

Analysis of
1 JOHN

"FELLOWSHIP"

"If we are saying that we are having fellowship with Him, and we are walking in the darkness, we are lying, and are not practicing the truth: but if we are walking in the light as He is in the light, we are having fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, is cleansing us from all sin."

1 John 1:6-7 ([JTB](#))

Annotated Analysis of 1 John
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Updated October 26, 2018 7:45 AM

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Introduction

Authorship

Nothing in this document identifies the author explicitly. But the Church has long held that the [Apostle John](#) wrote it. Several early church “fathers” have identified John as the author, including Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria. (See [Thomas Constable](#) and his [endnote 1](#).) In this letter, he placed himself in the company of those who were eyewitnesses of the one he called “the Word of Life” and “Jesus Christ,” “Son” of the “Father” (1 John 1:1-4).

Moreover, the language of 1 John 1:1-3 sounds very much like the language of John’s Gospel in its opening paragraph (John 1:1-4). A good case can be made that the author of the fourth gospel is [John the Apostle](#). Since there is correspondence between the two, it is safe to say that the person who wrote one document also wrote the other.

Recipients

There is no internal evidence as to the geographical identity of the recipients. From the contents of the letter, we gather that the readers were Christians (see for example 1 John 2:12-14, 21; 5:13). He believed that his readers possessed the [Holy Spirit](#), whom he identifies as “anointing from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20) and “the anointing” (1 John 2:27).

John had an affectionate, personal relationship with his readers. He called them his “little children” (*teknion*, [5040](#), the diminutive of *téknos*, [5043](#), “children”). John called his readers “little children” seven times (1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). He used the word “children” five times in four verses (1 John 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2). One of these times he referred to “children of the devil” (1 John 3:10).

According to church tradition, John ministered in Ephesus for many years. Indeed, the Lord’s commands to him to write to the messengers of the seven churches in Asia Minor (western modern-day Turkey) (Rev. 1:11; 2:1-3:22) are consistent with that tradition. Perhaps the readers of 1 John were Christians in that area. We do not know for certain.

Purpose for Writing

John wrote this theological treatise so his readers might have fellowship with him and the apostolic community, along with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:1-3). John also wrote for a joyful sense of personal fulfillment in ministry (1 John 1:4).

Beyond that John focused on the maintenance of Christian fellowship (1 John 1:1-2:28). (For a breakdown of John’s letter, see the author’s “[Analysis of 1 John](#).”) He introduced the topic of fellowship (1 John 1:1-4). He was intent on his readers’ dealing with sin in order to maintain fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-2:2). Obedience (1 John 2:3-8) and love (1 John 2:9-11) were essential in maintaining fellowship. So also were intentional maturing within the Christian family (1 John 2:12-17) and the determination to stay, or remain in Jesus (1 John 2:18-28).

He spoke, moreover, about certain indicators of fellowship within the family of God (1 John 2:29-4:6). Among these were righteousness (1 John 2:29-3:10) and love (1 John 3:11-24) within the family. Of critical importance was acceptance within the family of God’s revelation through the Apostles (1 John 4:1-6).

Finally, he wrote about the implications of fellowship (1 John 4:7-5:21) in regard to love (1 John 4:7-21); faith (1 John 5:1-20); and idolatry (1 John 5:21).

Theological error John was wishing to combat

There exists in this theological treatise an undertone of theological error that John was seeking to combat. He warns them that they are living in the “last hour,” marked by the appearance of many “antichrists” (1 John 2:18). These antichrists did not remain in the company or framework of apostolic teaching (1 John 2:19). They denied that Jesus is the Christ, or [Messiah](#) (1 John 2:22). In so doing, they denied both the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22-23).

He returned to the subject of antichrists later in his writing. He warned his readers that they should not believe every spirit, but they should rather test the spirits to see if they are from God. This was necessary because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1). Every spirit that confessed that Jesus is the [Messiah](#) who has come in the flesh is from God (1 John 4:2). Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, but is rather the spirit of antichrist (1 John 4:3). Those who are not from God do not listen to the apostolic teaching (1 John 4:6).

It is difficult to identify precisely the false teachings about which John was warning his readers. But perhaps these were among them. There was a man named Cerinthus, a Gnostic, and also a Docetist who believed that Jesus was not fully God, but that God came upon Jesus at his baptism and departed from him before his crucifixion ([Constable](#)). [Charles Ryrie](#) stated the following about Docetism (as quoted by [Constable](#)):

"Extreme Docetism [i.e., Docetic Gnostics] held that Jesus was not human at all but was merely a prolonged theophany, while moderate Docetism [i.e., Cerinthian Gnostics] considered Jesus the natural son of Joseph and Mary, upon whom Christ came at the time of baptism."

For more on the subject of Docetism, see the off-site article, “[What is Docetism?](#)” For more on the subject of the false teaching of Gnosticism, that actually developed later than the first century, see the off-site article, “[What is Christian Gnosticism?](#)”

Time of Writing

There are conservative scholars who believe this document was penned by John in the A.D. 60's. Others are more inclined to believe John wrote this letter in the 90's. I believe John wrote his gospel in the late 80's or early 90's. This letter seems to borrow ideas found in John's Gospel. So I date this book in the 90's after John had written his gospel.

1 JOHN

"FELLOWSHIP"

"If we are saying that we are having fellowship with Him, and we are walking in the darkness, we are lying, and are not practicing the truth: but if we are walking in the light as He is in the light, we are having fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, is cleansing us from all sin."

1 John 1:6-7 ([JTB](#))

A 1 THE MAINTENANCE OF FELLOWSHIP 1:1 - 2:28

B 1 Introduction: The Proclamation of Fellowship 1:1-4

C 1 The qualifications of the proclaimers 1:1-2

D 1 Eyewitnesses of the Word of life 1:1

E 1 Their statement of His eternality: {1} What ¹ was from the beginning,²

E 2 Their claim to have heard Him personally: what we have heard,³

E 3 Their claim to have been eyewitnesses: what we have seen with our eyes,⁴

¹ 1 John 1:1 - What: the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the Relative Pronoun *hós* ([3739](#)). This antecedentless relative pronoun refers to none other than the eternal Word (*lógos*, [3056](#)) of life (see 1 John 1:1).

² 1 John 1:1 - What was from the beginning: The "Word of Life (1 John 1:1) was already existing ([Imperfect](#) tense of the verb *eimi*, [1510](#)) when the beginning began. This demonstrates that the Word (pre-incarnate Second Person of the Deity) is Eternal, having no beginning nor ending. He is the Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 22:12-13).

What beginning did John have in mind? My understanding is that it is the beginning of all created beings, including angels. That beginning may well incorporate the beginning of the heavens and earth (Gen. 1:1), but, in my opinion, is more inclusive than that, including the beginning of the creation of angels, who were apparently created before God created the heavens and the earth, and were on hand to witness the creation of the universe (Job 38:4-7).

³ 1 John 1:1 - what we have heard: John used the Plural [Perfect](#) tense of the verb *akoiuō* ([191](#)), to listen to, given consideration to. John used the [Perfect](#) tense to indicate he and his associates had actually heard Jesus speak with their own ears, and the memories of what they had heard remained with them. John and his fellow [Apostles](#) heard Jesus speak a great many times during His three-year ministry. Sometimes these were private instructional times, while other times were in a public setting with multitudes gathered around.

⁴ 1 John 1:1 - what we have seen with our eyes: John used the [Perfect](#) Plural of the verb *horáō* ([3708](#)), indicating that which John had personally seen and observed with his own eyes. The [Perfect](#) tense indicates that John and his fellow [Apostles](#) had seen Jesus many times with their very own eyes, and those memories remained with him to the very day of writing this letter. John is doing his best to inform his readers that he was an eyewitness of the person of the [Messiah](#) and His teachings.

E 4 Their claim to have scrutinized Him: what we have looked at ⁵

E 5 Their claim to have handled Him: and touched with our hands, ⁶

E 6 Their assessment of His message: concerning the Word of Life— ⁷

D 2 The impact of the eternal life 1:2

E 1 It was manifested: {2} and the life was manifested, ⁸

E 2 It was observed: and we have seen ⁹

⁵ 1 John 1:1 - what we have looked at: Here John used the [Aorist](#) tense, [Middle Deponent](#) Plural of the verb *theáomai* (2300), to look upon, to gaze upon attentively. With the [Aorist](#) tense, John is looking over the whole of Jesus' life as John viewed Him. John was an eyewitness of Jesus, and he gazed upon Him attentively for three years.

⁶ 1 John 1:1 - and touched with our hands: Jesus, even though He was God personified, nevertheless had a human body. John himself, and the other [Apostles](#) had reached out and touched Jesus with their very own hands! He was not a figment of their imagination. They had embraced Him; they had given Him a pat on the back. They had brushed against Him while walking down the road. He was a real person with flesh and blood, not merely a ghost or an apparition. "Touched" is the 3rd Person [Aorist](#) Plural of *psēlapháō* (5584), to feel about or grope one's way (Acts 17:27); to feel, touch, handle (Luke 24:39) (adapted from [Friberg](#)). John and his fellow [Apostles](#) handled Jesus with their own hands both before his death and after his resurrection (John 20:26-29). Some false teachers denied Jesus' humanity (1 John 4:1-3) and in 1 John 1:2, John is [combating this false teaching](#).

⁷ 1 John 1:1 - concerning the Word of Life: literally, "concerning the Word of the Life." This is John's objective all along, to talk about the Person he called "The Word (message, [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *lógos*, 3056). John also called Jesus "the Word" in John 1:1, 14. He did so because Jesus is the accurate, ultimate expression of who God is and what He is like. In John's own words, Jesus "explained" God (John 1:18) ([Aorist](#) of the verb *exēgéomai*, 1834). This explanation about God was given by Jesus throughout the course of His earthly life, viewed here as a single event.

"...of Life": literally, "of the Life." Jesus, however, was not merely a "Message". He was *the* "Message" in whom the Life (the [Genitive Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *zōē*, 2222) inheres. "Life" is the word which John uses to depict "(2) supernatural life, opposite *to thnētón* (2349) (*what is subject to dying*) and *phthorá* (5356) (*destruction, death*)" ... and "(3) viewed as an attribute of God (1 John 5:20) and Christ (John 5:26b)" (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). Jesus Himself claimed to be the Way (to the Father), the Truth, and the Life (John 14:16). Moreover Jesus was the Creator of all things, including the Creator of plant life and animal life and human life and spirit existence (angels) (John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2). John uses the noun "life" 13X in 10 verses in John – 1 John 1:1; 1:2 (2X); 2:25; 3:14, 15, 5:11 (2X); 5:12 (2X); 5:13, 16, 20. It is a significant theme in 1John, which is a mere 5 chapters in length. "Life" was also a major theme in John's gospel, in which he used the term 36X in 32 verses.

⁸ 1 John 1:2 - and the life was manifested: "the life" is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *zōē* (2222), which John uses here to depict "(2) supernatural life, opposite *to thnētón* (2349) (*what is subject to dying*) and *phthorá* (5356) (*destruction, death*)" ... and "(3) viewed as an attribute of God (1 John 5:20) and Christ (John 5:26b)" (excerpted from [Friberg](#)).

"was manifested" is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Passive](#) of *phaneróō* (5319), meaning, in the [Passive](#) "become known, be shown, be in true character (2 Cor. 5:11); appear, become visible, be revealed (John 21:14; 1 Tim. 3:16). John will use the identical form of this same verb at the end of this verse. John uses this verb 9X in 7 verses in his letter. These include 1 John 1:2 (twice); 1 John 2:19, 28; 3:2 (twice); 1 John 3:5, 8; 4:9.

According to [Vine, meaning A-4](#),

To be manifested, in the Scriptural sense of the word, is more than to "appear." A person may "appear" in a false guise or without a disclosure of what he truly is; to be manifested is to be revealed in one's true character; this is especially the meaning of *phaneróō*, see, e.g., John 3:21; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 5:10, 11; Eph 5:13.

The life that inhered in the God/Man Jesus was plainly revealed to 1st Century A.D. [Israel](#), and especially to Jesus' [Disciples](#) ([Apostles](#)). The latter perceived and embraced that life. The vast majority of the former did not.

⁹ 1 John 1:2 - and we have seen: the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *horáō* (3708), "to see or perceive with one's own eyes. At this time of writing John asserts, once again, that at some point in the past He had personally seen Jesus, and the impact of that eye-witness encounter remained with him to this very day.

E 3 The eyewitnesses (apostles) felt compelled to share this life: and testify and proclaim to you ¹⁰ the eternal life, ¹¹

G 1 His eternal proximity in heaven with the Father: which was with the Father ¹²

G 2 His providential appearance in time here on earth: and was manifested to us— ¹³

C 2 The motivation of the proclaimers 1:3-4

D 1 Proclamation: {3} what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also,

¹⁰ 1 John 1:2 - and testify and proclaim to you: In the past John and his associates had seen Christ and His life. Now he and his associates were in the process of “testifying and proclaiming” to his readers that which they had seen.

“...testify” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *marturéō* (3140), which is here used “(1) of a human declaration of ascertainable facts based on firsthand knowledge or experience *bear witness to, declare, confirm* (Rom. 10:2); ... (4) of religious witness to truth and the factual content of the gospel as revealed truth from God *be a witness, tell about, testify* (Acts 23:11)” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). Both definitions fit this context, although (1) is technically a bit more appropriate. In writing this letter, John and his associates were presently and actively “testifying” or “bearing witness” to “the eternal life,” i.e. to the eternal life manifested in the Person of Jesus, the [Christ](#). John used this verb 6X in this letter (1 John 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10).

“...proclaim” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *apangéllō* (518), to inform, proclaim, or declare. As he is writing this letter on behalf of his associates, John is presently announcing, informing, proclaiming, declaring to his readers “the eternal life, which was the Father and was manifested to us” – i.e., the Life of the Eternal [Christ](#).

¹¹ 1 John 1:2 - the eternal life: literally, “the life, the eternal”

“...life” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *zōē* (2222), which John again uses here to depict “(2) supernatural life, opposite *tó thnētón* (2349) (*what is subject to dying*) and *phthorá* (5356) (*destruction, death*)” ... and “(3) viewed as an attribute of God (1 John 5:20) and Christ (John 5:26b)” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)).

