

AN AMERICAN PASTOR SERIES

BORN *of* GOD

An Exposition of I John Workbook

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.

I John 5:13

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Preface

Matthew 18:16

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

IT is a biblical standard that for something to be established as the truth, multiple witnesses are needed to ensure its validity. One witness should not be considered enough, especially so in areas where divine judgment is to be the result. *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established* (Deut. 19:15).

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Deut. 19:15) To secure against injury to life or property through inadequate or false attestation, it is enacted that more than one witness must appear before anything can be established; and that, should a witness be found on trial to have testified falsely against his neighbor, he was to be punished by having done to him what he thought to have done to his neighbor (cf. Deuteronomy 17:6; Numbers 35:30).¹ Verse 15.—The rule in Deuteronomy 17:6, regarding accusations of idolatry, is here

extended to accusations of every kind before a court of justice; a single witness was not to be admitted as sufficient to convict a man of any offence, either civil or criminal.

The reason this principle is important in the preaching of God's Word is that for those who do not believe, divine judgment is promised to come upon them.² *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (II Thess. 2:12). Because God has decreed that those who believe not must come under judgment, then it is reasonable that sinners should be given the greatest evidence that what has been presented to them has its source in God—that the Word spoken is not simply the word of men³ but is indeed the true Word of God, which shall also be fully upheld by Him. So that if the Gospel is rejected,⁴ then it can neither be claimed nor said that God did not give ample testimony to its truthfulness.

¹ *Deut. 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

Num. 35:30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.

² *Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Rev. 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

³ *Gal. 1:11–12 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.*

¹²*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

I Thess. 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

II Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

II Pet. 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

⁴ *Matt. 13:58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

Luke 22:67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

In Jesus' ministry we see the use of multiple witnesses. Examples include Jesus sending His disciples out two by two so that each disciple would strengthen the testimony of the other regarding Jesus being God's only begotten Son and Israel's Messiah.⁵ Three disciples—Peter, James, and John—were present at the transfiguration of Christ, enabling them to testify of the true glory of the Son of God.⁶ Christ also proclaimed that it was not just His own witness that gave credence to His being the Son of God but also the Father's witness to Christ's true identity.⁷ *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Matt. 3:17). The signs, miracles, and wonders done by Jesus also confirmed His being sent by God. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know* (Acts 2:22). The same truth can be said concerning the Holy Spirit bearing testimony to the divine and supernatural ministry of Christ. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which*

proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me (John 15:26). The apostle Paul also, in writing to the Thessalonians, opens his epistles with Silvanus and Timothy,⁸ two other gift ministries⁹ confirming the revelation he was about to reveal.¹⁰ It is always hoped that if one witness is not sufficient to bring people to belief, then another might. *And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign* (Exod. 4:8). Revelation given twice is established. Like Pharaoh's dream that was doubled by the Lord, revelation repeated will be certainly fulfilled. *And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass* (Gen. 41:32).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Gen. 41:32) *doubled ... twice*] This is a literal rendering. The repetition of the dream shewed emphatically that the thing was "established," i.e. made fixed and sure, by the decree of God. Cf. Psalm 93:2, "Thy throne is established"; Hosea 6:3, "sure as the morning.

⁵ Luke 10:1 *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*

⁶ Luke 9:28–36 *And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. ²⁹And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. ³⁰And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: ³¹Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. ³³And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. ³⁵And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. ³⁶And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.*

⁷ John 8:18 *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*

Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

I John 5:9 *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*

8 I Thess. 1:1 *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

II Thess. 1:1 *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

9 Eph. 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

10 I Thess. 4:15–17 *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

will shortly bring it to pass] Lit. "hasteneth to do it." Hence there is urgent need to take measures in good time to meet the crisis which is bound to come.

By these examples and others it is hoped that in the preaching of God's Word, when multiple witnesses join together testifying to the validity of a truth, there can be a great degree of spiritual confidence that what is agreed upon is the truth. Hence, when truly spiritual men speak independently (sometimes even hundreds of years apart) yet draw the same conclusions, then it is clearly evident that the same Spirit of Christ¹¹ is leading them. This is essential when

entering such topics as Christ's return¹² and what it takes to be truly saved by God.¹³ Thankfully, all that genuinely has its source in God and is sent by God is sure to manifest profit to those who believe it.¹⁴ Thus, when God sends His Word, whether by letter,¹⁵ Spirit,¹⁶ or prophet,¹⁷ because God is its true Author, it shall prosper where it is sent.¹⁸ This teaches us that if it is truly the Word of God that is both heard and believed, then God will do all that He has proclaimed He would.¹⁹ *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it (Isa. 55:11).*

¹¹ *I Pet. 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

¹² *I Thess. 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

^{II Peter 3:10} *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

^{Rev. 1:7} *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

¹³ *John 3:3-6 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

^{Rom. 10:9-10} *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

¹⁴ *I Cor. 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

¹⁵ *Gal. 6:11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

^{Heb. 13:22} *And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.*

^{I John 2:14} *I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

¹⁶ *II Sam. 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*

^{Matt. 10:20} *For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

^{I Cor. 2:13} *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

¹⁷ *Ezek. 38:17 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?*

^{Luke 1:70} *As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:*

^{Acts 3:18} *But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

¹⁸ *Ps. 33:9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

^{Hos. 6:5} *Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.*

^{Eph. 5:26} *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

¹⁹ *Josh. 23:14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*

^{I Kgs. 8:56} *Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.*

^{Rom. 4:21} *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

Lastly, readers will find a significant number of Scripture references added to the text. This is to illustrate that not only do the author and other esteemed men of God agree on the interpretation and revelation presented, but also the scripture itself is the third and final witness confirming the truth revealed. If men still do not believe when even three witnesses confirm the truth, then there is little more that can be done. At this point, though rejectors of Christ may remain religious, the truth is that they

will just seek out false teachers who will enable them to continue living in their own sinful and harmful lusts. Hence, if a man will not hear Christ's words or allow himself to be first convicted and then governed by God's Spirit, then all that is left for him to follow is an evil and corrupt world, which is purposed to satisfy the sinful nature within himself. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears* (II Tim. 4:3).

Commentators

Notes on the Old and New Testaments

by Albert Barnes

Albert Barnes, known as the most prolific American commentator of his generation, was born December 1, 1798, in Rome, New York. Although he wanted to study law, he instead entered the Presbyterian ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. There he was a dedicated student, rising early in the morning and studying by lamplight at night, almost driving himself blind. Upon graduation, his first pastorate was at Morristown, New Jersey. Barnes later accepted a call to be the minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, where he served for forty years and was granted the title of pastor emeritus. He later became president of the Pennsylvania Bible Society, a position he held until he died in 1870. While in Philadelphia, Barnes wrote multiple commentaries, making him a household name. His works include *Notes Explanatory and Practical on the Gospels* (1832), designed for Sunday school teachers and Bible classes, and *Notes on the New Testament* (11 vols.). He published commentaries on Job (2 vols.), Isaiah (2 vols.), Daniel, and Psalms (1870, 3 vols.). Over a million of *Notes on the New Testament* were sold by 1870, and they are still being printed today. Charles Spurgeon said concerning this commentary, “No minister can afford to be without it.”ⁱ

English Annotations on the Holy Bible

by Matthew Poole

Matthew Poole, a renowned theologian and Bible scholar, was born in York, England, in 1624. Little is known of his early life until his admittance to Emmanuel College in Cambridge on July 2, 1645. Poole served as minister of St. Michael-le-Querne in London for a time but later worked almost solely on his biblical studies. After earning his MA at Cambridge and Oxford University, Poole wrote the *Synopsis Criticorum Biblicum*, which condenses the views of 150 biblical critics into five volumes. Another of his works, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*, was greatly valued by both Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards. Spurgeon said of Poole, “He is a very prudent and judicious commentator, less a commentator, and more an expositor.” Spurgeon found Poole’s synopsis “a marvelous collection of all the wisdom and folly of the critics.” Poole’s other published works include *The Nullity of the Romish Faith*, *A Blow at the Root*, and *Dialogues between a Popish Priest and an English Protestant*. Before Poole finished his commentary, he died in October 1679. His friends completed the work and published it in 1685. Today, he is still considered one of the eminent Puritans of Great Britain’s biblical scholarship.ⁱⁱ

Commentary of the Old and New Testaments

by Joseph Benson

Prominent theologian and minister Joseph Benson was born January 26, 1749, in Melmerby, England. At an early age, Benson became proficient in Greek and Latin. At sixteen, he joined John Wesley, a leader of the Methodist Church. Later, in 1766 at Kingswood School, Benson was appointed as a master of classics, in which he dedicated himself to studying theology and philosophy under the guidance of Wesley. Three years later he was made headmaster of Trevecca College in Wales, which he later left due to conflicting beliefs as the school became Calvinistic. Though Benson had many shifts in ministry and titles, such as editor of the Methodist Magazine, his spiritual legacy lies in his multi-volume *Commentary on the New and Old Testaments*. Joseph Benson passed onto glory February 16, 1821, at the age of seventy-two.ⁱⁱⁱ

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

by Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown

The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* was created by three theologians and scholars from across the United Kingdom: Rev. Robert Jamieson, D.D. (January 3, 1802–October 26, 1880), Rev. Andrew Robert Fausset A.M. (October 13, 1821–February 8, 1910), and Rev. David Brown, D.D. (August 17, 1803–July 3, 1897). Robert Jamieson in his early years had intended to study medicine but instead devoted himself to the work of Christ’s ministry. His coauthor of the commentary, Andrew Fausset, was a man of many accolades who produced several works on biblical prophecy. Their third partner, Rev. David Brown, served as moderator of the general assembly. In 1871 these three men published a six-volume work known as *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. This expository continues holding a high reputation due to its “scholarly rigor” and “devotional value.” English preacher Charles Spurgeon commended this commentary in saying, “It is to some extent a compilation and condensation of other men’s thoughts, but it is sufficiently original to claim a place in every minister’s library: indeed it contains so great a variety of information that if a man had no other exposition he would find himself at no great loss if he possessed this and used it diligently.”^{iv}

Bible Commentary for English Readers

by Charles Ellicott

Charles John Ellicott, best known for his Bible commentary and as an outstanding conservative scholar in the nineteenth century, was born at Whitwell, near Stamford, England, April 25, 1819. Ellicott graduated from St. John’s College in Cambridge, where he became a fellow. Later he was ordained a priest in the Church of England. After marrying Constantia Becher he became the rector of a small country parish where he used his spare time to study and write his well-regarded commentaries on the New Testament epistles. He was quite accomplished as a divinity professor at Cambridge, dean of Exeter, and bishop of Gloucester but is best remembered for his commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Ellicott’s other popular works include *Modern Unbelief*, *The Being of God*, and *The History and Obligation of the Sabbath*. In 1860, he was involved in a serious train accident while traveling between Cambridge and London. Though

he had fractures to both legs and other injuries, it has been said that his first concern was for the academic manuscripts he was transporting, and the second was to minister to the dying passengers around him, with little thought of himself. His injuries left him with a limp; however, the railway company gratefully awarded him a silver pass for free travel between the two cities. About ten years after the accident, Ellicott was commissioned to help revise the King James Bible, a project that is regarded as one of the great works of his life. Ellicott was known for his sympathy toward others and for living a simple life. He was remembered as good-humored, kindly, pleasant, entertaining in conversation, and “a warm, outgoing person with a genuine interest in people.” Ellicott resigned in March 1905 due to failing health and retired with his wife to Birchington-on-Sea, England, where he died October 15, 1905.^v

The Pulpit Commentary

by Joseph Exell and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones

The Pulpit Commentary, created by Rev. Joseph Exell (1849–1909) and Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones (January 14, 1836–November 2, 1917) is one of the largest homiletical works produced to this day with a total of twenty-three volumes compiled over thirty years. Though not much is known about the faith of the creators of this commentary, the heart and labor of love of these men can be seen in their compilation and selection of one hundred contributors filling 95,000 entries covering the Scriptures. This commentary, being one of the largest of its kind, dissects the Bible into easy-to-read yet detailed outlines, providing key points for those who study God’s Word. In addition to outlines, it provides details on biblical customs and geographical information, as well as translations for key Greek and Hebrew words. This catch-all commentary is a great resource for students and ministers alike.^{vi}

Exposition of the Entire Bible

by John Gill

Baptist pastor and scholar John Gill was born November 23, 1697, in Kettering, England, and passed onto glory at the age of seventy-four October 14, 1771. At age twelve, Gill devoted himself to the Lord and made a public profession at eighteen. He went on to become a pastor at age twenty-one. Gill held a Doctor of Divinity degree and is known as the first major writing Baptist theologian. Gill’s *Exposition of the New Testament* includes three volumes written between 1746 and 1748. Soon after, Gill started his *Exposition of the Old Testament*, which included six volumes written between 1748 and 1763. Preacher Charles Spurgeon esteems Dr. Gill highly for his methodical formatted sermons and ability to retain being sound and sober in his commenting—rarely being given to his imagination, thus distinguishing Gill and his excellent work on the Holy Scriptures.^{vii}

Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible

by Matthew Henry

Matthew Henry was born into a godly home October 18, 1662, in Wales. By the age of three, Henry had developed a passion for books, mainly the Bible. After deciding to pursue theology, he sometimes rose as early as four o’clock in the morning to study. He often studied his day away, except for the allotted morning breakfast and worship.

Though Henry explained he was always best when alone and that no company was as good as that of the book of God, he was rich in friends. Later, when Henry became a minister in Chester he wrote, "I think I can say with confidence that I do not design to take up the ministry as a trade to live by, or to enrich myself, out of the greediness of filthy lucre. No! I hope I aim at nothing but *souls*; and if I gain those, though I should lose all my worldly comforts by it, I shall reckon myself to have made a good bargain." Henry was not settled in making a name for himself, but rather he would "prefer the good word of my Master before the good word of my fellow-servants." He was invited frequently to speak and lecture. After a visit to Chester in 1713, his health declined, and then a year later he was thrown off his horse but continued to preach at Nantwich, where he succumbed to apoplexy the morning after, on June 22, 1714. His legacy is still remembered in his six-volume *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* and *Complete Commentary*, for which thirteen other ministers completed Romans through Revelation after his death. Then in 1811 the entire commentary was re-edited. Henry is also remembered for *A Communicant's Companion* and *Directions for Daily Communion with God*.^{viii}

Word Studies in the New Testament

by Marvin Richardson Vincent

Born in Poughkeepsie, New York, Marvin Richardson Vincent (1834-1922) was a third-generation clergyman as well as a seminary professor, an author, and a prolific biblical scholar. He is most well-known for his New Testament study, a four-volume word-by-word Greek translation. First published in 1887, this work falls between a biblical commentary and a Greek lexicon. It is a detailed illumination of the grammar and etymology of the ancient Greek, as well as cultural and historical contexts and idioms. Without Vincent's work, modern readers using English translations often miss the intent, beauty, and impact of the original writers' inspired words. Through these volumes Vincent's deep reverence for the holy Scriptures, his gift for languages, and his affection for the rich culture of their authorship are all evident. Besides his Word Study, Vincent and his colleague Charlton Lewis together translated another famous commentary, *Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament*, from German into English (1864). Vincent's other writings included sermons, training books for ministers and theologians, textual criticisms, and numerous translations of other works from Greek and Latin into English.^{ix}

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

edited by John James Stewart Perowne and Frederic William Farrar

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges is a complete commentary set published by Cambridge University Press. More than thirty theologians and biblical scholars contributed to the 57 volumes in this collection between the late 1800s and early 1900s. Each volume in the set includes an introduction, history, original language studies, outlines, maps, literary analysis, and verse-by-verse commentary to provide a thorough understanding of the scriptures. Some volumes also include appendices for deeper study on topics and issues raised in the text. General editor and Anglican Bishop John Perowne exercised "limited editorial control over the writers ... being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series."^x

Geneva Study Bible

edited by William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson

The original 1560 *Geneva Bible*, which predates the *King James Bible* in 1611, was groundbreaking and has influenced every version of the Bible since its inception. It was the first direct translation from original Hebrew and Greek to English and included features like the first verse separation through numbering, cross-references, maps, and illustrations to help readers understand the text. Its Reformed Protestant perspective, design, study notes, and commentary were created and curated by a small committee of the most notable biblical scholars of their day, hoping their work would help common people in their reading and studying of the scriptures. The *Geneva Bible* significantly impacted literature and history as it increased in popularity throughout the 16th and 17th centuries when English refugees left England. It challenged the Church of England and shaped religious beliefs during the English Civil War. Though it has seen several revisions, this study Bible continues to be a beloved resource for Christians.^{xi}

Endnotes

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Session 1

An Exposition of I John

I John 1:1-4

Scriptures

I John 1:1

Romans 10:9-10

Hebrews 5:9

Ephesians 1:4

Isaiah 9:6

II Peter 1:16

John 3:1-2

I John 1:2

I John 5:11

John 6:27

I John 5:12

I John 1:3

I John 1:4

John 15:11

Psalms 16:11

I John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

In a book which details what is necessary to gain fellowship with the Father and the Son, and was written to confirm if a man has eternal life or not, this verse is remarkable in that the emphasis is directly centered upon the personal, albeit spiritual, relationship the apostle John had with Jesus Christ. He is the One Whom John hopes to expose the world to, and He is the One Whom John knows holds the keys to gaining eternal life.

Christ is the *Word of life*, that manifested form of God Who leads to life.

John gives Jesus Christ this title because through Him God's knowledge of the way to gain eternal life is revealed.

As the Word, Christ is God's revelation to man, revealing God to a world completely separate from Him.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 1:1

The Son of God may be called "the Word," because he is the medium by which God promulgates His will and issues His commandments.

The reason that a man is saved by Jesus Christ is because He is the living Word of God.

Ultimately, to hold Jesus as Lord is to obey all of God's commandments.

Where through the Mosaic Law obedience to the law is what previously was purposed to lead men to life, now the lordship of God's Son is how men can eternally be saved.

Romans 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

¹⁰ *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

The Greek word for *confess* is #3670 *homologeó*. Its definition is "to speak the same."

HELPS Word-studies defines the word as "*homologéō* (from 3674 */homouí*, 'together' and 3004 */légō*, 'speak to a conclusion')—properly, to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree ('confess'); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse)."

These definitions reveal that to confess Jesus Christ as Lord is to agree with God that His Son is Lord.

The Greek word for *Lord* is #2962 *kurios*, which is defined as “lord, master, sir; the Lord.”

HELPS Word-studies further defines the word as “properly, a person exercising absolute ownership rights; lord (Lord).” The origin of *kurios* is “from *kuros* (authority).”

What we observe from these definitions of both *confess* and *Lord* is that for a man to be saved, Jesus must be given full authority over the soul. Because God has given His Son authority over all things, to be saved men must agree with God’s transfer of divine authority to Christ, and subsequently make Him Lord and Master of their lives.

Accepting the Word and yielding fully to Christ’s present heavenly authority are viewed by God as subjection to His will for man.

Christ’s lordship over a man’s life takes the place of needing to obey every commandment of God. This obedience was necessary in the Old Testament in order to be saved, but in fact it is impossible, simply because of man’s weak fleshly ability to keep divine law.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Rom. 10:9

“And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Here it means to acknowledge him as Lord, that is, as having a right to rule over the soul.

To make Jesus Christ your Lord is to give Him full authority over your life. By this it is meant that both His Word and His Spirit must rule the inner being.

Rejection of either Christ’s words or Christ’s Spirit reveals rejection of divine law and cannot result in receiving the salvation promised by God through His Son.

It should also be noted that to receive Christ’s lordship partially is to receive it not at all.

Consequently, not until Jesus is given full and complete dominion over our lives can God’s salvation be given to us.

It is obedience to the Son of God, via His Word and His Spirit, that produces true salvation for the soul.

Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

That which was from the beginning.

It is important to recognize that before we were, Christ was.

Just as the heavens and earth were created before man, so did Christ exist with God in the beginning.

It is also at this time, before the world was formed, that God’s purpose for the saved came into being.

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:4

In him—In Christ. The choice was not without reference to any means of saving them; it was not a mere purpose to bring a certain number to heaven; it was with reference to the mediation of the Redeemer, and his work. It was a purpose that they should be saved “by” him, and share the benefits of the atonement. The whole choice and purpose of salvation had reference to him, and “out” of him no one was chosen to life, and no one out of him will be saved.

Before the foundation of the world—This is a very important phrase in determining the time when the choice was made. It was not an “afterthought.” It was not commenced in time. The purpose was far back in the ages of eternity.

The Lord’s predestination of His people is what makes the Christian’s salvation so secure.

The purpose of the Son of God coming into the world was to save those purposed by God for heaven, and it has proved to be astoundingly successful.

Well did Isaiah state that unto us (or for our purpose), Christ was born.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Benson Commentary, Isa. 9:6

Unto us a child is, or, shall be, born . . . The human nature of the Messiah is here first set forth. He shall be the *child born, the Word made flesh*, and that *for us*; not only for us *Jews*, but for us *men*, for us *sinners*, and especially for us *believers*. *Unto us a son is given*—Or, *the son*, namely, of the virgin, spoken of [in] Isaiah 7:14; the *Immanuel*, the *Song of Solomon of God*, so called, not only on account of his miraculous conception, but because of his eternal generation, the *Word, who was in the beginning with God*, had glory with the Father *before the world was*, was loved by him *before the foundation of the world*, and *by whom he made the worlds, and created all things*. See John 1:1–3; John 17:5; John 17:24; Hebrews 1:2; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16. This person, the Father’s *own Son*, his *only-begotten Son, is given*, John 3:16; *sent forth*, Galatians 4:4; *sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*, Romans 8:3; though *rich*, and *in the form of God*, made *in the likeness of men, poor*, and *of no reputation*, Php 2:7; 2 Corinthians 8:9; given to be our infallible Teacher, our prevalent Mediator, our almighty Saviour, our righteous Ruler, and our final Judge. Accordingly, *The government*—Of the church, of the world, yea, *of all things*, for the church’s benefit, Ephesians 1:21–22; *shall be upon his shoulder*—That is, upon him, or in his hands; *all power being given to him in heaven and on earth*. In mentioning *shoulder*, he speaks metaphorically; great burdens being commonly laid upon men’s shoulders, and all government, if rightly managed, being a great burden, and this especially being, of all others, the most weighty and important trust.

Which we have heard.

Here John reveals what was the basis of his faith in the Son of God—it was what the apostle had *heard* Jesus speak.

We can tell the depth and nature of a man by the wisdom and words which proceed out of his mouth. The words Jesus Christ spoke revealed an understanding and an enlightenment of heavenly truths previously unknown to man.

