch against sin; a life in which sin is not the normal accepted way, but the abnormal moment of temporary defeat.

The naval orange might help our understanding of this new birth and new nature. When the first naval orange trees were brought to California from Brazil they were grafted onto the old seedy orange trees and were a success. From the graft down they were of the old nature, but from the graft outward they were of the new nature. The growers did have to watch for new buddings from the old part below the graft and when they sprouted they were removed. So it is with the Christian, once born again we are of the new nature and must pluck the buds of the old nature that sprout. (Sublett)

10. Are manifest. Φανερά ἐστίν - clear, evident, conspicuous.

Does not practice righteousness...does not love his brother.

John now adds love of one's brother to the practice of righteousness as a mark of the child of God.

And the absence of such love, with the practice of unrighteousness, is a disqualification for membership in God's family.

Righteousness by itself, while much preferable to unrighteousness, might appear cold and judicial. But the adding of love gives warmth to God's family.

Since righteousness and love are inseparable in the character of God, and as revealed in Christ, they must also be inseparable in the lives of God's children.

He who does not love his brother actually has no brother to love! In refusing to love one of God's family, he has simply excluded himself from the family itself!

11. That we should love. ἀγαπῶμεν, present, subjunctive, active.

This shows that there is to be a continual, habitual attitude of love (cf: 2:7; Jn 13:34).

12. Not as Cain. Compare Genesis 4:7 with Proverbs 15:8.

Of the wicked [evil] one. Satan is Cain's spiritual father.

When all is said and done, every difficulty and dispute between brethren comes down to an absence of brotherly love.

C. LOVE AND HATRED CONTRASTED.....3:13-24

13. Do not marvel. μὴ θαυμάζετε - be not amazed, do not wonder.

This is a present, imperative, active and denotes a continuous feeling stirred up by the world around us.

If the world hates you. First class conditional meaning "since."

Compare John 15:18-20; Luke 10:16; John 17:14.

Christ suffered - why should we escape suffering?

Even though we live on the same planet as the unbelievers we are not to live on the same level!

14. We have passed. Μεταβεβήκαμεν, perfect, indicative, active - to pass over from one place to another, to transfer, to migrate.

From death to life. ἐκ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν.

Notice the prepositions.

He who does not love his brother. Love of the brethren is not optional!

Abides in death. As the presence of love signifies life, so its opposite signifies death.

The reference is to future death; it already exists and will reach its culmination in the next life.

15. Whoever hates. See Matthew 5:21-22.

Is a murderer. ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν- a man slayer, one who kills a human being.

This word is found only here and John 8:44.

No murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Not loving is hating. It is impossible to avoid one or the other of these two opposites.

John teaches that love and hate, life and death, as well as light and darkness, mutually exclude each other.

He who does not have the one must be regarded as possessing the other.

Since God is love it would make no sense if He allowed His children to hate one another. He does not! If we do we lose eternal life with Him.

16. On behalf of. ὑπὲρ. “The preposition ‘for’ here (huper) indicates the purpose of the death of Christ, and sheds much light on the nature and effects thereof. The picture in the preposition is of one who sees, for example, another who has fallen, wounded, in grave danger, and about to perish, and who rushes to him, stands over him, fights in his behalf, and enters the fray in his stead” - Woods.

We ought. ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν, present, indicative, active - “We must continue to.”

If we are to avoid the hate which motivated Cain, we must adopt the love which motivated Christ.

This verse is the Christian’s response to John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Compare Philippians 2:5; 1 Peter 2:21.

17. Goods. βίον - “life” or those things pertaining to life, such as wealth or possessions (cf: Lk 15:12).

Shuts up. κλείση - to shut up, to lock up.

The word suggests a barrier has been raised against the natural human feelings which these situations call forth within us.

We are not often called upon to give our lives for our brethren, but this is the same principle in action, even though it is at a lower level of intensity.

It is the willingness to surrender that which has value to our own life to enrich the life of another.

If such a small response to the law of love is called for and is not fulfilled then we are only fooling ourselves in pretending that we are in the family of God.

18. Tongue. γλώσσα - language, speech.

This means with mere outward expression as opposed to the genuine movement of our whole being.

Deed. ἔργω - work.

The meaning is, "Let us not love in word only, neither with the tongue alone, but let us also love in deeds and in truth" (cf: Jas 2:15-16).

19. And by this - by loving in deeds and truth.

Shall assure. πείσομεν, future, indicative, active - to persuade, to convince, to reassure, to set at rest, to appease.

20. Condemns. καταγινώσκη, present, subjunctive, active - to know something against, to condemn, to make a final judgment.

Is greater than. μείζων ἔστιν. "Our conscience is by no means infallible; its condemnation may often be unjust. We can, therefore, appeal from our conscience to God who is greater and more knowledgeable. Indeed, he knows all things, including our secret motives and deepest resolves, and it is implied, will be more merciful toward us than our own heart" - *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

God not only knows our sins, He knows our love, longings and penitence. God's knowledge gives Him this sympathy which can understand and forgive.

However, the accusations of our conscience must always be treated seriously.

21. If our heart does not condemn us. The cleansing from every sin (1:9), which Jesus' blood does for us, cleanses the conscience.

See Hebrews 9:9,14; 10:2,22. When we let Jesus' blood cleanse us thoroughly, we also let it cleanse our conscience and then we can have boldness toward God.

Confidence [boldness]. παρρησίαν - openness, confidence, assurance.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need" (Heb 4:16).

See comments on 2:28 for fuller meaning.

22. We keep. τηροῦμεν, present, indicative, active - to guard, to keep, to obey.

We receive...because we keep. This is the reason we receive our petitions but there is another qualification, i.e.: “according to His will” (see 5:14-15).

23. The name. τῷ ὀνόματι. “To believe in the ‘name’ of Jesus Christ, means to believe in the nature and character of Jesus Christ. It means to believe that he is the son of God, that he does stand in relation to God in a way in which no other person in the universe ever stood or ever can stand, that he can perfectly reveal God to men and that he is the Saviour of our souls. To believe in the name of Jesus is to accept him for what he really is” - Barclay.
24. By the Spirit whom He has given us. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance (cf: Eph 1:13-14).

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you . . . you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body . . .” Since we have Deity dwelling in us we should keep the premises clean – free from sin!

D. SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND SPIRIT OF ERROR CONTRASTED4:1-6

I. Test (try) [prove].

This they were able to do by:

- a. Exercising miraculous powers in the discernment of spirits - 1 Cor 12:4-11 or
- b. Comparing the claims of these men with the known teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Notice - it is John’s readers who were to make the test and not some church head or official.

This proves the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to be wrong. They claim infallibility for their pope and deny the right of private judgment in all religious matters.

Have gone out. ἐξεληλύθασιν, perfect, indicative, active - have gone out from.

The perfect tense expresses the continuance of their remaining in the world as distinguished from the single fact of their departure.

2. By this you know. - - - JOHN’S 1st TEST! - - -

Every spirit. This is the individual making these statements.

They were motivated either by the Holy Spirit or an evil spirit.

AND the spirits were subject to the speaker (1 Cor 14:29-32).

Confesses - *continues* to confess:

- a. Jesus - His humanity.
- b. Christ - Son of God, deity.
- c. Has come in the flesh - the incarnation.

John is making the belief in the fact that Jesus came in the flesh a test of fellowship. What does this do for the Docetics?

3. Does not confess - to deny the incarnation as a reality:

- a. Is to deny Jesus can be our example. If He was not a real human being, living under human conditions, He cannot show man how to live.
- b. Is to deny Jesus can be our High Priest opening the way to God. The true High Priest must be like us in all things, knowing our infirmities and our temptations (Heb 4:14-15).
- c. Is to deny Jesus can be our Savior. The only true mediator has to be both human and divine.
- d. Is to deny the resurrection of the body.
- e. Is to deny there can ever be any union between God and man. If spirit is wholly good and the body is wholly evil, God and man can never meet.

4. Have overcome them. νενικήκατε αὐτούς, perfect, indicative, active - have conquered, have been victorious.

Perfect tense - "have conquered and *are still* victorious." The readers were not more learned, more skilled in philosophical debate than the false teachers. BUT, by refusing to be persuaded by the false teachers they had overcome them.

They had not overcome the false teachers by just refusing to listen to their false doctrine, but also by the repudiating of that which these false teachers sought to impose upon them.

5. Hears. ἀκούει, present, indicative, active followed by the genitive - to listen to, to hear, to pay attention to.

The world recognizes its own people and listens to a message which originates in its own circle. This helps explain their popularity.

The philosophy to which they endeavor to accommodate the gospel is current secular philosophy, the prevalent climate of opinion.

There is no form of “worldliness” so fatal to Christianity as this kind of restatement of the gospel.

It is acceptable to “the world” because it is in line with contemporary fashion. BUT, it is doomed to pass away because with a change in fashion it loses its appeal, which the gospel never does.

6. - - - JOHN’S 2nd TEST - - -

We...us...us...we - the apostles.

We still have them today in the written word (the Bible)!

All the Christian has to do is to remember the truth he already knows from God’s word and cling to it.

God’s truth is that by which men live and error is ultimately that by which men die.

E. BROTHERLY LOVE COMMANDED.....4:7-21

7. Let us love one another. The resumption of the subject of brotherly love is connected with the preceding in that the Spirit of Truth produces love whereas the spirit of error is against it.

This love which the New Testament commands involves a consuming passion for the well-being of others, especially our brethren.

8. Does not know. οὐκ ἔγνων, aorist, indicative, active - has not known (from the beginning).

God is love. This is a compressed statement of the gospel.

It was that act of God (Jn 3:16) that gave meaning to His love.

And it is our acts of obedience that gives meaning to our love.

“God is Love” is the explanation of:

- a. Creation - the desire to share Himself with creatures.
- b. Free will - unless love is a free response it is not love.
- c. Providence - His creating act is followed by His constant care.
- d. The life beyond - the ultimate reward of love.

“To see God as only a God of love is to misconstrue the attributes of God. Those who are banking only on God’s love and refuse to obey His will should take note of the fact that He has wrath for those who are not His faithful children. God’s love must never be viewed as overriding every other attribute” (Sublett).

9. The love of God was manifested toward us. τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν.

Not just toward us, but we ourselves are the sphere in which His love is exhibited (see v. 12).

Only begotten. μονογενῆ - only one of its kind, single one, only, unique.

10. But that He loved us and sent His Son. God’s love is demonstrated in Jesus.

When we look at Jesus we see two things about the love of God:

- a. It is a love which holds nothing back and
- b. It is a totally undeserved love.

Some may feel Jesus had no choice in His coming and sacrifice, but Jesus said, “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again” (Jn 10:17-18a).

11. If God so loved us. First class conditional sentence - “since.”

We also ought. ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν, present, indicative, active - to be morally obligated, to owe a debt which must be paid, to have to do something.

In other words, “We *must!*”

The responsibility rests on us (you and me) to love someone else **FIRST!**

12. No one has seen God at any time. The point is that the unseen God, who was once revealed in His Son is now revealed in Christians - if and when they love one another.

Compare Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; Colossians 1:15; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16.

This does not mean that when we begin to love, God comes to dwell in us, but that our love for one another is evidence of God's indwelling presence (cf: 3:17).

13. He has given. δέδωκεν, perfect, indicative, active - "He has given us and we still have."
14. We - the apostles.

The Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. This teaches against the national exclusion of the Jews and any special sects such as the Gnostics.

"The scope of His mission was as boundless as humanity, and only man's impenitence and unbelief put a limit to its actual effect" (Vine).

15. Whoever confesses. It is implied in this confession that there is a complete surrender of the will to the Lord.

AND that surrender will express itself in willing obedience to His commands.

These verses (9-15) tell us Jesus is:

- a. The bringer of life (9),
 - b. The restorer of the lost relationship with God (10),
 - c. The Savior of the world (14) and
 - d. The Son of God (15).
16. We have known. ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν, perfect, indicative, active - "We have come to know and still know."

Believed. πεπιστεύκαμεν, perfect, indicative, active.

The perfect indicates that the recognition of the love of God is considered to be a lasting and settled conviction!

Abides - total fellowship.

17. Boldness. Christian confidence and Christian love go together.

The opposite is found in shame and fear.

A sense of awe in the presence of the majesty of God is proper.

HOWEVER, anything in the nature of unnerving fear at Christ's return denies the love which God has in us.

Because as He is, so are we in the world. The idea is, "because as He is (love), so are we in this world (loving)."

Compare 2:28; James 2:13.

18. There is no fear in love. This "fear" is not "awe or "respect." This fear (φόβος) is terror or dread.

This is the characteristic of a slave in the presence of a cruel and heartless master.

Perfect. τελεία - mature, full grown.

Casts out fear. ἔξω βάλλει, present, indicative, active - to cast out, outside; to drive out, outside; to turn out, out of doors.

This is present tense and emphatic, "continues to cast out, outside!"

This is a strong picture showing the vigor with which it is excluded.

Fear involves torment. ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει. The anticipation of the punishment expected in the future is torment in the present.

This is a foretaste of punishment before it actually begins.

The child aware that punishment is deserved and pending, suffers before the spanking is felt.

A believer who contemplates the judgment day with trepidation, is one in whom the divine love has not yet reached its full maturity.

This Christian has not yet reached his full spiritual maturity.

"Fear is a sign that he considers himself worthy of punishment (κόλασις), because it is punishments (κολάσεις) that (in prospect) instill fear" - Plato.