“...eternal” (literally, “the eternal”) is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the adjective *aiōnios* (166), meaning “eternal, everlasting opposite *próskairos* (4340) (*temporary, transitory*); (1) of God *without beginning or end, eternal* (Rom. 16:26); without beginning (Rom. 16:25); *without end, everlasting* (2 Cor. 5:1); neuter singular *aiōnion* as an adverb *for all time, forever* (Philemon 1:15)” ([Friberg](#)).

What John is saying is that the Life inherent in the Word, the Second Person of the Godhead, “which was with the Father and was manifested to us” is the Life that John and his associates are proclaiming and testifying to their readers.

John speaks of eternal life in this letter in 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20. See also the Glossary entry on [Eternal Life](#).

¹² 1 John 1:2 - which was with the Father: “Father” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of *patēr* (3962), which appears here “...(2) as a title for God; [a] as the creator and sovereign ruler of all (James 1:17); [b] as the Father of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:49); [c] as the Father of Christians ...” ([Friberg](#)). John is saying that the Second Person of God, from eternity past, “was being,” or “was existing,” the 3rd Person Singular [Imperfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *eimi* (1510) with the Father. Before He became a man, He was eternally existing with God the Father. This shows close association, but also differentiation. He was with the Father, but He was not the Father. They both share the same essence, but they exist eternally as two separate persons.

¹³ 1 John 1:2 - and was manifested to us: John used the identical form of this same verb, the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Passive](#) of *phanerōō* (5319), “was manifested” or “made known,” earlier in this same verse. He is saying that at a point in time this Eternal Life, inhering in the Word of Life was made known or manifested (or revealed) to John and his associates. In one sense John may have been referring to the [incarnation](#). But the moment when John was first personally introduced to Jesus, and began a journey of knowing Him as a disciple and later as an [apostle](#), is probably that to which he was referring. This word “manifested” would include learning to know the Divine attributes of Christ, His ministry and mission. His death, resurrection, and ascension, and His recruitment assignment which He gave to His [apostles](#) (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). See the appropriate footnotes at 1 John 1:2; 3:5 for more about *phanerōō*.

¹⁴ 1:3a

D 2 Mutual fellowship: so that you too may have fellowship with us; ¹⁵ 1:3b

D 3 Essential fellowship: and indeed our fellowship 1:3c

E 1 With the Father: is with the Father,

E 2 With the Son: and with His Son ¹⁶ Jesus Christ. ¹⁷

¹⁴ 1 John 1:3 - what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also: "...we have seen" is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *horáō* (3708), to see or perceive by firsthand experience; "...heard" is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *akoúō* (191), "to hear with one's ears, to listen to."

"...we proclaim" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *apangéllō* (518), to inform, proclaim, or declare.

John is saying that he and his fellow [apostles](#) had, in the past, seen Jesus with their own eyes, and heard Him give His messages with their own ears. That which they had heard and seen they were presently reporting to their audience through the medium of writing.

Why are the writer and his associated [apostles](#) so urgent about proclaiming this message?

1. Because life is at stake 1:1, 2
2. Because he (and they) want to share that life (fellowship) with their readers 1:3, 6, 7
3. Because joy is at stake 1:4

¹⁵ 1 John 1:3 - so that you too may have fellowship with us: "so that you too" – "so that" translates the Subordinating Conjunction *hina* (2443), used here to show John's "purpose or goal *that, in order that, so that*" ([Friberg](#)).

"...you too may have." John addresses his readers here in the plural "you," the 2nd Person [Nominative](#) Plural of the pronoun *sú* (4771); "may have" is the 2nd Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *échō* (2192), meaning here, "to have or possess" on a continual or ongoing basis. John wants his readers to possess or maintain continual and ongoing fellowship with him and his associates.

"...fellowship" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *koinōnía* (2842), "a relationship characterized by sharing in common, fellowship, participation" ([Friberg](#)); "fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation ..." ([Thayer](#)). John and his associates wished to communicate about "the Word of the Life" (i.e., Jesus and His life-giving message) to their readers so the readers might continually share Jesus and His life-giving message in common with John and the [apostles](#).

¹⁶ 1 John 1:3 - and with His Son: "Son" is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *huiós* (5207), almost universally translated "son" in the NT. It is my view that Jesus is the Son of God on four counts, perhaps five: (1) God made an eternal promise, later termed a Decree, that He would maintain a "Father / Son" relationship with David's son (2 Sam. 7:14). Though the initial referent was Solomon, the ultimate referent is the ultimate Son of David, Jesus the [Messiah](#). This Decree of Sonship is spelled out in Psalm 2:5-7. (2) In "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4) the Spirit of God descended powerfully upon the virgin Mary and caused the child to which she then gave birth to be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). (3) Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power by virtue of His resurrection from among the dead (Romans 1:4). (4) Jesus is called the Son of God with reference to God's yet future installation of Him as King of Israel in Jerusalem on the throne on Mount Zion in Jerusalem (Psalm 2:5-7). This installation and declaration of Christ as Son will authorize Him to rule over all the nations of the entire earth with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:8-9). (5) The standard view of theology is that Jesus has always been the Son of God. That is possible. But I struggle with that view, not because I doubt Jesus' eternal Deity, but rather because the evidence for that view seems to be in short supply. In other words, the terminology identifying Jesus as the Son of God seems to be a NT phenomenon, not an OT phenomenon. I say that on two counts. (a) There is a remarkable absence of references to God as "Father" in the OT. (b) There is a remarkable absence of references to the Second Person of the Godhead as "Son" in the OT. Rather, He seems to be identified as the particular "[Angel \(better Messenger\) of the Lord](#)," or "[Messenger of Yahweh](#)." That is consistent with John's terminology. In Jesus' pre-incarnate state, John thrice refers to Him not as the "Son of God," but as the "Word" or "Message" of God (John 1:1-3). In 1 John 1:1, the Apostle echoes that terminology, calling Jesus "The Word of the Life." It may be that he was there referring to the (Gospel) Message about Life, but I cannot help but think, in view of his gospel, that John did not also perceive of Jesus Himself as being the Word (Message) who personifies Life.

What I am attempting to convey is that describing Jesus as the "Son" of God conveys His relationship to God as a unique Human Being. In other words, "Sonship" is a human thing by definition, not a "God" thing.

One possible exception to my view is that, in 1 John 1:2, the author states that the Eternal Life (i.e. the Second

D 4 Personal joy: 4 These things we write, so that our ¹⁸ joy may be made complete. 1:4

B 2 Dealing with Sin to Restore Fellowship 1:5 - 2:2

C 1 Fellowship requires family forgiveness 1:5-10

D 1 The requirement for fellowship with God – total light 1:5

E 1 The message: {5} This is the message we have heard from Him ¹⁹

E 2 The announcement: and announce to you,

E 3 God's essential nature

G 1 Total purity: that God is Light, ²⁰

Person of the Trinity) was being constantly with the Father in eternity past. That may indicate that Jesus and Yahweh had an eternal Father / Son relationship that was intrinsic with their essence. That may be so, but I would like to see more actual evidence of that fact if that is what John actually meant. In other words, John's terminology may be explained because he now sees God as "Father" and interpolates that terminology back in time. On a human level, I can refer to what my own father did as a young man back in his high school days before he was ever married and certainly before he became my father.

Notice carefully what I am NOT saying. I am NOT saying that the Second Person of the Godhead became Deity when He was born. He has ALWAYS been and will ALWAYS be Deity. But I understand the term "Son" to connote the human connotation of having been born. John was the only NT writer to designate Jesus as the "only begotten" of the Father (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). A better translation is that Jesus was the "only-born" of the Father. See the other uses of this term in Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Heb. 11:17. My point is that one has to be "born" in order to be "only-born." My assertion is that, in His essence, the Second Person of the Trinity was always God. But His becoming a "Son" of God relates to His incarnation. For a fuller discussion of this topic, see "[In What Way is Jesus the Son of God?](#)"

¹⁷ 1 John 1:3 - Jesus Christ: This is John's first identification of the Second Person of the Trinity with His human name, "Jesus," and His customary Greek title, "Christ." "Jesus" means "Jehovah is Salvation" or better, "Yahweh is Salvation." The messenger (angel) of the Lord who appeared to Joseph instructed him to name the baby "Jesus" because "He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20, 21). The title "Christ" (*Christós*, [5547](#)) means "Anointed One," and is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "[Messiah](#)" (*mashiyach*, [4899](#)), also "Anointed One." Specifically, the term means that Jesus was anointed with God's Spirit. Jesus was anointed by God with His Spirit immediately after His immersion by John to serve God in the roles of Ultimate [Prophet](#), Ultimate [Priest](#), and Ultimate [King](#). During His lifetime on earth, Jesus functioned primarily as [Prophet](#). At the end of His life He acted as [Priest](#), offering His body as an eternally effective sacrifice for sins. After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, serving primarily as [Priest](#), interceding on behalf of His own before the Father (Heb. 7:25). When He returns to reign upon Earth, triumphing over His enemies, He will be serving primarily as [King](#) (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 9:9; 14:9, 16, 17; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 20:4-6).

¹⁸ 1 John 1:4 - our: According to the [NetBible](#) note on this pronoun, a number of Greek manuscripts refer to "your" joy rather than to "our" joy. The KJV follows, of course, the [Textus Receptus](#) reading ("your"), but the majority of Byzantine minuscules are split between the two readings. As a general rule, the text families on which the [NASB](#) is based, pre-date the Byzantine text type. So I prefer the [NASB](#) reading, "our."

¹⁹ 1 John 1:5 - we have heard from Him: Probably a reference to Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, the last person mentioned in 1 John 1:3.

²⁰ 1 John 1:5 - that God is Light: "Light" is the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *phōs* ([5457](#)). This word often speaks of physical light (Matt. 17:2; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:56; Acts 16:29; 1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 18:23; 21:24; 22:5). But more often than not, in the NT it is used, as here, in a metaphorical sense, symbolizing goodness, righteousness, purity, holiness, and absence of any sin or evil. That is how John used it here and elsewhere in this letter (1 John 1:5, 7; 2:8, 9, 10). John is saying that God is the essence of Light – goodness, righteousness, and holiness. There is no hint of evil or corruption within Him.

G 2 Completely uncontaminated by any evil whatever: and in Him there is no darkness at all.²¹ 1:5

D 2 Three false claims to fellowship with the God of light 1:6-10

E 1 Denial that living in darkness destroys fellowship 1:6-7

G 1 The deceitful claim – "Disobedience doesn't destroy fellowship" 1:6

H 1 They hypothetical claim of fellowship with God: 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him²²

H 2 The unholy lifestyle: and yet walk in the darkness,²³

H 3 The deceitful reality: we lie and do not practice the

²¹ 1 John 1:5 - that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all: There is no record in the Gospels that Jesus made this precise statement about God. But John and his fellow [Apostles](#) had spent three years with Jesus. There were undoubtedly many things Jesus stated that were not recorded in the Gospels (John 20:30-31; 21:25).

As Zane Hodges ([TBKC](#)) noted, there are many references in John's writing in which Jesus is depicted as being, and claiming to be, the embodiment of Light (John 1:4-5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46; Rev. 21:23). The first chapter of the Bible speaks of light replacing darkness (Gen. 1:3-5). After God had spoken light into existence in His physical creation, He saw that light was good. So from the beginning there has been an antithesis between light and darkness. Here in 1 John 1:5 the light and darkness are not physical, so much as spiritual and moral. God is completely light morally, spiritually, and ethically. He is wholly untainted by any hint of evil or wickedness or unrighteousness.

"darkness" is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of *skotía* ([4653](#)), used 16X in the NT. In a literal sense it refers to a condition in which there is an absence of daylight or even artificial light (Matt. 10:27; Luke 12:3; John 6:17; 12:35b; 20:1). More often in the NT, as here, darkness refers to moral and spiritual darkness, a condition manifest in the realm of the [Devil](#), his [angels](#), and the [world](#), but uninhabited by God, who dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16). Examples of this figurative darkness include Matt. 4:16 (in the NASB, though the [UBS4](#) Greek text uses the slightly more common noun *skótos* ([4655](#)) here); John 1:5; 8:12; 12:35a; 12:46; 1 John 1:5; 2:8, 9, 11).

Once again, John is saying that God is completely light in a moral and spiritual sense, and in Him there is no moral or spiritual darkness. But it is also true that God is essentially Light. There is a physical and visible glory that surrounds Him and emanates from Him that is unapproachable, at least for humans in their fallen condition. Occasionally man glimpses that Light, and it is truly stunning and debilitating (Acts 9:3-4; Rev. 1:16-17).

²² 1 John 1:6 - If we say that we have fellowship with Him: John is setting up a hypothetical situation, "If we say," where "we say" is the 1st Person Plural [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *légō* ([3004](#)). His point is that if we Christians should ever, at any time assert that we are having fellowship with God when, at the same time, we are walking in the darkness, we are lying, and are not living out the truth.

"...fellowship" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *koinōnía* ([2842](#)), "a relationship characterized by sharing in common, *fellowship, participation*" ([Friberg](#)); "fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation ..." ([Thayer](#)).

This is the first of three false claims to fellowship that John excoriates in his letter. The first false claim to fellowship is this: "Disobedience does not destroy my fellowship with God."

²³ 1 John 1:6 - and yet walk in the darkness: Literally, "and in the darkness we are walking" John is talking, of course, about people who claim to be Christians, yet they are "walking around" (1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *peripatéō*, [4043](#)), "living their lives" in the darkness, the [Dative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *skótos* ([4655](#)). In a literal sense this word refers to physical darkness (Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44; Acts 2:20; 13:11; 2 Cor. 4:6). Some times it is used in a more figurative, but no less real sense of the final condition of unbelievers in "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Jude 1:13). Most often it is used in the NT in the sense of moral and spiritual darkness (Matt. 6:23; Luke 1:79; 11:35; 22:53; John 3:19; Acts 26:18; Rom. 2:19; 13:12; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:8, 11; 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 5:4, 5; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:6). John is speaking of people who call themselves Christians, avow they are in fellowship with God, yet are living their lives in moral and spiritual darkness. He will say that these people are liars, and the truth is not found in them.

truth;²⁴

G 2 The purifying alternative – constant obedience 1:7

H 1 The condition – a holy walk: 7 but if we walk in the Light²⁵

H 2 The comparison: as He Himself is in the Light,²⁶

H 3 The results

J 1 Fellowship: we have fellowship with one another,²⁷

J 2 Cleansing: and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.²⁸

²⁴ 1 John 1:6 - we lie and do not practice the truth: Literally, “we are lying and not performing the truth,” where “we are lying” is the [Present](#) tense of the verb *pseúdomai* (5574) and “performing” is the [Present](#) tense of the verb *poiéō* (4160), “truth” is the [Accusative](#) case of the noun *alêtheia* (225). Again, what John is saying is this: If we, at a point in time, say that we are having fellowship with God, yet at the same time we are walking around in moral and spiritual and ethical darkness, then we are lying and we are not performing the truth. This is **the First False Claim to Fellowship** – that we can be living in disobedience to God and yet still claim to be having fellowship with Him.