Jesus revealed that for any to be saved they must be born again, and that for a man to save his life he must first lose it, and that for any man who believes upon the Son of God, out of his belly shall *flow rivers of living water*.

To John, Christ's words and the wisdom He spoke are what became the initial proof that Jesus was in fact God's Son and God's revelation of Himself to man.

Which we have seen with our eyes.

Like John, Peter equally attested that he was an eyewitness; he had seen Christ's majesty.

II Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

As much as John and Peter had heard Jesus speak, equally did they have the same opportunity to observe Jesus' person and the Son of God's walk in this world.

The apostle observed with his own eyes multiple instances of Jesus' compassion, His divine power, and Christ in His resurrected body.

Seeing was believing, and thus, for John, there was absolutely no doubt that Jesus was exactly Who He claimed to be.

Other miracles the apostle observed included Jesus feeding the five thousand (John 6:5–13), His calming of the sea (Luke 8:23–25), His casting out demons into a herd of pigs (Matt. 8:28–33), and His raising Jairus' daughter to life (Luke 8:41–42; Luke 8:49–56).

Like Nicodemus, the apostle knew that no man could do these miracles except God was with him (John 3:1–2).

The validity that Jesus was the Messiah rested on the wisdom of Christ's heavenly words, the power He manifested, and that God resurrected Christ from the dead.

Observance of the Savior proved to John and the other disciples that God was indeed in Christ and that Christ was in fact the Son of God.

John 3:1–2 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Benson Commentary, John 3:1–2
“His miracles were his credentials.”

Which we have looked upon.

This implies not simply seeing the Son of God and all that He has both said and did, but an even deeper contemplation that John and the other disciples experienced as they became illuminated to the wonderful identity of the Savior.

Just as Mary pondered the glory of the Son Whom she brought into the world (Luke 2:10–19), so also the apostles marveled and were amazed at Christ's person and the divine power exercised by Him.

I John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

Ultimately, the apostle knew that Jesus represented to the world the eternal *life* of God. It was this eternal life that John sought to show and bear witness to.

John confirms Christ's own words that since He possessed eternal life, He could give it to those who believed upon Him.

The Son of God holds great spiritual power, such power that He can give eternal life to any who through faith believe in Him.

Jesus' words *I give unto them eternal life* are authoritative and agree with Christ's purpose in coming into the world.

Thus, if a man desires to receive eternal life, he must share a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is done by hearing Christ's words and obeying them as well as by believing in the Father, Who sent Him.

There is but one door, one access point, by which sinners can find the hope of heaven, and it is through the very One sent by God to reveal God's spiritual and eternal life to the world.

That which a man has, he can give. Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, can therefore give God's eternal life to as many as make Him their Lord.

I John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:11

And this is the record—This is the sum, or the amount, of the testimony (μαρτυρία *marturia*) which God has given respecting him.

That God hath given to us eternal life—Has provided, through the Saviour, the means of obtaining eternal life.

And this life is in his Son—Is treasured up in him, or is to be obtained through him.

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

A man's labor should not merely be regulated to feeding his body and the things that might please it; rather, it should be directed toward that spiritual world that leads to the saving of the soul. It is this meat, which is the real sustenance of life, that provides the opportunity to receive eternal life.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 6:27

The meat that perisheth—The food for the supply of your natural needs. It perishes. The strength you derive from it is soon exhausted, and your wasted powers need to be reinvigorated.

That meat which endureth—The supply of your spiritual wants; that which supports, and nourishes, and strengthens the soul; the doctrines of the gospel, that are to a weak and guilty soul what needful food is to the weary and decaying body.

To everlasting life—The strength derived from the doctrines of the gospel is not exhausted. It endures without wasting away. It nourishes the soul to everlasting life.

And shew unto you that eternal life.

The purpose of the apostles' earthly ministry was that all men might know that in Jesus Christ is life and that He is the light of all men, without which they can only stumble in darkness.

I John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

In this one single maxim is contained the entire Christian gospel. If men would believe and rely upon this truth, then very little other preaching would be needed to bring them to salvation.

This also is the question that all who profess to believe in Jesus need to ask themselves, "Do I hold true belief in the Son of God in my heart, or do I merely know Christ's name in my head?"

There is a great difference, then, between a man who only mentally knows the Lord's name and he who has allowed Christ's full authority over his life.

The answer to this spiritual and contemplative question ultimately reveals whether a man is saved or not.

I John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

The Book of I John records certain immovable truths necessary for spiritual fellowship with God and the Son of God, Who came to reveal Him to the world.

These divine revelations cannot be compromised if a man truly desires sincere and genuine communion with both the Father and the Son. Each truth must be carefully considered and thoughtfully reflected upon, simply because each will reveal what is necessary for spiritual connection to the higher, heavenly, and more holy realm of the Spirit.

Minimizing or neglecting even one of these great truths easily can result in forfeiting fellowship with the heavenly Father. He, then, who will not hear and choose to believe John's message, which is directly linked to John's own personal relationship with Jesus Christ, cannot be saved.

For this reason, I John is an indispensable work, worthy of our highest interest and continued spiritual study. Ultimately, it was Jesus Who taught John, and it is Jesus Who has chosen to use John to teach us.

Therefore, not to heed the inspired and spiritual words of Jesus' apostle John, is the same as rejection of Christ Himself.

I John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

The Greek word for *joy* is #5479 *chara*. Its definition is "joy, delight."

John teaches us that those who sincerely maintain fellowship with the Father through His Son will possess a joy and inward spiritual happiness not found anywhere else in the world. This is that same indescribable *joy* that Jesus said He would give to His true followers. It is this spiritual joy that all who are truly pious will possess.

John 15:11 *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 15:11

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.—The better reading is, ... *that My joy may be in you.* The joy thought of is that which Christ Himself possessed in the consciousness of His love towards the Father, and of the Father's love towards Him. The brightness of that joy lit up the darkest hours of His own human life, and He wills that it should light up theirs. In the consciousness of their love to God, and of God's love to them, there would be in them, as part of their true life, joy which no sorrow could ever overcome. They were as men with troubled hearts. He has told them of the true source of peace. His own peace He has given to them. He tells them now of the source of joy, and has spoken the word that they may possess the very joy which was the light of His own heart.

Though Christ suffered in the flesh, He possessed a joy completely foreign to His accusers, betrayers, and political murderers.

It is this joy that every believer of the Son of God will experience, filling his soul, refreshing his spirit, and encouraging his walk with God.

Psalm 16:11 *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

When a man truly believes, he will experience for the first time in his life the joy and peace of God that only the Son of God can impart to men.

He who genuinely exercises faith in the Son of God will experience spiritual joy in his soul, a heavenly joy that proves not only the existence of a heavenly Father but also the true nature and disposition of heaven itself. The joy given to us by Christ teaches us that heaven is not a gloomy or oppressive habitation but rather a place of supreme happiness, freedom, and delight. Spiritual joy is an element of the nature of God, and it is what all of heaven reflects.

By believing in the Son of God, men can experience a portion of that joy, which will be their full possession when they are received by Christ into heaven.

This joy is aptly called *the joy of the LORD* because its source is the Lord, and it is a possession that only He can give to those who believe upon Him.

Session 2

An Exposition of I John

I John 1:5–8

Scriptures

I John 1:5
Exodus 33:20
Isaiah 30:21
Proverbs 8:13
I John 1:6

Isaiah 5:20
I Corinthians 6:9–10
I John 1:7
Isaiah 43:25
Psalm 32:1

Psalm 32:5
I John 1:8
John 16:8

I John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I John 1:5
This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you.—What the Son had received from the Father, this the Apostles were to report to the world.

The message that John heard and declared to these early Christians, that *God is light*, came from the One sent to declare God.

Every honest man knows and will confess that darkness lives within himself, whether he enjoys its company or not. This is not the case with his Creator. In Him no darkness dwells nor can any evil be done in any portion or measure.

Though God may and will judge evil, He is Himself totally incapable of committing it.

The Lord wraps Himself in light, and through the agency of light He created the heavens.

So great is God's divine light and glory that not even Moses, for fear of death, was allowed full sight of Him.

Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

The brightness, glory, and radiance of God's true nature are far beyond what any organic and material living being could observe and live through.

Light is emblematic of goodness, purity, holiness, and righteousness.

Not until saints are transformed into the image of God's Son will they be able to see God's face and thus not be limited to merely hearing His voice.

Without God approaching man and revealing Himself through His Word, all men, all mankind would continue toward eternal death.

There can be no true faith in God without hearing, and no hearing of God's will for man without God speaking.

The means of salvation, therefore, is limited to those humble enough to hear God's voice, believe it, and ultimately through the truth be saved.

Isaiah 30:21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 30:21

The idea is taken either from the practice of teachers who are represented as "following" their pupils and admonishing them if they were in danger of going astray (Grotius); or from shepherds, who are represented as following their flocks, and directing them when they wandered. The Jews understand this voice 'from behind' to be the *בַּת כּוֹל* *bath kol*—'the daughter of the voice;' a divine admonition which they suppose attends the pious. The essential thought is, that they would not be left without a guide and instructor; that, if they were inclined to go astray, they would be recalled to the path of truth and duty. Perhaps there is the idea, also, that the admonition would come from some "invisible" influence, or from some unexpected quarter, as it is often the case that those who are inquiring on the subject of religion receive light from quarters where they least expected, and from sources to which they were not looking. It is also true that the admonitions of Providence, of conscience, and of the Holy Spirit, seem often to come from "behind" us. That is, they "recall" us from the path in which we were going, and restrain us from a course that would be fraught with danger.

Not only is God defined by the apostle as light, but He is also revealed in Scripture as Spirit and love. By these three descriptive revelations it is possible to see the glory of God's divine nature and the primary components that make it up, which are Spirit, light, and love.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, I John 1:5

God is light] . . . No one tells us so much about the Nature of God as S. John: other writers tell us what God does, and what attributes He possesses; S. John tells us what He is. There are three statements in the Bible which stand alone as revelations of the Nature of God, and they are all in the writings of S. John: 'God is spirit' (John 4:24); 'God is light', and 'God is love' (1 John 4:8). In all these momentous statements the predicate has no article, either definite or indefinite. We are not told that God is the Spirit, or the Light, or the Love: nor (in all probability) that He is a Spirit, or a light. But 'God is spirit, is light, is love': spirit, light, love are His very Nature. They are not mere attributes, like mercy and justice: they are Himself. They are probably the nearest approach to a definition of God that the human mind could frame or comprehend: and in the history of thought and religion they are unique. . . . No figure borrowed from the material world could give the idea of perfection so clearly and fully as light. It suggests ubiquity, brightness, happiness, intelligence, truth, purity, holiness. It suggests excellence without limit and without taint; an excellence whose nature it is to communicate itself and to pervade everything from which it is not of set purpose shut out.

All that is holy, good, and benevolent, merciful, forgiving, and loving is contained in this simple axiom that *God is light*.

From light also comes all that can be conceived as life in the universe. Light is the very source of life, and without light, life could not exist.

It is also neither remarkable nor coincidental that God, Who is Himself divine light, brought into the universe natural light as an emblem of Himself.

Natural "light is made of particles called photons, bundles of the electromagnetic field that carry a specific amount of energy." Albert Einstein's theory of special relativity "expresses the fact that mass and energy are the same physical entity and can be changed into each other."

Since God is light, He is a form of energy, albeit spiritual energy. Therefore, as a form of supernatural energy, God surely would contain the ability within Himself to create matter, whether in the natural or spiritual realm.

No doubt we are laymen in the field of physics, but it is not hard to conceive how a supernatural God, Who is Himself light and spiritual energy, could create from His own essence the universe around us.

To create anything, one must have the inherent abilities within himself to do so. The nature and essence of God gives Him the ability to create from Himself, in whatever way that might entail, the world and the heavens as we know them.

Since God is *light* in every respect, then it is not reasonable that God would maintain fellowship with darkness on any level.

A truly good and honorable man would never befriend or share intimate fellowship with evil men; the same can be said even more concerning a holy God.

Just as God instructs those who believe in Him to depart and have no fellowship with darkness, so it is also unreasonable to believe that He would do that which He, Himself, commands His people never to do.

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Prov. 8:13

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.—Because there can never be any truce between the kingdoms of light and darkness (Matthew 6:24), so if we are the friend of one, we must be the enemy of the other.

Light and darkness have never been combined, and they are purposed never to be so. In the beginning God divided light from darkness. It is thus by divine choice and not by mere chance that light and darkness should be separated and never be merged into—if that were even practically possible, which it is not.

I John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

After declaring what Jesus Christ revealed to John and many others, that *God is light*, John now addresses the very important truth that no man can walk in darkness and maintain fellowship with Him.

John refutes the false claims of any who, though they walked in darkness, insisted they still possessed fellowship with God.

Then as now, sinners foolishly assume that they can have relationship with a holy God, even if they live in dark behaviors contrary to Him. But all and any who make such unbiblical claims, the apostle assures us, *lie*.

It is simply incompatible that God, Who is Himself light, would maintain any fellowship whatsoever with darkness. He will not, and John wants to make this abundantly clear to all who will hear what Jesus Christ Himself taught His servant about who can genuinely fellowship with the Father and who cannot.

Where darkness is, true fellowship with God cannot be.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 1:6

If we say that we have fellowship with him—If we reckon ourselves among his friends, or, in other words, if we profess to be like him: for a profession of religion involves the idea of having fellowship with God, (compare the notes at 1 John 1:3), and he who professes that should be like him.

And walk in darkness—Live in sin and error. To “walk in darkness” now commonly denotes to be in doubt about our religious state, in contradistinction from living in the enjoyment of religion. That is not, however, probably the whole idea here. The leading thought is, that if we live in sin, it is a proof that our profession of religion is false.

Until a man knows both Who and what God is, he cannot worship Him properly. It is God's nature that ultimately defines what is or what is not sin.

If a man therefore foolishly believes that God is not pure light, and that a degree of darkness lives within Him, then he can easily excuse the sin he knows operates within himself. Consequently, a man's view of God will directly affect what he views as sin in his own life.

Therefore, those who are ignorant of God and His level of divine purity are equally ignorant of the sin that lives within themselves.

He who is blind to God's true nature is also blind to seeing the corrupt nature of himself.

The point John makes cannot be overstated, simply because this evil world is filled with spiritual liars, many of whom openly claim relationship with God and yet live lives without any subjection to His Word, will, or Spirit.

There remains a disconnect and a contradiction either in what the Word of God reveals to be sin as or in the people who sin yet claim relationship with God.

No doubt the error lies not in the Holy Scripture but rather in those who will do their best to change the very description of good and evil, and of light and darkness.

Sinners, therefore, who have chosen not to abide in what is good and holy will seek to change the definitions of both. Thus, when men refuse to abide in the truth, then they will soon seek to change in others' minds what truth actually is.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 1:6

And yet how many there are who are living in known sin who profess to be Christians! How many whose minds are dark on the whole subject of religion, who have never known anything of the real peace and joy which it imparts, who nevertheless entertain the belief that they are the friends of God, and are going to heaven! They trust in a name, in forms, in conformity to external rites, and have never known anything of the internal peace and purity which religion imparts, and in fact have never had any true fellowship with that God who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all. Religion is light; religion is peace, purity, joy; and though there are eases where for a time a true Christian may be left to darkness, and have no spiritual joy, and be in doubt about his salvation, yet still it is a great truth, that unless we know by personal experience what it is to walk habitually in the light, to have the comforts of religion, and to experience in our own souls the influences which make the heart pure, and which bring us into conformity to the God who is light, we can have no true religion.

No doubt sinners think themselves sincere in their belief that they can walk in darkness and maintain relationship with God; however, it is not men who govern anything heavenly, nor can any man enter heaven by his own standards. Heaven is God's, and the Lord sets every standard on who may, and who may not, enter His holy world.

*I Corinthians 6:9–10 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

It is a clear sign of hypocrisy when men claim to know God but deny Him in their works, when they profess Jesus Christ as their Lord, but do not what He says, and when they honor God with their lips but their heart and behavior is far from Him.

Therefore, very early in John's epistle we see one of his main objectives, which is to refute the erroneous claims of those both in and out of the Church who walked in darkness yet professed that they maintained fellowship with God directly. This is contrary to the message that John heard from Jesus Christ. If any man claims differently, he has set himself as a rival to Christ.

I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If men walk in the light, God promises to them that they will experience sweet fellowship with other Christians and have the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse them of all sin.

God has promised from the very earliest of times that if men repent of sin and turn to Him, seeking to do His will, then all sin can be forgiven.

Such is the grace of God that He will not only forgive the penitent but also completely remove all stain of sin from him.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

It is because of God's own holy and divine nature that He remains willing to blot out transgressions against Himself. It is therefore because of God's *own sake* that He pardons sinners, and not because men remain worthy through themselves to be forgiven.

Psalms 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

If a man received nothing else in this life but forgiveness of sin from God, he would be the most blessed of men.

Benson Commentary, Ps. 32:1

Blessed is the man, &c.—We are here taught wherein true happiness consists, and what is the cause and foundation of it. It consists not in the possession of the wealth or honours of the world, or in the enjoyment of its pleasures, but in those spiritual blessings which flow from the favour and grace of God; *whose transgression is forgiven*—He does not say, Blessed is the man who never transgressed. For he knew no such man could be found; *all having sinned and come short of the glory of God*, and consequently of that happiness conferred on man at his first creation. But he lays the foundation of fallen and sinful man's happiness on the only foundation on which it can be laid, and that is on the pardon of sin. For as all our misery came in by sin, so it is not likely, nay, it is not possible, it should be removed, or even alleviated, without the forgiveness of sin.

Not until sin is truly forgiven, and not just presumed to be so, will the weight and burden that sin produces in the soul be lifted.

It is therefore not enough merely to *hear* of receiving forgiveness; forgiveness must actually be *gained*.

If any also truly desire hope of receiving forgiveness from God, then they must acknowledge their sin before Him.

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

To be forgiven, sin cannot be either hidden or defended but must be confessed.

Therefore, it is nearly impossible for a truly self-righteous man either to be saved or to gain fellowship with the Lord, simply because he will deny the existence of sin within himself.

King Saul is a noted example of this, in whom denial of sin resulted in his losing all that God had purposed for him (1 Sam. 15:1–26).

Contrary to Saul is David's confession of sin, which reveals the proper path to receive actual forgiveness from God.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 32:5

I acknowledged my sin unto thee—That is, then I confessed my guilt. I had borne the dreadful pressure as long as I could. I had endeavored to conceal and suppress my conviction, but I found no relief. The anguish became deeper and deeper; my strength was failing; I was crushed under the intolerable burden, and when I could no longer bear it I went and made humble confession, and found relief. The verb used here is in the future tense, "I will acknowledge my sin;" but in order to a correct understanding of it, it should be regarded as referring to the state of mind at the time referred to in the psalm, and the resolution which the psalmist then formed. The words "I said" should be understood here. This he expresses in a subsequent part of the verse, referring doubtless to the same time. "I said," or I formed a resolution to this effect. The idea is, that he could find no relief in any other way. He could not banish these serious and troublous thoughts from his mind; his days and nights were spent in anguish. He resolved to go to God and to confess his sin, and to see what relief could be found by such an acknowledgment of guilt.

And mine iniquity have I not hid—That is, I did not attempt then to hide it. I made a frank, a full confession. I stated it all, without any attempt to conceal it; to apologise for it; to defend it. Before, he had endeavored to conceal it, and it was crushing him to the earth. He now resolved to confess it all, and he found relief.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Any who claim they are absent of sin, wrongdoing, or spiritual transgression provide sure proof that they hold not the truth and that the truth does not hold them. If this is properly understood, then every man has a reliable metric by which he can determine whether or not he has true fellowship with the Lord.

This is seen and made visible if the Word of God is both held and cherished within himself. Ultimately, our relationship with the Word of Truth, reveals whether or not any true relationship with God exists. He then who professes to have no sin, cannot and will not have the holiness of God's Word living within himself.

To deny sin is to practically remove all sincere relationship and affection for the truth, which has its main home in the Word of God.

Without the Holy Spirit's influence in a man's life, sin would forever remain undetected and subsequently denied.

Practically, revealing the presence of sin is one of the great works of the Spirit in His attempt to save man.

John 16:8 And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 16:8

He will reprove—The word translated “reprove” means commonly to demonstrate by argument, to prove, to persuade anyone to do a thing by presenting reasons. It hence means also to convince of anything, and particularly to convince of crime. This is its meaning here. He will convince or convict the world of sin. That is, he will so apply the truths of God to men's own minds as to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners, and cause them to feel this. This is the nature of conviction always.

The world—Sinners. The men of the world. All men are by nature sinners, and the term the world may be applied to them all, John 1:10; John 12:31; 1 John 5:19.

By God's own holy nature, and not by man's sinful nature, is sin known to be sin.

Session 3

An Exposition of I John

I John 1:9–2:7

Scriptures

I John 1:9

Romans 8:8

Psalms 32:5

Psalms 66:18

I Corinthians 1:9

Psalms 119:90

Psalms 103:14

Romans 5:20

I John 1:10

I John 2:1

I Peter 2:22

I John 2:2

Isaiah 53:6

I John 2:3

Matthew 22:36–39

I John 2:4

I John 2:5

I John 2:6

I John 2:7

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

By nature, man is born in sin and under its power. His righteousness is viewed by God as nothing more than filthy rags.

As far as God is concerned, there are *none righteous, no, not one, none that doeth good, no, not one*. Together, then, both Jew and Gentile *are all gone out of the way and together become unprofitable*.

The single greatest thing for a man to overcome is his belief that in his flesh, or more appropriately, by his flesh, he can be justified by God. The Word of God flatly disputes this.

Romans 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Since it will never be by man's own merits that he can gain both fellowship and union with God, then it must come on the grounds of divine mercy. But for mercy to be given, there must first be a confession of sin.

Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

Without exception, in Scripture, in every age, and in every generation, forgiveness of sin demands that confession of sin precedes it. Thus, if a man desires divine forgiveness for his sins against God, then he must openly confess them and not deny their existence.

If sin remains unrepented of and men reject God's command to repent, then it is certain that God will not hear their prayer when called upon.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 66:18

If I regard iniquity in my heart—literally, "If I have seen iniquity in my heart." That is, If I have indulged in a purpose of iniquity; if I have had a wicked end in view; if I have not been willing to forsake all sin; if I have cherished a purpose of pollution or wrong. The meaning is not literally, If I have "seen" any iniquity in my heart—for no one can look

into his own heart, and not see that it is defiled by sin; but, If I have cherished it in my soul; if I have gloated over past sins; if I am purposing to commit sin again; if I am not willing to abandon all sin, and to be holy.