Are you afraid of judgment? If so, why? If you are it indicates you do not love God fully or you allow yourself to sin too easily!

With mature love we become as merciful as God is merciful.

Compare James 2:13; 1 Peter 1:8; Matthew 5:48; Luke 6:36.

19. We love Him because He first loved us. ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς. This is imperative, “You, love you! Because He first loved us” (cf: v. 10).
20. He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

Ordinarily it is easier to love that which is seen and near.

Therefore, if one fails in the easier task of loving that which is seen (his brother) he will obviously fail in the more difficult task of loving that which he cannot see (God).

21. Love his brother also. In the judgment, our behavior toward the Lord’s brethren will be counted as behavior toward the Lord Himself.

Compare Matthew 25:31-46 (esp. v. 40).

Those whose lives are marked by lack of love in this regard may well have a sense of fear as they look forward to the day of judgment.

A question needs to be asked here – Do you love your physical brethren more than your spiritual brethren? If you do you have a problem, for this passage is talking about our spiritual brothers and sisters. We must still love our physical brethren, but love them enough to win them to Christ if it is at all possible. After they become Christians what a beautiful double bond of love we have with them!

F. TESTS OF FAITH AND LOVE5:1-12

1. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

Some use this as a proof text for “Faith Only.”

IF THIS PROVES “FAITH ONLY” what do we do with 2:29?

Everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

OR, WHAT DO WE DO WITH 4:7?

Everyone who loves (his brother) is born of God.

This is not “Faith Only,” neither “Love Only” nor “Does Righteousness only.”

It takes all of these: Faith, Love and Obedience!

2. Love God and keep [do] His commandments. In verse 1 “faith” was declared to be the test of sonship.

In this verse “love of God” and “obedience” are the tests of sonship. Therefore “love” and “obedience” are embraced by “faith.” The conclusion is that they are included in “faith!”

Those who say they believe Jesus is the Christ and then do not obey Him are liars! Help them to love Him more and then obedience comes easy.

3. Keep. τηρῶμεν, present, subjunctive, active - to keep, observe, obey for ourselves.

The subjunctive is used in an explanatory clause which defines our love for God.

Burdensome (grievous). βαρεῖαι - heavy or burdensome. The word indicates a heavy and oppressive burden.

Since God is love, how would He ever command us to do things that are burdensome? He knows what is best for us far more than we do!

4. Overcomes the world. Their faith enabled them to overcome everything that is opposed to God.

Compare John 16:33.

Overcomes. νικῶ, present, indicative, active. This denotes a continuous struggle and there is continual victory only because there is continuous struggle.

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

By our faith in Jesus as the Son of God, we are so united with Him that His victory becomes ours. We conquer only by His power!

5. Confessing Jesus to be the Son of God is the same as confessing Him to be the Christ.

Both confessions are brought together by John in John 20:31.

Compare 1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37; Revelation 12:11; 17:14.

6. By water and blood. Some Gnostics were saying Jesus came by water, but not by blood.

In other words they were saying His baptism was an essential part of His Messiahship, but His cross was not.

Jesus came with water at His baptism and with His blood in His death on the cross.

The first witness being at the beginning of His public ministry, the other at its close.

Cerinthus (a Gnostic) taught that “the Christ” (a spiritual being) came down on the man Jesus when He was baptized, but left Him before He died.

In other words, Christ came through water (baptism) but not by blood (death).

John denies this lie by telling us Jesus came by both. The Jesus who died on the cross was as truly the Christ as the Jesus who was baptized in the Jordan.

The Spirit who bears witness. John and the apostles bear witness to the truth of what they have seen and heard (1:2; 4:14), but behind their witness is the witness of the Holy Spirit (3:24; 4:13).

This is completely in line with the promise of Jesus (Jn 15:26ff).

7. See commentaries by G. N. Woods and F. F. Bruce.

8. There are three that bear witness.

- a. The Spirit (v. 6),
- b. The Water (Mt 3:15-17) and
- c. The Blood (Rom 3:25; Jn 19:34).

9. If we receive the witness of men...the witness of God is greater. This argument, in logic, is called “a minori ad majus,” reasoning from the lesser to the greater.

We do accept the testimony of men; thus we should much more readily accept the testimony of God who is greater.

10. Has the witness in himself.

“We have earlier seen that one of the witnesses to the reality of the Christian religion is the Holy Spirit (v. 8). This Spirit, whose abiding presence is in all believers (Acts 5:32; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6), is thus an ever-present witness to the facts on which faith rests. The word, the instrument of the Spirit, is the basis of our faith; this faith supplies us with confidence that the witness is true; and this confidence is ever with us. We thus have a continual witness to the reality of that to which we have committed our lives” - Woods.

Has made Him a liar. To deny the deity of Jesus is not only unbelief it is an insult to God’s veracity!

11. Eternal life...in His Son. Jesus proclaimed Himself as the “resurrection and the life.” Those who are united to Him by faith enjoy eternal life in prospect right now.

But those who reject Him are “condemned already” without waiting for the sentence to be passed (cf: Jn 11:25 with 3:18).

12. Has life. Since having the Son is conditional on faithfulness and obedience to Him, it follows that the life (eternal) contemplated here is also conditional.

Read: Mark 10:29-30; Titus 1:2; Romans 8:24; 1 John 2:25.

IV. CONCLUSION 5:13-21

A. ADDITIONAL OBJECT IN WRITING 5:13-15

13. That you may know that you have eternal life. John is still combating the Gnostics and their “need” of superior knowledge. But what ever the “need” is, this is John’s total message in this letter.

Do you know you are going to heaven if you die right now? John says you can know and you can answer “Yes.” Some feel to answer “yes” is pride or assumptive at the least. But John’s whole point is that you can know you are going to heaven!

See: *Eternal Life in Prospect* by Jerry Moffitt.

14. If we ask. The subject is prayer.

According to His will. God’s will is set forth in the New Testament.

This means to ask in harmony with what He has taught regarding prayer.

Jesus understood this condition (Mt 26:39).

He hears us if we:

Are obedient	1 John 3:22
Remain in Christ	John 15:7
Pray in His name	John 14:14

True prayer = "Give me my request for Your sake."

- 15. If. ἐὰν. First class conditional - "since."

He hears us...we have the petitions. Sometimes we may not be able to see the way God has answered our prayer.

"The Father sometimes says, Yes!, by saying No! That is, he answers a prayer for our good by denying the petition made by supplying, in his wisdom, our need otherwise...(2 Cor 12:7-10)" - Woods.

B. THE SIN UNTO DEATH 5:16-17

- 16. Brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death...ask.

When we have prayed for this brother our task is not yet done. It is our duty to *speak* to him!

We must not just speak to God about him, we must also speak to the man about himself. We may have to be the arms, legs and voice for God in helping him to repent.

There is sin leading to death. What is this sin?

Major Premise:	The Lord will forgive any sin, of whatever nature, that a brother confesses (1:8).
Minor Premise:	There is, however, a sin which the Lord will not forgive (5:16).
Therefore:	The sin which the Lord will not forgive is simply a sin, any sin, all sin that a brother will not confess.

The sin unto death is then a disposition of heart, a perverseness of attitude and an unwillingness of mind to acknowledge one's sin and turn from it.

Such a disposition effectively closes the door of heaven to that one forever.

The only way to know a brother or sister has hardened their heart beyond repentance is to personally confront them, with love. If they refuse to repent after we have done what we could to help, THEN and ONLY THEN are we to cease to pray for them.

17. All unrighteousness is sin. Compare 2:16; 3:4; Romans 4:15.

C. DIVINE ASSURANCES.....5:18-21

18. We know. This verse, in conjunction with verses 19 and 20, begins with this phrase (also see 3:2,14; 5:15).

The phrase shows full persuasion and complete confidence (cf: 3:6,8-9).

Touch. ἅπτεται, present, indicative, middle - to continue to touch for himself.

This carries the idea of laying hold of someone in order to harm them.

19. Of God. ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ - out of God, from God.

Being begotten of Him we are His offspring (cf: 3:10; 4:6).

The wicked one (in wickedness) [the evil one]. τῷ πονηρῷ.

In Satan, the prince of this world, the ruler of its citizens (cf: Eph 2:2; 1 Pet 5:8; Eph 6:11; Col 1:13).

20. Understanding. δianoian - knowing, understanding.

The faculty of knowing or discerning seems to be what this expresses.

It is the ability to reason correctly and was used in Greek philosophy of the syllogistic reasoning.

True. ἀληθινῷ - genuine, true.

21. Keep. φυλάξατε, aorist, imperative, active - keep on guarding, keep on keeping.

This emphasizes the duty of personal effort.

Idols. εἰδώλων - image, idol, false god.

Not only is John warning against material idols but any false conceptions or philosophies about God.

Any conception of God that is at variance with His self-revelation is an idol.

John is saying that since you have received the truth have nothing to do with counterfeit gods - beware of imitations or subtle changes.

Refuse all substitutes!

FINIS

A P P E N D I C E S

DIFFICULT PASSAGES - 1ST John 5:13-17
Leonard M. Gray

Introductory Observations

“There is a sin unto death (v. 16) and “there is a sin not unto death” (v. 17). These are unusual statements. At first reading, they are extremely confusing and difficult. When one consults a dozen or so of the many commentaries available the difficulties seem to multiply! These difficulties, however, are mostly caused by the basic “theology” of the commentator.

Let it be recognized, at the very beginning, that these expressions, and the whole discussion they raise, are not the main thrust of the writer. In this context, the Holy Spirit is moving John to write words of assurance.

1 John 5:13-17

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us:

And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

In 5:13 He assures us that we have eternal life in Christ.

In 5:14-15 He assures us that our prayers are answered, if according to His will.

It is in respect to the assurance of answered prayers that he says, “If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death.”

Let it be observed that “a sin unto death” is not exact. There is no article in the Greek text here: This indicates that the noun “Sin” is qualitative and not “identifying,” and is more accurately translated, “there is sin (not a sin) unto death”- -and, “there is sin not unto death.” So, there is sin, of which a Christian may be guilty, which is not mortal,

fatal or “unto death.” The individual under consideration was not so far gone that the sin was unto death.

Alien sinners cannot be under consideration - here in either case.

Throughout the letter, it is stated that these are God’s “children ,” in “fellowship” with God and with his apostles (1:1 ff.). These are blessed with Jesus as their advocate (2:1ff). In the immediate context, these are they that have eternal life in the Son (5:13). It is not God’s will that sins of alien sinners be forgiven through prayer (as is the case here). Also, he says, “if any man see his brother sinning...” So, the man for whom the prayer is offered is also a Christian. This is not the conclusion reached by all commentators. Some see this as an act of salvation, bringing a lost sinner out of darkness into light. Such an interpretation is contextually impossible.

Some say “sins unto death and sins not unto death” are:

1. An allusion to Jewish law making such a distinction. Such sins as adultery, etc., were punishable by death. Others were not.
2. Violation of civil laws which carried the death penalty such as murder.
3. Very grievous life style or conduct which would cause God to bring death upon the person. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1) would illustrate such a contention.
4. Sins for which “delivering unto Satan” would follow (1 Cor 5). All these seem completely unacceptable.

Sin Not Unto Death

The one praying and one “sinning not unto death” are brethren. They are both “walking in the light.” One factor that assists in the cleansing, forgiving, life-sustaining process is prayer.

“NOT UNTO DEATH” (PROS THANATON) means not leading to death, not terminal, mortal or fatal. A similar construction is John 11:4 - “sickness not unto death.”

John lets us know that God is aware of the presence of sin in Christians. He has made provision for dealing with those sins one commits while “walking in the light” (1:7). Here he assures us of the value of prayer for such instances. Sins “not unto death” are in the same category as sins while “walking in the light.”

These are sins of which the individual is ashamed, remorseful and penitent. It seems that there are two basic attitudes towards one’s sins.

1. I know and I care. Or, I don’t know, but I would care if I knew.

2. I know and I don't care. Or, I don't know, but I wouldn't care if I did!

Sins not unto death are in the first category. Sins unto death are in the second.

Sins not unto death are those handled by our "advocate" and His "propitiatory" sacrifice. These do not move us out of the light. We maintain our sonship and continue our lives without fear of "judgment" because we continue to be "cleansed" (1:7) and given life (5:16).

Sins Unto Death

PROS THANATON...toward or leading to death, is very descriptive. It is terminal. These are sins regarding which he does not say we should pray. These are sins a Christian commits, looking death in the face and saying, "I know living this way will destroy my soul, but I am going to continue to live this way."

In contrast to the brother "sinning not unto death," this one is too far gone. He has chosen to walk in darkness, where there is no "cleansing" - 1 John 1:7. As with those who forsake assembling with the saints, "there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins!" (Heb 10:25-31).

That sober observation takes for granted the fact that for others there still does "remain a sacrifice for sins..." such sins would be "not unto death."

John presents the substance for a clear syllogism:

1. If we walk in the light, all sins will be cleansed ("not unto death") (1 Jn 1:7).
2. There are sins unto death (1 Jn 5:16).
3. Therefore, sins unto death are sins of those not walking in the light.

Again:

1. If we confess our sins, He will cleanse us (1 Jn 1:7).
2. Some sins He will not cleanse (1 Jn 5:16).
3. Therefore, sins unto death are sins one will not confess.

The same construction could be used with "repent" in the place of "confess."

The Assurance of Answered Prayers

In all this, remember the thrust. The text is not a treatise on “sins unto death” or “sins not unto death.” It is an assurance of God’s readiness to answer (grant) the request of prayers according to His will.