²⁵ 1 John 1:7 - but if we walk in the Light: Literally, “but if in the light we are walking around” “Light” is the [Dative](#) case of the noun *phōs* (5457), used here in a metaphorical sense, symbolizing goodness, righteousness, purity, holiness, and absence of any sin or evil. This is the realm where God exists, and we cannot hope to enjoy fellowship with Him unless we are walking around, presently living our lives in the realm of goodness and purity. “Walking around” is the [Present Subjunctive](#) of the verb *peripatéō* (4043), and indicates the ongoing or customary way that we are living our lives. For more information on *phōs* see the appropriate footnote at 1 John 1:5.

²⁶ 1 John 1:7 - as He Himself is in the Light: Literally, “as He Himself is existing in the Light” “He Himself” translates the single intensive pronoun *autós* (846), here appearing in the [Nominative](#) case. “Is existing” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *eimi* (1510), meaning, “to be, to exist, to happen, to be present” ([Thayer](#)). John is asserting that God continually is existing in the Light, the [Dative](#) case of the noun *phōs* (5457), used again here in a metaphorical sense, symbolizing goodness, righteousness, purity, holiness, and absence of any sin or evil. Since God continually is existing in the realm of moral and ethical goodness and holiness, that is the Light in which we must be walking around if we are to claim, accurately, to be having fellowship with Him.

²⁷ 1 John 1:7 - we have fellowship with one another: Literally, “fellowship we are having with one another,” where “fellowship” is the [Accusative](#) case of the noun *koinōnia* (2842), a relationship connoting commonality and mutual friendship and warmth. “With one another” refers to the fellowship between us Christians who are walking in the light and God. Only if we Christians are leading holy lives, walking around in the light of holiness as God Himself exists in holiness, can we then consistently be enjoying fellowship and vibrant commonality with God.

²⁸ 1 John 1:7 - and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin: Literally, “and the blood of Jesus, the Son of Him, is cleansing us from every sin.” “Blood” is the [Nominative Neuter](#) of the noun *haîma* (129), and refers to the blood Jesus shed on the cross when He died to pay for our sins. It is the blood of Christ, not the water of baptism or the wine of communion, that cleanses us from every sin.

“Is cleansing” translates the [Present](#) tense of the verb *katharízō* (2511), which means to “wash, make clean, or purify.” If we are walking (living) in the Light, Jesus’ blood is constantly cleansing or purifying us from every sin.

“Every” is the [Genitive Feminine](#) Singular of the adjective *pās* (3956), which in the singular means “every.” “Sin” is the [Genitive Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *hamartia* (266), any kind of wrongdoing.

We should note that consistently walking in the light does not here mean sinless perfection, as 1 John 1:7 indicates. Rather it means that we are living our lives under the searchlight of God’s will as revealed in His Word. There are sins we commit as believers of which we are not even conscious. But as soon as we perceive that we are violating God’s standards, we confess that sin to God (see 1 John 1:9) and to man, as necessary. Then we resume living our lives in accordance with God’s Word. The constant cleansing of Christ’s blood is necessary because we humans are contaminated with [sin natures](#) and with a sin-cursed body. Inevitably our [sin natures](#) break out into acts of sin sooner or later, even if we are believers in Christ. (John will deal with that subject momentarily.) We as believers who are continually walking around in the light still need constant cleansing from every sin.

E 2 Denial of one's sin nature 1:8-9

- G 1 The self-deceptive claim – "I don't have (a) sin (nature)": {8} If we say that we have no sin,²⁹ we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 1:8
- G 2 The purifying cure: Continual confession of specific sins arising from one's [sin nature](#) 1:9
 - H 1 Our responsibility – admission of violating God's standards: {9} If we confess our sins,³⁰
 - H 2 God's forgiveness: He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins³¹

²⁹ 1 John 1:8 - If we say that we have no sin: Literally, "If we say that sin we are not possessing" "say" is the 1st Person Plural [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *légō* (3004), to speak, or say; "possessing" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *échō* (2192), to have, hold, or possess. John is saying that, hypothetically, if we Christians should say at a point in time that we are not possessing sin, that sin as a principle or [nature](#) is not residing within us, then something else is also true – we are guilty of self-delusion and we are devoid of the truth. The fact is that all people possess a [sin nature](#). We call this [Inherited Sin](#). In fact we are all guilty of sin on three counts – we are guilty of [Representative Sin](#), [Inherited Sin](#), and [Personal Sin](#) – we all commit acts of sin. Here, I believe, John is speaking of [Inherited Sin](#) – that [sin nature](#) which we have [inherited](#) from our parents, and ultimately, from Adam, and which inevitably breaks out into [acts of sin](#) which we personally commit.

³⁰ 1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins: Literally, "If we are confessing the sins of us," where "confessing" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *homologéō* (3670), which means "saying the same thing as another," in this case, God. God says that such and such is sin, and that sin has deadly results. We agree with God that what we have done is sin. It is inexcusable. We have done wrong, and we admit it. The [Present](#) tense indicates confessing our sins to God is a consistent practice on the part of the believer. If we do that, we stand forgiven by God (see the remainder of this verse).

There is every indication that we are confessing our sins to the One we have wronged – God. There is no indication whatever that we must go to a confessional booth and confess our sins to a priest. That is contrived dogma of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), and is not based upon any Scripture. Indeed, the very existence of a priest as practiced by the RCC is illegitimate. There is no such priest to be found in the pages of the New Testament. Jesus is the Great High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:5-6, 9-10; 6:20; 7:26-28; 8:1-2; 9:11-14, 24-28). We need no faux human priest to mediate between us and God. In fact born again Jewish believers (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) and Gentile believers (Rev. 1:6) constitute a royal priesthood. There is no clergy class of priests in the NT.

³¹ 1 John 1:9 - He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins: Following after one of my Bible College instructors, Robert Wenger, I prefer to call this "Family Forgiveness," or "Forgiveness in the Family of God." John assumes in this letter that his readers are believers in Christ. So the forgiveness under discussion here is not "Legal Forgiveness" in the Divine Court of Law (see 1 John 2:1-2), but rather "Family Forgiveness" extended from God, the Heavenly Father, to his children who have offended Him with their sins. At issue is not Heaven as opposed to Hell, but Fellowship in the Family as opposed to Estrangement and Isolation in the Family. When earthly children disobey their earthly father, the father does not expel his children from his family. But his disobedient children have estranged themselves from fellowship and communion with their father. Confession, i.e., admission by the children that what they have done is wrong, removes the estrangement, and the children are restored to fellowship with their father. The same is true in the heavenly realm. When we disobey God, He does not expel us from His family, but rather, we remove ourselves from fellowship with Him. We have placed an impediment to fellowship between ourselves and God. To be restored to fellowship with our Heavenly Father, we must confess that what we have done is wrong. He is then faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins that have estranged us from Him.

"Faithful" is the [Nominative](#) case of the adjective *pistós* (4103), meaning here, "reliable, trustworthy." "Righteous" is the [Nominative](#) case of the adjective *dikaíos* (1342), which means "just, law-abiding, scrupulously ethical." "Forgive" is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *aphiēmi* (863), meaning here "to forgive, pardon, cancel, or absolve" a confessing Christian of his sins. The [Subjunctive](#) mood here indicates purpose or result, coupled as it is with the conjunction *hina* (2443), "(1) used [as here] to introduce clauses that show a purpose or goal *that, in order that, so that*; (a) predominately the present or [aorist subjunctive](#) ..." (excerpted from [Friberg](#)).

From a legal point, Jesus paid the death penalty for our sins when He died on the cross and was resurrected three days later. As Christians, we stand forgiven, uncondemned, and possessing the imputed righteousness of Christ

H 3 God's purifying of us: and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.³²

E 3 Denial of specific sins: "I don't disobey" 1:10

G 1 The hypothetical claim: {10} If we say that we have not sinned,³³

G 2 The blasphemous result: we make Him a liar³⁴

G 3 The Word has no place (in those persons): and His word is not in us.³⁵

the moment we trust in Jesus (John 3:16-18). But, once again, the issue under discussion here is forgiveness within the family of God. Salvation is not the issue here. Harmony and restoration to fellowship and communion is the issue at stake.

³² 1 John 1:9 - and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness: Sin always carries with it a dirtying, defiling effect. When we as children of our Heavenly Father admit to Him that what we have done is wrong, He not only forgives us and re-establishes the broken fellowship, He also cleanses us from the defiling effects of sin. "Cleanse" is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *katharizō* (2511), "to wash, make clean, cleanse, purify." "Unrighteousness" is the [Genitive](#) case of the noun *adikia* (93), "unrighteousness, wrongdoing, lawlessness, injustice."

³³ 1 John 1:10 - If we say that we have not sinned: This is the Third False Claim to Fellowship. When Christians claim they have not committed an act of sin (when in fact, they have), then we make God a liar, and His Word is not to be found in us. Once again, John introduces a hypothetical situation that may or may not happen. "If we say (at a point in time)" translates the 1st Person Plural [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *légo* (3004), "to say or speak," preceded by the conjunction *eán* (1437), used to denote uncertainty or indefiniteness, used here with the [Subjunctive](#) to indicate a hypothetical, yet possible and even plausible condition.

That "we have not sinned" translates the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264), "to miss the mark, be in error, sin, do wrong, transgress," preceded by the particle of negation, *ouch*, from *ou* (3756). John contemplates our saying that an act of sin we have committed in the past, and whose memory remains with us even now, was not really sin. In our minds we redefine what we have done and excuse ourselves. We know what God's Word says, but we shrug our shoulders and call it something else. We humans are always quick to justify ourselves, and one of the easiest ways to do that is to say something we did was not really what it appeared to be. In this way churches and individual Christians can justify women preachers, the practice of homosexuality, divorce, tyrannical church leadership, church tradition, false doctrine, and many other things either forbidden, or unauthorized in God's Word.

³⁴ 1 John 1:10 - we make Him a liar: Literally, "a liar we are making Him." "Liar" is the [Accusative](#) of the noun *pseústēs* (5583), one who speaks what is untrue. How unthinkable, that by our redefinition of what we have done, we make God a liar! How horrible! Yet such is the overwhelming urge in us to justify our past decisions and actions.

This word, "liar," is used but 10X in the NT, and John uses it 7X – in John 8:44, 55; 1 John 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10. "we are making" translates the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *poiēō* (4160), a very flexible verb meaning "to do or make." Here it has the idea that, if we, at a point, redefine our sin into something justifiable, we are "continually making God out to be a liar." I believe, for example that the Roman Catholic Church's saying that nearly 2000 years of church tradition is just as authoritative as Scripture falls into this category. There are so many things that the Catholic Church justifies by redefining it as acceptable church tradition, when in fact, these beliefs and practices cannot be found in the Scripture. The Bible calls that sin. And the Catholic Church is not alone. Protestant churches do the same, elevating their own church's tradition to the same level of authority as Scripture. Shame on us for insisting we have not sinned, and in the process, making God out to be a liar!

³⁵ 1 John 1:10 - and His word is not in us: Literally, "and the word of Him is not in us." Here is the problem. When we humans substitute our own definitions and traditions as the arbiter of truth and practice, the real problem is that God's Word is not in us. We make God out to be a liar, but the truth is that God's Word is not to be found in us. We have substituted our own definitions and standards for God's. How deplorable, and how dangerous! "Word" is the [Nominative](#) case of the noun *lógos* (3056), here referring to the revealed Word of God, the Bible. Earlier John used this noun to refer to the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1; see also John 1:1, 14), but here he uses it with reference to God's revealed will, ultimately, as recorded in Scripture. He will use it this same way in 1 John 2:5,

C 2 Advocacy assures legal forgiveness 2:1-2

D 1 The purpose of the letter – Prevention of sin: {1} My little children,³⁶ I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.³⁷ 2:1a

D 2 The provision if sin occurs: And if anyone sins,³⁸ 2:1b-2

E 1 Jesus' righteous counsel for the defense before the Father: we have an Advocate³⁹ with the Father,⁴⁰ Jesus Christ the righteous;⁴¹ 2:1b

7, 14. In 1 John 3:18 it speaks of our human speech.

³⁶ 1 John 2:1 - My little children: “Little children” is the [Vocative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *teknion* (5040), “little children,” the diminutive of *téknon* (5043), “child.” John uses the term “little children” affectionately of his readers, a term of endearment. He holds his readers in high regard.

³⁷ 1 John 2:1 - so that you may not sin: This is John’s purpose in writing. “Sin” is the 2nd Person Plural [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264), “to miss the mark, be in error, sin, do wrong, transgress.” John used the [Aorist](#) tense to view the readers’ lives as a whole – he is writing so they will not sin. Any kind of sin in the life of a believer is never advantageous. Eliminating sinning should always be our goal.

³⁸ 1 John 2:1 - And if anyone sins: Literally, “And if a certain one might sin.” “If” is the Subordinating Conjunction *eán* (1437), “if, if at any time, whenever; a combination of the conditional *ei* and the particle *án* to denote uncertainty or indefiniteness; (1) with the subjunctive; (a) to introduce a hypothetical condition if (ever) (Mark 3:24)” (excerpted from [Friberg](#));

“might sin” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264), “to miss the mark, be in error, sin, do wrong, transgress.”

John is not asserting that a particular Christian will or won’t sin. But, hypothetically, if he does, there is a remedy, which he next explains – “we have an advocate”

³⁹ 1 John 2:1 - Advocate: *paráklētos* (3875) – according to [Friberg](#) this verbal adjective carries “a basic meaning *one called alongside to help*; (1) as a legal technical term, as one who appears in another’s behalf *advocate, defender, intercessor* (1 John 2:1); (2) as one who gives protection, help, and security *helper, comforter, counselor* (John 14:16).”