The Lord will not hear me—That is, He will not regard and answer my prayer. The idea is, that in order that prayer may be heard, there must be a purpose to forsake all forms of sin.

Without confession of sin and willingness to depart from it, all hope of receiving forgiveness is lost.

Consequently, God will neither pardon nor give mercy to those who continue to engage in sin without repentance for it.

For true forgiveness and pardon to be granted, there must be acknowledgment of the wrong done as well as a genuine desire not to do it again.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 1:9

If we confess our sins—Pardon in the Scriptures, always supposes that there is confession, and there is no promise that it will be imparted unless a full acknowledgment has been made. Compare Psalm 51; Psalm 32:1–11; Luke 15:18 ff; Luke 7:41 ff; Proverbs 28:13.

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

Because God is *faithful*, then provided there is genuine and sincere confession of sin, His promise to sinners is twofold: (1) He promises forgiveness; (2) He promises complete cleansing and thorough removal of sin.

In all things concerning the Christian and in every promise made to him, including the promise of forgiveness and removal of sin, the hope of fulfillment rests on God's faithfulness.

I Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 1:9

God is faithful—That is, God is true, and constant, and will adhere to his promises. He will not deceive. He will not promise, and then fail to perform; he will not commence anything which he will not perfect and finish. The object of Paul in introducing the idea of the faithfulness of God here, is to show the reason for believing that the Christians at Corinth would be kept unto everlasting life.

It is the nature and character of a holy God that what He has promised He will perform. This holds true regarding both His blessings and His judgments.

Those who are certain that God will judge should equally be certain that He will forgive.

Likewise, those who are certain that He will forgive must not forget that God's faithfulness demands judgment for unconfessed sin as well.

God's faithfulness to His people is seen throughout Scripture: He will not let them be tempted above which they are able, and He will likewise protect from evil those He has called to Himself.

Where sin, temptation, and the evil one dwell, there God's faithfulness is the strong abiding force that prohibits the called from being completely overtaken by sin.

God's faithfulness also extends much further than just to one person or a group of individuals. In fact, His faithfulness has extended, and will continue to extend, to every generation born on the earth.

Because of the faithfulness of God, there is not one generation or one group of people whom God has ever let down, if men heed His commandments and seek to do His will.

Psalm 119:90 Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 119:90

Thy faithfulness—The accomplishment of thy promises.

Is unto all generations—Margin, “to generation and generation.” From one generation to another. The generations of people change and pass away, but thy promises do not change. They are as applicable to one generation as to another; they meet every generation alike. The people of no one age can lay any exclusive claim to them, or feel that they were made only for them. They are as universal—as much adapted to the new generations that come upon the earth—as the light of the sun, ever-enduring, is; or as the fountains and streams, which flow from age to age.

The Greek word for *forgive* is #863 *aphiémi*. Its definition from *Strong's Concordance* is “to send away, leave alone, permit.”

HELPS Word-studies defines the word as “properly, send away; release (discharge).”

From this definition we can see how forgiveness mirrors the scapegoat being sent away into the wilderness, symbolically revealing how God had removed sin from Israel (Lev. 16:8–10).

The Greek word for *cleans*e is #2511 *katharizó*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as “to cleanse.”

HELPS Word-studies' definition is to “make pure (‘clean’), removing all admixture (intermingling of filth).”

While forgiveness provides for separating sin from the sinner, cleansing entails its complete removal. Hence, if a man sincerely, genuinely, and deeply regrets and therefore repents of his sin, then God will honor His promise to forgive him and cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

It is the character and nature of a holy God to forgive and provide mercy for those bound by an unholy nature contrary to divine holiness.

Because God is man's Creator, He fully knows his weak and feeble condition. Because the Lord knows the constitution of man's fallen and weak nature, He has promised to show divine pity to the penitent.

Psalm 103:14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

Mercy is often connected to pity, and because of God's pity, He gives mercy for sin.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 103:14

For he knoweth our frame—Our formation; of what we are made; how we are made. That is, he knows that we are made of dust; that we are frail; that we are subject to decay; that we soon sink under a heavy load. This is given as a reason why he pities us—that we are so frail and feeble, and that we are so easily broken down by a pressure of trial.

He remembereth that we are dust—Made of the earth. Genesis 2:7; Genesis 3:19. In his dealings with us he does not forget of what frail materials he made us, and how little our frames can bear. He tempers his dealings to the weakness and frailty of our nature, and his compassion interposes when the weight of sorrows would crush us. Remembering, too, our weakness, he interposes by his power to sustain us, and to enable us to bear what our frame could not otherwise endure. Compare the notes at Isaiah 57:16 [*For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.*].

Human history has proven since the very earliest of time that sin abounds in all men. None have ever lived who did not sin repeatedly, often, and daily.

The Lord speaks of the unsaved as *sinner*s, simply because this defines who and what they really are.

If God never provided sufficient grace and mercy for sin, then all hope for heavenly union with Him would be lost.

Consequently, without divine pity and grace, men could never be properly reconciled to God.

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 5:20

The offence—The offence which had been introduced by Adam, that is, sin. Compare Romans 5:15.

Might abound—Might increase; that is, would be more apparent, more violent, more extensive. The introduction of the Mosaic Law, instead of diminishing the sins of people, only increases them.

But where sin abounded—Alike in all dispensations—before the Law, and under the Law. In all conditions of the human family before the gospel, it was the characteristic that sin was prevalent.

Grace—Favor; mercy.

Did much more abound—Superabounded. The word is used no where else in the New Testament, except in 2 Corinthians 7:4. It means that the pardoning mercy of the gospel greatly triumphed over sin, even over the sins of the Jews, though those sins were greatly aggravated by the light which they enjoyed under the advantages of divine revelation.

I John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Whenever a man denies his sin, it is evident that God's Word does not live in, nor is it adhered to, in his soul. By this it is easy to discern whether men have either confessed or denied their sin.

Practically, denial of sin and holding the truth are set in contrast with one another in order that sinners may know that embracing one will exclude the other.

Whenever the truth of God's Word truly resides in believers of Christ, then confession of their sin will follow.

But if a man denies his sin and will not agree with God that he is a sinner, then he cannot possess any true relationship with God, and neither will he possess any true affection for the truth.

This is because no one can truly and genuinely hold the truth of God's Word in his heart, love its purity, and rejoice in its message while denying the uncleanness that lives within himself.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 1:10

We make him a liar—Because he has everywhere affirmed the depravity of all the race. Compare the notes at Romans 1; 2; 3. On no point have his declarations been more positive and uniform than on the fact of the universal sinfulness of man. Compare Genesis 6:11–12; Job 14:4; Job 15:16; Psalm 14:1–3; Psalm 51:5; Psalm 58:3; Romans 3:9–20; Galatians 3:21.

And his word is not in us—His truth; that is, we have no true religion. The whole system of Christianity is based on the fact that man is a fallen being, and needs a Saviour; and unless a man admits that, of course he cannot be a Christian.

I John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Because of their sin and their own inability to enter God's presence in a state of sin, sinners need an *advocate*, someone to plead their cause to God. This advocate is *Jesus Christ the righteous*.

The Greek word for *advocate* is #3875 *paraklétos*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “(from 3844 */pará*, ‘from close-beside’ and 2564 */kaléō*, ‘make a call’)—properly, a legal advocate who makes the right judgment-call because close enough to the situation. 3875 */paráklētos* (“advocate, advisor-helper”) is the regular term in NT times of an attorney (lawyer)—i.e. someone giving evidence that stands up in court.”

As an advocate, Jesus gives divine evidence in God's heavenly court that His death for sin is sufficient to appease divine judgment for it.

He who sins, God's Word states, must die. Because of Christ's death for sin in taking the place of the sinner's death, God's judgment has been fulfilled and His punishment for sin exercised.

By paying the cost for sin, Jesus, as an Advocate, pleads that divine judgment has been met, and the justice of God was upheld.

The Son of God is more than able to enter God's divine presence and plead mercy for the penitent. It is here that we observe the great importance and significance of Jesus Christ's ministry as the sinner's advocate.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:1

The nature of his advocacy may be stated in the following particulars:

(1) He admits the guilt of those for whom he becomes the advocate, to the full extent charged on them by the law of God, and by their own consciences. He does not attempt to hide or conceal it. He makes no apology for it. He neither attempts to deny the fact, nor to show that they had a right to do as they have done. He could not do this, for it would not be true; and any plea before the throne of God which should be based on a denial of our guilt would be fatal to our cause.

(2) as our advocate, he undertakes to be security that no wrong shall be done to the universe if we are not punished as we deserve; that is, if we are pardoned, and treated as if we had not sinned. This he does by pleading what he has done in behalf of people; that is, by the plea that his sufferings and death in behalf of sinners have done as much to honor the law, and to maintain the truth and justice of God, and to prevent the extension of apostasy, as if the offenders themselves had suffered the full penalty of the law. . . .

(3) as our advocate, he becomes a surety for our good behavior; gives a pledge to justice that we will obey the laws of God, and that he will keep us in the paths of obedience and truth; that, if pardoned, we will not continue to rebel. . . .

Jesus Christ the righteous—One who is eminently righteous himself, and who possesses the means of rendering others righteous. It is an appropriate feeling when we come before God in his name, that we come pleading the merits of one who is eminently righteous, and on account of whose righteousness we may be justified and saved.

For the believer, the grounds for being both forgiven and made righteous by God reside in the holiness, righteousness, and obedience of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was in all respects holy and without sin.

1 Peter 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

Who did no sin reveals the true character of the Savior. On the grounds of Christ's perfect righteousness, fallen man is redeemed. Because Christ is holy, righteous, and without sin, His people can be made those things through Him.

The eminence of the Son of God's own pure and holy righteousness is what provides the means of His being able to impart righteousness to those who believe upon Him.

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Greek word for *propitiation* is #2434 *hilasmós*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as "properly, propitiation; an offering to appease (satisfy) an angry, offended party. 2434 (*hilasmós*) is only used twice (1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10)—both times of Christ's atoning blood that appeases God's wrath, on all confessed sin. By the sacrifice of Himself, Jesus Christ provided the ultimate 2434 *hilasmós* ('propitiation')."

At its core, sin breaks, disregards, and sets at nothing divine will. In sin, men know the will of God but abandon it in favor of doing their own will instead.

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He who does not go God's way goes his own way. Thus, if Christ did not seek out sinners, then men would forever remain estranged from Him.

The fallen nature of the sinner is never to initially turn to the Lord for forgiveness but rather to hide from God and deny that sin was ever committed.

Adam and Eve's behavior in the garden after sinning against the Lord illustrates this point (Gen. 3:8–14).

It is both right and righteous that God is greatly displeased with sinners, and men should not try to diminish the truth that His anger exists towards all who transgress His laws.

But because Jesus Christ took the place of both sin and the sinner, then Christ's death is the substitution for the sinner's death.

Through His Son's death the Lord deems that the penalty for man's sin has been met and God's justice has been satisfied.

I John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Those who have come to truly know God will keep His commandments. One also who has been cleansed of his sin and has come to know the Son of God will willingly, joyfully, and with great desire keep God's commandments.

For the truly saved, subjection to divine will is neither arduous nor difficult. It is not a burden but a blessing for the redeemed to yield obedience to God. It is He Who has saved them, and they will manifest no resistance whatsoever in yielding their entire lives to Him.

The two most significant commandments given by Jesus Christ are revealed in Matthew's gospel:

Matthew 22:36–39 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

³⁸ *This is the first and great commandment.*

³⁹ *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

The greatest evidence that a man has truly kept Christ's Word is if he abides in God's love, directed toward both God and the people of God.

Hence, those who genuinely and sincerely love God will equally, and with a similar affection, love His people.

Ultimately, it is by the possession of divine love that men can accurately gauge if they are true disciples of Jesus Christ or not, since he who does not love neither knows God nor has any true relationship with Him.

I John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

For the second time, the apostle reveals whom God considers liars: (1) those who refuse to confess themselves as sinners; (2) those who falsely claim and assume to know God and yet do not keep His commandments.

Thus, he who denies the presence of sin in himself is a liar, just as he who claims to know God but does not keep His commandments is also by divine revelation defined in Scripture as a *liar*.

There is no ambiguity on this point, and none should be looked for—that he who professes to know God but does not keep His commandments is a liar.

The Greek word for *liar* is #5583 *pseustés*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “properly, a liar; a person who falsifies, misrepresents (distorts, misleads).”

To lie and seek to deceive others about one's true relation with God proves that spiritual regeneration has never taken place. For none can truly love the Lord and at the same time fail to keep His commandments.

Thus, there are none, not even one, who truly know God, who will not keep His commands.

This sin is specific to those who either have no interest in the Lord, or falsely claim relationship with Him but actually have none.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:4

He that saith, I know Him—He who professes to be acquainted with the Saviour, or who professes to be a Christian.

And keepeth not his commandments—What he has appointed to be observed by his people; that is, he who does not obey him.

Is a liar—Makes a false profession; professes to have that which he really has not. Such a profession is a falsehood, because there can be no true religion where one does not obey the law of God.

I John 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

The Greek word for *perfected* is #5048 *teleioó*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as “to bring to an end, to complete, perfect. . . . Usage: (a) as a course, a race, or the like: I complete, finish (b) as of time or prediction: I accomplish, (c) I make perfect; pass: I am perfected.”

True obedience to divine law gives its fruit in the perfection of love in the obedient one.

If God's Word is kept by His people, then God's own love will be perfected in them.

Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and all who are truly led by this Spirit will manifest fruit in their lives.

The increase and expansion of God's love in the Christian's heart causes him to know that he is in God and that God is in him. Ultimately, love and obedience cannot be separated.

Therefore, whenever there is an absence of divine love in those who profess to know God, there cannot nor ever will be any true obedience to Him.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:5

In him verily is the love of God perfected—He professes to have the love of God in his heart, and that love receives its completion or filling up by obedience to the will of God. That obedience is the proper carrying out, or the exponent of the love which exists in the heart. Love to the Saviour would be defective without that, for it is never complete without obedience.

I John 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

If any claim relationship with Jesus Christ, the Scriptures reveal they should walk as He walked.

The standard for the Christian's behavior is therefore modeled in their Savior. Through Christ the believer has been born again, given a new spiritual heart, and become a completely new creature.

It is this spiritual transformation of becoming a new man through faith in the Son of God that allows for the believer to walk as his Savior walked.

So also, when men sincerely walk as Jesus walked, they will, like their Savior, be about the Father's business.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:6

Ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked—Ought to live and act as he did. If he is one with him, or professes to be united to him, he ought to imitate him in all things. Compare John 13:15. [*For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*]

When believers become imitators of Jesus Christ through pursuing His love and obedience to God, then they prove themselves as true followers of God.

I John 2:7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

Benson Commentary, I John 2:7

“The new commandment,” says Macknight, “of which the apostle speaks, is that contained in 1 John 2:6. That Christ's disciples ought to walk even as he walked; and in particular that, as Christ laid down his life for his people, they ought to lay down their lives for one another, chap. 1 John 3:16. Thus, to walk as Christ walked, St. John, with great propriety, termed a new commandment, because, notwithstanding the precept to love one another was strongly enjoined in the law of Moses, consequently was not a new commandment, the precept to love one another as Christ loved us, was certainly a new commandment, and so is termed by Christ himself, (John 13:34,) and is thus explained and inculcated 1 John 3:16: He laid down his life for us, therefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Session 4

An Exposition of I John

I John 2:8–18

Scriptures

<i>I John 2:8</i>	<i>I John 4:17</i>	<i>I John 2:15</i>
<i>John 15:13</i>	<i>I John 4:18a</i>	<i>James 4:4</i>
<i>I John 2:9</i>	<i>I John 2:11</i>	<i>I John 2:16</i>
<i>I John 3:14</i>	<i>Proverbs 4:19</i>	<i>Job 33:14–17</i>
<i>I John 2:10</i>	<i>Matthew 6:23</i>	<i>Romans 8:6</i>
<i>I John 4:8</i>	<i>II Corinthians 11:14</i>	<i>I John 2:17</i>
<i>Romans 13:10</i>	<i>I John 2:12–14</i>	<i>I John 2:18</i>

I John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

NEW commandment.

Though Scripture previously spoke of love, it was not fully manifested, nor could it be truly comprehended, until the coming of God's only-begotten Son.

John's commandment is new because of the divine love that led Christ to lay down His life for the brethren.

It was this depth of love, where one was willing to die for the sins of others, which reveals, the true essence of love.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus laid down His life not for family but for friends. One could perhaps fathom dying for those we have blood relationship with, such as children and other close family members, yet Jesus died for the ungodly: those who were strangers to God, alienated from Him, and Who had lived lives completely contrary to divine will.

Life is the most precious thing a man has. In fact, it is all he really has, and is his most priceless possession. To give it up, is to give up all that one has.

This is the divine love that Jesus manifested. It is this manner of love, of being willing to lay down our life for the brethren (if not unto death, then surely in life), that any who claim relationship with the Son of God are commanded to walk in.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:8

Which thing is true in him—In the Lord Jesus. That is, which commandment or law of love was illustrated in him, or was manifested by him in his contact with his disciples. That which was most prominent in him was this very love which he enjoined on all his followers.

The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

This light that now shines is Jesus Christ, and the love He openly manifested in the world.

This divine love can still be felt in those who have been given Christ's own divine nature in the form of the Holy Spirit today.

When a man is baptized by Jesus Christ, and has been given the Spirit of God, then God's love will be shed forth, and the glory of the Savior, is again revealed in the world.

I John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

No man who truly abides in the light, by abiding in Christ and His love, *hateth his brother*.

Hate blinds; it does not enlighten.

Where hate is, darkness is, and all who hate remain in darkness even now. Light and hate are incompatible.

Thus, it is impossible to hate the brethren and have any connection to divine light whatsoever.

Nowhere also is maintaining a false profession of the Lord more tolerated than in today's churches. Sadly, merely claiming that one is a Christian is enough for most people to accept you as such.

Yet it is not merely a profession of faith that saves a man if there is no true obedience to the Son of God and His will for man.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:9

And hateth his brother—The word "brother" seems here to refer to those who professed the same religion. The word is indeed sometimes used in a larger sense, but the reference here appears to be to that which is properly brotherly love among Christians.

Is in darkness even until now—That is, he cannot have true religion unless he has love to the brethren. The command to love one another was one of the most solemn and earnest which Christ ever enjoined, John 15:17; he made it the special badge of discipleship, or that by which his followers were to be everywhere known, John 13:35; and it is, therefore, impossible to have any true religion without love to those who are sincerely and truly his followers. If a man has not that, he is in deep darkness, whatever else he may have, on the whole subject of religion. Compare the notes at 1 Thessalonians 4:9 [*But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*].

In true Christian behavior, there is no substitute for divine love. It is heralded as greater than even faith and hope.

Love is what God is, and none can claim true relationship with Him, who do not possess the same love as God.

Love led Jesus' ministry while on the earth, and all who are called to heaven through Him, will manifest this same love. Because of their proximity to the Master, those saved by the Son of God, will manifest the same generous love as Him.

By love we know that a man has passed from death unto life, but if a man does not genuinely possess Christ's love in his heart, then it is certain he remains spiritually dead.

Where love therefore is, life is; where love is absent, life also is as well.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

I John 2:10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

When a man loves his brother with sincerity and genuineness, then he abides in God's light and reveals himself as a true child of God.

God is love, and there is not anyone who truly abides in Him, who will not naturally walk in His love.

Since love is what constitutes God's very own holy nature, then men are foolish to believe that they can have any true connection to the Lord, if they lack the very essence of His being.

Hence, the foundation of any true knowledge of God, both must, and will, include the possession of God's love.

If a man does not possess this divine fruit, then he is surely not a true Christian, and should never be recognized as such.

I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

None occasion of stumbling in him.

If a man truly loves both God and those born of Him, then little in this life will cause him to stumble.

By pursuing Christ's love, men avoid sin, and will do nothing ill to their neighbors.

Thus, he who truly loves both God, and the people of God, will neither create a stumbling block to himself, in his own spiritual walk, nor be a stumbling block to other Christians, in theirs.

Wherever also true love for God and other Christians exists, the Lord's divine law has been fulfilled.

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 13:10

Fulfilling of the law.—The form of the Greek word implies not only that love helps a man to fulfil the law, but that in the fact of the presence of love in his heart the law is actually fulfilled.

So great is the divine commandment to love that when men walk in it, practice it daily, and pursue its expansion in their lives, it fulfills God's complete purpose for their lives.

Thus, if a man truly desires to do God's will in his life, he should pursue walking in the very nature of God.

If it is truly love that rules a man, forms his character, and is the underlying force behind all his actions and decisions, then he will be filled with boldness, and not timidity, when Jesus returns to judge the world in righteousness.

1 John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 John 4:17

That we may have boldness in the day of judgment—... The idea is, that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment, and may even approach the awful tribunal where he is to receive the sentence which shall determine his everlasting destiny without alarm.

1 John 4:18a There is no fear in love.

Love's divine presence drives out not only the fear of man, but also all fear of God.

The greatest shame that sinners will have at Christ's judgment, is their disobedience to Christ's very clear and direct message, to love. Since love is Christ's greatest commandment, then not to love is the greatest sin.

And though most do not believe that the absence of love is sin, in truth there is no greater sin that can be committed.

Not to love, in the Lord's eyes, is the greatest sin of all.

1 John 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

This truth the apostle states with undeniable clarity, that those who hate possess absolutely no affinity to the light whatsoever, and as a result have no closeness, resemblance, or association either with God or the Son of God.

Not only, though, do those who hate the brethren both live and walk in darkness, but they also, as a further result of their sin, possess no true compass by which to govern their own lives.

Proverbs 4:19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

A wise and truly righteous man can sin and see the error of his way, but the wicked have no heavenly light to make known their sin. Hate, therefore, so blinds a man's soul that all ability to navigate properly in this life is lost.

The willful sinner, then, is blind not only to God and His light, but also equally to any true wisdom regarding how to govern his own life properly.

There is a great and dangerous consequence for abandoning God's will; it is that darkness will completely overtake the sinner.

He also who sins, has no idea whatsoever of the great error he is committing, nor the final death that sin will produce.

Pulpit Commentary, Prov. 4:19

The expression, *they know not at what they stumble*, carries with it the idea that they are so ignorant that they neither know wickedness as wickedness, nor do they apprehend the destruction which it involves. “Sins, however great and detestable they may be, are looked upon as trivial, or as not sins at all, when men get accustomed to them” (St. Augustine, ‘*Enchiridion*,’ cap. 80).

If evil is perceived as light, then darkness will encompass a man’s entire soul.