It is not His will that we make a request for a brother sinning sins unto death.

“I Will Give Him Life For Them...”

God promises to give to him that asks, “life for them that sin not unto death.” It is obvious that the one praying is asking life for the one sinning. God says, I will give you what you asked...life for them that sin not unto death.

Some conclusions:

1. Christians are here under consideration.
2. There is sin which a Christian can commit which is not unto death.
3. There is sin which a Christian can commit which is unto death.
4. We can (should) pray for the one.
5. We cannot (should not) pray for the other.
6. Death = Spiritual.
7. Life = Spiritual.
8. Life is given for one whom death would eventually overtake when his sin not unto death grows to become sin unto death.
9. Our prayers have a very important part to play!

James 5:16 instructs brethren to pray for one another, observing that “The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” We are to “restore” our sinning brethren (Gal. 6:1) and this text provides a stunning statement of the seriousness of it all -

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it.

All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death (1 Jn 5:16-17)

ETERNAL LIFE IN PROSPECT

These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God (1 Jn 5:13).

Calvinists, such as the Primitive Baptists and the Missionary Baptists, have abused the above passage in two ways. The Primitive Baptist says the individuals are unconditionally elect before the foundation of the world, so that they have eternal life before they believe. So they strongly maintain that one saved presently has eternal life. The Missionary Baptist believes a Christian cannot fall from grace, so he argues that if you have eternal life now (and the Christian does, he argues), you cannot lose it, or else it would not be eternal.

Now both errors can be refuted in various ways. But when some of our old brethren (like C. R. Nichol) refuted both errors by arguing that we do not actually, literally have eternal life in our lifetime, I believe they were right. Here we have eternal life, but only in hope and in prospect. Let us notice a few observations.

The Present Tense

Some say that we have it now because the present tense is used. First, we do presently have it, but we presently have it in hope. Notice Genesis 17:5: *For the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee.* God said this to Abraham, but at that present time the nations did not exist. But notice the language 'is that of the present. In prospect Abraham was at that time the father of many nations.

Notice Isaiah 9:1-2:

(1) But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. (2) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

It is all put in the present tense. But around 700 years pass before the reality of it came in the days of Jesus. Notice Matthew 4:13-14: *(13) and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, (14) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying... - and the above verse of Isaiah is quoted. The people truly saw a great light, but in Isaiah's time it was 700 years in prospect.*

Notice the present tense used in Matthew 26:28:

For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.

At that time it was a memorial of Christ's blood which was poured out, but the truth of the matter was, it was then poured out only in a sense, not literally.

A good commentary on what we have been saying is Romans 14:17 -

(as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom we believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were.

God can speak of things as though they are present, as though they actually were, but we are bound by time and have them only in hope. Which brings us to another consideration.

Eternal Life in Hope

Do we really have eternal life in a literal way now? Notice two passages:

(1)Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, (2) in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal (Titus 1:1-2).

that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7).

How do we now have eternal life? According to the apostle Paul, we have it in hope. We do not literally see eternal life in our present life; we hope to actually have it in the next world. And it was Paul who explained:

(24)For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? (25)But if we hope for that which ye see not, then do we with patience wait for it' (Rom 8:24-25).

We do not understand 1 John 5:13 to mean that we literally now have eternal life. If we literally now had it, how could we hope for it?! How could we with patience wait for it?! No, we possess eternal life now, but only in hope. We possess it in hope.

We Have Eternal Life In Promise

We do not possess eternal life literally at this time. We must wait for judgment day and heaven. But we now possess it in promise. Let John speak:

And this is the promise which he promised us even the life eternal (1 Jn 2:25).

We have it in promise, but we still look for the reality of it in the next life. That's why Jude could say:

keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

In a sense we have the life now. We have it in prospect, in promise, in hope. But we must wait until heaven to possess it in its fullest reality. Therefore we look "unto eternal life" as we look for the mercy of Jesus Christ in that great day. That is also why Paul could say the following to Timothy:

Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called... (1 Tim 6:12).

Timothy was a Christian. He knew that in some sense he, as all Christians, had eternal life (1 Jn 5:13). But obviously he did not actually have it, or he would not need to "lay hold on" it by fighting the "good fight." No, we have eternal life. We have it in prospect, in promise and in hope. As for the reality of it, we see it not. But with patience we wait for it, trying to lay hold on it by fighting the good fight.

Jerry Moffitt
December 14, 1983

GNOSTICISM

I. Gnosis.

- A. Word choice: The New Testament writers were determined to use prominent words of their time which were used by the people they addressed.
- B. Gnosis: The word usually denotes the act of knowing or the objective knowledge thus acquired.
- C. False Gnosis: This implies a knowledge which is false. It is another knowledge which is not true.
- D. Authority: The true Gnostic (Gnosis) submitted himself without reserve to the authority of Scripture.
- E. Out of Reach: The false Gnostic (Gnosis) claimed to be above the reach of the ordinary.
- F. Gnostic: This term, as used in these lessons, will refer to the False Gnostic (the heretic).
- G. Salvation: The Gnostic was so zealous for knowledge he would even give up his Christian salvation for it.

II. Heretical Gnosticism.

- A. General Character.
 - 1. Higher Knowledge - Their common ground was an acquisition of a knowledge higher than that of ordinary believers.
 - 2. Aim - It was to construct a theory of the universe, cosmogony and redemption.
- B. External Origin.
 - 1. Universal thought - From the old fables and philosophies some found what they thought was a uniting bond of truth and the elements of a universal religion.

2. The result - A number of new systems of religious philosophy sprung up immediately in different countries and exhibited similar characteristics.
 3. Oriental elements - Modern historians feel the Oriental elements are the strongest found in the Gnostic systems.
 4. Various roots - There were several contributing ideas:
 - a. Alexandrian Judaism.
 - b. Dualistic Persianism.
 - c. Pantheistic Buddhism.
 - d. Platonic.
 - e. Pythagorean.
 - f. Brahminic.
- C. Classification - There are many ways to classify them and this is only one of them:
1. Those who combined Christianity with Judaism and heathenism.
 2. Those who entirely separated them.
 3. Those who identify it with Judaism but are opposed to heathenism.
- D. History.
1. After Pentecost - During the years following Pentecost great freedom was given to religious thought among the Christians as long as the moral and religious life of the people was not perverted.
 2. Second Century - This is the time when Gnosticism in its many forms flourished under very capable teachers.
 3. Third Century - During this time Gnosticism lost most of its power even though some individual sects were prospering and a few new ones were springing up.
- E. General Principles.

1. Fundamental ideas - There were three ideas that were fundamental to all:
 - a. A supreme being, unconnected with matter and incapable of being affected by it.
 - b. Spirit is good while matter is evil, the source of evil and is opposed to God.
 - c. A series of beings (demi-gods) between the supreme God and matter.
 - d. No resurrection of the dead,
 - e. Christ did not come in the flesh and
 - f. God is in heaven and has no contact with the world.
2. The Gnostic knowledge - There were four general sources for their knowledge:
 - a. Tradition.
 - b. Christian Scripture.
 - c. Writings of other "enlightened" persons.
 - d. Writings of heathen poets and philosophers.

F. Literature.

1. Original - The original authorities were the ecclesiastical writers of that period, i.e.: Dead Sea Scrolls, etc.
2. Modern - Literature on Gnosticism is very abundant.

G. Gnosticism WAS NOT a homogeneous system of either religion or philosophy. It actually consisted of many groups holding different opinions drawn from a great variety of sources.

H. The Gnostic replaced the question, "What must I do to be saved," with other questions requiring special knowledge such as:

1. What is the origin of evil?
2. How is the primitive order of the universe to be restored?

- I. They addressed the problems of:
 - 1. God and the universe,
 - 2. God and providence,
 - 3. Christ,
 - 4. Intermediaries,
 - 5. Redemption and
 - 6. Revelation.
- J. The Gnostic understood salvation to be the “knowing” of these questions and problems along with others. But they also had to know their answers.
- K. For a time Christians had referred to themselves as “true gnostics” with the implication that through Christ they had learned the true wisdom.
- L. Many Christians were led away by their teachings.
- M. Gnosticism reached its greatest height about 150.
- N. They were finally defeated about 200 and then began forming their own societies outside the church.
- O. In meeting their threats, the Christians were forced to distinguish very carefully between genuinely inspired letters and forged works as well as heretical writings.
- P. The Greek and Roman gods were identified with their beliefs.
- Q. Cult practices from all parts of the empire were either adopted or adapted.
- R. Some of their theories go way back into antiquity from Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia and India.
- S. Some of their beliefs can be traced back to Zoroastrianism.
- T. They pictured the spirit of man, stripped of all foreign accretions, finally reaching God. This is an idea which is comparable to the Hindu doctrine of Nirvana.

- U. Add to the Greek mythology and philosophy, the Old and New Testaments, along with the body of apocryphal and pseudopigraphal literature (which developed immediately before and after the time of Christ) and you have the immediate background for Gnosticism.
- V. It appears no Gnostic group claimed any exclusiveness as opposed to any other group.
- W. Some adopted the Docetic teaching which claimed Christ only “seemed” to dwell in a body of flesh and blood. He only had the appearance of being human. His earthly life and the suffering on the cross were unreal.
- X. Some believed the Adoptionist (Cerentian) that Jesus was born an ordinary man, but at his baptism the Messiah took up abode in his body and stayed there until he was nailed to the cross. At that time the Messiah left him and Jesus died as an ordinary man.
- Y. They divided men into three categories:
 1. Animals (or material men) predestined to destruction (non-Christians).
 2. Psychic men who could attain salvation with the help of ordinary Christians and
 3. The spiritual men who were destined to eternal life.
- Z. Jesus is the revealer of gnostic wisdom. He taught these secret traditions to the elect (apostles).
- AA. They claimed their secret knowledge was superior to the Old and New Testaments.
 1. They also claimed the ordinary believer was not capable of this knowledge.
 2. You could receive salvation only after you had received this special knowledge.
 3. This special knowledge was based on special revelation.
 4. The Gnostics, in their pride, turned the gospel into a new philosophy.
 5. Gnosticism puts “knowledge” in the place of “faith.”

- BB. Man was saved by specific knowledge NOT by faith; NOT general knowledge BUT knowledge of the Gnostic Myth. THIS WAS ESSENTIALLY SELF-KNOWLEDGE! This makes salvation meritorious by making man's mental efforts the basis of salvation NOT the blood of Christ.
- CC. All Gnostic teachings were a part of the redeeming knowledge which gathers together:
1. The object of knowledge (the divine nature).
 2. The means of knowledge (the redeeming gnosis) and
 3. The knower himself.
- DD. Many Gnostics insisted that ignorance, not sin, was what involved a person in suffering.
- EE. Sin is not the act and the disposition of the human will in rebellion against God.
1. It is only a physical fact or quality inherent in the body and in matter everywhere.
 2. Redemption, therefore, does not consist in the work of Christ for us on the cross, nor the applying of the benefits of that work by the Holy Spirit in the renewal of the man.
 3. Redemption is simply each man's efforts to secure emancipation from the flesh (from physical evil).
- FF. All who had gone beyond and into Gnosis had gone beyond the church's teaching and had transcended the authority of the hierarchy.
- GG. Whoever achieves Gnosis becomes "no longer a Christian, but a Christ."
- HH. Only one's personal experience offered the ultimate criterion of truth. AND this took precedence over all secondhand testimony and all tradition - EVEN Gnostic tradition.
- II. All of this is comparable to the modern Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons etc. who claim guidance from the Holy Spirit apart from the Scriptures or those who would rather be guided by their feelings rather than God's word.
- JJ. Jesus was also in need of salvation in order that He might not be held back by the "deficiency in which he had been placed."

KK. Doctrines common to most Gnostics (from the “Gospel of Truth”):

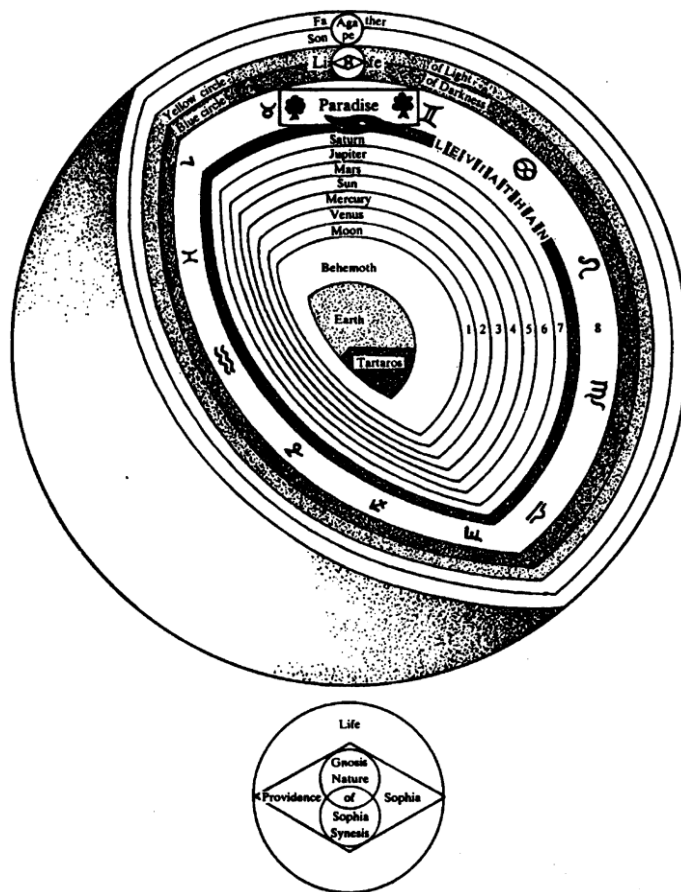
1. Not-knowing, forgetfulness, oblivion of the Father was the “original sin.”
2. Jesus is a savior, a savior by Gnosis, NOT by vicarious suffering.
3. Man is saved by knowledge - “Whosoever has knowledge understands from whence he come and whither he goes.”