This word is used but five times in the NT, and only by the [Apostle John](#). He used it in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 to refer to the [Holy Spirit](#). Each time NASB translates the word as “Helper.” He used it in 1 John 2:1 to speak of Christ Himself appearing as our Defense Attorney before the Father. NASB translates the word as “Advocate.” In John 14:16 Jesus said He would ask the Father, and He would give His disciples another Helper (i.e. *paráklētos*). The word “another” there is the word *hállōs* (243), which means “another of the same kind,” as opposed to *hēteros* (2087), “another of a different kind.” So in John 14:16 Jesus was telling His disciples that He would give them another Helper or Coach of the same kind as Himself. However, in 1 John 2:1, John likens Jesus to an Attorney for the Defense before the Father.

⁴⁰ 1 John 2:1 - with the Father: Perhaps better, “*before* the Father.” I say that because God the Father is a potentially intimidating figure who is Himself completely light, and in whom is no darkness whatever (1 John 1:5). He demands absolute holiness of His children. In this potentially explosive situation in which an errant child has sinned, there is relief before the holy Father – we presently possess an Advocate, a supremely qualified Attorney for our Defense.

⁴¹ 1 John 2:1 - Jesus Christ the righteous: Literally, “Jesus Christ – righteous.” Contrary to many human lawyers, Jesus, the [Messiah](#), is a supremely ethical lawyer. He will not transgress Divine laws to win a case. The descriptive term “righteous” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the adjective *dikaíos* (1342), used here in a moral and ethical sense of someone who is “*righteous, upright, just*” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). He is the perfect lawyer to be advocating on behalf of us fallible, flawed Christians, who inevitably seem to sin even when we don’t really want to. He is righteous because He Himself paid the penalty for all of our sins when He died upon the cross, “the just for the unjust” (1 Peter 3:18), as the rest of this verse explains. As the writer of Hebrews stated, Jesus Christ is our “high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). So when Jesus, the righteous lawyer argues our case before our Holy Father, He always adheres completely and fully to God’s standard of righteousness and morality.

E 2 The basis for His defense – He Himself is the atoning sacrifice 2:2

G 1 The reality for believers: {2} and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins;⁴²G 2 The potential for the entire world: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.⁴³**B 3 Obeying Jesus' Commands for Assurance of Fellowship 2:3-8**

C 1 The importance of obeying Jesus' commands 2:3-6

D 1 Ongoing obedience gives assurance of having known Him 2:3. {3} By this we know that we have come to know Him,⁴⁴ if we keep His commandments.⁴⁵

⁴² 1 John 2:2 - propitiation for our sins: The meaning is that Jesus Christ is the legal satisfaction concerning our sins. "Propitiation" is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *hilasmós* (2434), quoting [Friberg](#): "with focus on atoning sacrifice *means of forgiveness, way of reconciling* (1 John 2:2; 4:10)." John is the only NT writer who uses this word, and he uses it only in 1 John. In both cases he employs the word to depict Jesus as the "legal satisfaction" for the sins of the believer, and, in 1 John 2:2, for the sins of the entire world. According to [Friberg](#) the term focuses on Jesus' "atoning sacrifice for sin," and signifies "*means of forgiveness, way of reconciling*." Jesus, through His sacrificial death and resurrection, is the legal satisfaction for our sins.

⁴³ 1 John 2:2 - but also for those of the whole world: Jesus' blood and sacrificial death is of such infinite value that it pays for the sins of the entire world, whether people choose to accept the payment or not. The propitiation, or legal payment for sins that Jesus has made is potential, not automatic. In other words, though the payment is there, it is effective only for those who believe in Jesus. Those who are followers of John Calvin err in affirming that Christ died only for the sins of the elect. In the acronym TULIP, T stands for [Total Depravity](#); U for [Unconditional Election](#); L for [Limited Atonement](#); I for [Irresistible Grace](#); and P for the [Perseverance of the Saints](#). In that theological framework four out of the five descriptions are correct, but one is utterly incorrect – [Limited Atonement](#). This passage clearly teaches that Jesus died for the sins of all men, regardless of whether men choose to accept the payment or not. The payment spurned is eternal judgment earned, a very sad outcome, indeed.

"World" in this verse is the [Genitive](#) case of the noun *kósmos* (2889), meaning here, the world of people. (See meaning (3) in the opening paragraph of the author's [word study on "World \(kosmos\)"](#).) John leaves no exceptions. Jesus, through His death and subsequent resurrection, is the legal satisfaction not only concerning the sins of believers, but also concerning the sins of the "whole," the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the adjective *hólos* (3650), meaning, "whole, entire, complete, entirety of" – in this instance – the world of people.

⁴⁴ 1 John 2:3 - by this we know that we have come to know Him: "...we know" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of *ginō'skō* (1097); "we have come to know" is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of *ginō'skō* (1097). Both instances speak of knowledge in an experiential sense. "We know by experience that we have come to know Jesus by experience if we are keeping His commandments. "Him," governed by the immediately preceding context of 1 John 2:1-2, refers to Jesus Christ.

In terms of the author's [Word Study on "Know" \(ginō'skō\)](#), the first occurrence of "we know" is an intellectual comprehension [[meaning \(1\)](#)]. The second occurrence, "we have come to know," is [meaning \(4\)](#), to know Christ in an intimate, spiritual sense.

⁴⁵ 1 John 2:3 - if we keep his commandments: literally, "if we are keeping His commandments." The qualifier "if" is the Subordinating Conjunction *eán* (1437), used "to denote uncertainty or indefiniteness." It is used here with the [Subjunctive](#) of the verb "keep" "to indicate a realizable future contingency *if, whenever* (John 3:12)" (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). In other words, there is the potential, but no guarantee, that the audience will consistently keep Jesus' commands. The verb "are keeping" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Active Subjunctive](#) of *têréō* (5083). The [Present](#) tense indicates an ongoing consistency of obedience. It cannot mean, of course, an absolute perfection. That is impossible, as John has already pointed out (1 John 1:8-2:2).

John's point is that the ones who are keeping Christ's commands gain an [assurance of their salvation](#). This keeping of Christ's commandments that gives [assurance of salvation](#) is not a "hit and miss" sort of thing, but rather a consistent obedience.

"Commandments" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Plural of the noun *entolē* (1785), referring here to the directives, injunctions, commands, instructions, or imperatives of either God or Christ. There are times in John's writing when

- D 2 Ongoing disobedience contradicts claims of having known Him 2:4. {4}
The one who says, "I have come to know Him," ⁴⁶ and does not keep His commandments, ⁴⁷
- E 1 His characterization: is a liar,
- E 2 His severance from reality: and the truth is not in him; ⁴⁸
- D 3 Ongoing obedience indicates completion of love 2:5a {5} but whoever keeps His word, ⁴⁹
- E 1 Completed love: in him the love of God ⁵⁰ has truly been perfected. ⁵¹

the two are almost indistinguishable. In the OT God's commands were embodied specifically in the [Law of Moses](#), but elsewhere, in the exhortations of the prophets. In the New Testament, God's commands are embodied in the teachings of Jesus and the instructions of the [Apostles](#) and their associates in the letters of the NT.

"Commandments" *entolē* (1785) appears 14X in 10 verses in John's first epistle: 1 John 2:3, 4, 7, 7, 7, 8; 3:22, 23, 23, 24; 4:21; 5:2, 3, 3.

⁴⁶ 1 John 2:4 - The one who says, "I have come to know Him": Literally, "The one saying, "I have come to know Him." "The one saying" translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *lēgō* (3004), preceded by the article.

The word in the Greek text that immediately follows "The one saying" is the conjunction *hōti* (3754), normally translated "that," but which here introduces direct discourse. It is thus left untranslated, but its presence is indicated by quotation marks as indicated in the [NASB](#) text above.

"I have come to know" translates the 1st Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of *ginō'skō* (1097), which speaks of knowing Christ in an intimate, spiritual sense (see the writer's Word Study of *ginō'skō*, [meaning 4](#)).

"Him" refers to Jesus Christ.

John is contemplating a person who claims to have arrived at a deep and intimate knowledge of Christ. What follows indicates that the person is making yet another False Claim to Fellowship.

⁴⁷ 1 John 2:4 - and does not keep His commandments: Literally, "and the commandments of Him not observing," where "commandments" translates the [Accusative](#) Plural of the noun *entolē* (1785), "commandments, orders, precepts).

"Him" refers to Jesus Christ.

"Not observing" translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *têrō* (5083), meaning to "observe, obey, keep," preceded by the negative particle *mē'* (3361), meaning "not."

John is contemplating another False claim to Fellowship. Here is someone who says He has come to know Christ in an intimate sense, and yet at the same time He is not obeying the commands Jesus has given His followers. There is something terribly wrong with this person.

⁴⁸ 1 John 2:4 - is a liar, and the truth is not in him: Literally, "liar he is, and in this one the truth is not existing." "Liar" is the [Nominative](#) case of the noun *pseústēs* (5583), "one who speaks what is not true" ([Friberg](#)); "the truth" is the [Nominative](#) case of the noun *alētheia* (225), "that which corresponds with reality," preceded by the article.

The one who claims that he has come to know Jesus, but is not observing Jesus' commands, is existing as a liar, and the objective reality of "the truth" is not existing in this one.

⁴⁹ 1 John 2:5 - but whoever keeps His word: Literally, "but whoever is observing the word of him," where "is observing" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *têrō* (5083), meaning to "observe, obey, keep;" "the word" is the [Accusative](#) case of the noun *lógos* (3056), preceded by the article. Here "the word" of Him refers, in general terms, to that which Christ says, or His message, and is synonymous with "commandments" in 1 John 2:4. The reader should understand that John is not attempting to make a significant distinction between what Jesus says and what God says. The two are always in harmony. Today we know what each has said through reading and studying the Bible. John is going to say that the one who obeys Christ's word and God's word – in that person the love of God has been completed.

⁵⁰ 1 John 2:5 - the love of God: Does this mean the love God has for us ([subjective genitive](#)) or does it mean our love for God ([objective genitive](#))? It would seem that both the objective genitive and the subjective genitive could be used ([plenary genitive](#)). Could not both be intended (see John 14:21-24)?

Throughout John, "love" is either the verb (25) *agapao* = 28X; or the noun (26) *agape* = 26X. In either case the

E 2 Assurance of belonging: By this we know that we are in Him: ⁵²D 4 The claim of remaining in Jesus must be matched by a Christ-like lifestyle
2:6 {6} the one who says he abides in Him ⁵³ ought himself to walk in the
same manner as He walked. ⁵⁴

love is a self-sacrificing love that seeks the good of the object loved.

⁵¹ 1 John 2:5 - in him the love of God has truly been perfected: “has been perfected” is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *teleiōō* (5048), which has the sense of that which has been brought to its goal, completed, accomplished (adapted from [Friberg](#)). God’s love for the Christian and the Christian’s love for God has been brought to a state of completion in the person who is continually obeying God’s (and Christ’s) Word.

⁵² 1 John 2:5 - By this we know that we are in Him: Since John, in 1 John 2:3, said this, “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments,” it is probably accurate to convey, as does the NASB, that the parallel phrase in 1 John 2:5, “By this we know that we are in Him” is completed by that which follows rather than that which has preceded. In other words, it is better to follow the [NASB](#) and ESV rendering rather than the KJV or NKJV or [UBS4](#) rendering.

“We know,” literally, “we are knowing,” renders the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097), to know with certainty ([meaning #6](#)).

“that we are in Him” – i.e. in Christ. This probably has to do with the vital union between the believer and Jesus Christ as expressed in Jesus’ analogy of His being the vine and His followers being the branches (John 15:1-8). This linkage is enhanced by John’s use of the phrase “abides in Him” or “remains in Him” (1 John 2:6), where “abiding” or “remaining” translates the [Present Active Infinitive](#) of the verb *menō* (3306). (See the next footnote.)

John is talking here about having [assurance of salvation](#). A huge percentage of our [assurance of salvation](#) comes simply from believing the promises in God’s Word. However, there is another aspect of [assurance](#) that comes from a life-style that matches up to what a Christian ought to be, or, as John says in the next verse, to live the same way Christ did. This ventures over into James’ claim that a valid Biblical faith will result in good works (James 2:14-26).

⁵³ 1 John 2:6 - the one who says he abides in Him: As explained in the previous footnote, it is probably better, following the NASB, to perceive the clause thus begun as completing the thought of the last clause in 1 John 2:5 – “By this we know that we are in Him.” The complete thought reads as follows: ⁵ ... “By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

Literally, “the one saying in Him to be remaining” – “the one saying” translates the [Nominative Masculine Singular Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *légō* (3004), to “say” or “speak.”

“in Him” – probably a reference to Christ.

“to be remaining” – the [Present Active Infinitive](#) of the verb *menō* (3306), to “remain, stay, abide, continue.” This is the first time John uses this verb in this letter. He will use it an amazing 24X, 11X in this chapter alone. He used this verb 40X in his Gospel, 7X in John 15:4-7, an additional 3X in John 15:9-10, and 1X in John 15:16. It would appear that John is borrowing his “remaining in Him” language from John 15:1-16.

John’s point, of course, is that the person who is claiming to be remaining in Christ ought to live the same life-style that Jesus did (1 John 2:6). If he does so, that will give him [assurance of salvation](#) – “we know that we are in Him” (1 John 2:5).

⁵⁴ 1 John 2:6 - ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked: Literally, “is continually obligated – as that One walked around – also himself to be walking around.”

“ought” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *opheilō* (3784), which means “owe, ought, obligated (to), indebted (to).” The one saying he is remaining in Christ is continually obligated to be walking around as Jesus walked around.

“walked around” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *peripatēō* (4043), meaning literally, “to walk around, go about,” figuratively, “to conduct one’s daily life, behave, comport oneself” (adapted from [Friberg](#)). The figurative sense is what John has in mind here. The first instance of the verb (in Greek) looks at Jesus’ entire life as a completed event, thus the [Aorist](#) tense.

“to be walking around” is the [Present Active Infinitive](#) of the same verb, *peripatēō* (4043). It has the same figurative idea of conducting one’s life. The [present](#) tense indicates that the believer who claims to be remaining in Jesus is perpetually obligated to be *continually comporting himself* the same way Jesus did when He was here on earth.

How did Jesus live when he was upon earth? Here is a brief summary: (1) He spent much time alone with God. (2) He always endeavored to do and say only what His Father asked of him. (3) He had compassion for people in need. (4) He was always trying to build up others’ faith in Himself and in God. (5) He was friendly toward down and outers – not because he wanted to copy their life-style but because he loved them and wanted them as sinners to find God! (6) He stood for the truth, no matter what the personal cost was. (7) He was willing to sacrifice himself for

C 2 The antiquity of Jesus' command [to love] 2:7-8

D 1 It is old – one you have had since the beginning 2:7.