Matthew 6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Vincent’s Word Studies, Matt. 6:23

“Seeing falsely is worse than blindness. A man who is too dim-sighted to discern the road from the ditch, may feel which is which; but if the ditch appears manifestly to him to be the road, and the road to be the ditch, what shall become of him? False seeing is unseeing, on the negative side of blindness” (Ruskin, “*Modern Painters*”).

Who also can really be saved if they view hate as a form of enlightenment? With all devilish deception, the illusion is given that one is following the light.

Indeed, those most in the dark often view themselves as the most enlightened men of all.

Many also have ignorantly believed they were following God, while being filled with hate, when in fact, it was only Satan’s deception that created their illusion.

II Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 11:14

For Satan himself is transformed . . . —That is, he who is an apostate angel; who is malignant and wicked; who is the prince of evil, assumes the appearance of a holy angel. Paul assumes this as an indisputable and admitted truth, without attempting to prove it, and without referring to any particular instances. Probably he had in his eye cases where Satan put on false and delusive appearances for the purpose of deceiving, or where he assumed the appearance of great sanctity and reverence for the authority of God. Such instances occurred in the temptation of our first parents Genesis 3:1–6, and in the temptation of the Saviour, Matthew 4. The phrase “an angel of light,” means a pure and holy angel, light being the emblem of purity and holiness. Such are all the angels that dwell in heaven; and the idea is, that Satan assumes such a form as to appear to be such an angel. Learn here:

(1) His power. He can assume such an aspect as he pleases. He can dissemble and appear to be eminently pious. He is the prince of duplicity as well as of wickedness; and it is the consummation of bad power for an individual to be able to assume any character which he pleases.

(2) His art. He is long practiced in deceitful arts. For six thousand years he has been practicing the art of delusion. And with him it is perfect.

(3) We are not to suppose that all that appears to be piety is piety. Some of the most plausible appearances of piety are assumed by Satan and his ministers. None ever professed a profounder regard for the authority of God than Satan did when he tempted the Saviour. And if the prince of wickedness can appear to be an angel of light, we are not to be surprised if those who have the blackest hearts appear to be people of most eminent piety.

(4) We should be on our guard. We should not listen to suggestions merely because they appear to come from a pious man, nor because they seem to be prompted by a regard to the will of God. We may be always sure that, if we are to be tempted, it will be by someone having a great appearance of virtue and religion.

(5) We are not to expect that Satan will appear to man to be as bad as he is. He never shows himself openly to be a spirit of pure wickedness; or black and abominable in his character; or full of evil and hateful. He would thus defeat himself. It is for this reason that wicked people do not believe that there is such a being as Satan. Though continually under his influence and “led captive by him at his will,” yet they neither see him nor the chains which lead them, nor are they willing to believe in the existence of the one or the other.

I John 2:12–14 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.

¹³ I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

¹⁴ I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Because the Holy Spirit is Himself light, He will detect and identify when darkness is only parading itself as light.

Discerning of spirits is that spiritual ability and gift of God, which enables those saved by Him, to detect not only the true workings of the Holy Spirit in their own souls, but also all other deceptive and erring spirits, seeking to lead them away from God.

Through the possession of the Holy Spirit, and the discernment and power He produces in the believer, Christians will be brought to know God, and that they have overcome the wicked one.

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Previously the apostle warned of the danger of hate; now he speaks of the ever-present danger of loving a carnal and sinful world.

He who loves the world cannot truly love God, and he who loves God, will forsake any true love or affection he might have for the world.

This world is corrupt; therefore, any true love or affection for it, reveals that there is no true affection for God, or the spiritual holiness that He seeks to lead men toward.

Hence, just as saints love God and will forsake the world for Him, those who love the world, will gladly forsake God for it.

It is impossible to love the world, and at the same time properly claim any true and sincere love for its Creator.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 2:15

If any man love the world . . . —If, in this sense, a person loves the world, it shows that he has no true religion; that is, if characteristically he loves the world as his portion, and lives for that; if it is the ruling principle of his life to gain and enjoy that, it shows that his heart has never been renewed, and that he has no part with the children of God.

If a man also seeks to be a friend of this world, he has positioned himself as God's enemy.

To be a friend of the world is to align oneself with it. Thus, wherever and whenever, men choose fellowship with the world, they have made themselves the Lord's enemies.

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 4:4

Is enmity with God—Is in fact hostility against God, since that world is arrayed against him. It neither obeys his laws, submits to his claims, nor seeks to honor him. To love that world is, therefore, to be arrayed against God; and the spirit which would lead us to this is, in fact, a spirit of hostility to God.

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world—“Whoever” he may be, whether in the church or out of it. The fact of being a member of the church makes no difference in this respect, for it is as easy to be a friend of the world in the church as out of it. The phrase “whosoever will” implies “purpose, intention, design.” It supposes that the heart is set on it; or that there is a deliberate purpose to seek the friendship of the world. It refers to that strong desire which often exists, even among professing Christians, to secure the friendship of the world; to copy its fashions and vanities; to enjoy its pleasures; and to share its pastimes and its friendships. . . .

Is the enemy of God—This is a most solemn declaration, and one of fearful import in its bearing on many who are members of the church. It settles the point that anyone, no matter what his professions, who is characteristically a friend of the world, cannot be a true Christian.

I John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Lust of the flesh.

The Greek word for *lust* is *epithumia* #1939 *Strong's* defines it as “desire, passionate longing, lust.”

The unsaved have a great longing to satisfy not God, but the fallen nature of self. Since those unsaved are nothing but flesh, then they will seek to live their lives solely by its desires and appetites.

Lust of the eyes.

It was the lust of the eyes that led to Eve's sin, when she saw the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eye, and able to make one wise.

Much sin and rebellion begin with the eye, and then they expand themselves so that the entire body is consumed by them.

Many a man has looked upon something with lust, which then ultimately led him to turn away from God, and His will for his life.

Pride of life.

There is nothing more dangerous and able to prevent salvation than pride.

The Lord detests pride. It was this that led to Satan's fall, and countless men have followed his rebellious example.

No doubt the devil's main attribute is his pride. Consequently, the one thing he seeks to promote above all other things in this world is leading men to imitate his own evil character.

Pride is also that deceptive sin that God seeks to hide from men, simply because if most get a taste of it, they will value it so much more, than the pursuit of holiness.

Job 33:14–17 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not
¹⁵*In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;*
¹⁶*Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,*
¹⁷*That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 33:17

From his purpose.—Rather, That He may withdraw man from carrying out his evil actions, and may remove that pride from man which he secretly cherishes. This is the main point of Elihu's teaching: that the purposes of God are disciplinary, to keep man from the sin which otherwise he would be prone to commit.

At the core of all pride is an inward desire to be worshiped as God.

Practically, this is first evidenced, when men worship themselves. This is what Satan desired, and so will all those who have chosen to follow his apostate example, engage in as well.

The nature by which a man is ruled is what ultimately determines his appetites and passions. Consequently, those born of the *flesh* will have no other desire than those that are both worldly and fleshly.

But God's Word reveals that all who choose to be led by the sinful nature of the flesh will die.

To be *carnally minded is death*; thus when a man is ruled by the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, he has no other end, than the grave and complete separation from all things eternal. This undoubtedly includes God Himself.

To be led by the flesh, and its unholy desires, is to ultimately separate oneself from any true hope of receiving the eternal life presented through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 8:6

For to be carnally minded—Margin, "The minding of the flesh." The sense is, that to follow the inclinations of the flesh, or the corrupt propensities of our nature, leads us to condemnation and death. The expression is one of great energy, and shows that it not only leads to death, or leads to misery, but that it is death itself; there is woe and condemnation in the very act and purpose of being supremely devoted to the corrupt passions. Its only tendency is condemnation and despair.

It makes no difference what men love in the world—whether it is wealth, leisure, hobbies, or any other worldly affection; to love this world, is to forfeit any hope of receiving God's eternal spiritual life.

I John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

What a man does, how he lives, and what he cherishes ultimately determine his destiny. It is therefore only those who *[do] the will of God* that God has promised will *abideth for ever*.

Sin is temporary, and though it sprouts, blooms, and has its day, it quickly fades and passes away.

Of this God's Word is certain: the wicked will perish, and only the righteous are given the hope of living forever.

Obedience to the eternal God has as its heavenly reward, receiving the same spiritual life as Him.

I John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

The phrase *the last time* makes no determination regarding the length of time that needs to be completed before Christ's appearance. It is enough to know that both *antichrists* and the *antichrist* will come before the Son of God is revealed to the world, of which He also is to ultimately rule.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, I John 2:18

Every man is an antichrist, who denies the Person, or any of the offices of Christ; and in denying the Son, he denies the Father also, and has no part in his favour while he rejects his great salvation.

To reject Christ's lordship is itself a form of antichrist.

Hence, if a man does not submit to Christ's rule, he rejects Christ's government and the overall authority God has given to His Son.

It is God's right to transfer authority to whom He wills, and His will is that His Son will reign over mankind forever.

Thus, all who are properly labeled antichrist, are those resistant to Christ's divine rule.

To be anti-Christ is to reject the rule of Christ, and the power and authority that God has now given to His Son.

By this truth, it is easily observed, that those who choose to reject Jesus as Lord of their lives are by God's definition antichrist.

The more also the Son of God is rejected on the earth, the closer time draws, for Christ's judgment to come upon her.

Session 5

An Exposition of I John

I John 2:19–24

Scriptures

I John 2:19
Galatians 5:9
Matthew 13:25
Luke 14:33
I John 2:20
I John 2:21

I John 2:22
Romans 1:4
Acts 2:36
Matthew 16:13–17
Luke 2:11
I John 2:23

II Corinthians 5:19
John 1:12
Galatians 4:6
I John 2:24
Matthew 24:13

I John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

They went out from us, but they were not of us.

John's words prove that those who depart from the faith were never really of it.

Apostates can and will remain with true believers for a time, but then there will arrive a day when their false professions of faith become manifest.

Impure motives are not enough to keep men faithful to their religion for their entire life.

Jesus' disciple Judas is an example of this. Though he walked with the Lord Jesus for a number of years, his true inward character eventually came to be made known.

Spiritual counterfeits therefore cannot and will not remain faithful to Christ unto the end—as their allowed departure from the faith is purposed to be revealed by God that they were never true saints.

Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Even a small amount of religious hypocrisy will affect the growth of a Christian assembly. Because the Lord allows the departure of those who once called themselves Christians, the influence they once had or could have had in the true church of Christ is greatly diminished.

Thus, when men depart from Christ, Whom they once professed to follow, they soon lose their authority to influence all who remain loyal to Him.

To understand apostasy properly, it is important to know first that those who leave the faith were once considered part of it. They took on the habits of conversion, but were never truly converted.

Second, God allows their departure so that their false profession of faith might be fully known, removing any confusion as to what true faith really is.

Third, with the departure of these counterfeit believers, the true church of Christ is better able to grow in the divine qualities of love and spiritual unity.

When schisms are removed, even if they were undetected by many, then harmony and peace are more freely able to flourish among the redeemed.

A long-standing practical military tactic in warfare is to infiltrate the enemy and cause as much internal disruption as possible. Satan does this by planting people with false motives among those whose hearts are pure towards the Savior.

Planting tares among the wheat is a common devilish practice in the spiritual realm.

Matthew 13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 13:25

While men slept, his enemy came . . . —That is, “in the night,” when it could be done without being seen, an enemy came and scattered bad seed on the new plowed field, perhaps before the good seed had been harrowed in. . . .

Sowed tares—By “tares” is probably meant a degenerate kind of wheat, or the darnel-grass growing in Palestine. In its growth and form it has a strong resemblance to genuine wheat; but it either produces no grain, or that of a very inferior and hurtful kind. Probably it comes near to what we mean by “chess.” It was extremely difficult to separate it from the genuine wheat, on account of its similarity while growing.

“The tare abounds all over the East, and is a great nuisance to the farmer. It resembles the American ‘cheat (chess),’ but the ‘head’ does not droop like cheat, nor does it branch out like oats. The grain, also, is smaller, and is arranged along the upper part of the stalk, which stands perfectly erect. The ‘taste’ is bitter, and when eaten separately, or even when diffused in ordinary bread, it causes dizziness, and often acts as a violent emetic. Barn-door fowls also become dizzy from eating it. In short, it is a strong soporific poison, and must be carefully winnowed, and picked out of the wheat grain by grain, before grinding, or the flour is not healthy. Even the farmers, who in this country generally ‘weed’ their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other. They would not only mistake good grain for them, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to ‘grow together’ until the time of harvest.”—(Thomson) “The Land and the Book,” vol. ii. pp. 111, 112. Thus, “tares” aptly represented hypocrites in the church. Strongly resembling Christians in their experience, and, in some respects, their lives it is impossible to distinguish them from genuine Christians, nor can they be separated until it is done by the Great Searcher of hearts at the day of judgment. An enemy the devil hath done it. And nowhere has he shown profounder cunning, or done more to adulterate the purity of the gospel.

Men depart from anything because there is someplace more pleasing to them where they wish to go. When men depart from the faith, however, there is no place to go but back to the world.

There are but two forms of government that men will ultimately choose to align themselves with. First, it is the government through which the god of this world, Satan, sets the parameters on how men can live while in it. In this worldly government Satan promises much freedom. Not only can men live as they will, with no judgment, but they are also encouraged to embrace self-will and self-government. In Satan’s world, self-love and self-will are far more preferable than love for God and subjection to divine will.

Those who love the world and are willing to depart from the faith for it reveal themselves as preferring human government, or the government of self, man, and Satan, over the heavenly rule of God. Human will is embraced over divine will, and rejection of God is chosen over obedience to God's commandments.

By leaving the faith and the body of believers who still practice it, apostates reveal that they never really possessed true piety at all.

Though they may have walked among the saved, their love for the world ultimately reveals no sincere love for God and the higher spiritual realm was ever held.

What men love they will always eventually serve, and those who love the world will possess no compunction in leaving God and His people for the world.

The true test of discipleship, therefore, is whether a man is willing to forsake all for Christ, or if he will forsake Christ for earthly and worldly affections.

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Luke 14:33

Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not . . . —Better, that renounceth not. This, then, was the immediate lesson which the company of eager disciples had to learn: to say good-bye to their "all," whatever that might be. Fishing-nets and hired servants, or great possessions, or ease and safety, or besetting sins, or fancied righteousness—all had to be renounced. The word for "forsake" is that which was afterwards used in the baptismal formula, "I renounce the devil and all his works," and the same as that which is translated "bidding farewell" in Luke 9:61, Acts 18:18.

The standard of leaving everything to follow Christ is the true test of discipleship. This standard is that which Jesus Himself set, and it should never be lowered by men, who do not possess sufficient divine love to keep it.

To ultimately be saved by the Son of God, a man must be willing to leave everything for Him. There can be no compromise on this great spiritual truth.

To properly follow the Son of God, the penitent must be willing to leave and give up everything contrary to Christ's will for his life. There can remain nothing between the Lord and those purposed to be of His fold. If there is, then this only proves that Jesus Christ is not their Lord.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Luke 14:33

[*So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*] 1. Every man who becomes a follower of Jesus should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act and be prepared to meet them.

2. Men in other things act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there is every prospect that they will be defeated.

3. Religion is a work of soberness, of thought, of calm and fixed purpose, and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve by the grace of God to fulfil all its requirements and make it the business of his life.

4. We are to expect difficulties in religion. It will cost us the mortification of our sins, and a life of self-denial, and a conflict with our lusts, and the enmity and ridicule of the world. Perhaps it may cost us our reputation, or possibly our lives and liberties, and all that is dear to us; but we must cheerfully undertake all this, and be prepared for it all.

5. If we do not deliberately resolve to leave all things, to suffer all things that may be laid on us, and to persevere to the end of our days in the service of Christ, we cannot be his disciples. No man can be a Christian who, when he makes a profession, is resolved after a while to turn back to the world; nor can he be a true Christian if he “expects that he will” turn back. If he comes not with a “full” purpose “always” to be a Christian; if he means not to persevere, by the grace of God, through all hazards, and trials, and temptations; if he is not willing to bear his cross, and meet contempt, and poverty, and pain, and death, without turning back, he “cannot” be a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

When men leave the faith, they will return to the world, which in fact they never really left. There is no other place to go than this, and apostates are more than comfortable with their choice.

Whenever, then, men leave the faith, this is purposed by God to reveal that they were never really of it, since no man truly saved by the Son of God would depart from Him to again gain fellowship with a world that has rejected God and desires no true intimacy with Him.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 2:19

They went out from us—From the church. That is, they had once been professors of the religion of the Saviour, though their apostasy showed that they never had any true piety. John refers to the fact that they had once been in the church, perhaps to remind those to whom he wrote that they knew them well, and could readily appreciate their character. It was a humiliating statement that those who showed themselves to be so utterly opposed to religion had once been members of the Christian church; but this is a statement which we are often compelled to make.

But they were not of us—That is, they did not really belong to us, or were not true Christians. See the notes at Matthew 7:23. This passage proves that these persons, whatever their pretensions and professions may have been, were never sincere Christians. The same remark may be made of all who apostatize from the faith, and become teachers of error. They never were truly converted; never belonged really to the spiritual church of Christ. . . .

But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us—It was suffered or permitted in the providence of God that this should occur, “in order” that it might be seen and known that they were not true Christians, or in order that their real character might be developed. It was desirable that this should be done:

(a) in order that the church might be purified from their influence—compare the notes at John 15:2;

(b) in order that it might not be responsible for their conduct, or reproached on account of it;

(c) in order that their real character might be developed, and they might themselves see that they were not true Christians;

(d) in order that, being seen and known as apostates, their opinions and conduct might have less influence than if they were connected with the church;

(e) in order that they might themselves understand their own true character, and no longer live under the delusive opinion that they were Christians and were safe, but that, seeing themselves in their true light, they might be brought to repentance.

I John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

In contrast to those who were never true followers of Christ and who departed from the fellowship of the godly, true Christians are those who have the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Practically, for men to be destroyed they must first be deceived, and God's Holy Spirit provides spiritual discernment so that the true children of God will not be.

Hence, the Holy Spirit not only makes personal sin known to the Christian, but It also allows him to discern where God's true Spirit abides, and where it does not. This unction, this anointing from the Holy Spirit, is what ultimately allows Christians to discern between truth and error.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 2:20

Those anointed of God in Christ alone can resist those anointed with the spirit of Satan, Antichrists, who would sever them from the Father and from the Son. Believers have the anointing Spirit from the Father also, as well as from the Son; even as the Son is anointed therewith by the Father. Hence the Spirit is the token that we are in the Father and in the Son; without it a man is none of Christ. The material unguent of costliest ingredients, poured on the head of priests and kings, typified this spiritual unguent, derived from Christ, the Head, to us, His members. We can have no share in Him as Jesus, except we become truly Christians, and so be in Him as Christ, anointed with that unction from the Holy One. The Spirit poured on Christ, the Head, is by Him diffused through all the members.

I John 2:21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

The apostle understood that the people to whom he was writing knew the truth. Because of the Spirit's anointing and influence on their lives, they could discern between truth and error, as well as any false and deceiving spirits, impersonating themselves being of God.

Having actually come to know God, true Christians therefore are brought to know the truth, and because of this, the chance for spiritual deception can be avoided.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:21

Error often appears plausible. It seems to be adapted to relieve the mind of many difficulties which perplex and embarrass it on the subject of religion. It seems to be adapted to promote religion. It seems to make those who embrace it happy, and for a time they apparently enjoy religion. But John says that however plausible all this may be, however much it may seem to prove that the doctrines thus embraced are of God, it is a great and vital maxim that no error can have its foundation in truth, and, of course, that it must be worthless.

I John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Denieth that Jesus is the Christ.

The word for *Christ* is #5547 *Christos*. *Strong's Concordance* defines this word as "the Anointed One; the Messiah, the Christ."

From this we can see that to deny Christ is to deny the Messiah. Anti-Christ is actually anti-Messiah. To deny Christ is to deny Him Whom God has declared will rule the world.

Recognizing the critical truth that Jesus is the Messiah means both believing in and subjecting oneself to the power and lordship God has said now is the Son's.

In recognizing Jesus Christ's person as the Messiah, two important revelations from God must be believed. The first is that Jesus is God's appointed Ruler of the world. The second is that His right to rule the world stems from His relationship with God as God's only-begotten Son.

Jesus' divine sonship was proven by God raising Him from the dead.

Romans 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Not to recognize Jesus as the Son of God, and not to subject oneself to Him, Whom God has declared will rule the world, is to be anti-Christ.

Therefore, it is not enough to know Jesus as nothing more than a historical figure, nor only profess His name to be saved. This is insufficient for salvation.

For God will save no one who is not willing to yield to, and subject himself to, the Lord's purposed Ruler of the world.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

It is God Who has made and established Jesus to be the Christ; thus, any who reject Him must also reject the heavenly Father in the process.

To be anti-Christ is ultimately recognized as being anti-God, Who sent His Son.

He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

When men deny the Son and His authority over their lives, they must subsequently deny the Father.

The Father and Son are one; thus, to reject Jesus as Messiah is to reject the Father Himself. No bond is more important in Christianity than the one between God and His only begotten Son.

If any remove Jesus Christ and deem Him unessential in knowing the Father, then he is left with nothing but human and vain imagination as the foundation of his faith.

Without also the light of the Son of God revealing the true essence of God, God's ways, His judgments, and His purposes for man would forever remain a mystery.

It is in Christ that God has chosen to make Himself both known and seen, and only through God's Son can men be saved by God.

Recognizing Jesus as the Christ, God's promised Messiah, is critical in order to gain salvation from God.

It was first this belief, that Jesus is the Messiah, that led Peter to become one of the Lord's disciples.

Matthew 16:13–17 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

¹⁴ And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Peter's recognition of Jesus as *the Christ, the Son of the living God* reveals that he knew the true nature of Jesus and the authority that God had given Him.

Christ and Lord cannot be separated.

Thus, to sincerely believe in the Son of God must result in making Jesus Lord of your life.

The birth of Jesus signified that Jesus was purposed to be not only this world's Savior but also her Lord.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Luke 2:11

Christ the Lord] "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ," Acts 2:36; Php 2:11. 'Christ' or 'Anointed' is the Greek equivalent of Messiah. . . . "We preach Christ Jesus the Lord," 2 Corinthians 4:5 (see Php 2:11; Romans 14:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; "No one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Corinthians 12:3).

I John 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.

To deny the Son is to deny God's authority over your life. This denial, ultimately, means to refuse to submit to God's rule or follow His person.

In the Son, God has made Himself known; consequently, to deny the Son is to reject the very one God sent to reconcile man to Himself.

II Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Sinners often foolishly believe that they can casually believe in God, and be saved by Him, without any true subjection to God's Son. Time will reveal this to be a great spiritual miscalculation.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:23

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father—That is, has no just views of the Father, and has no evidence of his friendship. It is only by the Son of God that the Father is made known to people, Matthew 11:27; Hebrews 1:2–3, and it is only through him that we can become reconciled to God, and obtain evidence of His favor.

He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

A true relationship with God begins when one accepts the Son of God and genuinely believes in His heavenly authority.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

It is the Son of God Who provides the privilege of being brought into the family of God.

Therefore not until Jesus Christ is fully received can men possess any true hope of becoming sons of God themselves.

He that acknowledgeth the Son and is spiritually baptized by Him is given the Spirit of God, confirming adoption into the family of God. By receiving the Holy Spirit through Christ, it is confirmed and verified that spiritual sonship has occurred.

But if a man lacks receiving the Holy Spirit from Christ, then God has declared that he is none of His.

Ultimately, only when men have been given the Holy Spirit through belief in the Son of God can they know they have been made to become sons of God themselves.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 4:6

And because ye are sons—As a consequence of your being adopted into the family of God, and being regarded as his sons. It follows as a part of his purpose of adoption that his children shall have the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

I John 2:24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

Once a man has been made a son of God, he must remain loyal to Christ's calling in order to maintain both fellowship and relationship with the Father and Son.

In no place does Scripture allow for unfaithfulness after conversion. Since the Lord provides no second renewal, nor adding of mercy for any who, once exposed to the Son of God, then walk away from Him.

To make Jesus Christ Lord is to make Him the ultimate authority, not only presently over your life, but also throughout the entirety of your life.

Continuance of faith, and loyalty to Jesus Christ are essential to entering the eternal life offered by Him.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, Matt. 24:13

It is a promise to perseverance, especially to such perseverance as is joined with fortitude. He that shall not be tempted to apostasy through the afflictions of the gospel, but shall patiently and courageously endure all the sufferings which shall follow the profession of the gospel, shall be saved; if not preserved, and so saved with a temporal salvation, yet he shall be eternally saved.

Session 6

An Exposition of I John

I John 2:25–3:2

Scriptures

I John 2:25

I John 2:26

I John 2:27

John 14:26

I Corinthians 2:10

I Corinthians 2:14

I John 2:28

I John 2:29

I John 3:1

I John 3:2

Romans 8:19

Revelation 21:5

Isaiah 65:17

Revelation 21:4

I John 2:25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

The promise spoken of is that promise of the Son of God proclaiming that whosoever believed in Him would be given God's eternal life. This heavenly promise was personally given to John by Jesus Christ Himself. Hence, the apostle seeks to assure his readers that what *he* (Jesus Christ) *hath promised*, pertaining to receiving eternal life, was given to John while Christ tabernacled in the flesh—the one also Whose bosom John leaned upon and Who, it is recorded, loved John.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:25

And this is the promise that he [Jesus Christ] hath promised us, even eternal life—This is evidently added to encourage them in adhering to the truths which they had embraced respecting the Son of God. In maintaining these truths they had the promise of eternal life; in departing from them they had none, for the “promise” of heaven in our world is made only to those who embrace one class of doctrines or opinions.

I John 2:26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

The believers to whom John was speaking had not actually been seduced, but many false teachers were attempting to accomplish such a purpose.

There have always been, and always will be, those who try to turn people from the faith. Elymas the sorcerer was such a man (Acts 13:8).

Thus, whenever the Holy Spirit and His power and spiritual fruit are drawing men to God, those with unholy spirits, who themselves have already rejected God, will exert great energy to influence others to leave the faith.

If they are successful and men are deceived and depart from God, as the Greek word for *seduce* implies, then endless wandering will be the result.

The Greek word for *seduce* is #4105 *planōntōn*, “to cause to wander, to wander.”

Israel's unbelief in God's promises led to their wanderings in the desert, and ultimately only two, Joshua and Caleb, were allowed to enter the promised land.

Hence the judgment for not believing in the Son of God and His purposes for coming into the world will result, as with Israel, in an endless state of wandering. This is what transpired with the Jews, and the same result will occur if men willfully reject Christ today.

1 John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Previously the apostle spoke of the knowledge of Christ (v. 24); now he references the anointing given by Him in the form of the Holy Spirit, which allows saints to be spiritually taught of God. Christ's Spirit would teach them and introduce caution not to trust the deceptive words of the religious counterfeits.

The Spirit of God consequently teaches those born of God, not only to recognize and repent of sin, but also to discern between truth and error.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, John 14:26

he shall teach you all things: this is the proper work and business of the Spirit, to teach, interpret, and explain all things which Christ had said to them; to make them more plain and easy to their understandings; to instruct them in all things necessary to salvation, and to be known by them, that they might teach them others:

A Christian can possess no greater teacher than the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the Christian's great spiritual tutor and can enlighten him on so many things concerning God and the higher spiritual realm.

1 Corinthians 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

No mere fleshly man can come to know the deeper things of the Lord through his own natural ability.

This is because the spiritual realm noticeably is separate from the material realm; as such, the Holy Spirit is needed to unlock its hidden truths and mysteries.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The Lord's Spirit is necessary for instruction in the invisible spiritual world.

To truly learn of God, Who is Spirit, one must be taught by Him, and this can only occur through the illumination and enlightenment produced by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual things can be communicated only through spiritual means, and the Holy Spirit is Whom God employs for this purpose.

Thus, for God, Who is Spirit, to make Himself known to man, His own divine nature is necessary to be possessed, so that what cannot be seen or perceived through physical sight, can be grasped through spiritual illumination.

Ultimately, God has chosen to make Himself known through His Son, His Word, and His Spirit. It is through these three divine entities, which are all directly connected to the Father and part of His own holy nature, that God makes Himself known to the material world.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

This verse teaches us that if men have not abided in Christ while on earth, then they will be ashamed at Christ's return to it.

Thus, only those who actually abided in the Son of God, will possess confidence at His coming from heaven. Mere professors of religion will have no such internal spiritual assurance, even as all who have willfully chosen to go their own way will realize the fateful consequence of their error.

The reasons for the sinners' shame when having to give account for the carnal lives they have lived, will be numerous:

- (1) They will be ashamed of their unbelief, which they once thought little of.
- (2) They will learn that Jesus is exactly Who He said He was, and was never an impostor.
- (3) They will discover that a higher spiritual realm of God not only exists, but also rules and overrules all things worldly.
- (4) They will discover with alarm, that now they have to give account for their sin.
- (5) Their lives will be seen to have been lived in vain, with no respect for the hereafter, and this will be recognized as a great unchangeable error.
- (6) They will be publicly ashamed for the carnal motives that led them, and the hidden and selfish desires they were governed by.
- (7) They will be distraught for believing lies over the truth, since now the truth will be made clearly visible to them.
- (8) They will learn that things they foolishly thought could be hidden from God, could not be, once Jesus reveals their true hearts.
- (9) Sinners will learn that the way to heaven was not nearly as broad as they had once hoped it would be. But at this time, there will remain no means to reverse their previous decisions or the fact that they willingly rejected divine rule.

I John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Righteous and spiritual obedience is the true fruit of divine birth. Just as God is righteous, so those born of Him will seek to walk in His righteousness.

Thus, pursuing God's righteousness is credible evidence of being born of God and being made a Son of God; this is because the new birth gives a man the ability to walk righteously in order that he may keep God's commandments while also gaining sufficient internal spiritual desire to remain faithful to God.

Because God has given His sons new spiritual hearts, pursuing righteousness will be their preferred way of living.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 2:29

do righteousness, which alone would evidence their Divine birth, since God hath no children destitute of his image, or who resemble him not.

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

No greater manifestation of divine love is revealed than when, by grace, God enables previous sinners to become sons of God through Jesus Christ.

It is this spiritual love that John directs his readers to *behold* and dwell upon so that they might more fully recognize the great act of grace that has been bestowed upon them.

No emperor, ruler, conqueror, or king who has ever lived will exceed the glory given to God's true children.

To be accounted as a son of God is the highest office, most exalted position, and greatest honor ever given to men, and it was only divine love that produced such a heavenly blessing.

God has evidenced many other acts of grace and favor throughout the dispensations of the world. Yet none compare to His grace in imparting heavenly sonship to those who through themselves could never be worthy of it.

I John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

In Christ's kingdom all are one in Him, and none are lesser than another.

When any are saved, they receive the very same rights and privileges as all the other sons of God. This includes even Jesus' early apostles and disciples. Thus, John emphasizes the wonderful revelation that those he is writing to now will fully share in the same honor as himself. This is evidenced by the apostle's repetition of *we* in regards to not only his own hope at Christ's return, but also all God's new sons, to whom he is addressing his epistle.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

There is a certain mystery regarding the transformation which will occur to saints at Christ's appearance.

It doth not yet appear.

It is not visible; it cannot be seen. The secret things belong unto the Lord, and this is one of those hidden secrets.

Perhaps what awaits the saints is beyond present human understanding, so that even if God attempted to reveal it to us, the reality would far exceed anything we could ever grasp.

Thus, just as the full extent of Christ's own glory remains a mystery, so also is the coming glory of what His people will be made through Him, likewise largely a mystery.

Yea, *it doth not yet appear* what true Christians shall be, but only that they will be made to share in the same glorious image as their Savior.

When he shall appear, we shall be like him.

No truth more exemplifies the incredible oneness that Christ shares with His people than the fact that at His return they will be made to share in the same glorious and spiritual image as Himself.

Ultimately, Christ became flesh so that we could be made spiritual beings through His death, resurrection, and ascension.

By Jesus taking on our physical nature, we are afforded the glorious opportunity to share in His own eternal and spiritual nature.

What God has made the Head to be will be passed on to each and every one of His members. As the Head is, so will the body be. Thus, when Jesus Christ is fully glorified and made known to the world, then will the full and complete glorification of His people also be made visible. They will be as He is, even as He became as they were. And this will be practically demonstrated when all those chosen by the Son of God are made to share in the same heavenly image as Himself.

See him as he is.

The believer's promised glorification is expressingly linked to the sight of his Savior.

Scripture does not contain a more beautiful revelation than this, the revelation that when believers observe the glorified Lord Jesus, at His return in glory, they will at this very moment, be changed into His own glorious image.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:2

For we shall see him as he is—Which it would be impossible we should do if we were not like him. Or rather, as perhaps the apostle chiefly means, the great privilege being granted us, of seeing him as he is, the sight of him will transform us into his likeness.

The Book of Romans reveals that the whole of creation both waits, and anticipates the future revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

A new heaven and earth will emerge, in which holiness and righteousness will dwell.

Revelation 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Commentators differ as to what the *creature* spoken of in Romans rightfully refers to. One school of thought is that the reference is to the new creation formed in the Christian at conversion.

Romans 7 speaks of the conflict between the old and the new nature in the Christian, which lasts until a total transformation of his body has taken place. Another more embraced interpretation is that the *creature* spoken of is all created things, the entire realm of God's creation.

In truth, both interpretations are valid, and both can be believed; thus, we need not throw one out, in order to maintain confidence in the other.

This is simply because the liberty that the Christian will experience at Christ's second coming will simultaneously be felt in the whole of creation.

Hence, both the saint, and the fallen world around him, will be changed and readied for the ushering in of the kingdom of God.

Practically, all must be made new for the new spiritual reign of God's Son to commence. And just as there will be a new world order, so will the entirety of creation be liberated from its present increasing decay and corruption.

The promise that God will make all things new, is not itself fully new, as Isaiah prophesied of this coming event.

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Once believers are made completely new spiritual beings through Christ's power, they will no longer remember their previous and painful earthly troubles.

The past will be over, forgotten, erased, and so totally removed from the consciousness of the saved, that even if they looked for previous sorrow, it could not be found.

With a new spiritual world, and new heavenly bodies, saints will create new memories, hopes, and affections fit for their new heavenly environment. All former things shall have passed, and all things shall be made new.

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Benson Commentary, Rev. 21:4

From the first mention of him that sat upon the throne, (Revelation 5:1) this is the first speech which is expressly ascribed to him. [Rev. 5:1 *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*] He [God in Christ] is the author of this second, as he was of the first creation; and he commands these things to be *written* for the edification, support, and consolation of his people, with a full assurance of their certainty and importance. *And he*—The same person; *saith to me, Write*—Namely, as follows: *These words are true and faithful*—This includes all that went before. The apostle seems again to have ceased writing, being overcome with ecstasy and the voice of him that spake.

Session 7

An Exposition of I John

I John 3:3–19

Scriptures

<i>I John 3:3</i>	<i>John 16:8</i>	<i>I John 3:10</i>	<i>I John 3:14</i>
<i>I Corinthians 15:49</i>	<i>I John 3:7</i>	<i>I John 4:20</i>	<i>I John 3:15</i>
<i>Hebrews 7:26</i>	<i>Jude 1:4</i>	<i>I John 3:11</i>	<i>Romans 2:16</i>
<i>John 15:3</i>	<i>I John 3:8</i>	<i>Matthew 22:40</i>	<i>I John 3:16</i>
<i>I John 3:4</i>	<i>Colossians 2:15</i>	<i>I John 3:12</i>	<i>I John 3:17</i>
<i>Ezekiel 36:26–27</i>	<i>I John 3:9</i>	<i>Genesis 4:8</i>	<i>I John 3:18</i>
<i>I John 3:5</i>	<i>John 14:17</i>	<i>Genesis 4:4–5</i>	<i>I John 3:19</i>
<i>Matthew 1:21</i>	<i>I Peter 1:23</i>	<i>I John 3:13</i>	
<i>I John 3:6</i>	<i>Romans 8:6</i>	<i>II Corinthians 2:16</i>	

I John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

When men draw near to Christ by faith, a bond is created between them and Christ. This divine act creates a union between the sinner and the Lord. The hope of being united with the Savior and sharing in His heavenly image ultimately purifies the soul.

Whatever a man sets his mind on and journeys toward, directly affects the inside of his soul. This is especially true when the hope is spiritual and the focus is becoming like the Savior.

I Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 15:49

The argument here is, that the connection which is formed between the believer and the Saviour is as close as that which subsisted between him and Adam; and as that connection with Adam involved the certainty that he would be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ involves the certainty that he will like him free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal.

Even as he is pure.

The glory and beauty of the Savior reside in His purity. It is not just that Jesus did not sin and was able to resist the sinful urges of His body, but rather in Him is no sin. He was sinless, holy, and without blemish or defect.

Hebrews 7:26 For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

It is this purity, this cleanliness of heart and soul, that Christ passes on to those who believe on Him.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

What begins on earth with Christ's words cleansing the soul, and the Holy Spirit enlightening the heart, will be finished when Jesus returns from heaven to completely transform the saint's body.

In short, the ministry of the Son of God is purposed to bring repentant sinners into Christ's own divine image and purity.

Just as *He is pure*, so shall all those who believe upon Him, by His power, share in His own divine, celestial, and eternal holy nature.

1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Sin is contrary to divine law, and in opposition to God's holy nature. It prompts, leads, influences, and even controls men to do as they desire and not as God wills.

If a man remains indifferent to his sin and perceives no harm in breaking God's commandments, you can be sure that Jesus Christ is not his Lord.

One can recognize those born of God and filled with His Spirit, by their obedience and subjection to the gospel, and surely not their rejection and breaking of it.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 John 3:4

It seems evident that the apostle is here combating an opinion which then existed that people might sin, and yet be true Christians, 1 John 3:7; and he apprehended that there was danger that this opinion would become prevalent. On what ground this opinion was held is unknown. Perhaps it was held that all that was necessary to constitute religion was to embrace the doctrines of Christianity, or to be orthodox in the faith; perhaps that it was not expected that people would become holy in this life, and therefore they might indulge in acts of sin; perhaps that Christ came to modify and relax the law, and that the freedom which he procured for them was freedom to indulge in whatever people chose; perhaps that, since Christians were heirs of all things, they had a right to enjoy all things; perhaps that the passions of people were so strong that they could not be restrained, and that therefore it was not wrong to give indulgence to the propensities with which our Creator has formed us. All these opinions have been held under various forms of Antinomianism, and it is not at all improbable that some or all of them prevailed in the time of John.

Antinomianism is "the belief that Christians, by virtue of divine grace, are freed not only from biblical law and church-prescribed behavioral norms, but also from all moral law." Historians have noted, "the ideas of antinomianism had been present in the early church, and some Gnostic heretics believed that freedom from law meant freedom for license."

While it is true that a person is saved by grace through faith, it is equally true that neither grace nor faith allows men to continue in sin and break divine law.

Grace gives no man the right to sin; if it did, it would totally negate the purpose of God imparting to men His Spirit, Who infuses recipients with the strength, power, and ability to flee iniquity in order to keep God's will and statutes.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

When a man is truly saved, the Holy Spirit will convict him of sin and surely not give him license to continue living in it.

The Holy Spirit gives men the desire, power of will, and inward determination to do God's will in their lives, not the freedom to abandon it.

Only this spiritual transformation of the heart proves salvation has been granted and a new son of God has been born.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:4

(a) all sin is a violation of the law of God, 1 John 3:4;

(b) the very object of the coming of Christ was to deliver people from sin, 1 John 3:5;

(c) those who are true Christians do not habitually sin, 1 John 3:6;

(d) those who sin cannot be true Christians, but are of the devil, 1 John 3:8; and,

(e) he who is born of God has a germ or principle of true piety in him, and cannot sin, 1 John 3:9.

I John 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Jesus was manifested to take away sin and free men from its dreadful end, not to provide the carnal freedom for men to practice it.

If men profess to follow the Son of God while excusing themselves of sin, and therefore continue living in it, they never were truly Christ's followers.

In [Christ] is no sin; thus, if a man claims a close relationship with the Savior, yet endorses sin, he only confirms that he never actually possessed true piety.

The Lord Jesus came to remove sin from the world, not to provide for any the right to continue living in it.

Consequently, if a man gives himself to sin, Christ is certainly not his Lord. There is no ambiguity in this truth, and to think otherwise only proves that one does not know the Son of God, or the real reason and purpose for His sacrifice.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:5

To take away our sins—The essential argument here is, that the whole work of Christ was designed to deliver us from the dominion of sin, not to furnish us the means of indulgence in it; and that, therefore, we should be deterred from it by all that Christ has done and suffered for us. He perverts the whole design of the coming of the Saviour who supposes that his work was in any degree designed to procure for his followers the indulgences of sin, or who so interprets the methods of his grace as to suppose that it is now lawful for him to indulge his guilty passions.

Geneva Study Bible, I John 3:5

An argument taken from the material cause of our salvation: Christ in himself is most pure, and he came to take away our sins, by sanctifying us with the Holy Spirit, therefore whoever is truly a partaker of Christ, does not give himself to sin, and on the contrary, he that gives himself to sin does not know Christ.

Jesus came into the world to deliver people from their sin.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

No man will be drawn to the Son of God until he first desires forgiveness and spiritual cleansing.

And though it is possible to remain in religion and continue in sin, it is impossible to truly abide in Christ, and not despise sin wherever it exists, either in ourselves or the world around us.

I John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

The language of the apostle's argument could not be any clearer:

Whosoever abideth in him [Jesus Christ] sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him.

One cannot infer from this that true Christians never sin; they do, and they must continually and humbly seek forgiveness for doing so.

But although Christians may, and will, stumble and not consistently obey God's will in their lives, as they spiritually mature, an increased walk in holiness will occur.

(NIV) No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

It is impossible to truly abide in the Son of God yet continue to sin, impossible to have seen Christ or known Him, if sin remains in control of one's life. Mere professors of Christ, yes; true believers of Christ, never.

Whenever men habitually sin while claiming relationship with the Son, they prove themselves false professors of the faith. He who believes he has the right to sin while practicing his religion, undoubtedly proves the falseness of it.

Those who truly abide in the Savior will depart from a life of sin, where those who merely profess His name will not.

Ultimately, any who practice sin cannot be true believers of the Son of God, though they will often claim they are.

Jesus said He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and He would reprove and convict the world of sin.

Hence, none can truly possess God's divine nature, while still making allowances, giving excuses, and providing shallow reasons for continuing in sin. The Spirit of God, Whom the Son of God imparts to true believers, the Holy Spirit, will not allow it.

John 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 16:8

He will reprove—The word translated “reprove” means commonly to demonstrate by argument, to prove, to persuade anyone to do a thing by presenting reasons. It hence means also to convince of anything, and particularly to convince of crime. This is its meaning here. He will convince or convict the world of sin. That is, he will so apply the

truths of God to men's own minds as to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners, and cause them to feel this. This is the nature of conviction always.

I John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

It is a falsity and a lie that a man can remain in sin and still be a true son of God. The apostle therefore warns his readers not to be deceived by such a perversion of the truth.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:7

Let no man deceive you—That is, in the matter under consideration; to wit, by persuading you that a man may live in sinful practices, and yet be a true child of God. From this it is clear that the apostle supposed there were some who would attempt to do this, and it was to counteract their arts that he made these positive statements in regard to the nature of true religion.

Whenever men sin and do not think it is abhorrent to God, sin has deceived them.

Moreover, willful sinners, after they have rejected Christ's doctrine, will look for corrupt teachers who will allow them to continue living in error.

A false teacher or false prophet is one who has taken on the title of speaking for the Son of God, yet in truth has no real relationship with Him, or His divine ministry to save men.

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jude 1:4

For there are certain men crept in unawares—The apostle now gives "reason" for thus defending the truth, to wit, that there were artful and wicked men who had crept into the church, pretending to be religious teachers, but whose doctrines tended to sap the very foundations of truth. The apostle Peter, describing these same persons, says, "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies." See the notes, 2 Peter 2:1. Substantially the same idea is expressed here by saying that they "had crept in unawares;" that is, they had come in "by stealth;" they had not come by a bold and open avowal of their real sentiments. They professed to teach the Christian religion, when in fact they denied some of its fundamental doctrines; they professed to be holy, when in fact they were living most scandalous lives. In all ages there have been men who were willing to do this for base purposes.

The devil is not above wrongly dividing the truth and seeking to pervert it in an attempt to lead people toward spiritual rebellion. He attempted this with the Savior, and he will attempt to do the same with any seeking to do God's will in his life today.

I John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

How a man walks, not what he says, reveals whom he is of.

By continuing in sin, sinners prove themselves to have aligned themselves with the very one who has sinned since the very beginning. The language used is strong, because the truth is certain: *he that committeth sin is of the devil.*

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:8
He that committeth sin is of the devil—in contrast to “He that doeth righteousness,” 1Jo 3:7. John does not, however, say, “born of the devil,” as he does “born of God,” for “the devil begets none, nor does he create any; but whoever imitates the devil becomes a child of the devil by imitating him, not by proper birth” [Augustine, Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Homily 4.10]. From the devil there is not generation, but corruption [Bengel].