LL. Their god was an ineffable, transcendent god - “Above the universe dwells the prime Father who is also called Bythos and Chaos. He is invisible, incomprehensible, above time, and dwells unbegotten in eternal peace.”

MM. If an ineffable god is to have contact with a material world, it must come through a chain of intermediate beings. Each one of these intermediate beings is less divine and more earthly than the one before it.

1. The lowest god in this chain of 15 pairs is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.
2. Therefore, the material universe and man were created by this inferior god named Jehovah.
3. Unbeknown to Jehovah, the Ineffable God placed a spark of the divine in man (known as “a spark of light”).
4. This spark of light is described as being in “ignorance,” or “oblivion,” or “forgetfulness” or “drunkenness.”
5. This meant that man’s soul was unconscious of its true nature and destiny.
6. From this state man can be redeemed only by having the ignorance removed, the oblivion or forgetfulness changed to wakefulness and awareness, the drunkenness replaced by sobriety.
7. In other words, the Gnostic must come to himself, know himself and thus be redeemed.
8. An offshoot of this is that Jesus is Jehovah (which is true), but that Jesus is definitely a created god (or being). This is exactly what the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach today!

- NN. The redemption guaranteed by gnosis is realized for the first time at physical death.
1. This is when they are actually released from their physical bodies and are able to set out on their way to their true home.
 2. This is called the “ascent of the soul” or the “heavenly journey of the soul.”
- OO. The planets were often viewed as seven heavenly wardens who attempted to keep the soul from completing its journey to “bliss.”
- PP. The soul must overcome these wardens or give the magic password which enabled it to pass on to the next sphere.
- QQ. The Ophite Diagram:



1. The “kingdom of God” consists of pure spirit and two circles.
 - a. One is the Father and the other is the Son.
 - b. A smaller circle represents “love” as the element which draws the Son (the Urmensch) downward and so establishes the link with the intermediate kingdom.

2. The middle or intermediate kingdom is ruled by spirit and soul and is marked by two colors [yellow for light and blue for darkness (evidently the limit of the visible cosmos)].
 - a. The small “circle of life” symbolizes the realm of Sophia, from which the germ of life (i.e.: the divine soul) comes to man.
 - b. In the rhomboid figure, “providence of Sophia (Wisdom)” is said to have stood. And within it in two intersecting circles, “knowledge (gnosis)” and “insight (synsis),” with at the intersection between them “Nature of Sophia.”

3. The earthly cosmos consists of body, soul and spirit.
 - a. In the middle is the earth with the underworld (tartarus).
 - b. Around it in concentric circles are:
 - (1) The sphere of Behemoth (named after the primeval monster of extra-biblical Jewish tradition; cf. Gen 1:1,4; Esdras 6:49; Baruch 29:4) or the atmosphere.
 - (2) Then the spheres of the seven planets and the circle of the serpent biting its own tail (leviathan), the lord of the world who gives expression to malevolent character of the cosmos.
 - c. Beyond these is the circle of the fixed stars in which are the signs of the zodiac and in which paradise is located. The latter is marked as the rectangle in which stand the tree of life and that of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - d. The “flaming, turning sword” (cf: Gen 3:24) separates paradise from the sphere of fixed stars and perhaps also symbolizes the turning of the spheres (following a passage in Philo).

RR. The Gnostic religions failed to establish a safe basis for practical morals:

1. On the one extreme, a spiritual pride obscured the sense of sin. This brought about antinomianism which often ended in sensuality and debaucheries.
2. On the other extreme, an over-strained sense of sin often led the Gnostics to ascribe nature to Satan, to abhor the body as the seat of evil and to practice extreme asceticism.

SS. Gnosticism, not being from God, could not, did not and still can not provide salvation for mankind!

SECOND JOHN INTRODUCTION

I. AUTHORSHIP

A. External Evidence:

1. Irenaeus knew this epistle and assumed it was written by the apostle John.
2. Various allusions were made to this epistle and Eusebius listed it as a disputed book.
 - a. “Disputed” does not mean it was not accepted, but . . .
 - b. Only questioned by some as canonical in the beginning as they were gathering the books of the New Testament together.
3. The absence of citations in others works may be accounted for by the character of the book itself.

B. Internal Evidence:

1. The epistle’s own claims:
 - a. In the text itself the name of the author is not given.
 - b. The author describes himself as “the elder” and this title is generally accepted as being self-given by John the apostle.
 - c. It is unlikely the title of “elder” is an official title.
 - 1) An elder’s authority does not extend outside the local congregation.
 - a) This writer assumes he has the right to speak with authority and
 - b) That his word will carry weight in congregations where he is not actually present.
 - 2) He speaks as one whose authority is in the church “at large.”

- 3) It would have been better to translate this as “the aged.”
2. Relationship to other writings of the apostle John.
 - a. There are unmistakable similarities in vocabulary, thought patterns and writing style between 1,2,3 John and the Gospel of John.
 - b. A clearer meaning of this letter is derived if you understand 1 John.
3. Views of authorship.
 - a. To conclude that the apostle John is the author is natural from both the external and the internal evidences.
 - b. Irenaeus tells us the apostle John spent his later years in the city of Ephesus and served as a spiritual guide to the churches of Asia Minor from there (cf: Rev 1:4).
 - c. Our conclusion is that the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, is the writer of this epistle.

II. Destination - The “Elect Lady”

A. Literal view:

1. This is the most obvious meaning of these words. The first rule of hermeneutics is to understand any part of Scripture as literal unless there is sufficient evidence to prove otherwise.
2. The reference to the lady’s children is quite normal if these children were adults.
3. The greeting from the lady’s sister’s children in verse 13 is also quite possible if taken in a literal sense.
4. According to this interpretation the apostle is writing to a lady of some importance, warning her of certain dangers and preparing the way for his coming visit.

B. Alternate view:

1. The lady is not only beloved by the apostle but by all who know the

truth.

- a. This could possibly mean “she” was known universally by Christians.
 - b. This would be more intelligible if used of a group or of a congregation rather than an individual.
2. Neither she, her children, nor her nephews are named which detracts from the personal character of the letter. This is in strong contrast with John’s third letter.
 3. The subject-matter is probably more suited for a group or congregation with its warnings against false teachers.
 4. In verses 3,8,10 and 12 the word “you” is in the plural which is not acceptable if written to an individual but is proper if addressed to a congregation.
 5. The personification of the church in the feminine is in harmony with other New Testament usage (cf: Eph 5:29ff; 2 Cor 11:2ff).

C. Conclusion:

The fact is, nobody knows to whom the epistle is written.

III. OCCASION AND PURPOSE

- A. The false teachers in verse 7 are the same as those referred to in 1 John.
- B. John wants to forewarn his readers against infiltration of error.
- C. The apostle wants his readers to have Christian hospitality.
 1. Hospitality is a virtue needed by all Christians (cf: Heb 13:1-2).
 - a. The “strangers” were brothers and sisters in the Lord whom they had not known before.
 - b. The difficulties of travel and the need of those fleeing from persecution required this hospitality among the believers.
 2. Traveling evangelists were particularly in need of such hospitality.
 - a. Those who received John’s letters were known for their loving

care (cf: 3 Jn 5-8).

- b. But the apostle still must warn against receiving and aiding any false teacher (cf: 2 Jn 10-11).
3. We so need this virtue in our lives today!
- a. Our lives in the industrial nations are becoming very close and impersonal.
 - b. Christianity is a sustained relationship between the believer and God and with his fellow Christians.

IV. Date

Soon after 1 John was written - about 90-95 A.D.

**SECOND JOHN
OUTLINE**

I. Address and Salutation..... 1-4

II. Admonitions 5-6

III. Warnings..... 7-11

IV. Conclusion 12-13

**SECOND JOHN
(Optional Outline)**

I. Introduction..... 1-3

II. Walking in Truth..... 4-6

III. False Teachers 7-9

IV. Deny Hospitality 10-11

V. Close..... 12-13

SECOND JOHN EXPOSITION

I. INTRODUCTION 1-3

1. The elder. Ὁ πρεσβύτερος. Why this name or title?

- a. John was an old man at the time of writing.
- b. His relationship of a father to his “little children.”
- c. The article (Ὁ) designates him as a person rather than a title or position (elders always ruled in the plural).
- d. It is safe to say that he calls himself the elder because of his age.

Elect lady.

- a. John addresses this “elect Lady” sometimes in the plural and sometimes in the singular:
 - 1) Singular: verses 1,4,5,13.
 - 2) Plural: verses 6,8,10,12.
- b. One may address a congregation either in the singular or the plural:
 - 1) Singular - as the collective congregation as a whole.
 - 2) Plural - when thinking of the individual members.
- c. One would not address a particular lady, especially one of close acquaintance, in the plural.
- d. It seems likely this is addressed to a congregation rather than as an individual (however, see Guy N. Woods for the “individual” view).

Love. “A French proverb says, ‘There are times when to be only kind is to be not even kind.’ John demonstrates, in His firmness motivated by love, that the sort of kindness which in our day answers to tolerance is not a manifestation of real Christian love in the presence of error” (Gill).

In truth. ἐν ἀληθείᾳ. Based and rooted in God’s love. All who love God and His truth will also love the church wherever it is.

2. Because of the truth which abides in us.

“It is a vivid and impressive description of the reason for the love each faithful disciple feels for all the disciples. It was the truth which abode in them all which supplied the occasion for the love expressed. Only those who have love ‘for’ the truth love ‘in’ truth” - Woods.

Which abides. μένουσαν, present, active, participle - that (truth) which continues to dwell (abide).

Forever. εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα - into the ages.

Truth, like love and light, will exist forever as they are attributes of deity.

3. Grace, mercy and peace will be with you. Some see a progression in John’s greeting:

- a. Grace - the source of all gifts and blessings.
- b. Mercy - that which is received when one responds in obedience to God’s plan of salvation (grace).
- c. Peace - that which passes all understanding now and will be permanently ours in heaven based on our remaining faithful.

From God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- a. These blessings spring forth from God the Father and come to us through Jesus His Son.
- b. They may be obtained from no other source.
- c. John wants them, and us, to remain faithful to the truth which we have received **AND THEN** to constantly prove our love which issues from the truth.

Truth. This word occurs five times in 2 John and six times in 3 John.

II. **WALKING IN THE TRUTH** 4-6

4. I rejoiced. Ἐχάρην, aorist, indicative, passive - to be glad, to rejoice.

This is referring back to the time when the elder had met these “children.”

Walking in truth. περιπατοῦντας ἐν ἀληθείᾳ. This is often used in the Bible to describe manner of life or behavior. This is not a one time action but habitual action which progresses toward its goal.

5. I plead with you. ἐρωτῶ σε. This is a stronger word than our word “beseech” (KJV).

It is a petition in which the one making the request has the right to make the request.

Which we have had...that we love. Notice the plural, “we.”

John is aware that he too is included within the responsibility to fulfill the obligation of the command.

New commandment...we have had from the beginning. See 1 John 2:7-8 cf. John 13:34-35.

6. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.

- a. The commandment to love is a summary commandment.
- b. It includes all that we are to do in response to what God has revealed about Himself and about His will!

You should walk in it.

- a. Emotion without obedience is worthless.

Love without obedience is fanaticism.

Duty without love is formalism.
- b. Where love does not exist the keeping of God’s commandments is hard and irksome.
- c. But to faithful brethren the keeping of God’s commandments is not grievous because love makes them light.

III. **FALSE TEACHERS** 7-9

7. Deceivers. πλάνοι - ones who lead others into wrong actions, not just to wrong opinions.

This word also suggests wanderers or rovers moving about for the purpose of seducing and leading astray anyone whom they can induce to accept their teachings.

This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

- a. All who teach false doctrine, regardless of what type or on what subject or even if they oppose each other in their teachings and actions, are one in their opposition to the Lord and His kingdom.
- b. “The spirit of the anti-christ is the motivating factor in every false teacher” - Woods.

8. Look to yourselves.

Look into your own heart and mind to see if you have the defenses necessary to combat these false teachers.

That we do not lose.

- a. This verse clearly teaches:
 - 1) The possibility of apostasy.
 - 2) The constant need of a self spiritual check-up (cf: 2 Cor 13:5).
 - 3) The absolute necessity of constant vigilance against any type of assault of Satan on us.
- b. To pay attention to these false teachers and follow them would involve the waste of all their Christian service and the loss of the fruit properly accruing from it.

BEWARE of false teaching on John 15:5 – “I am the vine and you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

This is not teaching that without Christ, and the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on your heart, you can do no good works (take care of the needy, build hospitals, etc.), nor cultivate love, joy, peace, patience, etc. without Him.

The idea in this verse is – for without Me you can do nothing *that abounds to your credit!*

Compare Philippians 4:17 – Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.

Some are teaching that without Christ and the Holy Spirit indwelling you, you can do absolutely nothing good.

They say taking care of the needy is imitation goodness (mirrored) and that love, joy, patience, etc. in the non-Christian is only an imitation of the true, nothing more.