E 1 It is not a new command: {7} Beloved,⁵⁵ I am not writing a new commandment to you,

E 2 It is an old command: but an old commandment⁵⁶

E 3 The length of its tenure: which you have had from the beginning;⁵⁷

E 4 The identity of the old command: the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

D 2 Yet it is new 2:8.

E 1 The newness of the command: {8} On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you,⁵⁸

E 2 The truth of the command

G 1 In Christ: which is true in Him⁵⁹

those he loved, regardless of how they felt about him.

⁵⁵ 1 John 2:7 - Beloved: Literally, “Beloved ones,” the [Vocative](#) Plural of the of the adjective *agapêtós* (27), those who are “*beloved, dear, very much loved*” ([Friberg](#)). Note that John’s endearing term, “beloved” is appropriate to the context. (See 1 John 2:5).

⁵⁶ 1 John 2:7 - but an old commandment: The command is old in the sense of dating back to the Law (Matt. 22:36-40) – “You shall love God with all your heart” (cf. also Deut. 6:5); and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (cf. also Lev. 19:18).

⁵⁷ 1 John 2:7 - which you have had from the beginning: John probably was referring to the beginning of his readers’ Christian experience. John elsewhere identifies this command as the command to love (1 John 2:24; 3:11; 2 John 1:5-6).

⁵⁸ 1 John 2:8 - a new commandment: Cf. John 13:34-35 ³⁴ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” ³⁵ “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Cf. John 15:12, 17 ¹² “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.” ¹⁷ “This I command you, that you love one another.”

Cf. 2 John 1:5-6 ⁵ “Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.” ⁶ And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.”

One might ask, “In what was is this command to love a new one?” Might I suggest that it is new in its emphasis and new in its example. God’s love for us humans in Christ is the epitome and example of love. Real love demands real sacrifice on behalf of another, and that abundantly declares the love of God and of Christ toward us humans.

Furthermore, the emphasis upon love that is to be found in the New Testament differs greatly from the emphasis found in the Old. The emphasis in the OT was on holiness and righteousness and the stamping out of evil. The Law itself was never meant to serve as an impetus to love, but to show man he could never possibly keep God’s standards (Rom. 3:20). The Law was given to reveal sin and demonstrate the need to be declared righteous in Jesus Christ, not in the impossible act of trying to keeping God’s commands in order to earn righteousness (Gal. 2:16).

⁵⁹ 1 John 2:8 - which is true in Him: What is the new commandment which is true in Him, that is in Christ? It is the command to love. We can quantify God’s love for us and Christ’s love for us by His willingness to die for us. We read, for example, in 1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

G 2 Among the readership: and in you,⁶⁰

E 3 The validation of the truth

G 1 The receding of darkness: because the darkness is passing away,⁶¹

G 2 The presence of the true light: and the true light is already shining.⁶²

B 4 Warning against Hatred, the Antithesis of Fellowship 2:9-11

C 1 Hating nullifies a claim to fellowship in light 2:9.

⁶⁰ 1 John 2:8 - and in you: How is this new command to love true in us Christians? It is true in us when we love one another as Christ loved us. This is the way all men will know we are Christ's disciples (John 13:34-35).

⁶¹ 1 John 2:8 - because the darkness is passing away: Perhaps better, "because the darkness is being caused to disappear," where "the darkness" is the [Nominative](#) case of the noun *skotía* ([4653](#)), preceded by the article. "The (specific) darkness" refers to the malevolence of the [world](#), the [devil](#), the flesh, sin, decay, and [death](#) as having invaded the physical earth and God's universe and ruining mankind, the assigned rulers of the earth (Gen. 1:26-28).

"is being caused to disappear" ([NASB](#) = is passing away) translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *parágō* ([3855](#)), used but 10X in the NT. In its predominant usage in the [Active](#) Voice in the NT (8X), it refers to someone "passing by" (Matt. 20:30; Mark 1:16; 2:14; 15:21; John 9:1). John is the only writer who uses it in the [Passive](#) Voice (both times [Present](#) Tense). Here in 1 John 2:8 the darkness is being caused to disappear, and in 1 John 2:17, the world is being caused to disappear, along with its lusts. Both entities speak of corruption. We might say, in a broader sense, that evil is being caused to disappear in God's created world and moral universe because of what is said in this verse – "and the true Light is already shining."

I believe John is saying that evil in God's universe is being caused to disappear because Christ, the Light of the world, is already shining. This dissipation of darkness is not rapid. It has been in process for nearly 2000 years now. Once Christ returns to set up His kingdom, His glory will stifle the darkness for another thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6). But the darkness will rear its ugly head briefly when Satan is released from the [Abyss](#) to return to earth and deceive all those who do not believe in the King. The rebels and Satan will be overpowered by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:7-10). God will purge this earth and universe in a series of fiery explosions (2 Pet. 3:7-12), and will create a [New Heavens](#) and [New Earth](#) and [New Jerusalem](#) in which only righteousness and righteous people will exist (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1, 8, 27; 22:3-4, 14-15). The darkness will then have been dissipated entirely and only the Light of the glory of God and Christ and their kingdom will persist throughout all eternity (Rev. 22:1-5).

⁶² 1 John 2:8 - and the true Light is already shining: On a primary level, John's reference to "Light" ... "already shining" undoubtedly speaks about the [incarnation](#) of the Word of God. For example, in his gospel, John introduces the eternal Word of God who was already existing in the beginning, who was with God, who was God, and who created all things that exist (John 1:1-3). John states, further, that in the Word was life, and that the life was the Light of men (John 1:4). Moreover, the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not subvert (*katalambánō*, [2638](#)) it (John 1:5). God sent a man identified in Scripture as [John the Immerser](#) (John 1:6; Matt. 3:1). He came as a witness to bear witness about the Light so that all might believe through his (John's) witness (John 1:7). John was not the Light, but [came] in order to bear witness concerning the Light (John 1:8). The Word was continually existing as the true Light, which, coming into the world, enlightens each man (John 1:9). Ultimately, the Word became flesh and camped among us (i.e. among [John the Apostle](#) and his associates, the 11 disciples, who later became [apostles](#)), and we gazed upon His glory, glory as of the uniquely begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). John later recorded Jesus' assertion, "I, even I am the Light of the world. The one following me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall possess the Light of the Life" (John 8:12). Jesus later asserted, "While I am in the world, I am Light of the world" (John 9:5).

On a secondary level, John's reference to the Light may also indicate the illumination of the light of the [Gospel](#) (literally, "good news") which is about Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 1:10). These, however, are statements by [Paul](#), and not by [John the Apostle](#). Since John so clearly identified Christ Himself as the Light of the World (John 1:1-14; 8:12; 9:5) it is more likely that, in 1 John 2:8, John had in mind the [incarnation](#) of Christ rather than the [Gospel](#) (good news) about Christ.

D 1 The claim: {9} The one who says he is in the light ⁶³

D 2 The contradiction: and yet hates ⁶⁴ his brother ⁶⁵

D 3 The grim truth: is in the darkness until now. ⁶⁶

C 2 The results of loving 2:10.

D 1 The reality of loving: {10} The one who loves his brother ⁶⁷

⁶³ 1 John 2:9 - The one who says he is in the light: Literally, “The one saying in the light he is existing,” where “the one saying” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *légō* (3004), “to say or speak,” preceded by the article.

“in the light” is the [Dative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *phōs* (5457), preceded by the preposition *en* (in) and the article. *Phōs* is used here metaphorically of the realm of holiness, moral, ethical, and spiritual purity, the realm which God always inhabits.

“he is existing” translates the [Present Active Infinitive](#) of the verb *eimi* (1510). The [Present](#) tense reveals this person is habitually claiming habitually to be living in the realm of light, i.e., ethical goodness.

⁶⁴ 1 John 2:9 - and yet hates his brother: Literally, “and the brother of him is hating” Here is a person who is continually claiming, on the one hand, to be habitually living in moral and ethical purity; yet at the same time, his Christian brother (see the next footnote) he is constantly hating, the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *miséō* (3404), “to hate, detest, abhor, be hostile toward, treat with contempt.” This attitude and action is diametrically opposed to the practice of loving (*agapāō*, 25) one’s brother, lauded in the next verse (1 John 2:10).

⁶⁵ 1 John 2:9 - brother: Frequently in this letter John used the term “brother” (*adelphós*, 80). He was not here referring to a genetically-related brother, but to a Christian brother. But he did not use the word “Christian” (*Christianós*, 5546) (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). Nor did he add the words, “or sister.” He used only the word “brother” (*adelphós*, 80), as he did 15X in 13 verses in this letter (1 John 2:9, 10, 11; 3:10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 4:20, 21; 5:16). He did so because men, in God’s world, and in the Hebrew and Greek cultures in which John operated, were rightfully seen as leaders. Readers in John’s day understood that women were not excluded from a proper application of the principle of this text. The same should be said for modern-day audiences. Alas, increasingly, such is not the case.

A majority of recent modern English translations depart from the literal Greek wording of this text and either add “or sister” or employ a translation such as “fellow believer” or “someone.” [Examples include](#) the New International Version, the New Living Translation, the New Revised Standard Version, the Contemporary English Version, The Message, and the [Christian Standard Bible](#).

It is the task of Bible translators and Bible teachers to use Biblical language, not language that has been demasculinized, defiled by a culture that despises God and Christ and Christians and men, and seeks to delegitimize Biblical values. As a student of the Bible, I am here to espouse God’s values, not bow to the anti-masculine values of a depraved Western culture (Acts 4:17-20; Rom. 1:18-32).

[Examples of English versions](#) that faithfully translate the Greek text of *adelphós* (80) here in this passage only as “brother” include the New American Standard Bible, the English Standard Version, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, the New King James Version, and the 21st Century King James Version.

⁶⁶ 1 John 2:9 - is in the darkness until now: The awful truth about this person is that, even though he is claiming habitually to be existing in the light, he actually is remaining in the darkness, even to this very moment! “The darkness” translates the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *skotía* (4653), preceded by the article, the realm of moral, ethical, and spiritual bankruptcy and hostility toward God and all that He represents.

John’s point is that, even up to this very moment, “until” (the temporal conjunction *hēōs*, 2193) “now,” the [Genitive](#) of the adjective *árti* (737), meaning “just now, at this very moment,” this brother who claims to be existing in the light, yet is holding his Christian brother in contempt, is actually living in the darkness of moral and spiritual bankruptcy. What a self-deluding contrast!

⁶⁷ 1 John 2:10 - The one who loves his brother: Literally, “The one loving the brother of him,” where “The one loving” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *agapāō* (25), preceded by the article, here meaning sacrificing one’s own interests to seek the welfare of another believer ([meaning F](#)). This is an important word to John. He used this verb a surprising 28X in this relatively short letter. He used it 37X in his gospel.

“the brother of him” is the [Accusative](#) case of the noun *adelphós* (80), preceded by the article and followed by

D 2 The truth in regard to light: abides in the light ⁶⁸ 2:10a

D 3 The avoidance of causing offense: and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ⁶⁹ 2:10b

C 3 The results of hating 2:11.

D 1 The reality of hating: {11} But the one who hates his brother ⁷⁰

D 2 The existence in darkness: is in the darkness ⁷¹

the Genitive case of the pronoun *autós* (846), “of him,” implying possession, or at least association. “Brother” here refers to one’s spiritual brother – a brother in Christ. Loving one’s brother is an ongoing activity. Of course, John was not limiting the application merely to the male sex. He is about to make a statement that is true of the one who is consistently loving his Christian brother.

⁶⁸ 1 John 2:10 - abides in the light: Literally, “in the light is remaining.” “in the light” is the [Dative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *phōs* (5457), preceded by the preposition *en* (in) and the article. *Phōs* is used here metaphorically of the realm of holiness, moral, ethical, and spiritual purity, the realm which God always inhabits.

“is remaining” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), to “remain, stay, abide, continue.” This is the second time John has used this verb. See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:6 for more information on this verb.

John is saying that the Christian who is continually loving his Christian brother is continually remaining in the light, the realm of holiness, moral, ethical, and spiritual purity which characterizes God. Continually loving is a key component of spirituality. The noun “love” (*agápē*, 26) is the first characteristic of the “fruit of the Spirit” listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

⁶⁹ 1 John 2:10 - and there is no cause for stumbling in him: Literally, “and trap stick in him is not existing.” “Trap stick” translates the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *skándalon* (4625). On a literal level the term refers to “(1) ... the movable bait stick or trigger in a trap *trap stick*; by synecdoche, the trap itself, *snare*; (2) metaphorically *trap*, i.e. *what causes a person to sin, cause of ruin, occasion of falling* (Rom. 11:9); (3) figuratively; as an *enticement* to sin or apostasy *temptation, offense* (Matt. 18:7); (b) as what gives offense or arouses opposition *stumbling block, offense* (1 Cor. 1:23)” ([Friberg](#)). One can easily see how the English word “scandal” makes sense here. The NASB’s “cause for stumbling” is certainly an accurate and understandable translation.

The larger question is, “What does this mean, and whom does it affect?” Probably in the first place it means that there is nothing in the believer’s life to cause him to stumble in his own life. This is true because of the application John makes in the next verse about the brother who hates being in the darkness and not knowing where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

But by way of application, there is also, I believe, an effect upon others. There is nothing in his life that causes *other* people to stumble. Notice that in Matt. 16:23, Jesus told Peter that he, Peter, was a stumbling block to Him, Jesus! Matt. 18:7 and Luke 17:1 presumably envision a person causing other persons to stumble. Paul warned the Romans not to place a stumbling block in the path of another (Rom. 14:13). Apparently some were doing that (Rom. 16:17). And Balaam taught Balak to place a stumbling block in the path of the sons of Israel (Rev. 2:14).

⁷⁰ 1 John 2:11 - But the one who hates his brother: Literally, “However, the one hating the brother of him” “The one hating” translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *miséō* (3404), “to hate, detest, abhor, be hostile toward, treat with contempt,” preceded by the article. This is the person John has just described in 1 John 2:9. He is the one who claims to be existing in the Light while at the same time he is continually abhorring his Christian brother. John is about to make some dramatic statements about this person who claims to be living in the Light while at the same time actively hating his brother.