Men who walk in sin may not be directly born of the devil in the way God’s children are born of God, but they are still of his company and move and operate no differently than him.

Indeed, imposters of the faith have as much of a relationship with sin, and the devil, as true believers of Jesus Christ have with the Holy Spirit and their Father.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 3:8
(1) That all who commit sin, even true believers, so far as they are imperfect, in this respect resemble Satan, and are under his influence, since sin, just so far as it exists at all, makes us resemble him.

(2) all who habitually and characteristically sin are of the devil. This latter was evidently the principal idea in the mind of the apostle. His object here is to show that those who sinned, in the sense in which it would seem some maintained that the children of God might sin, could have no real evidence of piety, but really belonged to Satan.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

The devil seeks to influence people through subtle spiritual deception to sin against God. This is made visible in Genesis 3:1, where the scripture reveals that *the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field.*

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Gen. 3:1
The woman knew that there were spirits, and did freely and frequently converse with spirits or angels, who also did appear in some visible shape to her, which seems very credible; because in the following ages not only the angels, but even the blessed God himself, did in that manner converse with men. And as they afterwards used to appear in the shape of men, why might not one of them now appear to her, and converse with her, in the shape of a beautiful serpent? And why might she not freely and securely discourse with this which she thought to be one of those good angels, to whose care and tuition both she and her husband were committed? For I suppose the fall of the angels was yet unknown to her; and she thought this to be a good spirit, otherwise she would have declined all conversation with an apostate spirit.

The overall theme of the Bible, beginning in Genesis and culminating in the book of Revelation, is that God’s true Christ, the promised seed of the woman, will crush Satan’s head. To do so, Christ shall destroy every plan, scheme, and malicious intention emanating from, and worked by the devil.

He who is bound by sin, cannot serve God. Thus, to truly serve the Lord, the power of sin must be broken by a greater power than it.

Moses' act of delivering Israel from Egypt's Pharaoh foreshadowed Christ freeing men from sin. Just as Moses emancipated and liberated the Israelites from Pharaoh's power, Jesus frees His people from sin's power, enabling them the spiritual freedom to both worship and serve their heavenly Father.

Colossians 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Col. 2:15

The Christian is a freeman. His great Captain has subdued all his enemies, and we should not allow them again to set up their dark empire over our souls.

I John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

No one, not one man, woman, or child, can continue practicing and living in sin, if they are truly born of God. This is a practical impossibility and the apostle seeks to make this very important revelation abundantly clear.

Once someone is born again, has been filled with God's Holy Spirit, and has made Jesus Christ their Lord, then he cannot, and will not, continue in sin. This is because God's spiritual seed has regenerated and transformed the heart, and now righteousness is more preferred to be walked in, than either sin or unrighteousness.

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

This seed of God, the Holy Spirit, is the very nature of God.

Because God is eternal, the Spirit He imparts to those who believe upon Him is eternal.

I Peter 1:23 (NLT) For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.

Ultimately, men receive regeneration and the new birth through faith in the living and written Word of God.

Through God's Holy Word and through His resurrected Son, the Lord gives to men His own divine and eternal spiritual nature.

Thus, saints and sinners are easily distinguishable by whether sin still retains power over their lives, or the Holy Spirit leads them to fulfill God's will for their lives.

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

For true Christians, continuing in sin is infeasible, undesirable, and loathsome. They cannot continue to sin once God and Christ have come and made their abode in the heart.

Once regeneration occurs, sin's power is broken, and a new holy energy is imparted to the Christian, enabling a successful pursuit of first gaining and then maintaining personal communion and fellowship with the Lord.

I John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

There are but two camps of people: those born of God, and those still the property of the god of this world. To distinguish who is who, we need only observe if men pursue God's righteousness, or remain content to live a life governed by fleshly lusts.

He who pursues not righteousness is not of God; neither is he who continues in sin.

Every tree is known by its fruit; therefore, how a man lives, and what he pursues, reveal who he truly is.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:9

To be begotten of God and to sin, are states mutually excluding one another. In so far as one sins, he makes it doubtful whether he be born of God.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:10

In this the children of God are manifest ...—That is, this furnishes a test of their true character. The test is found in doing righteousness, and in the love of the brethren. The former he had illustrated; the latter he now proceeds to illustrate. The general idea is, that if a person is not truly a righteous person, and does not love the brethren, he cannot be a child of God.

I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

It is impossible for men to claim that they love God, Whom they cannot see, if they do not love those born of God, whom they can see.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:10

The general sense is, that brotherly love is essential to the Christian character, and that he who does not possess it cannot be a Christian.

Love, specifically love for the brethren, reveals if a man has been truly saved by the Son of God, or if he merely walks in the company of those who are.

I John 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

From the very first moment John was exposed to the ministry of God's Son, Jesus taught him to love.

Jesus condensed the entire law of God into two great commandments: love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments, the Lord states, hang the entirety of God's will for man.

It was also this message—that followers of Jesus should love one another—that John heard Him speak from the beginning. It was Jesus Who taught John to love, and Jesus Who spoke this divine message from the beginning.

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 22:40

Love to God and man comprehends the whole of religion, and to produce this has been the design of Moses, the prophets, the Saviour, and the apostles.

I John 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

The opposites of love are envy and hate, the very same devilish qualities that led Cain to murder and slay his natural-born brother, Abel. The evil spiritual influence that led Cain to envy Abel, and then murder him, originated in the devil.

Genesis 4:8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Gen. 4:8

And Cain talked with Abel his brother—Under the guise of brotherly familiarity, he concealed his premeditated purpose till a convenient time and place occurred for the murder (1Jo 3:12; Jude 11).

When men have no love for God and their fellow man, they will often resort to deceptive words to conceal their true inward condition.

After Cain led his unsuspecting brother into a field, far away from where anyone could see his intentions, he then rose up and attacked him. Like Satan, Cain was subtle, appearing innocent and unthreatening, until he arose with vengeance to murder one better than himself.

The Hebrew word for *slew* is #2026 *herag*, defined as “kill, slay, implying ruthless violence, especially private violence.”

No doubt the crime scene, which screamed of Abel's blood being shed, revealed the true character of his murderer. There existed no divine love in Cain, and this left the door wide open for envy and hate to fill his soul.

Love will ultimately prevent sin, but in its absence, sin will often continue to grow until violence is the end result.

When men do not obey Christ's command to love, there is no other path for them to follow, than that which is harmful not only to themselves, but, sadly, eventually to others as well.

Who was of that wicked one.

There was no neutrality in Cain's heart, no mere indifference to either good or evil. Instead, he fully and willingly consented to be led by his hate and to carry out the ultimate purpose of the wicked one.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:12

Who was of that wicked one—Of the devil; that is, he was under his influence, and acted from his instigation.

The cause of Cain's hate lay in the fruitlessness and shallowness of his own corrupt and defective character. Such deficits of character often foster envy and hate towards the righteous, when men sense the absence of true goodness and virtue within themselves.

Therefore, he who is unrighteous will often despise and hate those who are.

In truth, when an evil man compares himself to a good man, it is difficult for him not to see his own lack of spiritual integrity.

We observe this in the story of Saul, who envied David and sought to take his life (I Sam. 18:6–16).

In Abel, Cain's lack of genuine spirituality, love, and respect for God was exposed. Consequently, Cain hated Abel, and the fact that Abel's offering was accepted by the Lord, while his own was not.

***Genesis 4:4–5 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:
5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.***

I John 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

It should not be surprising that the world hates those called to Christ, since it also hated Christ before them.

Christians therefore should never think it an unnatural thing that an evil world that has rejected both the Father and the Son will not also despise those now born of them.

II Corinthians 2:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 2:16

We are the savour of death unto death—We are the occasion of deepening their condemnation, and of sinking them lower into ruin. The expression used here means literally, “to the one class we bear a death-conveying odor leading to their death”—a savor, a smell which, under the circumstances, is destructive to life, and which leads to death. Mr. Locke renders this: “To the one my preaching is of ill savor, unacceptable and offensive, by their rejecting whereof they draw death on themselves.” Grateful as their labors were to God, and acceptable as would be their efforts, whatever might be the results, yet Paul could not be ignorant that the gospel would in fact be the means of greater condemnation to many; see the notes on 2 Corinthians 2:15. It was indeed by their own fault; yet wherever the gospel was preached, it would to many have this result.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Divine love appearing in the Christian's heart is proof that he has passed from death unto life. However, where divine love does not reside, neither does God's salvation.

It is also worthy of note that love for the brethren confirms that a man has been declared righteous before God.

Ultimately, no one can enter heaven, or be given eternal life, without first being made righteous.

The presence of divine love in the Christian, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, proves that righteousness has been imparted, and God's eternal life is now possessed.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:14

because we love the brethren—the ground, not of our passing over out of death into life, but of our knowing that we have so. Love, on our part, is the evidence of our justification and regeneration, not the cause of them. Let each go to his own heart; if he find there love to the brethren, let him feel assured that he has passed from death unto life.

The divine qualities of love, joy, and peace, as well as the other fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23), cannot exist in an unsaved man. These fruits of the Spirit, thus cannot either be experienced, or enjoyed by those who have not the Spirit.

I John 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Though hate may not initially manifest itself on the outside, it is always seen by God on the inside.

Benson Commentary, I John 3:15

Every degree of hatred being a degree of the same temper which moved Cain to murder his brother.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:15

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer ... The private malice, the secret grudge, the envy which is cherished in the heart, is murderous in its tendency, and were it not for the outward restraints of human laws, and the dread of punishment, it would often lead to the act of murder. The apostle does not say that he who hates his brother, though he does not in fact commit murder, is guilty to the same degree as if he had actually done it; but he evidently means to say that the spirit which would lead to murder is there, and that God will hold him responsible for it.

The ministry of the Son of God is purposed to reveal the secret things in men's hearts, and ultimately, to judge them whether they be found good or evil.

Romans 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Benson Commentary, Rom. 2:16

when God shall judge the secrets of men—Not only their outward actions, good and evil, which are manifest to all men, but their most secret and hidden ones, with their internal desires and designs, their intentions, purposes, schemes, contrivances, with the various workings of their passions, imaginations, and thoughts; for he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Ecclesiastes 12:14; will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, 1 Corinthians 4:5.

Jesus considers hating one's brother the same as murder.

Just as eternal life does not abide in any murderer, so it cannot abide in anyone who hates the brethren.

While love proves the presence of eternal life, hate establishes its absence.

Practically, there are but two base emotions at the core of what men think of the brethren: love or hate.

No murderer has eternal life, and those who hate are considered by the Lord to be completely estranged from Him.

I John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

The love found in Jesus Christ stands in direct contrast to a hate-filled world.

Cain's hate prompted him to take the life of his brother, while Christ's love motivated Him to sacrifice His own life for others. Cain and Jesus Christ are therefore contrasting examples of what hate will result in, and what true love will ultimately produce.

Through Christ laying down His life for the brethren, divine love became visible.

In Jesus Christ we have the very essence of God's love.

This is why a man manifests Jesus' love, when he is willing to give his life to God, as Jesus first did, for the benefit of others. This is the standard of true discipleship, to both love, and lay down our lives for the brethren, even as our Savior has done for us.

By laying down our lives in service to God and for those also born of Him, believers manifest the love of Christ, and Christ's own sacrifice is revealed in them.

I John 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

One of the chief signs that men love is their willingness to give up their earthly possessions when a brother is in need. All love gives—and no true love can ignore those in need.

If our hearts remain closed to the lack of those around us, especially the brethren, it is certain that God's love has no real place in us.

Where true need is, love responds, especially when those in need, are born of God.

I John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Geneva Study Bible, I John 3:18

Christian charity stands not in word but in deed, and proceeds from a sincere affection.

If a man says he loves, it means little to nothing if he is unwilling to sacrifice for that love.

True love therefore will be evidenced by deed. And it is this form of divine love that reveals if the love professed is genuine and true—simply because if there are no good deeds, then it is certain that there is no true love held.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 3:18

It is a vain thing to make verbal pretences of love, without any real proof of it.

I John 3:19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

Only by sincerely walking in love can the believer prove to himself and others that he abides in the truth. Whereas a hypocrite has no assurance that he is of God and has been saved by Him, the man who genuinely loves does.

It is also only by doing the Word, not merely hearing it, that the internal conscience is quieted and the assurance that we are God's children is confirmed.

By walking in divine love our own hearts are assured that we have become the true children of God.

By Christ's love being manifest in us, the world will come to know that we are genuinely true followers of the Son of God. It is love that characterized His earthly walk and will be manifested in those truly saved by Him.

To love as Christ loved, brings assurance to the heart, and confidence that we are born of Him.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 3:19

And shall assure our hearts before him; so shall our hearts be quieted, and well satisfied concerning our states God-ward.

Session 8

An Exposition of I John

I John 3:20–4:12

Scriptures

<i>I John 3:20</i>	<i>John 17:20–21</i>	<i>Psalms 28:8–9</i>	<i>I Corinthians 13:2</i>
<i>I John 3:21</i>	<i>Galatians 4:6</i>	<i>I John 4:5</i>	<i>I John 4:9</i>
<i>I Timothy 1:5</i>	<i>I John 4:1</i>	<i>James 4:4</i>	<i>I John 4:10</i>
<i>I John 3:22</i>	<i>II Corinthians 11:3</i>	<i>I John 2:15</i>	<i>Romans 5:8</i>
<i>Psalms 66:18</i>	<i>Acts 2:38</i>	<i>I John 4:6</i>	<i>I John 4:11</i>
<i>I Peter 3:12</i>	<i>I John 4:2–3</i>	<i>Ephesians 4:11–13</i>	<i>I John 4:12</i>
<i>I John 3:23</i>	<i>John 1:18</i>	<i>I John 4:7</i>	
<i>I John 3:24</i>	<i>I John 4:4</i>	<i>I Thessalonians 4:9</i>	
<i>John 14:23</i>	<i>I Corinthians 4:7</i>	<i>I John 4:8</i>	

I John 3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Men cannot hide or indulge in sin, especially in the heart, and maintain peace and fellowship with God.

A condemning heart also does nothing to inspire greater confidence in the Lord; in fact, it does quite the opposite.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:20

For if our heart condemn us—... The general sentiment is, that if they should so live that their own hearts would condemn them for present insincerity and hypocrisy, they could have no hope of peace, for God knows all that is in the heart. In view of the past—when the heart accuses us of what we have done—we may find peace by such evidences of piety as shall allay the troubles of an agitated soul, 1 John 3:9, but we cannot have such peace if our hearts condemn us for the indulgence of secret sins, now that we profess to be Christians. If our hearts condemn us for present insincerity, and for secret sins, we can never “persuade” or soothe them by any external act of piety. In view of the consciousness of past guilt, we may find peace; we can find none if there is a present purpose to indulge in sin.

I John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

To properly walk with God, our love must be pure, our faith unfeigned, and our conscience free of convicting and condemning sin.

The condition of the heart greatly affects men's faith and trust in God. To properly grow and develop in the Christian faith, we must so live that our heart does not accuse us or condemn us of sin, but rather commends us for living rightly before the Lord.

Though most do not know it, a good conscience is as critical to true piety as love and faith.

Possessing these three godly characteristics is the ultimate end of God's will for the Christian.

1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

If our faith and love are insincere and have no real depth, our conscience will inform us. Hence, the conscience plays a very significant and key role in leading men's souls toward God's salvation, by exposing potential spiritual insincerity or impurity where it exists.

1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

Here we observe the great result that the pursuit of righteousness, a good conscience, and inward purity will produce. It is that God will answer all prayers that align themselves with His will. Teaching us that how a man lives directly affects whether or not God hears and answers his prayers.

Therefore, if men choose not to keep God's commandments, then they should not be so presumptuous to believe that God will hear their prayers.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 1 John 3:22

We can have no hope that he will hear us unless we do so live as to please him.

How foolish are men to falsely believe that they can live as they will, and sin as they desire, and that God will still hear them in their time of need! The truth is, that God will not hear or come to the aid of anyone who cherishes iniquity in the heart.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

As long as sinners embrace sin, the Lord will not hear them.

One of the fatal consequences of choosing to live a life of sin is that God refuses to hear any who do so.

Sinners, therefore, should never be so naive to believe that God will still hear them in their time of need, if they have continued to resist divine will.

Scripture repeatedly confirms that a sinner's plea will not be heard without repentant prayer and acknowledgment of sin, with also no attempt to defend it or hide it from God.

Thus for God to hear men's petitions, they must keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Only by living this way can they be assured that what is asked of God will be both heard and answered.

God hears and has promised to come to the aid of the righteous, but not to any who harbor sin in their hearts. The Lord's ears are open to the righteous, but His face is divinely set against any who engage in evil.

1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

A truly righteous man should never fear that God will not hear his prayers or come to his aid in time of need. What God has declared will be done for the righteous, you can be certain will be done.

I John 3:23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

This is *His* (God's) *commandment*, that we should not only believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, but also love one another, as Jesus commanded His followers to do. Though two things are mentioned, *that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as he gave us commandment*, the apostle reveals that God has combined both into one commandment.

Therefore, believing in the Son of God and love for the brethren are eternally bound. Obeying one leads to embracing the other, just as disregarding one ensures that there can be no true possession of the other.

This teaches us that whenever there is true belief in Jesus Christ, there will also be genuine and sincere love for those born of Him.

Hence, whenever there is faith in the Savior, there will be a corresponding love for the saved. This is undoubtably true regarding those created in Christ's image, who have been made to share in the same Spirit of God.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:23
Summing up of God's commandments under the Gospel dispensation in one commandment.

this is his commandment—singular: for faith and love are not separate commandments, but are indissolubly united. We cannot truly love one another without faith in Christ, nor can we truly believe in Him without love.

I John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.

Those who keep Christ's commandments dwell in Christ, and He in them.

Jesus promised His followers that if He was loved and His words were kept, then He and the Father would come and live within their hearts.

By the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart, the saved are assured and comforted that God in Christ lives within them.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

In the Old Testament, God dwelt among His people. Now Jesus promises that both the Father and the Son will come and make their abode within them.

Once the Holy Spirit enters a believer's heart, a spiritual oneness is created between the believer, the Father, and the Son. It is this oneness that Jesus possessed with God, that He prayed could also be shared with those who believed upon His name.

John 17:20–21 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

²¹ ***That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.***

For the true Christian, God is much more than simply around him; He is in all respects living within him. Consequently, sinners are saved not when they enter churches, but only when, the Father and the Son, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, come to live, abide, and dwell within them.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 17:21

That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; and the meaning is that the union of the Church may be of the same essential nature as that between the Father and the Son; yea, that the union of the Church may result from the union of individual members with the Father through the Son.

And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

The Christian knows that God dwells in him through the Spirit of God living within. Because of the Spirit's inward presence and influence, those saved are brought to know that they are of God, and that God dwells in them. This is directly due to the Holy Spirit's presence in their hearts, which internally testifies to possessing true relationship with God.

The Holy Spirit also allows believers to cry, *Abba, Father*, something slaves, and those still in bondage, were never allowed to do.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 4:6

Abba, Father—See the note at Romans 8:15. It is said in the Babylonian Gemara, a Jewish work, that it was not permitted slaves to use the title of Abba in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged. If so, then the language which Christians are here represented as using is the language of freemen, and denotes that they are not under the servitude of sin.

I John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

The warning here is to *believe not every spirit*. This includes every spirit or man who professes to come in God's name.

All spirits and all who present themselves as being sent by God should be tried, simply because a vast number of *false prophets are gone out* and operate in the world.

Not all spirits are holy. Neither are all men who profess to speak by the Spirit of God actually of Him.

The apostle seeks to make this essential truth abundantly clear, simply because false ministries in the Christian faith have abounded throughout its inception, and many have been deceived by those who, though they claimed relationship with God, actually had none.

Hence, if absent the Spirit of Christ and the ability to discern the true nature of both good and evil spirits, those searching for God can easily confuse that which has not been genuinely sent by God, as having come from Him.

Sadly, if men listen to and trust these counterfeit spirits, who falsely claim they are of the Lord, even the elect can be deceived.

II Corinthians 11:3 *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

The primary purpose of all spiritual deception in the church, brought by false ministries into her, is separating the believer from the simplicity of Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 11:3

But I fear ... The mention of this seems to have suggested to him the fact that the first woman was deceived and led astray by the tempter, and that the same thing might occur in regard to the church which he was so desirous should be preserved pure. The grounds of his fear were:

(1) That Satan had seduced the first woman, thus demonstrating that the most holy ones were in danger of being led astray by temptation; and,

(2) That special efforts were made to seduce them from the faith. The persuasive arts of the false teachers; the power of philosophy; and the attractive and corrupting influences of the world, he had reason to suppose might be employed to seduce them from the simple attachment to Christ.

The Christian doctrine, which leads to the new birth and eternal life, is a very simple one. It is a call to repent for sin, believe in the Son of God, and be baptized by Him with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

In contrast to this, false prophets and false teachers often stress what God will do for men, while at the same time completely ignoring what men need to do to be saved by God.

In all false religion it is easily observed that man is the real center of it. And this will be seen by men being lovers of self more than lovers of God.

Because also many mere professing believers are ruled by lust, they will seek out false teachers who will allow them to remain in it.

I John 4:2–3 *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

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

A great debate arose among the Jews and early Christians as to the true nature of Jesus Christ: was Jesus actually born of God, and was He, God's promised Messiah? The actual debate centered around not mere doctrines of faith but the genuineness of the gospel's Author.

To be *antichrist* is to be against God's true Christ. Thus, he who rejects the Son rejects not only the Savior of this world but also the Ruler of the next.

John 1:18 *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

Because Jesus, God's only begotten Son, revealed God to the world, it is impossible to reject Him and not also reject the Father, Who sent Him.

Hence, to reject Christ's rule and the power God has given His Son is to reject the divine rule and authority of God Himself.

Benson Commentary, John 1:18

... neither Moses, nor any of the Old Testament prophets, were so well qualified to make God and his will known to mankind, as our Lord Jesus Christ was. They never saw, nor perfectly knew the Divine Being, and his eternal counsels, and therefore could not make a full discovery thereof to men. The only person who ever enjoyed this privilege was the only-begotten Son of God, *the Word*, which was in the beginning with him, or, as it is here expressed, was, and is, *in the bosom of the Father*: that is, always was, and is the object of his tenderest, yea, of his infinite affection, complacency, and delight, and the intimate partner of his counsels. And this circumstance recommends Christ's holy religion to us unspeakably before any others; that it was founded by one that had seen God, or that had clear and perfect knowledge of him, and of his mind and will, which no other person ever had, or could have.