This is Calvinism in its purest form!

The T-U-L-I-P doctrine developed in Dordt in 1619 represents the “pillars” of Calvinism. But these pillars stand on the foundation teaching of the irresistible “direct operation” of the Holy Spirit on the hearts and souls of men.

This “direct operation” of the Holy Spirit is broadly taught today. This is heresy in its purest form!

We may receive a full reward. μισθὸν πλήρη ἀπολάβητε.

- a. Receive - “to take away, receive.” This word was used in the papyri of “receiving” what is due.
- b. Full - “complete, full.”
- c. Reward - “pay, wages, reward.”
- d. If they rejected the enticements to error, and maintained the teaching which they had received from the apostles, and then continued doing the works they had been doing, then they would be paid their reward in full.

9. Whoever transgresses [goeth onward]. πᾶς ὁ προάγων, present, participle, active - to be going before, to be running ahead.

“Perhaps this is a sarcastic reference to the way in which the false teachers themselves proudly claim to be offering ‘advanced’ teaching; the elder claims that they have ‘advanced’ beyond the boundaries of true Christian belief” - *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

And does not abide in the doctrine [teaching].

- a. The false teachers claimed they were progressives, the advanced thinkers, the men of open and adventurous minds.

- b. But John insists that no matter how far a man may advance, he must abide in the teachings of Jesus Christ or he loses contact with God the Father.
- c. The verbs “transgresses” and “does not abide” are descriptive of the same act:
 - 1) The first states it positively and
 - 2) The second states it negatively.

False teachers claim –

To be progressive,

To have advanced knowledge and

To have a monopoly on scholarship.

All false teachers change the meaning of words – they use the same words we are familiar with but give them a different meaning. Sometimes only a slight shift in meaning but the result is the same – lost souls!

Doctrine [teaching] of Christ. How are we to understand this phrase?

- a. Objective: “About Christ.”
 - 1) If this is true it is speaking to the specific doctrines of the Gnostics.
 - 2) But if it is about Christ Himself, Christ is still the source and therefore it is still objective in nature.
- b. Subjective: “Belonging to Christ.” The entire Christian system.
 - 1) “It is the teaching of Christ, because He, is, in the final analysis, its author, and from Him it issued.
 - 2) It is thus an infallible standard, and no deviation from it is possible without apostasy” - Woods.

Because of this letter’s rejection of Gnosticism this passage means the teaching about Christ and His divine nature; the teaching that He is the God-Man.

Has both the Father and the Son.

This is receiving the full reward of verse 8.

IV. DENY HOSPITALITY 10-11

10. If anyone comes to you. εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

- a. The Greek construction shows this is not a hypothetical case.
- b. It should be: "When anyone comes to you!"

There are two admonitions, both negative:

- a. Do not receive him into your house. John is not forbidding hospitality to strangers, only to false teachers.
- b. Nor greet him (neither bid him God speed). This includes the approval of the actions and teachings of the one being greeted.

This also includes a desire for success in their efforts.

11. Shares (partaker). κοινωνεῖ, present, indicative, active - to have fellowship with, to share in.

V. CLOSE 12-13

12. Having many things to write. John has many more things he wishes to share with them.

I do not wish to do so with paper and ink.

- a. The word "paper" stood for a leaf of papyrus. This would have been just the right size for this letter to have been written on.
- b. The word "ink" literally means "black."

Face to face. στόμα πρὸς στόμα - mouth to mouth. John knows the value of personal contact!

That our [your] joy may be full.

- a. This includes all God's blessings.
- b. This is the greatest of wishes!

13. Your elect sister. The church where John is, at this time of writing.

APPENDIX

**THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST
SECOND JOHN 9-11
Bob Waldron**

INTRODUCTION.

- A. This section of Scripture is recognized as a “problem” passage because of the difficulty in interpreting the phrase, *the doctrine of Christ*, (v. 9).
1. Some render it *Christ’s doctrine*, seeing the Greek genitive as a genitive *subjective*.
 2. Others believe the Greek genitive should be a genitive *objective*, thus rendering the phrase *doctrine about Christ*.
 3. Either rendering is allowed by Greek grammar.
- B. Also at stake here is what rules we will use for biblical interpretation. Will we force the Scriptures to fit our practice or personal belief? Or will we allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves?

I. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF INTERPRETING IT AS CHRIST’S TEACHING.

- A. Some Say Such a Rendering Is Consistent With New Testament Usage.
1. John R. W. Stott, in reference to Westcott and Brooke, wrote: “the ‘usage of the N.T.’ requires that the genitive be interpreted not as objective, ‘the teaching about Christ,’ but as subjective, ‘Christ’s teaching.’”¹
 2. Westcott added that “the usage of the N.T. is uniformly in favor” of such an interpretation and then he cited Revelation 2:14-15; John 18:19 and Acts 2:42 as examples.²

¹ J. R. W. Stott, Tyndale Commentaries, *The Epistles of John: an introduction and commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 212.

² Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), p. 230.

3. Chart 1, which follows, demonstrates the force of the argument.

Mt 16:12	τῆς the	διδαχῆς teaching	(of)	τῶν the	Φαρισαίων pharisees
Mk 12:38	τῇ the	διδαχῇ teaching			αὐτοῦ (of) Him
Jn 18:19	τῆς the	διδαχῆς teaching			αὐτοῦ (of) Him
Acts 2:42	τῇ the	διδαχῇ teaching	(of)	τῶν the	ἀποστολῶν apostles
Rev 2:14	τῆν the	διδαχὴν teaching			Βαλαάμ (of) Balaam
Rev 2:15	τῆν the	διδαχὴν teaching	(of)	τῶν the	Νικολαιτῶν Nicolaitans
2 Jn 9	τῇ the	διδαχῇ teaching	τοῦ (of)	Χριστοῦ the	Christ
	τῇ the	διδαχῇ teaching	τοῦ (of)	Χριστοῦ the	Christ

4. Some argue that because in all the other passages the genitive is interpreted as a genitive subjective, 2 John 9 should follow suit.

B. Some say this interpretation is consistent with the context of 2 John 9.

Many see the principle theme of 2 John to be *truth* and cite the following references:

Verse 1: “Whom I love in truth;” “and not only I, but also all who know the truth.”

Verse 2: “for the sake of the truth.”

Verse 3: “in truth and love.”

Verse 4: “I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth.”

Verse 6: “walk according to His commandments.”

People who see this widespread use of the word *truth* believe 2 John 9 is a general statement about all who do not follow Christ's teachings. They argue that the context favors the rendering of the genitive subjective: *Christ's teaching*.

C. This Interpretation Is Also Consistent With Most Scholars.

1. Thayer said 2 John 9 referred to "the doctrine which has God, Christ, the Lord, for its author and supporter."³
2. Westcott agreed and added, "the doctrine which Christ broughtThis sense seems better than *the doctrine of* (concerning) *the Christ*."⁴
3. A. T. Robertson declared that the *doctrine of Christ* is "not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ."⁵
4. Our own Guy N. Woods commented, "The 'teaching of Christ' here is not teaching about Christ, or teaching which is Christian in substance or nature; it is the teaching which Christ did personally and through those whom he inspired."⁶

Most all of those who favor the genitive subjective interpretation base their arguments on one or more of these points: (1) it is consistent with New Testament usage; (2) it is consistent with John's appeal for truth; and (3) most scholars agree with such an interpretation. But are these arguments substantial enough to warrant the conclusion that 2 John 9 is speaking about Christ's teaching?

II. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF *DOCTRINE ABOUT CHRIST*.

A. New Testament Usage Is Determined by Context.

³ J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 4th edition), p. 144.

⁴ Westcott, *op cit*.

⁵ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933), vol. 6, p. 254.

⁶ Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John and Jude* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1966), p. 347.

Earlier we looked at Chart 1 which demonstrated the harmony of the Greek words and their interpretation as genitive subjectives. However, they were not so interpreted because of some rule of Greek grammar but because their respective contexts demanded such as an interpretation.

1. Notice that before the phrase “the teaching of the Pharisees” (Mt 16:12) we find “the leaven of the Pharisees.” The Greek grammar is exactly parallel and therefore the phrase could not have been translated *the teaching about the Pharisees* unless we translated the first phrase *the leaven about the Pharisees*. The context determines our interpretation.
2. In Mark 12:38 we must translate τῆ διδασκῆ αὐτοῦ as *His teaching* and not as *teaching about Him*. It would make no sense to say “*And in the teaching about Him He was saying: ‘Beware of the Scribes ...’*” It must be interpreted, “*And in His teaching He was saying: ‘Beware of the scribes..’*” Once again our interpretation is determined is determined by the context.
3. John 18:19 says, “Then the high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.” Again, we have two grammatically parallel statements. It is not *disciples about Him*, but *disciples of Him*, or *His disciples*. Likewise, it must be *teaching of Him*, or *His teaching*. The context would prohibit any other interpretation.
4. In Acts 2:42 we find “they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles.” It could not be *they continued steadfastly in the teaching about the apostles*, for in what teachings *about* the apostles could they continue? Teachings *about* the apostles are few and easily learned and would not require steadfastness and continuance. To continue in teachings about the apostles would make too much of the apostles and not enough of God. The context requires the genitive subjective.
5. Revelation 2:14 talks about “the teaching of Balaam.” It cannot mean *teaching about Balaam*, for the verse continues “who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the sons of Israel.” In other words, the verse tells of one of the teachings of Balaam that was condemned by the Lord. He was condemning the church in Pergamum for the same reason. The context demands the genitive subjective, “the teaching *of* Balaam.”
6. Revelation 2:15 mentions the “teaching of the Nicolaitans,” and this could be translated by either the subjective or objective genitive if it were not for one important point. The verse begins with “So you *al-*

so have those holding to the teachings of the Nicolaitans,” which makes the grammatical construction of verse 15 parallel to that of verse 14: “You have those holding to the teaching of Balaam...So you also have those holding to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.” Using the genitive subjunctive in verse 14 dictates that we use it in verse 15.

7. One important principle of biblical interpretation states: “Always interpret a passage in harmony with the context.”⁷ We have seen this principle followed in each of the above examples. Now we shall see that to apply that principle to 2 John 9, we must interpret the genitive as objective, *doctrine about Christ*, rather than subjective, *Christ’s doctrine*.

B. The Interpretation *Doctrine About Christ* Is More Consistent With the Primary Context of 2 John.

1. What is the background of John’s writings?

Nearly all scholars agree that John addressed the Gnostics both in his Gospel account and his epistles. Oriental Gnosticism had its own prophets, its own concept of salvation and belief in a Redeemer who was a light bringer. Basically, the Gnostics taught that God is light (good) and world is darkness (evil). They believed a Redeemer needed to come from heaven to earth to rescue the soul from its prison of flesh and conduct it to heaven.

Some of these Gnostics became Christians but continued to live by their prior beliefs. They denied that God could come to earth in human flesh for then He, too, would be contaminated and His soul held captive in a sinful body. Therefore it would have been an impossibility for God to have been subjected to the agony and humiliation of the cross.

So these false teachers were denying the incarnation and sacrificial death of Christ (God the Son). They advocated, instead, that Christ only *seemed* to do this. These were labeled Docetics (“Seemists”). They taught that the man Jesus was not Christ, not divine. Some declared that Christ’s divine nature only came upon Jesus at his baptism and left just prior to the scourging and crucifixion. Yet it was not so much a divine Jesus to which the Gnostics objected as it was to an earthly God. “They might believe in the God-

⁷ W. Robert Palmer, *How to Understand the Bible* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1965), p. 50.

likeness of Christ; they could not believe in the Christlikeness of God.”⁸

Most likely these Gnostics had come to these conclusions in order to protect the holiness of God, but it resulted in tearing the heart out of Christianity. After all, if you eliminate the incarnation and sacrificial death of the Son of God, what do you have left? The divinity of Jesus Christ is the core of the Gospel. Take Christ out of the Gospel and there is no Gospel left. The Good News without the truth of John 3:16 is no good news at all.

One other point must be made here regarding these Gnostics. They lived to the measure of their beliefs. Empty Christ of His divine nature and you lose a valuable reason to live a pure life. Couple this with the idea that what you do in the flesh is evil but that you can be saved by what you think (gnosis = knowledge) and you set the stage for ungodly, animal-like existence guided by brute passions. Such were the Gnostics. The belief in the dichotomy of soul and flesh cheapened God’s demand for purity. And to top it off, they acted as if *they* were superior because of a knowledge of and insights into the nature of God. What a blight they were upon the early church!

Another rule of biblical interpretation states, “An interpretation of a passage should always conform to the environment of the author.”⁹ Now we understand why John began his Gospel account with John 1:1-14 and why he included the words of 3:16-21.

2. Let’s take a look at the context of 2 John.
 - a. A brief study of John’s second letter reveals the following structure:

Salutation (vv. 1-3),
Opening Comments About the Problem (vv. 4-6),
Treatment of the Problem (vv. 7-11),
Conclusion (vv. 12-13).
 - b. It is quite simple to see that a definite break comes at verse 7. Up to that point John was speaking only in general terms.

⁸ George Arthur Buttrick, ed. *The Interpreter’s Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), vol. 12, p. 246.

⁹ Palmer, *op cit.*

Beginning at verse 7 he addressed a specific problem and did not finish with it until verse 11.