⁷¹ 1 John 2:11 - is in the darkness: Literally, “in the darkness is existing,” where “the darkness” translates the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *skotía* (4653), preceded by the article, the realm of moral, ethical, and spiritual bankruptcy and hostility toward God and all that He represents. In rapid-fire succession John lists the real state of this person who claims to be walking in the Light, yet is actively hating his Christian brother.

“is existing” translates the 3rd Person Singular, [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb of being, *eimi* (1510). The [Present](#) tense reveals this person is habitually existing in the darkness, despite his claim to the contrary (1 John 2:9).

D 3 The continual participation in darkness: and walks in the darkness,⁷²

D 4 The ignorance in regard to destination: and does not know where he is going⁷³

D 5 The blindness caused by the darkness: because the darkness has blinded his eyes.⁷⁴

B 5 Maturing within the Family to Deepen Fellowship 2:12-17

C 1 Encouragement to grow 2:12-14

D 1 To children in the faith 2:12

E 1 The addressees: {12} I am writing to you, little children,⁷⁵

E 2 The reason for writing – their present knowledge of sins forgiven:

⁷² 1 John 2:11 - and walks in the darkness: Literally, “and in the darkness he is walking around” “darkness” is, once again, the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *skotia* (4653), preceded by the article. John is speaking of moral and spiritual darkness.

“he is walking around” translates the the 3rd Person Singular, [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *peripatéō* (4043). John is conveying, in a figurative sense, that this “hating” person is habitually conducting his life by stumbling around in the darkness of sin. As we shall see in a moment, he does not even realize what is happening to him.

⁷³ 1 John 2:11 - and does not know where he is going: This person who claims to be in the Light, yet is hating his Christian brother (1 John 2:9), actually is stumbling around in the darkness. He is directionless, and is unaware that he has been deluded that is existing in the darkness.

“does not know” translates the 3rd Person [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oída* (6063), and suggests a settled state of ignorance.

“he is going” translates the the 3rd Person Singular, [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *hupágō* (5217), used only here in this letter. This hating person does not even know where he is heading in his life. The reason is that the darkness in which he is living his life has blinded him.

⁷⁴ 1 John 2:11 - because the darkness has blinded his eyes: Literally, “because the darkness blinded the eyes of him.” “The darkness” is the [Nominative](#) case of the oft-used noun *skotia* (4653), preceded by the article.

“Blinded” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *tuphlōō* (5186), which speaks, in a literal sense, of someone who has been rendered unable to see. Here it is a spiritual and moral blindness, an inability to see one’s true condition. The darkness in which he is walking around has blinded him spiritually. He is not even aware that he is actually walking around in the darkness. His spiritual perception has been disabled.

⁷⁵ 1 John 2:12 - I am writing to you, little children: “I am writing” is the 1st Person Singular, [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *gráphō* (1125). In this brief section he is telling his readers why he is writing this treatise to them.

“little children” is the [Vocative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *teknion* (5040), the endearing diminutive of a much more common noun *teknon* (5043), which is the word for “child” or “children.” *Teknion*, used only 8X in the entire NT, is a favorite address that John used for his readers. He is the only apostle who addressed his readers in this endearing fashion. He used it once in his gospel, attributing it to Jesus (John 13:33). In this letter, he used it seven times, always in the [Vocative](#) case, [Neuter](#) gender, Plural number, and this is the second time (1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).

John will address his readers, twice each, as “little children,” “fathers,” and “young men” in this section (1 John 2:12-14). Commentators differ on what he meant. Let me give you my opinion. By “little children” I believe he was referring to those who are relatively young in their Christian faith. By “fathers” he was addressing those who are the most mature in their faith. By “young men” I believe he was addressing those who have reached a certain level of maturity in their Christian faith and walk. But they do not have the same time and experience in the faith as the “fathers.”

because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.⁷⁶

D 2 To fathers in the faith 2:13a

E 1 The addressees: {13} I am writing to you, fathers,⁷⁷

E 2 The reason for writing – their knowledge of Christ, who has existed from the beginning: because you know Him who has been from the beginning.⁷⁸

D 3 To young men in the faith 2:13b

E 1 The addressees: I am writing to you, young men,⁷⁹

E 2 The reason for writing – their having conquered the devil: because you have overcome the evil one.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ 1 John 2:12 - because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake: John was writing to those in his audience who were relatively new in their Christian faith to assure them that their sins ([Nominative Plural of *hamartia*, 266](#)) have been forgiven (3rd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *aphiēmi*, [863](#)). Their forgiveness was granted them at some time in the past, and it remains their present possession. What John declares concerning Christians who are new in the faith, is, of course, true of all Christians. We are blessed with the incredible, gracious gift of forgiveness! We are no longer guilty! We have been forgiven! The verb *aphiēmi* is used in this sense in Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; 9:2, 5, 6; 12:31, 32; 18:21, 27, 32, 35; Mark 2:5, 7, 9, 10; 3:28; 4:12; 11:25, 26; Luke 5:20, 21, 23, 24; 7:47, 48, 49; 11:4; 12:10; 17:3, 4; 23:34; John 20:23; Acts 8:22; Rom. 4:7; James 5:15; 1 John 1:9; 2:12).

“For His name’s sake,” literally, “on account of the name of Him” indicates that deference toward and the credibility of God’s name is the reason that our sins have been forgiven. This assures us that forgiveness is based upon the integrity of God, not the performance of humans. We are not worthy of forgiveness. But the death of Christ is so valuable, and God’s plan for redemption so immense, that God’s integrity is at stake if He does not forgive the one who has placed his faith in the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus.

So a basic, child-like understanding of the Good News about Jesus is the understanding that our sins are forgiven on account of God’s name.

⁷⁷ 1 John 2:13 - I am writing to you, fathers: “Fathers” is the [Vocative Masculine Plural](#) of the noun *patēr* ([3962](#)), which literally means the male biological parent of a son or daughter. Here it is used metaphorically of someone who has reached a stage of advanced Christian maturity. What makes someone a *father* in the faith is qualitative exposure to and experience with God over a long period of time. A father in the faith sees God as the Timeless One, Creator, King, Covenantor, Judge, Sovereign, exuding faithfulness under all circumstances. Nothing can bypass time and prolonged dedication here in the maturation process.

⁷⁸ 1 John 2:13 - because you know Him who has been from the beginning: Literally, “because you have known the One from beginning.” “Have known” is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* ([1097](#)), here meaning that these “fathers” in the faith had, at some time in the past, with the results continuing to the present, come to know God in an intimate, spiritual sense ([meaning #4](#)). As the preceding footnote indicates, they had come to know God as the Timeless One, the One whose existence stemmed from the beginning, the [Genitive](#) of the noun *archē* ([746](#)), which here indicates primacy in relation to time ([Friberg](#)). This refers to the beginning of time and creation of the universe as described in Genesis 1:1.

⁷⁹ 1 John 2:13 - I am writing to you, young men: “Young men” is the [Vocative Masculine Plural](#) of the noun *neaniskos* ([3495](#)), used, in a literal sense, of a man in the prime of life, between twenty-four and forty years old (Matt. 19:20)” ([Friberg](#)). But it is used here in a figurative sense of a Christian who has had considerable exposure to Christ and the Christian faith, and has developed a level of maturity in his or her Christian walk. The particular area of Christian maturity which John cites is their successful experience with and victory over the malevolent schemes of “evil one,” the Devil (1 John 2:13; Eph. 6:10-11).

⁸⁰ 1 John 2:13 - because you have overcome the evil one: Literally, “because you have conquered the evil one.” “Have conquered” is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *nikāō* ([3528](#)); “the evil one” is the [Accusative Masculine Singular](#) of the adjective *ponērós* ([4190](#)), preceded by the article. This unquestionably refers to the specific evil person, i.e. the [Devil](#), or [Satan](#).

D 4 To children in the faith 2:14a

E 1 The addressees: I have written to you, children,⁸¹E 2 The reason for writing – their knowledge of God as the Father: because you know the Father.⁸²

D 5 To fathers in the faith 2:14b

E 1 The addressees: I have written to you, fathers,⁸³E 2 The reason for writing – their knowledge of God as eternal: because you know Him who has been from the beginning.⁸⁴

In what way had these “young men in the faith” succeeded in conquering the [Devil](#) at some time in the past with results continuing to the present day? It cannot mean a final or complete conquest. Rather, through experience and through exposure to the Word of God, they had learned to use the shield of “the faith,” i.e. the combined truth of the Word of God in which they believed, employing it to ward off the flaming arrows of the Evil One who constantly opposes them (Eph. 6:16) (borrowing from [John Gill](#)). John the writer will refer to “the evil one” again in 1 John 2:14; 3:12; 5:18-19.

This completes the first trilogy to whom John is [presently](#) writing – the little children, the fathers, and the young men. He will begin the second trilogy in latter portion of this verse (1 John 2:13), and he will employ the [Aorist](#) tense, literally “I wrote.” He will carry on the remainder of the trilogy in 1 John 2:14.

⁸¹ 1 John 2:13 - I have written to you, children: Literally, “I wrote to you, children.” “I wrote” is the 1st Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *gráphō* (1125). In the Greek Text ([UBS4](#)), this clause begins 1 John 2:14. Perhaps John changed from the [Present](#) tense of the verb *gráphō*, which indicated his ongoing purpose in writing to these three different spiritual age groups, to the [Aorist](#) tense of the verb to indicate his overall purpose in writing to each of them. Frankly, it is difficult to state with certainty why John changed verb tenses. Perhaps it was simply a stylistic alteration. For greater detail on the stylistic interpretation, see [W. Hall Harris III's explanation](#).

John switched from calling the first group “little children,” *teknion* (5040) to now calling them “children,” *paidion* (3813) ([Vocative Neuter Plural](#)), which, though it can refer to an infant or small child (Matt. 2:8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21), can also refer to older, but still immature, elementary school-age children (Matt. 11:16), or even a child as old as twelve years of age (Mark 5:39, 40, 41, 42). John was looking at this group of readers, who, though young in the faith, not only recognized that their sins had been forgiven (1 John 2:12), but had now grown, and, through limited experience, had still come to know God as their Father (1 John 2:13b).

⁸² 1 John 2:13 - because you know the Father: Literally, “because you have come to know the Father,” where “have come to know” is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097), indicating that the children, at some time in the past, with results continuing into the present, have come to know God in an intimate, spiritual sense ([meaning #4](#)) as their Father

“The Father” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *patēr* (3962), preceded by the article. This noun refers to God as the Father of all who believe in God’s “only-born,” ultimate Son, Jesus (John 1:11-13).

John is suggesting that these still young Christians, who understood that their sins had been forgiven them on account of the Name of God (1 John 2:12), had also, through limited, yet real experience, come to know God as their Father who loves them, cares for them, protects them, and disciplines them (Heb. 12:4-11).

⁸³ 1 John 2:14 - I have written to you, fathers: Literally, “I wrote to you, fathers,” where “wrote” is the 1st Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *gráphō* (1125). Once again, perhaps John changed from the [Present](#) tense of the verb *gráphō*, which indicated his ongoing purpose in writing to these three different spiritual age groups, to the [Aorist](#) tense of the verb to indicate his overall purpose in writing to each of them. Alternatively, John used a stylistic variation here. For greater detail on this interpretation, see [W. Hall Harris III's explanation](#).

⁸⁴ 1 John 2:14 - because you know Him who has been from the beginning: Literally, “because you have come to know the One from beginning.” “Have come to know” is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097), indicating that the “fathers,” at some time in the past, with results continuing into the present, have come to know God as being the “Timeless One,” the One who was the Creator and Originator of all things, Who had a Master Plan that could not be thwarted, that has everything under control, destined to achieve God’s purposes while at the same time allowing man to make choices and be held responsible for his choices. This is not really a significant advance from what John stated about the fathers’ knowledge of God in 1 John 2:12.

D 6 To young men in the faith 2:14c

E 1 The addressees: I have written to you, young men,⁸⁵

E 2 The reasons for writing

G 1 Their strength: because you are strong,⁸⁶G 2 Their saturation with the Word: and the word of God abides in you,⁸⁷G 3 Their victory over Satan: and you have overcome the evil one.⁸⁸C 2 Warning against loving the [world](#) 2:15-17

“Beginning” is the [Genitive](#) case of the noun *archê* (746), which here indicates primacy in relation to time ([Friberg](#)). This refers to the beginning of time and the creation of the universe as described in Genesis 1:1. Of course we know from John 1:1 that the Word (the pre-incarnate Second Person of the Trinity) was already existing (the [Imperfect](#) tense of the verb *eimi*, 1510, when the beginning began.

The words “has been” (NASB) do not appear in the Greek text. Nor is there any article in the Greek text before the word “beginning.” Both are allowable to make more sense to the English reader.

⁸⁵ 1 John 2:14 - I have written to you, young men: Literally, “I wrote to you, young men,” where “I wrote” is the 1st Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *gráphō* (1125), and “young men” is the [Vocative Masculine](#) Plural of the noun *neaniskos* (3495). Once again, perhaps John changed from the [Present](#) tense of the verb *gráphō*, which indicated his ongoing purpose in writing to these three different spiritual age groups, to the [Aorist](#) tense of the verb to indicate his overall purpose in writing to each of them. Alternatively, this was a stylistic variation. For greater detail on the stylistic interpretation, see [W. Hall Harris III’s explanation](#).

“Young men” again refers to those who have reached a level of maturity in their Christian walk, but they do not have the lengthy experience of walking with God that the “fathers” do.

⁸⁶ 1 John 2:14 - because you are strong: “strong” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Plural of the adjective *ischurós* (2478). These Christians have a spiritual fervor, energy, and vitality in their walk with God. John lists the source and the extent of their strength in the text two clauses.

⁸⁷ 1 John 2:14 - and the word of God abides in you: Literally, “and the word of the God in you is remaining,” where “the word” translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *lógos* (3056), here referring to the whole corpus of Divine revelation, whether from the OT Scriptures, the NT prophets and apostles, or the growing collection of apostolic letters, such as this one.

“is remaining” translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), to “remain, stay, abide, continue.” This is the third time John has used this verb. See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:6 for more information on this verb.

John is revealing that these “young men” of the faith are virile in their walk with God because they have allowed God’s Word to keep remaining in their lives. It is the source of their strength. A rigorous and intentional and regular acquaintance with the Word of God is what makes one a strong Christian. Ignoring the Word of God, or remaining apathetic to it, is a sure sign of a weak Christian.