I John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

The ones who have been *overcome* are those listed as of *antichrist* in the previous verse.

It is tempting to believe that because of the vast number of sinners who reject God, and the positions of power in the world they hold, that true saints are inferior to the evil forces around them. This is not true, simply because the Son of God lives within His people, and through Him they have been made more than conquerors.

Greater is Christ in the true believer, than the hosts of antichrists in the world.

So powerful is the Spirit of God's Son, imparted to the saved, that by this Spirit they have been made greater than even he who presently rules this world.

Benson Commentary, I John 4:4

Because greater is he that is in you—Namely, the Spirit of Christ; *than he*—The spirit of antichrist; *that is in the world*—The Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostacy, and for all his confederates. Thus, the issue of the divine government will be, that truth and virtue shall be finally victorious over error and wickedness, because God, the Patron of truth and virtue, possesseth far greater power and wisdom than the evil spirits who promote error and wickedness.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:4

Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world—God, who dwells in your hearts, and by whose strength and grace alone you have been enabled to achieve this victory, is more mighty than Satan, who rules in the hearts of the people of this world, and whose seductive arts are seen in the efforts of these false teachers. The apostle meant to say that it was by no power of their own that they achieved this victory, but it was to be traced solely to the fact that God dwelt among them, and had preserved them by his grace.

The Christian is not made victorious by his own power. This could never be the case. This would only lead to greater trust and confidence in self. Rather, that which causes God's new sons to overcome the world lies in the strength of their Savior.

This is a reality that every true Christian can attest to through personal experience, that because of God's presence in their lives, things that should have overcome and defeated them, in the end, neither did nor could.

A treasure, a very precious treasure, lives in the people of God.

This treasure is the Holy Spirit, Who enables God to unleash His power in and for the Christian.

I Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

The excellency of the power manifested in the saint of God is vastly superior to any opposing evil power assembled against him.

Victory is the Lord's, and due to God's own spiritual power, His people are themselves made to become victorious.

The believer's strength lies not in himself, but in the Lord. And though God's hands which deliver His people remain invisible, His power cannot be denied.

The Lord is indeed the strength of His people. For this reason they need not to rely on their own strength and ability, but rather on He, Who is so much stronger than them.

Psalms 28:8–9 The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

Benson Commentary, Ps. 28:8

The Lord is their strength—That is, the strength of his people, mentioned in the next verse. *He is the saving strength*—Hebrews מְצוּחַת מְצוּחַת, *the strength of the preservations, deliverances, or salvations; of his anointed*—Of me, whom he hath anointed to be king, and whom therefore he will defend. He signifies that it was by God's strength alone that his victories, deliverances, and preservations were wrought.

I John 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

One of the distinguishing marks of antichrists is that this world is their true home. It is the world that they are most comfortable in, and they inwardly seek nothing beyond it.

Just as Christ's people hear His voice, so do those of the world hear all the various voices of antichrists. And like with Israel of old, sinners will often look for weak and compromising leaders, who will allow them to do as they will.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:5

They are of the world—This was one of the marks by which those who had the spirit of antichrist might be known. They belonged not to the church of God, but to the world. They had its spirit; they acted on its principles; they lived for it.

Whomever a man listens to, or enjoys the company of, reveals who he really is. If it is the world, then he is of it; if it is God, then he is of Him. By this simple criterion the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest.

Observe also that if any have made themselves friends with this world, they have by choice become God's enemy.

James 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

When a man is a friend of anything, especially that which is evil and rebellious towards the Lord, he reveals kinship with it.

This devilish friendship provides evidences that antichrists are worthy of divine judgment. Because of their choosing to love a sinful world more than their Creator, they are promised to suffer the same dreadful fate as it.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Jas. 4:4

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?—i.e., the state of being an enemy to God, not one of simpler enmity with Him. There cannot be a passive condition to the faith of Christ: "he that is not with Me is against Me" (Matthew 12:30). Renunciation of the world, in the Christian promise, is not forsaking it when tired and clogged with its delights, but the earliest severance from it; to break this vow, or not to have made it, is to belong to the foes of God, and not merely to be out of covenant with Him. The forces of good and evil divide the land so sharply that there is no debatable ground, nor even halting-place between.

The Christian's call, given by God through Jesus Christ, is a call to separate himself from all things worldly.

I John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

No man can serve two masters. Hence, as no man can love an evil and sinful world that rejects divine rule, and at the very same time hold any true affection for a divine Being Who demands it.

I John 4:6 *We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

By observing who hears the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error are made visible.

No man can turn a deaf ear to the truth, and still be of God, which means that those who are truly of the Lord will readily, and with great joy, hear the gospel of Christ once it is presented to them.

The primary means by which this gospel is spread and proclaimed to the world is through the gift ministries that the Son of God has both given, and placed in the church.

Ephesians 4:11–13 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

¹³ *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Eph. 4:11

He gave.—In the original "He" is emphatic—He and He alone, as the ascended Head of humanity. The word "gave," instead of the more obvious word *set*, or *appointed* (used in 1 Corinthians 12:28), is, of course, suggested by Ephesians 4:8. They who are ministers of His gifts are themselves gifts from Him to the Church.

It is Christ's will that He be made more fully known to the church. Through the gift ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, He will be.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:6

Know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error—We can distinguish those who embrace the truth from those who do not. Whatever pretensions they might set up for piety, it was clear that if they did not embrace the doctrines taught by the true apostles of God, they could not be regarded as his friends; that is, as true Christians. It may be added that the same test is applicable now. They who do not receive the plain doctrines laid down in the word of God, whatever pretensions they may make to piety, or whatever zeal they may evince in the cause which they have espoused, can have no well-founded claims to the name Christian. One of the clearest evidences of true piety is a readiness to receive all that God has taught. Compare Matthew 18:1–3; Mark 10:15; James 1:19–21.

Whether a man will hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ or not reveals what spirit or spirits are influencing him.

I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

The apostle places great importance on love because of its direct relationship to God.

Love is of God reveals that all love has its source in Him. From the Father flows all the love experienced and present in creation.

Divine love, therefore, is the primary test to determine whom God has saved and made His true sons, and those He has not.

There is no such thing as a true Christian who lacks divine love, simply because once born of God, believers are taught by Him to love.

I Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

So natural will be love in the true Christian's heart, that there will be found no great need to teach him to love. Because God is love, He births spiritual children, in His own image, whose main desire is to love.

Nothing also gives a man more confidence that he is of the truth, than when God's love abounds in his heart. By this he is assured that he is born of God and has accurately come to know Him.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:7

And everyone that loveth, is born of God—Is a regenerated man. That is, everyone who has true love to Christians as such, or true brotherly love, is a true Christian. This cannot mean that everyone that loves his wife and children, his classmate, his partner in business, or his friend—his house, or his farms, or his horses, or his hounds, is a child of God; it must be understood as referring to the point under discussion. A man may have a great deal of natural affection toward his kindred; a great deal of benevolence in his character toward the poor and needy, and still he may have none of the love to which John refers. He may have no real love to God, to the Saviour, or to the children of God as such; and it would be absurd for such a one to argue because he loves his wife and children that therefore he loves God, or is born again.

I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:8

knoweth not—Greek aorist: not only knoweth not now, but never knew, has not once for all known God.

Love is that standard which reveals who in this world actually knows the Lord and who does not—who is born again, and has been regenerated by the Christ Spirit, and who has not.

Thus, neither religious attendance nor biblical study provides insight as to who possesses a true knowledge of the Lord; only His own divine love can prove this.

A man could live his entire life, give to the poor every possession he possessed, manifest the gift of prophecy, and even perform miracles and wonders in Christ's name—yet without love he will be both judged and accounted by God as nothing.

I Corinthians 13:2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

It is love that determines a man's true worth, and if a man does not have this divine fruit both in his heart, and in his life, he is by all heavenly standards viewed and accounted by God as nothing.

I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

There is not anything more precious than life, and nothing reveals divine generosity and goodness more, than when eternal life is imparted to the sinner. By this act of compassion and mercy, the true benevolent nature of God is made known to the world.

Thus, whenever repentant sinners are forgiven and spiritual regeneration occurs, divine love is both seen and manifest in the world.

I John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

It is one thing to possess love for those who love us, or have done something to merit good being done for them. It is quite another thing when God's love and the gift of salvation are given to sinners unworthy of love.

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Long before men loved God, He loved them.

Many also have wondered why God would absolve men of sin. The answer lies in the divine goodness and spiritual generosity of a loving God.

Thus, transgressors are forgiven of sin, saved, and made righteous before God, simply because God is love.

There is no other reason for these acts of grace beyond the reality that it is because of divine love that sinners are cleansed from their sin, and given a new heavenly standing before God.

I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Once we have been made partakers of divine love, and God's love has been shown to us, then it should be very easy to share this love with others. Freely we have received, and just as freely we should give.

Because God's love was freely given to us, we should likewise freely love, as He has loved us.

I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:12

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us—Though we cannot see him, yet there is a way by which we may be assured that he is near us, and that he even dwells in us. That way is by the exercise of love.

No man is more assured that God truly dwells within him, than he who has inward spiritual proof that God's love is being perfected in him.

It is thus by loving one another that God's love is perfected in Christians, and they are made to know that God actually dwells in them.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 4:12

The essence of God is to our eyes invisible, incomprehensible to our minds; but by yielding ourselves to the power of his love, so as to be transformed by it, and habituated to the exercise of mutual love, we come to know him by the most pleasant and most apprehensible effects, experiencing his indwelling, vital, operative presence and influences, whereby he is daily perfecting this his own likeness and image in us. This is the most desirable way of knowing God, when, though we cannot behold him at a distance, we may feelingly apprehend him nigh us, and in us.

Love is meant to increase in the believer, and if it does, faith in God's existence will likewise increase.

By manifesting divine love to the world, it is proven that God's holy presence remains in it.

Session 9

An Exposition of I John

I John 4:13–5:12

Scriptures

<i>I John 4:13</i>	<i>I John 4:17</i>	<i>I John 5:2</i>	<i>Matthew 3:16</i>
<i>Galatians 4:6</i>	<i>Acts 17:31</i>	<i>I John 5:3</i>	<i>I John 5:9</i>
<i>Romans 8:9</i>	<i>I John 4:18</i>	<i>I John 5:4</i>	<i>I John 5:10</i>
<i>I John 4:14</i>	<i>I John 4:19</i>	<i>I John 5:5</i>	<i>I John 5:11</i>
<i>I John 4:15</i>	<i>I John 4:20</i>	<i>I John 5:6</i>	<i>I John 5:12</i>
<i>Romans 1:4</i>	<i>I John 4:21</i>	<i>I John 5:7</i>	
<i>I John 4:16</i>	<i>I John 5:1</i>	<i>I John 5:8</i>	

I John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

The greatest proof of God's existence in the human heart is the presence of the Holy Spirit within it. This proves not only that a man dwells in God but also that God dwells in him.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

The greatest gift that God gives is the Holy Spirit, which is a portion of God's own holy nature.

The spiritual authentication which every Christian possesses, which also proves he has true relationship with Christ, is that the Spirit of God lives within him.

But if any have not been given the Holy Spirit through Christ, then it is certain that they are not of God, and He does not consider them as His own.

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:9

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ—Thus residing in him, and governing him, whatever he may pretend; he is none of his—Not a disciple or member of Christ; not a Christian; not in a state of salvation.

The evidence that a man dwells in God (or does not) and is also God's child (or is not) is his having been given the Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit's presence in a man, or lack of, that reveals his true standing and relationship with God.

To whom the Holy Spirit has been given, through belief in the Son of God, God dwells; where It has been withheld, He does not.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:13

Hereby know we that we dwell in him—Here is another, or an additional evidence of it.

Because he hath given us of his Spirit—He has imparted the influences of that Spirit to our souls, producing “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,” etc., Galatians 5:22–23. It was one of the promises which the Lord Jesus made to his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them after he should be withdrawn from them, John 14:16–17, John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7, and one of the clearest evidences which we can have that we are the children of God, is derived from the influences of that Spirit on our hearts.

The Holy Spirit given through belief in Jesus Christ is the great witness that a man has been saved by God, absent which no man should either assume or claim he has any true relationship with God.

I John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Because the apostle John personally observed Jesus Christ in both His earthly and resurrected forms, and was given the Holy Spirit through Him, he could openly testify to the truth that Jesus is the Savior of the world. The power of the Lord's ministry in John's own life confirmed the Son of God's true identity.

Yet it was not simply the apostle John who was an eyewitness of Jesus' deity but also many other disciples, who had observed the glory of the Son of God. Hence, John states, *we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:14

The internal evidence of the indwelling Spirit (1Jo 4:13) is corroborated by the external evidence of the eye-witnesses to the fact of the Father having “sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.”

I John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

The Greek word for *confess* is #3670 *homologeó*. It is defined by *Strong's Concordance* as “to speak the same, to agree.”

HELPS Word-studies defines the word, “properly, to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree (‘confess’); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse).”

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

No greater promise could ever be made, nor any promised reward ever be given, regarding what true faith in the Son of God will produce—the Lord Himself coming to abide in the believer's heart.

He therefore who confesses Jesus as his Lord, just as God has declared Him to be, will have the Lord's own holy presence come and abide within him.

Although death has power over all those only physically born, it did not over the Son of God, Who shares the same holy and divine nature as God.

It was also Jesus' resurrection from the dead, that declared and proved Him to be filled with God's power.

Romans 1:4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:4

The act of raising him from the dead designated him, or constituted him the Son of God. It was such an act as in the circumstances of the case showed that he was the Son of God in regard to a nature which was not “according to the flesh.”

Jesus' fleshly birth is what revealed Him as the “Son of man.” Jesus' spiritual birth, coupled with the manifestations of divine power and His resurrection from the dead, confirmed Jesus as the Son of God.

Once raised from the dead, all doubt that could have remained in those who were previously exposed to the Son of God, became able to be removed by His resurrection from the dead.

The gospel does not hide from this reality, nor does it shy away from the fact that if Jesus Christ is not risen, then every element of Christianity is undoubtedly vain (I Cor. 15:14).

Simply put, if Christ is not risen, man has no hope of anything beyond his earthly existence and a very short time on the earth.

But if Jesus has been raised—as God's Word and the Holy Spirit attest Him to be—then an indescribable heavenly reality and spiritual world awaits those who have believed on God's Son. Where previously there existed only darkness for all men now, *the true light now shineth*.

I John 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

Here is the second truth that confirms if a man dwells in God and God dwells in him. The first was stated in the previous verse, in which confession of the Lord Jesus produces the Lord coming into the heart. Now, along with confession of the Son of God as Lord, is the added revelation that those who *dwelt in love* dwell in God, and He in them.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.

It is one thing to hear of God's love. It is quite another thing to be brought to know it.

No man also will deeply love the Lord until he is exposed to the divine and spiritual love that God has for the sinner.

Since it is love that covers a multitude of sins, and love that alone can produce their removal, repentant sinners will be drawn to Him Who is Himself purely love.

It is also the love of God which gives sinners hope of ultimately being forgiven by God.

I John 4:17 *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*

If Christ's people pursue and walk in Christ's love, they can be assured that they will have nothing to fear in the day of His judgment.

The Greek word for *boldness* is #3954 *parrésia*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “properly, confidence (bold resolve), leaving a witness that something deserves to be remembered.”

Obedying Christ’s command to love produces great confidence in the believer of being of Christ’s fold and escaping God’s divine wrath at His return in judgment.

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Obedying Jesus’ commandments to love God and love our neighbor allows the believer to approach the tribunal of the Son of God with the spiritual confidence that he has lived in obedience to Christ and His will for his life.

Ultimately, it will be only those who have genuinely pursued and walked in divine love, who will remain confident and unafraid when the Lord comes to bring every man’s work into judgment.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 4:17

That we may have boldness in the day of judgment—... The idea is, that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment, and may even approach the awful tribunal where he is to receive the sentence which shall determine his everlasting destiny without alarm.

*Because as he is, so are we in this world—*That is, we have the same traits of character which the Saviour had, and, resembling him, we need not be alarmed at the prospect of meeting him.

I John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

There is no fear in love, since perfect love casts out all fear of God and any anxiety of being judged by Him.

Yet if fear of divine judgment remains, this is strong evidence that love also remains an unfinished work in the Christian.

Thus, only when love has fully grown and achieved its full purpose in the Christian will he suffer no more alarm or anxiety in having to face the Savior.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 4:18

*But perfect love casteth out fear—*That is, love that is complete, or that is allowed to exert its proper influence on the soul. As far as it exists, its tendency is to deliver the mind from alarms. If it should exist in any soul in an absolutely perfect state, that soul would be entirely free from all dread in regard to the future. ...

*He that feareth, is not made perfect in love—*He about whose mind there lingers the apprehension of future wrath, shows that love in his soul has not accomplished its full work. Perhaps it never will on any soul until we reach the heavenly world, though there are many minds so full of love to God, as to be prevailingly delivered from fear.

I John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

The source of all divine love is God. It is because God first loved man that men have come to love Him. Consequently, if any have deep fondness and love for the Father,

they can rest assured that the reason for this spiritual affection is their first being loved by Him. And although not all men will respond to God's love by reciprocating love, those purposed to be saved through the Son of God will.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:19

We love him, because he first loved us—This passage is susceptible of two explanations; either.

(1) that the fact that he first loved us is the “ground” or “reason” why we love him, or.

(2) that as a matter of fact we have been brought to love him in consequence of the love which he has manifested toward us, though the real ground of our love may be the excellency of his own character.

Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 4:19

His is the fountain love, ours but the stream: his love the inducement, the pattern, and the effective cause of ours.

I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

If a man professes love for God while hating those born of Him, he is unquestionably *a liar* and has borne false witness concerning his faith.

Moreover, no one can love God, Who cannot be seen, if he does not love those born of Him, who can be seen.

Ultimately, one who is truly born again and has become a true child of God cannot hate, simply because it is completely contrary to the divine and holy nature imparted to him.

To hate any brother proves that there cannot be, nor ever has been, any sincere love for the Lord.

He who hates knows not God, nor does God consider him as His own.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:20

If we do not love the brethren, the visible representatives of God, how can we love God, the invisible One, whose children they are?

I John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

This expressed commandment that he who loves God will love his brother has its source in the Son of God. John heard this truth from the Savior, and therefore he boldly asserts this very important revelation as having come from Him.

It was Jesus Who first taught John to love, and it was He, Who revealed that those who genuinely love God, will love their brothers also.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:21

And this commandment have we from him—That is, the command to love a brother is as obligatory as that to love God. If one is obeyed, the other ought to be also; if a man feels that one is binding on him, he should feel that the other is also; and he can never have evidence that he is a true Christian, unless he manifests love to his brethren as well as love to God.

I John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

To be begotten of God requires sincere faith that Jesus is the Christ. Through faith in the Son of God are men made spiritual sons through the new birth.

And every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

John's previous argument was that if men love God, they will love their brothers; now he adds that if a man truly loves God, he will love all those begotten of Him.

This undoubtedly includes loving Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Thus, if a man genuinely adores, cherishes, and embraces the Father, he will possess the same love and affection for the Son.

There is ultimately no separation between true love for the Father and all those born of Him. For he who truly loves God will, with all spiritual certainty, love each and every other believer begotten of Him.

I John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:2

As our love to the brethren is the sign and test of our love to God, so (John here says) our love to God (tested by our "keeping his commandments") is, conversely, the ground and only true basis of love to our brother.

First, as the apostle stated, those who possess the Spirit of God dwell in God and He in them.

Second, it has been revealed that those who dwell in love dwell in God, and God in them.

And now third, that those who truly love God will keep His commandments.

By these three spiritual realities—(1) possessing the Spirit of God, (2) dwelling in God's love, (3) and keeping God's commandments—it is confirmed who has genuine relationship with the heavenly Father and who does not.

Scripture also makes it abundantly clear that a mere profession of relationship with God is not enough if one lacks the Holy Spirit, love for the brethren, or fails to keep Christ's commandments.

Practically, there is no such thing as a truly disobedient Christian, a Christian who lacks divine love in his life, or a Christian who has not been regenerated through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

All those who truly love God will keep His commandments—to this revelation the apostle adds that God's commandments are neither difficult nor grievous to be borne.

The Greek word for *grievous* is #926, *barus*. *Strong's Concordance* defines the word as “heavy, weighty, burdensome, lit. and met; violent, oppressive.”

HELPS Word-studies defines the word as “properly, heavy (weighty); (figuratively) what is grievous (burdensome), pressing down on a person with oppressive force. Such a grievous burden makes a person unable to function (enjoy free movement).”

Sin weighs men down; obedience to the heavenly law does not.

The Lord puts nothing on a man that is not profitable for his life and good for his soul.

Thus, subjection to God's will is always good for men, and cannot be considered either burdensome or grievous in any manner.

Keeping God's commandments also brings joy to the soul, health to the body, and prosperity to the life.

It is always good for believers to keep God's Word, and by doing so, this will lead them to possess the spiritually abundant life promised by the Son of God.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:3

And his commandments are not grievous—Greek, “heavy”—βαρεῖται *bareiai*; that is, difficult to be borne as a burden. See Matthew 11:30. The meaning is, that his laws are not unreasonable; the duties which he requires are not beyond our ability; his government is not oppressive. It is easy to obey God when the heart is right; and those who endeavor in sincerity to keep his commandments do not complain that they are hard. All complaints of this kind come from those who are not disposed to keep his commandments. Indeed, they object that his laws are unreasonable; that they impose improper restraints; that they are not easily complied with; and that the divine government is one of severity and injustice. But no such complaints come from true Christians. They find his service easier than the service of sin, and the laws of God more mild and easy to be complied with than were those of fashion and honor, which they once endeavored to obey. The service of God is freedom; the service of the world is bondage. No man ever yet heard a true Christian say that the laws of God, requiring him to lead a holy life, were stern and “grievous.” But who has not felt this in regard to the inexorable laws of sin?

I John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:4

John makes this affirmation of all who are born of God. “Whatsoever,” or, as the Greek is, “Everything which is begotten of God,” (πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον *pan to gegēnēmenon*;) meaning to affirm, undoubtedly, that “in every instance” where one is truly regenerated, there is this victory over the world.

This scripture makes two very important points: first, that *whosoever is born of God overcometh the world*, and second, that this victory is accomplished through *faith*.

What this teaches us is that the world cannot overcome a true child of God, as it does so many who have never been born of Him.

True Christians, therefore, regardless of their state in the world, cannot be, nor ever should be, considered as victims of it.