- c. Notice, too, that all the references to *truth* which we discussed earlier fall into verses 1-6, three of them in the salutation. None occur in verses 7-11 which form the *immediate* context of verse 9. Verses 1-6, and the references to *truth*, form at most, only the *remote* context. Any understanding of 2 John 9 must first deal with the immediate context of vv. 7-11.
- d. Tracing the thoughts of these verses we encounter the following:

Verse 7: Deceivers (antichrists) have gone out into the world denying that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.

Verse 8: Be careful that you do not follow after them and thus lose all that you have worked for.

Verse 9: Because anyone who goes too far and does not abide in this teaching about Christ (namely that He came in the flesh) does not have God. How can God be Father if He never had a Son?

Verse 10: If anyone comes to you and does not bring this crucial doctrine of Christ's nature, do not even receive him into your home or greet him.

Verse 11: For the one who wishes him godspeed participates in his evil deeds.

- 3. Now, let's pay close attention to some parallel passages from John's writings.

An important rule of biblical interpretation tells us, "Always allow parallel passages to explain one another." This is extremely important in understanding the parable of Jesus and the Hebrew parallelism of the Psalms and Proverbs, for example. It is equally important for the study of 2 John 9.

The following parallel passages have more to do with the immediate context of 2 John 9 than do verses 1-6 and 12-13 of the same book.

They cast light on each other and upon the proper interpretation of each.

1 Jn 2:18-26	Many anti-christs have arisen	They went out from us	Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the anti-christ, the one who denies the Father and the Son	Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. Abide in what you heard - you will also abide in the Son and the Father
1 Jn 4:1-4	Test the spirits Many false prophets	have gone out into the world	Every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God	
2 Jn 7-9	Many deceivers This is the deceiver and the anti-christ	have gone out into the world who	do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in <u>the teaching of Christ</u> does not have God,	Watch yourselves that you may not lose. . . but receive a full reward. The one who abides in the teaching has both the Father and Son.

Look in the third column of the text to find 2 John 9, “the teaching of Christ.” By looking at the parallel expressions of this phrase we learn that it means that Jesus is the Christ (1 Jn 2:18-26) and that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (1 Jn 4:1-4; 2 Jn 7-9).

By its immediate context and by its parallel passages *teachings of Christ* must be understood as *doctrine about Christ*.

SUMMARY.

We have seen that some prefer to render 2 John 9, *Christ's teachings*. They claim that such is required to be consistent with New Testament usage. What we have learned, however, is that New Testament usage requires us to interpret the genitive in light of its context. This is much more important than merely interpreting all genitives alike.

Further, we have observed that the effort to tie "doctrine of Christ" to John's mention of truth must remain a weak attempt to take 2 John 9 out of its immediate context.

There is no reason, either grammatically, or for consistency with other New Testament occurrences, or contextually, to interpret "doctrine of Christ" by *Christ's teaching*. To do so is to misunderstand the force of the passage and make it say something that was not intended. But what of the argument that such a rendering is consistent with the majority of biblical scholars?

First, let's observe that not all scholars are certain how this passage should be interpreted. Barnes was not sure what it meant.¹⁰ Adam Clarke ignored the question altogether.¹¹ And J. W. Roberts draws no conclusion.¹²

Second, some scholars are in favor of the rendering, *doctrine about Christ: The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll is strongly in favor of this interpretation.¹³ Kenneth Weust in his *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* wrote, "the teaching which recognizes Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior. We have a genitive of reference, 'teaching with reference to Christ.'"¹⁴ But in the final

¹⁰ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), p. 365.

¹¹ Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.), vol. 6, p. 937.

¹² J. W. Roberts, *The Living Word Commentary*, Everett Ferguson, ed., *The Letters of John* (Austin: R. B. Sweet Co., Inc., 1968), pp. 163-164.

¹³ W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), vol. 5, pp. 202-203.

¹⁴ Kenneth S. Weust, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), vol. 4, p. 206.

analysis let God be true and every man a liar!¹⁵ The important consideration is not what men say— though never let us be so proud as not to learn from others—but what God says.

WHAT HAVE WE LOST?

What have we lost by interpreting 2 John 9 as *the doctrine about Christ*? Really we have not lost anything but perhaps a mistaken understanding of 2 John 9.

False teachers of a different brand than we find in Second John are elsewhere condemned. Our treatment of false teachers in general is elsewhere described. We are not robbed of our biblical defense against those who corrupt the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. With the storehouse of the following passages no one can say he is bankrupt before false teachers - Matthew 7:15-23; 15:7-9; Galatians 1:8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-4; 4:1-3; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:3-4; Titus 1:10-14; 3:10-11.

A WORD OF CAUTION

One further word of exhortation is needed at this point. Some suggest that although 2 John 9 does refer to the doctrine about Christ's divinity, it is nevertheless a true statement about any error from the teachings of God's word. They wish to apply this passage to any false teachers. I caution you about such a practice. It is very loose biblical interpretation and will result in a general misunderstanding of the passage. Such has already been done and has resulted in 2 John 9 being considered a "difficult passage."

Another example of the misapplication of Scripture is found in our treatment of Jesus' words in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst." Preachers have for too long applied this to the small groups that meets for midweek prayer meeting. Hardly a member today realizes that this passage does not apply to a worship gathering but to a gathering for the purpose of withdrawing church fellowship from an unrepentant brother. Is it true that Jesus is present in our worship services no matter how few are gathered? Certainly. Can we therefore use this verse for such an application? Never! The cost is too high. We cease being biblical in our exegesis and interpretation of God's Word and we create a biblically ignorant brotherhood. Let us go back to the Bible. Let us never be a stumbling block to the restoration of New Testament Christianity. Let us do Bible things in Bible ways and apply Bible things in Bible ways.

¹⁵ Romans 3:4.

THIRD JOHN INTRODUCTION

I. Authorship

A. External Evidence:

The external evidence is not so strong for this epistle.

B. Internal Evidence:

1. The epistle's own claims:

- a. In the text itself the name of the author is not given.
- b. The author describes himself as "the elder" and this title is generally accepted as being self-given by the apostle John.
- c. It is unlikely the title of "elder" is an official title.
- d. An elder's authority does not extend outside the local congregation.
 - 1) But this writer assumes he has the right to speak with authority and
 - 2) That his word will carry weight in congregations where he is not actually present.
 - 3) He speaks as one whose authority is in the church "at large."
 - 4) It would have been better to translate this as "the aged."

2. Relationship to other writings of the apostle John.

- a. There are unmistakable similarities in vocabulary, thought patterns and writing style between 1,2,3 John and the Gospel of John.
- b. A clearer meaning of this letter is derived if one understands 1 and 2 John.

3. Views on authorship.
 - a. To conclude that the apostle John is the author is natural from the internal evidence.
 - b. Irenaeus tells us the apostle John spent his later years in the city of Ephesus and served as a spiritual guide to the churches of Asia Minor from there (cf: Rev 1:4).
 - c. The conclusion seems inescapable that the same writer is at work in both 2 and 3 John.
 - d. There would be, in fact, less grounds for disputing 3 John than for 2 John on the basis of literary form.
 - e. Our conclusion is that the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, is the writer of this epistle.

II. Destination

It may be assumed, like 1 and 2 John, that this epistle has an Asian destination.

III. Occasion and Purpose

- A. This epistle is a personal correspondence to John's good friend Gaius (cf: v. 1).
 1. Gaius was a common name at that time so we have no way of knowing for sure who he is specifically.
 2. John loved the man for his good life.
 - a. Gaius was faithful to the truth in his teaching and manner of life (cf: vv. 3-4).
 - b. Gaius also encouraged others in their works through his love and hospitality (cf: vv. 5-8).
 3. The letter is designed to be an encouragement to Gaius and a warning against the trouble making Diotrephes (cf: vv. 2,9).
- B. The apostle wants his readers to have Christian hospitality.
 1. Hospitality is a virtue needed by all Christians (cf: Heb 13:1-2).

- a. The “strangers’ were brothers and sisters in the Lord whom they had not know before.
 - b. The difficulties of travel and the needs of those fleeing from persecution required this hospitality among believers.
2. Traveling evangelists were particularly in need of such hospitality.
- a. Those who received John’s letters were known for such loving care (cf: 3 Jn 5-8).
 - b. But the apostle still must warn against receiving and aiding any false teacher (cf: 2 Jn 10-11).
3. We so need this virtue in our lives today!
- a. Our lives in the industrial nations are very isolated and impersonal.
 - b. Christianity is a sustained relationship between the believer and God and also with his fellow Christians.

IV. Date

Soon after 1 and 2 John were written - about 90-95 A.D.

**THIRD JOHN
OUTLINE**

I.	Address and Salutation.....	1-4
II.	New Testament Law of Missions	5-8
III.	John's Apostolic Approval.....	9
IV.	Domination of Diotrephes	10
V.	Faithfulness of Demetrius	11-12
VI.	Conclusion	13-14

THIRD JOHN EXPOSITION

I. ADDRESS AND SALUTATION..... 1-4

1. The elder. The same writer as 2nd John - the apostle John.

Unto the beloved Gaius. This was a common name and occurs in Acts 19:29; 20:4; Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14.

- a. It is not possible to determine if any two of these refer to the same person.
- b. The term “beloved” tells us much about his character.

Whom I love in truth.

This is John’s specific “stamp of approval.”

2. That you may prosper. σε εὐοδοῦσθαι, present, infinitive, passive - to be led along a good road.

In other words, “to get along well, to prosper, to succeed.”

And be in good health. To prosper physically.

Even as your soul prospers. καθὼς εὐοδοῦται σου ἡ ψυχὴ.

- a. The same word for “prosper” is used in both places in this verse.
- b. This is the standard with which to determine how rich one may safely become - “even as your soul prospers!”
- c. It is clearly implied that if he were in as good physical health as he was in spiritual health he would be in very good condition.

3. When brethren came and testified.

- a. “Came” and “testified” are both present participles and suggest repetitive action.
- b. John had heard this testimony concerning Gaius more than once.

Just as you walk in the truth.

- a. To be right with God we must walk in the truth.
- b. We do this by walking in (observing) God's commandments.
- c. Compare Zacharias and Elizabeth in Luke 1:5-6.

4. No greater joy that to hear.

All of us have great joy when we hear of those we have worked with (and perhaps even helped convert) being faithful to God.

II. NEW TESTAMENT LAW ON MISSIONS..... 5-8

5. You do faithfully [a faithful work].

In other words, a work of God's.

For the brethren and for strangers.

Gaius had extended fellowship to missionaries even when he did not know them personally.

6. These missionaries are now witnesses to Gaius' love.

Before the church.

His example was set before others.

If you sent them forward on their journey.

- a. This means to accompany them a portion of the way and supply their needs for the journey.
- b. This was the custom at that time (cf: Rom 15:24).

You will do well.

This indicates these men are going back to see Gaius and that he should continue to help them.

7. For they went forth for His name's sake.

- a. The name of Christ (cf: Acts 5:4; Jas 2:7; 1 Pet 4:16).
- b. The word "name" used this way represents all that Jesus did and taught as well as His authority.

- c. Just as the “name” stood for Jehovah in the Old Testament the “name” is a synonym for Christ in the New Testament.

Taking nothing from the Gentiles.

If they had been receiving money from those they were trying to convert they would have been open to the charge of preaching for a profit.

- 8. That we may become fellow workers for the Truth.

Just as those who welcomed and supported false teachers became partakers with them (2 Jn 9), so we who receive and assist those who preach the truth become fellow workers for the Truth.

III. JOHN’S APOSTOLIC APPROVAL..... 9

- 9. I wrote...but Diotrephes... does not receive us.

John wrote to this congregation, but Diotrephes suppressed the letter and may have even destroyed it.

Who loves to have the preeminence. ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων - a lover of the “first place.”

- a. A disposition too often found in the church!
- b. Diotrephes refused to act according to John’s instructions in the letter.
- c. In rejecting the letter, he rejected John.
- d. Of course, this also means he rejected Christ and God the Father as well!

IV. DOMINATION OF DIOTREPHES..... 10

- 10. If I come. John wants to help these brethren.

Diotrephes’ lordship displayed:

- a. Prating against us (to babble, accuse idly and falsely) with malicious (evil) words.
- b. He refused to receive the missionaries from John.

- c. He forbade others to receive them.
- d. He expelled those who would not obey him

NOTE: He did not have the power to sever them from Christ!

V. FAITHFULNESS OF DEMETRIUS..... 11-12

11. Do not imitate (follow not). μή μιμοῦ, present, imperative, middle - to mimic, to imitate.

Lit: "Keep on imitating not!"

That which is evil - Diotrephes.

But what is good - Demetrius.

The sources are also identified:

- a. Does good is of God - He is the source of all good.
- b. Does evil has not seen God - Satan is the father of this one.

12. Demetrius has a good testimony from all:

- a. From all those who knew him,
- b. From the word (truth) itself - his life conforming to the teachings of the word and
- c. From the apostle John himself.
- d. As one who breaks the law is condemned by it, the one who keeps the law is approved by it.
- e. In this way truth becomes an independent witness of the faithfulness of those who walk in harmony with it.

VI. CONCLUSION..... 13-14

13. I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink.

There are some things it is better to discuss in person and some things better by letter.

John knows the difference.

14. I hope to see you shortly and we shall speak face to face.

Here is why he did not write more at this time.

Peace to you. A normal greeting.

Our friends greet you. Others know Gaius and wish to greet him also.

Greet the friends by name.

- a. A warm hearted expression is extended.
- b. We all love to be greeted “by name.”