⁸⁸ 1 John 2:14 - and you have overcome the evil one: Literally, “and you have conquered the evil one.” This is the extent of their strength. “You have conquered” is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *nikáō* (3528), to *overcome, defeat, conquer* ([Friberg](#)). Whom had the “young men” of the faith conquered? “The evil one,” the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the adjective *ponēros* (4190), preceded by the article. This unquestionably refers to the specific evil person, i.e. the [Devil](#), or [Satan](#). See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:13 to discover in what way the “young men” have conquered “the evil one.”

Here in this verse, however, the additional connection is revealed that the young men were able to conquer the evil one because of their strength derived from remaining in God’s Word. Just as the shield of “the faith” is all-important in quenching the fiery darts of the evil one (Eph. 6:16), so also the “young men” were careful to take up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (*hrēma*, 4487) of God” (Eph. 6:17). The importance of remaining vitally immersed in God’s Word cannot be overemphasized in conquering the evil one.

D 1 Because loving the [world](#) precludes loving the Father 2:15.

E 1 The command not to love the [world](#): {15} Do not love the world,⁸⁹

E 2 The command not to love the things in the [world](#): nor the things in the world.⁹⁰

E 3 The reason for the warning

G 1 If a certain person is presently loving the [world](#): If anyone loves the world,⁹¹

G 2 The inevitable conclusion – He does not love the Father: the love of the Father is not in him.⁹²

D 2 Because nothing in the [world](#) is from the Father 2:16.

⁸⁹ 1 John 2:15 - Do not love the world: "...love is the 2nd Person Plural [Present Active Imperative](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25), preceded by the negative. The verb means "to place a high value on someone or something. This value is based on evaluation and choice, and it is a matter of one's will and deliberate action (adapted from [Friberg](#)). The one thus loving is willing to make great personal sacrifice on behalf of the person or thing loved. In this instance Christians are forbidden *continually* ([Present](#) Tense) to place a high value on the [world](#). They are forbidden to make any sacrifice whatever to benefit the [world](#) or to secure what it offers for oneself.

"...the world" is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889), preceded by the article. This noun appears a staggering 23X in 17 verses in this relatively brief letter. It first appears in this letter in 1 John 2:2, where it referred to the "world of people." In 1 John 2:15 it appears 3X in an [ethical sense](#) as the evil, Satanic-inspired system which is antithetical to God, to Christ, and to followers of Christ. It will appear twice in the same evil sense in 1 John 2:16, and once more in 1 John in the same sense in 1 John 2:17.

John is far-and-away the most frequent user of the word "world" *kósmos* (2889) in the entire NT. He uses it an astonishing 78X in 57 verses in his gospel. Thus, in both his gospel and his first letter, John employs the word a combined 101X in 74 verses. The next closest competitor is Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. There, Paul employs the word 21X in 17 verses. Clearly, "the world" is a favorite topic of the [Apostle John](#)! See also the [Glossary entry on "world."](#)

In this letter, he has little good to say about the [world](#), forbidding his readers to love the [world](#), which is filled with lust and pride, and is only temporary (1 John 2:15-17). He who does the will of God, however, will live forever!

2 Cor. 4:4 - Satan is the "god of this world." 1 Cor. 7:31 - We are to use this world without abusing it. Its fashion is rapidly passing away.

⁹⁰ 1 John 2:15 - nor the things in the world: John defines three categories of things in the [world](#) in 1 John 2:16. These categories are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. See the further discussion there. See also the preceding footnote on the content of "the world." See also the [Glossary entry on "world."](#)

⁹¹ 1 John 2:15 - If anyone loves the world: (Compare James 4:4.)

"If anyone..." "If" is the Compound Subordinating Conjunction *eán* (1437). As a compound, this conjunction combines the conditional particle *ei*, and the particle *án* "to denote uncertainty or indefiniteness" ([Friberg](#)).

"...loves" is the 3rd Person Singular, [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of *agapáō* (25). This type of love is an ongoing, self-sacrificial, committed type of love that seeks the good of the person or entity being loved, but in this case, the world. This, therefore, is an illegitimate love. In this instance, *eán* ("if") and the [Present Subjunctive](#) mode of *agapáō* ("keeps loving") together signify a hypothetical situation – "If a certain one keeps loving the forbidden world – maybe he will; maybe he won't. But one thing is certain – if he *does* keep loving the world, the love of the Father is not within him!

"the world" – see the [Glossary entry on "world."](#)

⁹² 1 John 2:15 - the love of the Father is not in him: Literally, "not is existing the love of the Father in him," where "is existing" is the [Present](#) tense of the verb *eimí*, 1510, the verb of being.

"of the Father" is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *patēr* (3962), preceded by the article. This refers, of course, to God the Father. Is this a [Subjective Genitive](#) (the Father's love for us) or an [Objective Genitive](#) (our love for the Father)? Probably the latter. If anyone is continually loving the [world](#), love for God the Father is not continually existing within him.

- E 1 The catalogue of the contents of the [world](#) – three areas of temptation: {16} For all that is in the world,⁹³
- G 1 The overpowering desire of the sin-cursed human body to caress: the lust of the flesh⁹⁴
- G 2 The overpowering desire of the sin-compromised human eyes to possess: and the lust of the eyes⁹⁵
- G 3 The overpowering desire of the sin-contaminated human ego to impress: and the boastful pride of life,⁹⁶

⁹³ 1 John 2:15 - For all that is in the world: John does not admit any exceptions – all, everything that exists in this present [world](#), which has been corrupted by the Devil, sin, evil, death, and fallen humanity – is not from the Father, but is from the [world](#). We Christians obviously live *in* the [world](#), but we are not *of* the [world](#) (John 15:19; 16:33; 17:11, 14, 15, 16, 18).

⁹⁴ 1 John 2:16 - the lust of the flesh: **The lust to caress!** Sensual gratification; the compulsive desire to satisfy bodily urges without respect to God's standards; "the lust" is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *epithumía* (1939), preceded by the article, and meaning, "in a neutral sense, *strong impulse* or *desire* (Mark 4:19);" but in a bad sense, as here, an "unrestrained desire for something forbidden *lust, craving, evil desire* (1 Thess. 6:19)," adapted from [Friberg](#).

"of the flesh" is the [Genitive Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *sárx* (4561), preceded by the article. *Sárx* is used here by John "in an ethical sense ... as a sinful and sensual power tending toward sin and opposing the Spirit's working *flesh* (Rom. 7:25; Gal. 5:17)" (adapted from [Friberg](#)). Stated in another way, John here speaks of the human body as corrupted by sin, which negatively affects what would otherwise be normal bodily desires. The lust John speaks of here might manifest itself in immorality, in overeating, in an overindulgence of things that feel pleasurable.

The three different lusts of which John speaks might appear singly, or in tandem with either or both of the other strong desires.

⁹⁵ 1 John 2:16 - and the lust of the eyes: **The lust to possess!** Obsession with materialism; the overpowering desire to possess more and more. "and the lust" is, once again, the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *epithumía* (1939), preceded by the article, along with the coordinating conjunction *kai* (2352), "and." See the definition of *epithumía* in the preceding footnote.

"of the eyes" is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Plural of the noun *ophthalmós* (3788), meaning, the organs of seeing. There is nothing, of course immoral or antichristian with eyes. What casts a negative shadow in this context is the preceding noun, *lust* of the eyes. A great many temptations come through the eyegate. A woman sees a lovely dress and *has* to purchase it, no matter what the cost, and no matter what her husband says. A man sees a really nice bass boat and becomes obsessed with buying one, regardless of its price tag.. Their best friends bought an upscale home in a nice neighborhood, and the Christian couple go for a visit. They are stunned at the lifestyle of their friends, and they go deeply into debt to purchase a similar home far above their budget. A man is attracted to a pretty face at work, and before long the twosome are seeing each other on the sly. The lust of the eyes is a very powerful temptation, and it can go hand in hand with the lust of the flesh, thus the coordinating conjunction.

⁹⁶ 1 John 2:16 - and the boastful pride of life: **The lust to impress!** Literally, "and the arrogance of the life." "Arrogance" is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *aladzoneía* (212). This noun is used but twice in the NT, here, and in James 4:16. According to [Friberg](#), the word describes someone who is "characterized by presumption in word or action *arrogance, pretension* (James 4:16); in regard to one's possessions *false pride, conceit, boasting* (1 John 2:16)."

"the life" is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *bíos* (979), preceded by the article. It speaks "(1) of earthly life in its daily functions, such as preoccupation with food, clothing, and shelter (2 Tim. 2:4); (2) of the means of subsistence property, goods, one's living (1 John 3:17)" ([Friberg](#)). There is, of course, nothing whatever wrong about living one's life. What is wrong, however, is arrogant pride in what one has amassed in life. In America, and even in American Christendom, decisions are often made on the basis of impressing other people with one's status in life. There is always a great temptation in this world to impress others with one's possessions, whether they be clothes, shelter, status, or accomplishments.

A great deal of what happens in the world is based on "the boastful pride of life." That sort of posture does not take into account God's provisions, or God's grace. It is sheer arrogance. That sort of attitude is not from the Father (1 John 2:16)! It is from the anti-God world.

E 2 The origin of the contents of the world

G 1 Not from God: is not from the Father,

G 2 But from the [world](#): but is from the world.⁹⁷

D 3 Because the [world](#) is temporary, but he who does God's will is eternal 2:17.

E 1 The temporal nature of the [world](#): {17} The world is passing away,⁹⁸

E 2 The temporal nature of the strong desires of the [world](#): and also its lusts;

E 3 The eternality of the one who performs God's will: but the one who does the will of God lives forever.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ 1 John 2:16 - is not from the Father, but is from the world: "Father" refers, of course, to God the Father. "[World](#)" is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889).

Living in this present [world](#), which has been corrupted by sin and decay and death, confronts us daily, and almost moment by moment, with temptations in these three areas – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the arrogance of life. When Satan tempted Eve, she succumbed to each of these three temptations (Gen. 3:6). Lust of the flesh: "the woman saw that the tree was good for food." Lust of the eyes: "and that it was a delight to the eyes." The arrogance of life: "and that the tree was desirable to make one wise." Likewise, when Satan tempted Jesus he used each of these three areas: Lust of the flesh: "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Matt. 4:3). The arrogance of life: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down" (from the pinnacle of the temple) (Matt. 4:5-6). Lust of the eyes: "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:8-9). Satan is "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), and he continually attempts to deceive and tempt people through the use of these three temptations from the [world](#). See the Glossary entry on "[World](#)." See also the [Word Study on kósmos](#).

⁹⁸ 1 John 2:17 - The world is passing away: "world" is the [Nominative](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889). John is speaking of the "world" here in two senses – the physical world that God created, which was originally exceedingly good (Gen. 1:31) – but also the evil [world](#) system, corrupted by man's sin, death, and decay. Providentially, we are looking for new heavens and a new earth in which only righteousness and righteous people and beings will dwell (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

"is passing away" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *parágō* (3855), meaning here, "is in the process of being caused to disappear." The physical world, corrupted by death and decay, is wearing down and approaching its demise. And the corrupt system administered by fallen man, is also approaching its demise. After Christ's 1000 year reign and the final human revolt engineered by Satan (Rev. 20:1-9), this entire universe will be destroyed in a fiery explosion (2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12; Rev. 20:11). All evil entities and people will be finally judged (Rev. 20:10-15), and then God will create new heavens and a new earth which will never be corrupted, and which will last for eternity (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-22:5).

Since this corrupt [world](#) is in the process of being caused to vanish, why should we Christians be enamored with it? Why should we yield to its siren temptations and strong desires? See also the Glossary entry on "[World](#)."

⁹⁹ 1 John 2:17 - but the one who does the will of God lives forever: Literally, "but the one continually performing the will of the God is continually remaining into the age." "The one continually performing" is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *poiēō* (4160), preceded by the article.

"Will" is the [Accusative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *thélēma* (2307), referring here to that which God desires and has revealed in His Word.

"Is continually remaining" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), to "remain, stay, abide, continue." This is the fourth time John has used this verb. See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:6 for more information on his use of it.

"Into the age" ([NASB](#), "forever") translates *eis tòn aiōna*, the final word being the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *aiōn* (165). This three-word prepositional phrase is Greek idiom for "*forever, eternally*" (John 6:51) (excerpted from [Friberg](#)).

John's whole point is that believers should refuse to indulge in the temptations of the corrupt [world](#), because it is passing away and will ultimately all be destroyed. Rather the believer should focus on continually doing the will of

B 6 Remaining in Fellowship 2:18-28**C 1 The implications of departure from visible fellowship 2:18-19****D 1 The existence of antichrists shows it is the last hour 2:18.**E 1 The addressees: {18} Children,¹⁰⁰E 2 The time: it is the last hour;¹⁰¹E 3 The coming of the future Antichrist: and just as you heard that antichrist is coming,¹⁰²E 4 The presence of many antichrists: even now many antichrists have appeared;¹⁰³

God, for he who does so will continue to exist “into the age” – forever!

¹⁰⁰ 1 John 2:18 - Children: The [Vocative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *paidion* ([3813](#)), an endearing term which John used only twice in his letter – here, and in 1 John 2:14. More frequently (7X), John used the term “little children,” *teknion* ([5040](#)), “small child” (1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). This latter word John used entirely metaphorically, as an endearing term.

¹⁰¹ 1 John 2:18 - It is the last hour: The “last hour” appears to be used in the NT as the time between the two [advents](#) of Christ. In broad terms, it is equivalent to the [day of grace](#). Jesus came the first time to provide the opportunity for reconciliation between God and man (2 Cor. 5:18-20) and among men (Eph. 2:11-22). Following the terrible catastrophes of the [Tribulation](#) period, Jesus will come the second time to bring terrible judgment upon all who do not believe in / submit to Him (2 Thess. 1:6-10; Matt. 25:31-46). The last hour will terminate with the [second coming of Christ](#) (“the end of the age,” Matt. 24:3). See also 1 Pet. 4:7 - “The end of all things is near.”