This is simply because those saved by the Son of God have, through their faith in Him, overcome the world.

The Greek word for *overcome* is #3529 *niké*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as "victory."

HELPS Word-Studies defines the word as "conquest; a particular expression of victory, resulting from receiving (obeying) the faith Christ imparts (i.e. His inworked persuasion)."

It is because of faith in the Son of God that a man is both born of God and overcomes the world, that is, made victorious over all its temptations, sin, and evil spiritual influences.

Because of being born of God, the power the world once held over the sinner is broken, and a new power is imparted to him.

By also being born from above, Christians have overcome *the god of this world* (II Cor. 4:4), who has blinded so many to the light of the gospel and its ability to save.

Ultimately, through faith in the Son of God, believers have been made to reign over everything that once ruled them, even Satan himself.

1 John 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

This world has beaten down many a sinner, drained him of all strength, discouraged his soul, and ruined his life.

It has not, and cannot, do the same thing to those who have believed upon God's Son.

By possessing faith in Jesus Christ, Christians are made to share in the same victory over the world as Him.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:5

For it is by believing; that we are made one with Jesus the Son of God, so that we partake of His victory over the world, and have dwelling in us One greater than he who is in the world (1Jo 4:4). "Survey the whole world, and show me even one of whom it can be affirmed with truth that he overcomes the world, who is not a Christian, and endowed with this faith" [Episcopius in Alford].

1 John 5:6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Many scholars have speculated regarding the true meaning of this verse, but as with most things, the simplest explanation is often the most satisfactory.

Scripture states here that Jesus *came by water and blood*. Jesus' earthly ministry began when John the Baptist baptized Him with water.

As for Christ coming to His people with *blood*, it should be remembered that just as His earthly ministry began with water, Jesus' true heavenly ministry, which saves men, began with His death and the shedding of His blood.

In both instances, at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry (which began with water) and the commencement of His heavenly ministry (which began with blood), the Spirit of God gave supernatural testimony that Jesus is the Son of God.

These two spiritual events—the heavenly baptism of Christ, when the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven which declared, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Matt. 3:16–17), and Christ’s resurrection from the dead, when He also ascended back into heaven—testified to His Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4), and proved Jesus to be the Son of God.

I John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

For a more thorough examination of this verse, the *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown* notes provide enlightening insight on this important topic.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:7
three—Two or three witnesses were required by law to constitute adequate testimony. ... That THE Trinity was the truth meant is a natural inference: the triad specified pointing to a still Higher Trinity; as is plain also from 1Jo 5:9, “the witness of God,” referring to the Trinity alluded to in the Spirit, water, and blood. It was therefore first written as a marginal comment to complete the sense of the text, and then, as early at least as the eighth century, was introduced into the text of the Latin Vulgate. The testimony, however, could only be borne on earth to men, not in heaven. The marginal comment, therefore, that inserted “in heaven,” was inappropriate. It is on earth that the context evidently requires the witness of the three, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, to be borne: mystically setting forth the divine triune witnesses, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

I John 5:8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

The Spirit, the water, and the blood together bear one great witness of Jesus’ true identity as being God’s Son.

The water.

At Jesus’ baptism the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended and lighted upon Him.

Matthew 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.

As with Stephen when the heavens were opened and he observed the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55), so were the heavens opened at Jesus’ earthly baptism, allowing a multitude to observe the Holy Spirit descending upon God’s Son.

With Stephen the heavens were opened, allowing Stephen to observe Jesus at the right hand of God, but now the heavens have been opened, testifying to Christ’s being the world’s Savior.

The Spirit.

Jesus’ earthly ministry bore witness of His being God’s Son, and through it the Holy Spirit became visible, through both Christ’s deep spiritual wisdom, and His supernatural spiritual power.

Jesus also is seen to have returned from His temptation in the wilderness full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1), returning also in the power of the Spirit to Galilee.

Biblical prophecy had revealed that the Spirit of God would come upon the Messiah, and it was this spiritual anointing that proved Jesus as being the Messiah.

It was also through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus cast out demons, which ultimately revealed His supernatural power over all spiritual forces that oppress man.

Blood.

The blood and Jesus' sacrifice for sin confirmed Him to be the Son of God, since after His death God raised Him from the dead.

In contrast to those merely born of the flesh, the Spirit of holiness, which Christ possessed, proved His heavenly deity.

Hence, from Christ's birth to Christ's resurrection, God testified to Jesus being His only begotten Son.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:8
agree in one—"tend unto one result"; their agreeing testimony to Jesus' Sonship and Messiahship they give by the sacramental grace in the water of baptism, received by the penitent believer, by the atoning efficacy of His blood, and by the internal witness of His Spirit (1Jo 5:10): answering to the testimony given to Jesus' Sonship and Messiahship by His baptism, His crucifixion, and the Spirit's manifestations in Him (see on [2651]1Jo 5:6). ... By the baptism then received by Christ, and by His redeeming blood-shedding, and by that which the Spirit of God, whose witness is infallible, has effected, and still effects, by Him, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, unite, as the threefold witness, to verify His divine Messiahship [Neander].

I John 5:9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

It is one thing for men to testify that Jesus is the Son of God; it is quite another when God Himself testifies to this truth.

God's witness is significantly greater and more worthy to be trusted than any earthly witness, even that of the apostles: *if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.*

Regarding the origination of the Word of God and the true identity of Jesus Christ, critics have argued for millenniums that Christianity was founded by men—that the Word of God came from them, and that the Son of God was nothing more than a man.

Left out in this deceptive assertion is the fact that God Himself has borne witness—and continues to bear witness—that Jesus Christ is His Son.

Therefore, it is not merely the apostles who have borne testimony that Jesus is the Son of God, who were themselves personal witnesses or personal eyewitnesses of Jesus' glory and majesty, but more importantly the Lord Himself, Who has openly witnessed to, and confirmed the great spiritual reality that Jesus both was and is His only begotten Son.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:9
For this is the witness of God ...—The testimony above referred to—that borne by the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. Who that saw his baptism, and heard the voice from heaven, Matthew 3:16–17, could doubt that he was the Son of God? Who that saw his death on the cross, and that witnessed the amazing scenes which occurred there, could

fail to join with the Roman centurion in saying that this was the Son of God? Who that has felt the influences of the Eternal Spirit on his heart, ever doubted that Jesus was the Son of God? ... Any one of these is sufficient to convince the soul of this; all combined bear on the same point, and confirm it from age to age.

I John 5:10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.

All true Christians possess a spiritual witness in their hearts of Christ's true identity.

This witness is the Spirit of God. This spiritual witness is given to them by God through Christ.

For the true Christian there is no such thing as blind faith, simply because everyone saved through the Son of God, has a personal and continuing spiritual witness within himself, confirming his faith is built on actual spiritual realities.

He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

He who refuses to believe the testimony of God presented at Jesus' baptism, His resurrection from the dead, and Jesus sending forth the Holy Spirit has no other option than to assert that God has lied about Jesus being His only begotten Son.

Hence, he who does not believe in the evidence given by God of Jesus' true identity as being His Son, ultimately declares the Lord to be a liar.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:10
He that believeth not God hath made him a liar ...*

Because he believeth not the record ...—The idea is, that in various ways—at his baptism, at his death, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, by the miracles of Jesus, etc.—God had become a “witness” that the Lord Jesus was sent by him as a Saviour, and that to doubt or deny this partook of the same character as doubting or denying any other testimony; that is, it was practically charging him who bore the testimony with falsehood.

I John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Through His Son, God has given men life, and this life is eternal. In the Son of God, is treasured up, and kept safe, the eternal life of everyone that the Son of God has saved. It has been obtained through Him, and will openly be revealed at His second coming.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:11
And this life is in his Son*—Is treasured up in him, or is to be obtained through him. See the John 1:4; John 11:25; John 14:6 notes; Colossians 3:3 note.

I John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

The entirety of God's eternal life abides in His Son, and there is no means of gaining this spiritual and eternal life apart from Him.

Ultimately, it is a man's faith in, obedience to, and relationship with the Son of God that allows him to receive God's gift of eternal life.

It is God's will that all men might be saved, and he who believes on and trusts in the message of the Son of God, will be.

Pulpit Commentary, I John 5:12

Eternal life is not granted to the whole world, or even to all Christians en masse; it is given to individuals, soul by soul, according as each does or does not accept the Son of God.

Session 10

An Exposition of I John

I John 5:13–21

Scriptures

I John 5:13

Hebrews 6:12

John 6:66

Hebrews 6:4–6

Matthew 24:13

Luke 9:62

I John 5:14

Romans 4:19

Jeremiah 32:27

I John 5:15

Ephesians 3:20

I John 5:16

Matthew 12:31

I John 5:17

I John 1:9

I John 5:18

II Corinthians 5:17

I John 5:19–20

I John 5:21

I John 1:5–6

I John 5:13 *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.*

To preach Christ and make Him known is to preach the precious gift of spiritual regeneration. It is to reveal that God's eternal life can be found in the One sent to declare Him to the world.

There is but one entrance into heaven, and it is through the Son of God, Who now sits in heaven.

There should be no guesswork in determining one's salvation, as both God's Word and God's Spirit will confirm its possession.

Sincerely believing in Jesus Christ, obeying His words, and loving the brethren produces confidence that one is born of God, and shares spiritual relationship with Him. While religion provides no real certainty of these truths, genuine belief in the Savior does.

And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

The second part of this verse, which appears at first as a duplication of thought, is actually just an exhortation to continue in the faith.

It is not enough to merely believe upon Jesus Christ for a brief period of time, which offers no sure hope of gaining the spiritual life offered through Him.

True faith is enduring; it is not short-term, for a time, or temporary. This mere profession of piety will save no one.

Thus, continued belief in the Son of God and subjection to Him must extend until this earthly life is over, or we are received into heaven by Him.

Practically, faith produces faithfulness, which is essential to receiving from God all that He has promised.

Hebrews 6:12 *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

When any lack following God's will for their lives, this demonstrates their lack of true spiritual regeneration.

John 6:66 From that time many of his [Jesus'] disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 6:66

Many of his disciples—Many who had followed him professedly as his disciples and as desirous of learning of him. See the notes at John 6:60.

Went back—Turned away from him and left him. From this we may learn,

1. Not to wonder at the apostasy of many who profess to be followers of Christ. Many are induced to become his professed followers by the prospect of some temporal benefit, or under some public excitement, as these were; and when that temporal benefit is not obtained, or that excitement is over, they fall away.
2. Many may be expected to be offended by the doctrines of the gospel. Having no spirituality of mind, and really understanding nothing of the gospel, they may be expected to take offence and turn back.

To truly believe in the Son of God, faithfulness to Him must continue throughout our entire life. All departure and falling away from the Savior, prior to this, has perilous and eternal consequences.

***Hebrews 6:4–6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,
5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,
6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.***

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 6:6

Such a statement might be one of the most effectual means of preserving from apostasy. To state that a fall from a precipice would cause certain death, would be one of the most certain means of preserving one from falling; to affirm that arsenic would be certainly fatal, is one of the most effectual means of preventing its being taken; to know that fire certainly destroys, is one of the most sure checks from the danger. Thousands have been preserved from going over the Falls of Niagara by knowing that there would be no possibility of escape; and so effectual has been this knowledge that it has preserved all from such a catastrophe, except the very few who have gone over by accident. So in religion. The knowledge that apostasy would be fatal, and there could be no hope of being of the danger than all the other means that could be used. If a man believed that it would be an easy matter to be restored again should he apostatize, he would feel little solicitude in regard to it; and it has occurred in fact, that they who suppose that this may occur, have manifested little of the care to walk in the paths of strict religion, which should have been evinced.

The Christian's call requires faithfulness until the end.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Once the Christian journey begins, it cannot be departed from. To do so endangers the promise of eternal life itself.

To even begin looking back is dangerous; actually turning back is spiritually fatal.

Luke 9:62 *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Luke 9:62

No man, &c.—As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. Though the reference seems chiefly to ministers, the application is general. The expression “looking back” has a manifest reference to “Lot’s wife” (Ge 19:26; and see on [1621] Lu 17:32). It is not actual return to the world, but a reluctance to break with it. (Also see on [1622] Mt 8:21.)

I John 5:14 *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

One way to encourage faith in God is to focus not on the petition, but rather on the Lord Who has the power to grant it.

Understandably, no faith can really be developed by looking at the obstacle, and consequently, not God’s ability to help us to overcome it.

This was the spies’ sin, when they returned from searching the promised land and gave an evil report of what they had seen (Num. 13:25–29).

Thus, when praying for deliverance, we should trust in God’s ability to deliver and not be consumed with our own natural inabilities.

Spiritual confidence in God is what characterized Abraham’s faith, and it should characterize ours as well.

Romans 4:19 *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb.*

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Rom. 4:19

He considered not—He did not regard the fact that his body was now dead, as any obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise. He did not suffer that fact to influence him, or to produce any doubt about the fulfillment. Faith looks to the strength of God, not to second causes, or to difficulties that may appear formidable to man.

It is not confidence in self that gives hope of answered prayer, but trust and confidence in the One we are praying to.

For this reason men should not look on their own fleshly inadequacies, shortcomings, and inabilities, but rather trust in the Lord, Who has none.

Jeremiah 32:27 *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?*

I John 5:15 *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

Expectant prayer is the most effective prayer. This is observed in the lame man at the gate Beautiful (Acts 3:2–8); the woman who came to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment expecting healing (Matt. 9:20–22); and the centurion who sought for Jesus to speak only a word in order that his servant might be healed (Matt. 8:5–13).

This is again why men's eyes should be solely on the Lord, similar to when Peter's eyes were focused on Jesus when he walked on the water (Matt. 14:22–32), lest their attention become distracted, also like Peter, by observing the storm, and dependent faith in God is lost.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:15

Not one of our past prayers offered in faith, according to His will, is lost. Like Hannah, we can rejoice over them as granted even before the event; and can recognize the event when it comes to pass, as not from chance, but obtained by our past prayers. Compare also Jehoshaphat's believing confidence in the issue of his prayers, so much so that he appointed singers to praise the Lord beforehand (II Chrn. 20:5–22).

When a man spiritually perceives that God has heard him, he should expect, when his request is according to divine will, to receive what has been asked.

The only way also that believers may experience the powerful effects and wonderful results of prayer is by praying.

For God cannot prove Himself until men believe that God is, and that the Lord will justly reward those who diligently seek Him.

When prayer is offered with expectant faith, God can reveal His supernatural spiritual ability to do exceedingly above all that is asked and/or thought.

Understandably, it is not God's power that falls short in times of need, but His people's faith, which cannot perceive that what is impossible with man, is entirely and absolutely possible with God.

Ultimately, whatever any can perceive, God is able to do exceeding abundantly more than this.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him [God] that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 3:20

That is able to do—see the notes, Romans 16:25.

Exceeding abundantly—The compound word used here occurs only in this place, and in 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:13. It means, to an extent which we cannot express.

Above all that we ask or think—More than all that we can desire in our prayers; more than all that we can conceive; see the notes on 1 Corinthians 2:9.

According to the power that worketh in us—The exertion of that same power can accomplish for us more than we can now conceive.

I John 5:16 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.

Praying for other Christians in need in the body of Christ is as essential as praying for our own needs. If we love our brothers as ourselves, we will seek God's help for them.

Though there is *a sin which is not unto death*, there is undoubtedly one that is.

There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

In all of life there are natural laws that govern points of no return. The same is true concerning spiritual laws, when men progress further in sin than where God's forgiveness will follow.

An example of this can be observed in the physical realm, such as if a man jumped off an exceedingly high and lofty cliff, but then, in the middle of the fall, abruptly changed his mind, yet nothing could alter the fatal result.

In some things, and especially so in regard to certain sin, there exists an event horizon. Once this has been passed, there is no chance of reversing the choice that has been made, nor to avoid the inevitable repercussions that must come because of it.

Sin against the Holy Spirit is such a fateful error as this: an error from which neither repentance nor prayer can change God's judgment.

Matthew 12:31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

If any passage of Scripture should alarm men to the danger of aligning themselves with the devil and carrying his words of blasphemy against the work of the Holy Spirit, it is this one.

If this sin is committed, no room for forgiveness remains, and not even prayers of faith can alter God's sentence.

No sin is so great as proclaiming evil the work of God. To proceed this far in sin goes beyond even the manifold grace of God.

To align oneself with the devil is to carry out his malicious and treacherous aims and speak evil of the Lord's work. The consequence of this devilish act is none other than eternal damnation.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 12:31

The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.— ... The Pharisees were warned against a sin to which they were drawing perilously near. To condemn the Christ as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, as breaking the Sabbath, or blaspheming when He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was to speak a word against the Son of Man. These offences might be sins of ignorance, not implying more than narrowness and prejudice. But to see a man delivered from the power of Satan unto God, to watch the work of the Spirit of God, and then to ascribe that work to the power of evil, this was to be out of sympathy with goodness and mercy altogether. In such a character there was no opening for repentance, and therefore none for forgiveness. The capacity for goodness in any form was destroyed by this kind of antagonism. The human nature in that extremest debasement has identified itself with the devil nature, and must share its doom.

I John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

When men do not adhere to the commandments given by either God's Word or God's Spirit, it is sin; however, this does not imply that all sin is unpardonable and must end in death.

God's nature is to forgive, so that if a man repents of his sin, the Lord's grace will prove itself greater than his transgression.

Nowhere also is God's love manifested more than when He forgives those who have broken His laws and transgressed His commandments.

Ultimately, pity on the sinner is one of the greatest expressions of divine love that is extended towards him. Vast amounts of sin have been forgiven through repentance, and the penalty for sin avoided because of the generosity of God's nature.

Just as man's fallen nature compels him to sin against God's laws, God's loving nature allows for forgiveness for this disobedience.

The gospel of Christ is undoubtedly a gospel of divine grace, where men, though unworthy of pardon, are still, because of heavenly mercy, granted it.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

The truth is not debatable that any true Christian cannot remain living in sin, nor will he return back to it once born of God. God's very own nature imparted to him prohibits this.

Thus, if a man claims he can remain in sin and live as he always has and still be saved, then you can be sure he has never received true spiritual regeneration.

Continuing in sin, or refusing to leave it, only proves that men have never been saved by Christ, since it is the children of wrath, and not the children of promise, who foolishly believe the holiness of heaven and the uncleanliness of sin can be joined.

Yet no man can truly enter heaven without being born of God, and all those truly born of Him will depart from serving their carnal nature, which consists of nothing but sin.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:18

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not—Is not habitually and characteristically a sinner; does not ultimately and finally sin and perish; cannot, therefore, commit the unpardonable sin. Though he may fall into sin, and grieve his brethren, yet we are never to cease to pray for a true Christian: we are never to feel that he has committed the sin which has never forgiveness, and that he has thrown himself beyond the reach of our prayers. This passage, in its connection, is a full proof that a true Christian "will" never commit the unpardonable sin, and, therefore, is a proof that he will never fall from grace. Compare the notes at Hebrews 6:4–8; Hebrews 10:26.

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Adding to the wonderful truth that the new birth transforms the human heart is that God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, preserves, protects, and keeps safe those whom God has given Him and made to become part of His mystical body.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I John 5:18

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself.—Rather, he that is begotten of God keepeth him: that is, the Son of God preserves him. (Comp. John 6:39; John 10:28; John 17:12; John 17:15.)

It is Christ's blood that saves the Christian, and it is Christ's power that preserves and keeps unholy and deceptive spirits from exerting the needed spiritual influence to lure him back to a life of sin and death.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:18

And that wicked one toucheth him not—The great enemy of all good is repelled in his assaults, and he is kept from falling into his snares.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:18

that wicked one toucheth him not—so as to hurt him. In so far as he realizes his regeneration-life, the prince of this world hath nothing in him to fasten his deadly temptations on, as in Christ's own case. His divine regeneration has severed once for all his connection with the prince of this world.

Where habitual sin is, God is not.

Where sin is preferred more than faith, the Holy Spirit's presence cannot be. This undoubtedly includes every willful sinner's heart.

True believers in Jesus Christ have been made anew. They have, through the ministry of the Son of God, been given a holy Spirit, which convicts them of sin, and will not allow their heart to continue in it.

Where the Spirit of Christ truly is, the desire to continue in sin cannot exist.

Hence, he who is truly born of God *sinneth not*; he cannot, simply because Christ's new nature that has been imparted to him is far greater than the previous sinful nature received from Adam.

Ultimately, the holy, spiritual genetics of heaven are far greater than the sinful, natural genetics passed on from Adam.

Because of their relationship with the Son of God, those saved are made completely new creatures.

II Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

This spiritual transformation is similar to when God took from the Spirit upon Moses and gave it to the seventy elders of Israel (Num. 11:25).

But now God has taken the Spirit of His Son, and anointed those saved by Christ, so that they might share in the same spiritual nature as their Savior.

I John 5:19–20 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

These verses reveal the three spiritual realities that every child of God will be made to know through the revelation given to him by the Son of God:

- (1) That God is Jesus Christ's Father, and Jesus Christ is God's Son.
- (2) That the whole world *lieth in wickedness*.
- (3) That he who is saved is *in Him that is true*, even in His Son, Jesus Christ.

I John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

These last words of the apostle seem to be a digression, yet the danger of unintended idolatry remains, even for those born of God.

Idolatry can occur when personal pursuits, worldly pleasures, carnal desires, and the cares of this world wrongly assume the place in the believer's heart reserved solely for God and His Christ.

For this reason Christians should take great care and regularly inspect their own hearts to ensure that nothing assumes the rightful place reserved solely for the Savior.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:21

(1) Those to whom he [the apostle] wrote were surrounded by idolaters, and there was danger that they might fall into the prevailing sin, or in some way so act as to be understood to lend their sanction to idolatry.

(2) in a world full of alluring objects, there was danger then, as there is at all times, that the affections should be fixed on other objects than the supreme God, and that what is due to him should be withheld.

There is no middle ground for true Christians to balance love for God and love for the world.

To love what the flesh desires, and not what the Holy Spirit wills, only reveals the absence of true salvation.

Consequently, if any desire to be saved, then sincere, deep, and genuine love for God must arise above every other carnal and worldly affection in the heart.

Idolatry is the foundation of all unrighteousness, and no man who lives in it will inherit everlasting life.

Many also have deceived themselves into believing that they may continue in sin, pursue its carnal pleasures, and still enter heaven. This is not the truth of God's Word, nor what the apostle John personally heard and was taught by Jesus Christ. If any believe otherwise, they have entered into conflict with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and shall as a result, forfeit the salvation offered through Him.

I John 1:5-6 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him [Him] is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.