SPECIAL LESSONS FROM THIS LETTER

- A. The apostle John has shown us how to deal with error God’s way.
 1. When he learned about Diotrephes, he immediately did something about the situation.
 2. His message was clear, pointed and forceful.
 3. Sins, such as those of Diotrephes, are not to be tolerated.

- B. This letter also shows us that the idea that we must talk personally with a false teacher (who has taught his false views publicly) before we can respond to him and to his teachings is wrong.

FINIS

JUDE

INTRODUCTION

- I. **Brother of James - this is the author's identification of himself.**
 - A. This means that he is also a half-brother of Jesus and was the youngest or next to youngest (cf. Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3).
 - B. Following the example of James, he simply refers to himself as a "Servant of Jesus Christ."
 - C. He claims no special privilege because of his fleshly relationship to Jesus.
 - D. Christians would have treated the Lord's brethren (in the flesh) with respect and this would account for the authority with which he writes. It would also account for the early and wide acceptance of this epistle.
- II. **Possibly written from Jerusalem or Palestine and some feel it was sent first to Antioch.**
- III. **Tradition is that Jude became an elder of the Jerusalem church.**
- IV. **Written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, approximately 64-68 A.D.**
- V. **Purpose.**
 - A. To write a longer letter on salvation, but false teachers needed to be rebuked.
 - B. There seems to be two major problems he is addressing. Both are a result of Gnosticism.
 1. Antinomianism - "Against Law." These Gnostics felt they had advanced so far in spiritual life and knowledge that they were beyond being associated with the sins of this life.

Therefore, they felt they could sin all they wanted and their sins affected only the body or that which is physical and their sins had nothing to do with their spiritual well-being.
 2. Denial of the deity of Jesus. See Appendix "A."

VI. Theme: The danger of false teachers and the necessity of contending for the faith.

- A. Resembles Second Peter.
 - 1. Some say Peter copied Jude. Others say Jude copied Peter.
 - 2. Second Peter warns of false teachers who are yet to come (2:1), while Jude speaks of them as already present (4).
 - 3. Jude's reference to apostolic warnings about false teachers may be a reference to Peter's second epistle (17-18).
- B. The important thing to remember is both were guided by the Holy Spirit and which writer precedes the other is immaterial!

VII. Jude's letter was later questioned as being canonical (antilegomena). Jude had quoted from uninspired writings so some felt his writings were not inspired.

- A. Jude cites psuedepigraphal literature twice.
 - 1. There was certain Jewish literature which never met canonical status. They had never been accepted by either the Jews or the Christians.
 - 2. Most of these writings were falsely written under the names of important men in Jewish history such as Moses, Isaiah or Job.
- B. Jude refers to material from the "Assumption of Moses" (v. 9) and the "Book of Enoch" (vv. 14-15).
- C. There is nothing told to us, from God, which would restrict the use of uninspired sources.
 - 1. Paul cites the Greek poets:
 - a. Aratus (Acts 17:28),
 - b. Menander (1 Cor 15:33) and
 - c. Epimenides (Titus 1:12).
 - 2. No one understands Paul to be endorsing everything these men ever wrote or taught!

- 3. A quote of a part does not sanction the whole!
- D. Jude made use of uninspired sources and the Holy Spirit enabled him to do so in such a way so as to impart truth accurately.

VIII. The value of the epistle.

- A. As long as men need stern rebukes for their practices, the epistle will remain relevant.
- B. When this book is neglected by any, it reflects more on the superficiality of that generation rather than any irrelevance of its message.

**JUDE
OUTLINE**

I. Introduction 1-4

II. Warnings..... 5-19

III. Exhortations 20-25

JUDE EXPOSITION

I. INTRODUCTION 1-4

1. Servant: Δοῦλος - slave, bondservant.

Sanctification - That process by which the Holy Spirit, as agent, using the word of God as His instrument, brings us into the likeness of Jesus Christ in word, thought and deed.

Preserved [kept]: Τετηρημένοις - to keep safe, to guard, to watch over.

The word expresses the watchful care that is given by God.

Called: Κλητοίς. How? By the word of God (cf: 2 Thess 2:14).

2. Be multiplied: Πληθυνθείη - to multiply, to increase.

Not merely increased, but multiplied mercy, peace and love!

3. Beloved: Ἀγαπητοί. This is a beautiful word of tender address. Jude uses the word three times (3,17,20).

All the faithful in Christ Jesus are beloved of God and beloved of one another.

Very diligent: Σπουδῆν - haste, effort, earnestness, strong desire, determination.

Common: Κοινής. This does not mean “ordinary.”

It refers to the fact that the “salvation” in Christ is available to all people, everywhere, who are willing to comply with the terms set forth by Jesus (cf: Mk 16:16; Acts 10:34-35; 2 Pet 3:9; Heb 5:9; Titus 1:4).

I found it necessary: Ἀνάγκην - “necessity I had.”

Jude felt deeply his individual and personal responsibility. He was not willing to wait for someone else to take care of this very urgent matter.

Exhort: Παρακαλῶν, present, participle, active - to urge, encourage, to beseech.

It was used by military leaders to send timid and fearful troops into battle (cf: Acts 2:40; Rom 12:8; Heb 10:25).

Jude found it necessary to change his mind and exhort them about impending danger. Their faith was in danger of being altered and spoiled. The truth of the divinity and person of Christ were being attacked . . . Before the enemies of Christ can be properly confronted, we must be sure of our own position and defenses. Our only position and defense is truth! (Fream).

Contend earnestly: Ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι - to struggle for, to exercise great effort and exertion for.

The word was used to describe athletic contests along with the struggle and effort of the athletes in those games. It is a strong pugilistic word. Our English word “agonize” comes directly from the second part of this compound word.

Its meaning here is “to contend strenuously in the defense of.”

Conclusion – When the enemy attacks, the Christian firmly takes his personal stand upon (ἐπί) that thing, that point or that teaching which is being attacked. Then he fights earnestly and sincerely to hold on to and to defend that which is right (cf: Col 1:29; 2 Tim 4:7 (twice); Rom 16:17-18; 2 Pet 2:1-2).

The faith: Τῆ πίστει. Notice the definite article!

We are not contending for “a faith,” or for “some faith,” let alone just “any faith,” but for “*the faith*,” *the only faith*! (cf: Gal 1:6-9,23; 3:23,25-26; Acts 6:6).

Once: Ἄπαξ, literally - “once for all time.”

There are no modifications or adjustments to “the faith.” It was delivered “once for all time” and never to be delivered again. Also see this word in Hebrews 9:26,28; 10:2; 1 Peter 3:18,20.

Delivered: Παραδοθείση. This faith is a “delivered” faith.

It did not originate in human councils or conferences. It originated in the mind of God and was delivered to man. God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, revealed the divine plan to Peter, Paul and others, who used the words of the Holy Spirit in writing it down and speaking it (cf: Eph 3:1-5; 1 Cor 2:10-13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21, also Gal 1:6-9; Rev 22:18-19; Deut 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:6).

To the saints: “The saints—New Testament Christians, God’s people—are, therefore, the custodians of ‘the faith.’ They have the sacred, solemn, and frightening responsibility of teaching, preaching, proclaiming, living, and contending earnestly for the faith. If ‘the saints’ do not contend earnestly for ‘the faith’ then it will not be contended for, and men will not have the privilege of knowing the difference be-

tween the truth and error, between right and wrong, between the doctrine of God and the doctrine of men.

“Like Paul, let us pray and let us ask others to pray for us—that we may speak boldly as we ought to speak (Eph 6:18-20)” Roy Deaver.

“The Faith” is something which:

- a. Was delivered to man,
 - b. Was delivered once and for all time,
 - c. Is entrusted to God’s people and
 - d. Must be defended.
4. For certain men: Peter said such men “would come,” and now, when Jude is writing, they “had come.”

Jude is stating the “fact” that these ungodly false teachers had already come and are in the world.

Crept in unnoticed: Παρεισεδύησαν - to slip in along side of, secretly.

They intentionally try to destroy our faith! They did not make known what their intentions were. They sneaked in under a false pretense. They found a “loop hole,” an unguarded place.

The idea here is the same as if these false teachers had sneaked in a side door in order to do their evil teaching.

In the Greek, this is a very expressive word. Some of its uses are:

- a. Clever and seductive words of an attorney seeping into the minds of a judge and jury.
- b. An outlaw slipping secretly back into a country from which he had been expelled.
- c. The slow and subtle entry of innovations into the life of a country which, in the end, breaks down the established laws.
- d. It always indicates a stealthy intrusion of something evil into a society or situation.

Long ago (of old): Πάλαι. The NKJV is the more accurate translation.

Marked out (ordained): Προγεγραμμένοι - to write beforehand, to write down previously, predestined, marked out.

The idea here is that it has been “written before in God’s book of judgment.” It shows that the enemies of God are already doomed! This is not the teaching of Calvinistic “predestination” of individual souls, but refers to the type of men who are condemned.

Who turn: Μεταπιθέντες, present, participle, active - to transpose, to change from one place to another, to transfer.

The present tense shows they are trying to change.

Licentiousness (lasciviousness): Ἀσέλγειαν - unbridled living.

All base forms of sensual actions and exposure - the worst type of Spiritual Adultery!

“The apostasy is of such a nature that the good, acceptable, and complete will of God (Rom 12:2) is changed into something vile and repulsive to the general public. This is the most repugnant of all apostasy in that wholesomeness is changed into corruption. It is no wonder that the warning appears so strong” (Fream).

And deny: Ἀρνούμενοι - to say no to, to deny.

This is in an emphatic position, at the end of the sentence. (The emphatic position can be either at the beginning or the end of a sentence.)

There is more than one way we can deny Christ:

- a. In a time of persecution,
- b. For the sake of convenience,
- c. By our life and conduct or
- d. By developing false ideas about Him.

GNOSTICS: “They argued and preached and practiced the doctrine that since we are under grace we are not under law. They stressed that, therefore, ‘Christians’ could do anything they wanted to—including involving themselves in all kinds of sensual conduct. These were the anti-nomians. And, there are still some around today who are making the same arguments and who are teaching and practicing

the same doctrine—that Christians are not under law! Lenski points out that these were men who ‘deny, disown, repudiate even the Christ.’ They denied His absolute sovereignty. They rejected His Lordship. They rejected Him as Savior. They rejected Him as being the Messiah. This is total rejection” - Roy Deaver.

Compare 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23.

II. **WARNINGS**..... **5-19**

To understand these examples Jude now uses, we need to understand that the evil men who were corrupting the church did not regard themselves as enemies of the church or Christianity. They regarded themselves as advanced thinkers, slightly above the ordinary Christian, the spiritual elite. Jude chooses these examples to make it clear that even if one has special privileges, he may still fall from grace. Even those who have received great privileges from God cannot consider themselves safe, but must be on constant watch against misunderstanding and misapplying any scripture.

5. I want to remind you: Men, like children, easily forget. We must constantly be on guard and constantly reminding ourselves and our brethren of the “faith once delivered.”

You once knew this: No new doctrine is presented here, but an admonition based on prior knowledge.

Saved...destroyed: Notice that they had been saved, then became lost!

Did not believe: Μὴ πιστεύσαντας, literally - were not believing (cf: Jn 3:36).

6. Did not keep: Μὴ τηρήσαντας - to keep, to guard.

Proper domain (first estate): Ἀρχὴν - position, office, dominion, authority.

“The word could indicate either the office of the angels or their domain, i.e., sphere of rule, or it could indicate the spiritual state in which they were created, i.e., they were made different from humanity but did not maintain the original state, rather they left their own habitation” - *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

Habitation: Οἰκητήριον - place of living, dwelling place. This comes from the word for “house.”

Reserved: Τετήρηκεν - guarded, kept; irrevocably reserved - no cancellations.

Darkness: Ζόφον - darkness, gloom (cf: 2 Pet 1:19).

7. And the cities around them: The other cities which were destroyed were Admah and Zeboim. A fifth city, Zoar, was spared for that is where Lot went (cf: Deut 29:23).

Strange: Ἐτέρας - another of a different kind.

Not male with female as God intended but:

- a. Male with male,
- b. Female with female or
- c. Humans with animals.

Are set forth for an example: We should be able to look at these and learn. Examples like these must also be used over and over.

Suffering: Ὑπέχουσαι - to undergo, to suffer.

It was a legal term meaning “to undergo punishment.” This is going on now!

Vengeance: Δίκην (cf: Rev 14:9b-10).

Eternal fire: Πυρὸς αἰωνίου. It is not just in or during time, nor is it annihilation! But punishment is not known or felt unless the soul is conscious of it. Therefore, annihilation is not a possible solution or conclusion.

8. These = False teachers (v. 4).

Likewise: just like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Dreamers: Ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι, present, participle, middle - to dream.

“The word may indicate that in the false teachers’ delusion and their blindness, they take the real for the unreal and the unreal for the real (Mayor) which would emphasize their false source of revelation, but the word may also stress the fact that they are asleep to God’s judgment and entertained by the temporal allusive and imaginary character of the pleasures of their lusts” - *Linguistic Key of the Greek New Testament*.

Defile - themselves and those who hear them.

Reject authority (despise dominion). Lordship is set aside. They “do their own thing,” and “look out for number one.”

Speak evil of dignitaries (dignities): Δόξας δὲ βλασφημοῦσιν- blaspheme glories.

9. Michael: see 2 Peter 2:11; Revelation 12:7.

Archangel: Ἀρχάγγελος. This is the only place in scripture where Michael is called an archangel.

- a. 2 Peter 2:11 - He does not even rail against Satan.
- b. Revelation 12:7 - He is a captain of an angelic host.

Reviling (railing) accusation: Βλασφημίας - blaspheme.

Devil: Διαβόλω - slander.

10. But these speak evil of whatever they do not know: Οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἶδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν.

Literally: “But these, whatever things they know not, they speak evil of.” Their realm is sensual and physical therefore they blaspheme everything in the spiritual realm.

The Gnostics felt they had the right to speak against anything and everything they wanted to. They claimed they had knowledge God had not revealed in the Scriptures. They felt that through their ritualism they knew truth the inspired writers of the Old and New Testaments did not have. These false teachers presumed to add to and to take away from the Scriptures (Fream).

Whatever they know naturally: The only things they know “naturally” are what “irrational” animals know.

Their practice is sensual - and like cows or horses they know the practices that bring them enjoyment. They follow their natural appetite and live to feed their senses (Fream).

Corrupt: Φθείρονται - spoil, ruin, corrupt, deprave!

Jude says two things about evil men:

- a. They criticize everything they do not understand and
- b. They allow themselves to corrupt, or to be corrupted, by the things they do understand.

11. Woe to them!: Οὐαὶ αὐτοῖς. Compare Matthew 23.

Jude parallels these false teachers with Cain, Balaam and Korah along with their sins.

Three proofs that disobedience leads to disaster:

- a. Cain - His will-worship. He was devoid of love which led to murder.
- b. Balaam - He attempted to curse Israel (teaching? preaching?) for personal gain. These were prepared, in return for money, to teach others that sin did not matter.
- c. Korah (Core) - He rebelled against God's authority. These were insubordinate to elders of the church just like Korah was.

"There seems to be a progress in the action expressed in these examples. The apostates 'went the way' of Cain, 'ran in the error' of Balaam and 'perished in the gainsaying' of Korah. Such is a way of sin. First one walks, then one runs; and finally one is consumed. The lusts of the flesh have the same process. First there is the sinful play with the fire. Then there comes a frantic chase after the sin; and finally one is completely consumed in his lusts. Sin is a snare that draws tighter with indulgence. Sin is not a single trap, but a series of traps, each one stronger and more vicious than the last. It begins with playful rebellion and ends with total destruction. 'Woe to them!'" (Fream).

12. Spots [hidden rocks]: like coral reefs - hidden until the damage is done.

Feast with you: Ποιμαίνοντες - to fatten, to indulge.

Without fear: ἀφόβως - fearless, without respect.

Clouds...without water: no rain (cf: Prov 25:14).

Trees...twice dead: They had a late autumn and expected two harvests. With false prophets there is no harvest of righteousness - they are absolutely without fruit and are worthless. They take nourishment from the ground and water and give nothing in return.

Pulled up by the roots: Ἐκρίζωθέντα. The fruitless trees were then disposed of by burning. This was a familiar Old Testament metaphor of judgment.

13. Waves...foaming: the most worthless part!

Wandering stars: stars which disappear into outer darkness. Just as shooting stars which disappear out of the sky and are engulfed in darkness (cf: Mt 25:30).

Be on guard against anything sensual, whether in false teachers or what we allow to come into our homes, especially by TV, etc. Spirituality is lost in the sensual desire for these programs. Wednesday night Bible study and even Sunday night worship services have be overwhelmed by the avalanche of fleshly carnality via the TV. Entire congregations have dismissed these services admitting defeat (Fream). How sad!

14. Now Enoch: Enoch's prophecy is given to Jude by revelation.

Ten thousands: Μυριάσιν = myriads of angels.

How many would the Lord need? One? None!

15. To execute judgment: not grace!

Ungodly...ungodly...ungodly: ἄσεβεις - godless, irreverent.

Deeds...committed...hard speeches...spoken: not only for their evil deeds, but for their evil and hard words.

Harsh (hard): Σκληρῶν. See Trench, pg. 48.

Dry,	Harsh,
Severe,	Stern,
Vehement,	Inhumane,
Violent,	Uncivil,
Fierce,	Grievous,
Painful,	Grating to the mind,
Repulsive,	Offensive,
Stubborn,	Perverse in resisting authority.

16. Jude now gives additional details about false teachers.

Murmurers: Γογγυσταὶ - grumblers, complainers, "providence is against me."

Complainers: Μεμψίμοιροι - constantly expressing their bad lot in life.

"You're satisfied by nothing that befalls you; you complain at everything. You don't want what you have got; you long for what you haven't got. In winter you wish it were summer and in summer that it were winter. You are like the sick folk, hard to please, and one who complains about his lot in life" - *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

Walking according to their own lusts: predetermined evil on a predetermined course of their own making.

The one who feels no responsibility for the welfare of anyone except himself stands condemned!

Great swelling words: Ὑπέρογκα - excessive size, puffed up, 'big' words, arrogant speech, verbose speech without any substance. Their (and our) promises without performance are useless.

Flattering people to gain advantage (having men's persons in admiration) [showing respect of persons]: Compare Acts 10:34. If God holds no man's person in special respect, we, His children, certainly must not. If we do God is not our father, but Satan is.

"It is not as though they had walked away from the brethren. They are still in the presence of the church, preying upon them. They are separated by their choice of desire. They want the ungodly lusts, and strive for sensuality. Thus the Holy Spirit is quenched and cannot remain with them. Their spirit is far removed from the Spirit of Christ, and so they are separated from those who do have the Spirit of Christ" (Fream).

17. But: adversative - opposed to what has just been written.

Remember...words...spoken...apostles: Jude appeals to them to remember what the apostles had taught.

Go back to the standard, walk in the old paths!

18. Mockers: Ἐμπαίκται - ones who make fun of others by mocking; scoffers. Compare with 2 Peter 3:3.

19. Who cause divisions (separate themselves): Ἀποδιορίζοντες - to make a boundary between someone and separate from this one, to make a distinction, to work a division, to cause division.

It indicates the false teacher had made distinctions between themselves and the other brethren.

Sensual: Ψυχικοί - worldly minded. This shows these men followed their natural lusts and appetites without restraint or control.

Not having the Spirit: Not having the Holy Spirit, they lived unrestricted lives. God will not dwell in the sensual!

III. EXHORTATIONS 20-25

20. But: adversative again!

Building yourselves up: Ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς - to build up, to edify.

Your most holy faith: Ἁγιωτάτη υμῶν, superlative - most holy, holiest, very holy.

The “faith once delivered” is a holy, sanctified, set apart faith.

Praying in the Holy Spirit: by His direction in the written word.

The Holy Spirit also aids our prayers before the Father in heaven (Rom 8:26-27).

“Prayer is love in need appealing to love in power” - Moffatt.

21. Keep yourselves in the love of God: This is an imperative.

If we cannot fall from grace, why did the Holy Spirit have Jude write this statement? (cf: Jn 15:9-10; 1 Pet 1:5).

Looking for: Προσδεχόμενοι - waiting for, looking forward too, earnestly expecting.

22. On some have compassion [mercy]: Ἐλεεῖτε, [Ἐλεάτε] - put yourself in his place (cf: Gal 6:1).

When the love of reclaiming lost souls dies in the church it ceases to be the Lord's church.

Making a distinction (difference) [who are in doubt]: Honest doubters are to be shown mercy - lead them gently!

23. Others: those more advanced into the snare of the error being taught.

Fear: Φόβω - true fear, for their souls and yours.

Pulling them out: Ἀρπάζοντες - to seize, to snatch. There is urgency here!

Hating even the garment defiled (spotted) by the flesh:

Beware, unless we are also pulled in.

24. This verse and 25 are a Doxology.

Able: Δυναμένω - the One who has the power.

Praise is given to the God Who is able, three times in the New Testament:

- a. Romans 16:25 - to strengthen.
- b. Ephesians 3:20 - to do more than we can ever dream of.
- c. Here - God is able to:
 - 1) Keep us from falling,
 - 2) Make us to stand blameless in the presence of His glory and
 - 3) Bring us exalted into His presence.

Keep you from stumbling (falling): the idea is to guard you from falling.

Stumbling (falling): Ἀπταίστους. "This word is used of a horse which is sure-footed and does not stumble, or of a good man who does not make moral lapses" - *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

To present you faultless: only Christ can do this!

With exceeding joy: "The word has special chatological overtones denoting the jubilation of God's chosen people at His manifestation at the end" - *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*.

But the primary joy is Christ's.

25. God our Savior: Jesus Christ!

FINIS

APPENDIX

THE DENIAL OF GOD AND OF JESUS CHRIST

Of the antinomianism and blatant immorality of the heretics whom Jude condemns there can be no doubt. The other two faults with which he charges them are not so obvious in their meaning. He charges them with, as the Revised Standard Version has it, "denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (verse 4). The closing doxology is to "the only God," a phrase which occurs again in Romans 16: 27; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:15. The reiteration of the word *only* is significant. If Jude talks about our *only* Master and Lord and, about the *only* God, it is natural to assume that there must have been those who questioned the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and of God. Can we trace any such line of thought in the early church and, if so, does it fit in with any other evidence which hints within the letter itself may supply?

And so often in the New Testament, we are again in contact with that type of thought which came to be known as Gnosticism. Its basic idea was that this was a dualistic universe, a universe with two eternal principles in it. From the beginning of time there had always been spirit and matter. Spirit was essentially good; matter was essentially evil. Out of this flawed matter the world was created. Now God is pure spirit and, therefore, could not possibly handle this essentially evil matter. How then was creation effected? God put out a series of aeons or emanations; each of these aeons was farther away from him. At the end of this long chain, remote from God, there was an aeon who was able to touch matter; and it was this aeon, this distant and secondary god, who actually created the world.

Nor was this all that was in Gnostic thought. As the aeons in the series grew more distant from God, they grew more ignorant of him; and also grew more hostile to him. The creating aeon, at the end of the series, was at once totally ignorant of and totally hostile to God.

Having got that length, the Gnostics took another step. They identified the true God with the God of the New Testament and they identified the secondary, ignorant and hostile god with the God of the Old Testament. As they saw it, the God of creation was a different being from the God of revelation and redemption. Christianity on the other hand believes in the *only* God, the one God of creation, providence and redemption.

This was the Gnostic explanation of sin. It was because creation was carried out, in the first place, from evil matter and, in the second place, by an ignorant god, that sin and suffering and all imperfection existed.

The Gnostic line of thought had one curious, but perfectly logical, result. If the God of the Old Testament was ignorant and hostile to the true God, it must follow that the people whom that ignorant God hurt were in fact *good* people. Clearly the hostile God would be hostile to the people who were the true servants of the true God. The

Gnostics, therefore, so to speak, turned the Old Testament upside down and regarded its heroes as villains and its villains as heroes. So there was a sect of these Gnostics called Ophites, because they worshipped the serpent of Eden; and there were those who regarded Cain and Korah and Balaam as great heroes. It is these very people whom Jude uses as tragic and terrible examples of sin.

So we may take it that the heretics whom Jude attacks are Gnostics who denied the oneness of God, who regarded the God of creation as different from the God of redemption, who saw in the Old Testament God an ignorant enemy of the true God and who, therefore, turned the Old Testament upside down to regard its sinners as servants of the true God and its saints as servants of the hostile God.

Not only did these heretics deny the oneness of God, they also denied "our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ." That is to say, they denied the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. How does that fit in with the Gnostic ideas so far as they are known to us? We have seen that, according to Gnostic belief, God put out a series of aeons between himself and the world. The Gnostics regarded Jesus Christ as one of these aeons. They did not regard him as our *only* Master and Lord; he was only one among the many who were links between God and man, although he might be the highest and closest of all.

There is still one other hint about these heretics in *Jude*, a hint which also fits in with what we know about the Gnostics. In verse 19 Jude describes them as "these who set up divisions." The heretics introduce some kind of class distinctions within the fellowship of the Church. What were these distinctions?

We have seen that between man and God there stretched an infinite series of aeons. The aim of man must be to achieve contact with God. To obtain this his soul must traverse this infinite series of links between God and man. The Gnostics held that to achieve this a very special and esoteric knowledge was required. So deep was this knowledge that only very few could attain to it.

The Gnostics, therefore, divided men into two classes, the *pneumatikoi* and the *psuchikoi*. The *pneuma* was the spirit of man, that which made him kin to God; and the *pneumatikoi* were the *spiritual* people, the people whose spirits were so highly developed and intellectual that they were able to climb the long ladder and reach God. These *pneumatikoi*, the Gnostics claimed, were so spiritually and intellectually equipped that they could become as Jesus - Irenaeus says that some of them believed that the *pneumatikoi* could become *better* than Jesus and attain direct union with God.

On the other hand, the *psuche* was simply the principle of physical life. All things that live had *psuche*; it was something which man shared with the animal creation and even with growing plants. The *psuchikoi* were ordinary people; they had physical life but their *pneuma* was undeveloped, and they were incapable of ever gaining the intellectual

wisdom which would enable them to climb the long road to God. The *pneumatikoi* were a very small and select minority; the *psuchikoi* were the vast majority of ordinary people.

It is clear to see that this kind of belief was inevitably productive of spiritual snobbery and pride. It introduced into the church the worst kind of class distinction.

So, then, the heretics whom Jude attacks were men who denied the oneness of God and split him into an ignorant creating God and a truly spiritual God; who denied the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and saw him as only one of the links between God and man; who erected class distinctions within the church and limited fellowship with God to the intellectual few.

Wm. Barclay
The Daily Study Bible Series
The Letters of John and Jude (London: The Westminster Press; 1976), pp. 163-166.

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