¹⁰² 1 John 2:18 - and just as you heard that antichrist is coming: John did not use an article. He did not say, “the Antichrist” is coming. He stipulated that his readers had heard that in the last hour there was such a thing as Antichrist coming in the future. John distinguishes between that future Antichrist and the present antichrists. There is such a thing as a future great Antichrist coming, but John is the only writer who gives him that title. Elsewhere he is described by John as “a beast coming out of the sea” (Rev. 13:1-4) who will be a totalitarian who will blaspheme God (Rev. 13:5-6), wage war against the saints and murder them (Rev. 13:7-10), and permit a numbering / ID system that will monitor every purchase of every person on the earth (Rev. 13:16-18). Partaking of the numbering system will entail worshiping the antichrist (Rev. 13:12) and his image (Rev. 13:15). Paul refers to this evil man as “the man of lawlessness” (2 Thess. 2:3) and “the lawless one” (2 Thess. 2:8). He will deceive the whole world into revolting against God and Christ and instead worshiping him. His ultimate doom is the Lake of Fire which burns with brimstone (Rev. 19:20). See the Glossary entry on [Antichrist](#). See also the longer article, “[Who is the Antichrist?](#)” See also the Glossary entry on [Lake of Fire and Brimstone](#). See also the longer article on the [Lake of Fire](#).

The Greek noun *antichristos* ([500](#)) is used 5X in 4 verses in the NT, all by John: 1 John 2:18 (twice); 1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7. The Greek prefix *anti* can mean “against” and “instead of.” Throughout history from the time of Christ onwards, there have been many antichrists in the sense of “against” the real Christ. But the final Antichrist will both be “against” the real [Messiah](#), but will portray himself as “instead of” the real [Messiah](#). He will claim to be the [Messiah](#), God come in the flesh, and will seat himself in a rebuilt [Tribulation](#) era Jewish temple (2 Thess. 2:4).

¹⁰³ 1 John 2:18 - even now many antichrists have appeared: John details several facts about these individuals who are against Jesus, the true Christ ([Messiah](#)). (1) There are many of them that have appeared (1 John 2:18). (2) Their appearance is the sign that it is the “last hour” (1 John 2:18). (3) These antichrists had left the faith propounded by the original apostles – “They went out from us” (1 John 2:19). (4) Their departure from the apostolic faith and apostolic community indicates they were never really connected with the apostolic faith (1 John 2:19). (5) Their departure from the apostolic community and faith is proof that they were never truly connected with the apostles (1 John 2:19). (6) The readers had been given an anointing (i.e., the [Holy Spirit](#)) from God so they could detect truth and deceit (1 John 2:20-21). (7) The liar is the one denying that Jesus is the [Messiah](#) (1 John 2:22). (8) This is the antichrist – the one denying the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22). (9) Every one denying the Son does not have the Father either (1 John 2:23).

- E 5 The conclusion about the time: from this we know that it is the last hour.¹⁰⁴
- D 2 The departure of antichrists shows they were never in fellowship 2:19.
 - E 1 The departure of the many antichrists: {19} They went out from us,¹⁰⁵
 - E 2 Their [heterodoxy](#): but they were not really of us;¹⁰⁶
 - E 3 The proof of their [heterodoxy](#)
 - G 1 Unmet premise: for if they had been of us,
 - G 2 Unmet activity: they would have remained with us;
 - E 4 Their departure: but they went out,
 - E 5 The (Divine) purpose of their departure: so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.¹⁰⁷
- C 2 The basis for remaining in fellowship – possession of the anointing (the [Holy Spirit](#)) 2:20-23
 - D 1 The possessors of the anointing – all Christians {20} But you have an anointing from the Holy One,¹⁰⁸ 2:20a.

¹⁰⁴ 1 John 2:18 - last hour: The time between the two [advents](#) of Christ. See a previous footnote on “last hour” in 1 John 2:18 for more information.

¹⁰⁵ 1 John 2:19 - They went out from us: John is referring to the antichrists who had departed from the apostolic-based Christian circle, the believing community. The criterion by which we evaluate all teaching is whether or not it adheres to apostolic, or New Testament teaching. Antichrists may give lip service to apostolic teaching, but in reality their teaching undermines NT authority in one way or another. As [Constable](#) says, “The physical separation of these men from the apostles and the faithful eventually illustrated their doctrinal separation from them.”

¹⁰⁶ 1 John 2:19 - but they were not really of us: These antichrists who had departed from Apostolic teaching never had been bona fide believers in Christ.

¹⁰⁷ 1 John 2:19 - so that it would be shown that they all are not of us: The physical departure of these antichrists from the circle of believers adhering to apostolic doctrine was demonstrable evidence that they were not truly apostolic-based teachers.

Heresy in the Christian church, whether on the part of its saved members or unsaved people in it, always unmasks a fundamental disharmony with the spirit and doctrine of the apostles. A man in touch with God will submit to apostolic instruction (cf. 1 John 4:6). (Zane Hodges, [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

¹⁰⁸ 1 John 2:20 - But you have an anointing from the Holy One: Literally, “And you an anointing are possessing from the Holy One.” “And” is the very common coordinating conjunction *kai* ([2532](#)) appearing 3001 X in the [UBS4](#). “anointing” is the [Accusative](#) Singular [Neuter](#) of the noun *chrisma* ([5545](#)). This noun means, literally, “ointment,” but it is used figuratively in the NT to refer to the gift and empowering of the [Holy Spirit](#) (adapted from [Friberg](#)). It is used only here and in 1 John 2:27 in the entire NT. The “Holy One” probably refers to God (2 Cor. 1:21-22).

John’s point is that all Christians possess the [Holy Spirit](#) and are equipped to discern the truth. This does not, of course, negate the need today for teachers who have been gifted to amplify and explain revealed truth (Eph. 4:11-13). Nevertheless it is incumbent on every Christian to “test” every spirit (behind each teacher) because many false prophets (and false teachers) have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1-3).

D 2 The effect of the anointing – knowing the truth about Jesus as Christ 2:20b, 21

E 1 Certain knowledge: and you all know. ¹⁰⁹ 2:20b

E 2 Knowledge of the truth 2:21a

G 1 Not imperception: {21} I have not written to you because you do not know the truth,

G 2 But perception: but because you do know it,

E 3 Discernment of untruth: and because no lie is of the truth. 2:21b

D 3 The implied effect of not having the anointing 2:22-23

E 1 Denial that Jesus is the Christ indicates one is a lying antichrist 2:22.

G 1 The identification of the liar: {22} Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? ¹¹⁰

G 2 The identification of the antichrist: This is the antichrist, ¹¹¹

The particular issue John, along with the early church, was dealing with concerned the Deity and humanity of the [Messiah](#) (1 John 4:1-3). Sadly, I have observed Christians, who ought to know better, succumb to false teaching in other areas. I am not saying they have lost their salvation or that they were never saved in the first place. But I have seen them swallow false teaching unsupportable from Scripture. Satan is diabolically clever in deceiving even Christians (Acts 5:3).

¹⁰⁹ 1 John 2:20 - and you all know: "...know" is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect](#) (used as a [Present](#)) [Indicative Active](#) of *oída* (6063). In contrast to the claims of the [Gnostics](#), who claimed that only those who had liberated the Divine spark trapped within them could really know, John said that *all Christians* know. That is so because all Christians possess the anointing of the Spirit, culminating in illumination, or special knowledge, through the teaching ministry of the [Holy Spirit](#). Jesus promised to send the [Holy Spirit](#) (John 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:12-15), and He did so (Acts 2:1-13, explained in Acts 2:14-40; Acts 10:34-48). Specifically, all true believers in Jesus know the truth that He is the [Messiah](#), the Son of God (1 John 2:20-23).

¹¹⁰ 1 John 2:22 - Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?: "the liar" translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *pseústēs* (5583), one who speaks that which is not true, preceded by the article. John uses this sharp term, which appears but 10X in the NT, more than any other NT writer (John 8:44, 45; 1 John 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10). The ultimate liar is the Devil (John 8:44).

But on a human level, the person who denies that the human/Divine Jesus is, in fact the [Messiah](#), is "the liar". The terms "[Messiah](#)" and "Christ" both refer to the fact that the God-Man Jesus, physical descendant of David, and thereby qualified to sit on the throne of David, reigning over Israel, has been anointed with and by God's Spirit to be God's ultimate Prophet, Priest, and King.

"The one who denies" is, literally, "the one denying," where "denying" is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present](#) Middle/Passive [Deponent](#) of the verb *arnéomai* (720), preceded by the article. It means to deny, denounce, disown, repudiate (adapted from [Friberg](#)). The [present](#) tense indicates this is an active, ongoing denial or repudiation that Jesus is the [Messiah](#). "Denying" is the opposite of "admitting" or "confessing" (*homologéō*, 3670) (1 John 2:23).

Historically, of course, the Jewish people have denied that Jesus is the Christ. But so have others. Gnostics believed that anything material was sinful. Therefore Jesus could not have been God's Son ([Constable](#)). They considered "Jesus" and "Christ" as two distinct entities ([Constable](#), citing [Ryrie](#)). Moreover,

"Docetists taught that Jesus was not truly a man, and therefore could not be our Savior" ([Constable](#)).

"Followers of Cerinthus believed that Jesus was not fully God, but that God only came upon Him at His baptism, and later departed from Him before His crucifixion" ([Constable](#)).

¹¹¹ 1 John 2:22 - This is the antichrist: John is not here merely speaking of the one future eschatological great [Antichrist](#), but of any and all who deny that Jesus is the [Messiah](#) (1 John 2:22). See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:18 for more information about the descriptive noun "antichrist" (*antichristos*, 500).

H 1 Denunciation of the Father: the one who denies the Father

H 2 Denunciation of the Son: and the Son.¹¹²

E 2 Denial of the Son means non-possession of the Father 2:23.

G 1 Denial of the Son: {23} Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father;

G 2 Confession concerning the Son: the one who confesses the Son¹¹³ has the Father also.

C 3 The method of remaining in fellowship: "Let Jesus' promise of eternal life remain in you!" 2:24-25

D 1 The command – Let what you heard, the promise of eternal life, remain in you! 2:24a.

E 1 The command: {24} As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning.¹¹⁴

E 2 The condition: If what you heard from the beginning abides in you,

E 3 The result: you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

D 2 The content of the promise – eternal life 2:25. {25} This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.¹¹⁵

C 4 The equipment for remaining in fellowship – the anointing 2:26-27

D 1 Information about deceivers: {26} These things I have written to you

¹¹² 1 John 2:22 - the one who denies the Father and the Son: One cannot deny who Jesus is without at the same time denying the Father. The two, though distinct persons, are one in essence (John 10:30; 12:44-45; 1 John 2:23).

¹¹³ 1 John 2:23 - the one who confesses: Literally, the one [who keeps] confessing (*homologōn*) the Son also has the Father. "...confesses ([NASB](#)) is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of *homologēō* ([3670](#)). The idea conveyed here is that of one continually admitting to and agreeing with the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. This is another way of stating that this person believes in Jesus as the [Messiah](#).

¹¹⁴ 1 John 2:24 - let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning: In the context here, John is talking about the truths concerning Jesus as being the Word of Life – the visible manifestation of God (1 John 1:1; John 1:1-3, 14, 18), whom to know is [Life Eternal](#) (1 John 1:1-3). Implicit in these truths is Jesus' promise of [eternal life](#) (see 1 John 2:25).

¹¹⁵ 1 John 2:25 - eternal life: Literally, "the life, the eternal." Cf. also 1 John 5:11-13, 20; John 3:16; 5:24; 6:40, etc. "The life is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *dzōē* ([2222](#)), preceded by the article; "the eternal" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the adjective *aiōnios* ([166](#)), preceded by the article. John is not speaking here of biological life, but rather of unending, spiritual life. We who believe in Jesus presently possess [eternal life](#), albeit in a mortal, decaying body. The ultimate destiny of [eternal life](#) for us who believe in Jesus as the [Messiah](#) is unmitigated meaning and fellowship in [New Jerusalem](#) and [New Earth](#) in a resurrected, immortal body free from the limitations of sin, pain, sorrow, death, aging, and the curse (Rev. 21:1-22:5). John speaks of [eternal life](#) in this letter in 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20.

concerning those who are trying to deceive you. ¹¹⁶ 2:26.

- D 2 Possession of the anointing: {27} As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, ¹¹⁷ 2:27a.
- D 3 The superfluity of human teachers: and you have no need for anyone to teach you; ¹¹⁸
- D 4 The truthful teaching of the anointing: but as His anointing teaches you about all things,
 - E 1 Its veracity: and is true
 - E 2 Its reliability: and is not a lie,
- D 5 The content of the teaching – remain in Jesus! and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. ¹¹⁹

C 5 The essential requisite for remaining in fellowship – remaining in Jesus 2:28

¹¹⁶ 1 John 2:26 - those who are trying to deceive you: The existence of deceivers who were then in the process of leading them astray is the whole reason He is writing about the anointing. The [Holy Spirit](#) was given to us, in part, so that we can detect error and correct it with the truth. According to Zane Hodges ([TBKC](#)), there were certain men whom he had previously labeled as “antichrists” (1 John 2:18, 22) who

...apparently sought to undermine the readers’ conviction that Jesus is the Christ and that they had eternal life through Him. John’s insistence that his readers genuinely know God and know His truth (1 John 2:12-14, 21) was part of his strategy for fortifying them against the antichrists.

¹¹⁷ 1 John 2:27 - the anointing which you received from Him abides in you: The anointing received from Jesus (cf. 1 John 2:20), obviously a reference to the promised [Holy Spirit](#), remains in them. The [Holy Spirit](#) illumines believers, giving them the capacity to understand spiritual truth. Illumination is (1) the capacity to absorb spiritual truth (possessed by all Christians) and (2) the capacity to teach spiritual truth (also possessed by all Christians, but to a larger extent by those with the gift of teaching, cf. Romans 12:7). By “anointing” John is, in this context, referring to meaning (1).

The time will come when God will pour out His [Spirit](#) on all mankind (Acts 2:16-21, cf. Joel 2:28-32). This was partially fulfilled at [Pentecost](#) when God poured forth His [Spirit](#) on the fledgling [Church](#). It will be fulfilled much more dramatically in the [Millennium](#), when all at the beginning will be beneficiaries of God’s [Spirit](#). It will most completely be fulfilled during the [Eternal State](#), when all unbelievers will be banned from the universe, and only righteousness and Spirituality will prevail in [New Jerusalem](#), headquarters of the [New Heavens](#) and [Earth](#). To that end the [Holy Spirit](#) issues His invitation to humans to come and partake freely of the water of life (Rev. 22:17)!

¹¹⁸ 1 John 2:27 - and you have no need for anyone to teach you: Do we not need human teachers? Obviously John is taking a shot at the *false* teachers. “You don’t need those ([gnostic](#)) teachers to learn from God!” On the other hand the very fact that (1) John is writing this letter and that (2) there is a gift of teaching (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 4:11) suggests that God intends gifted believers to teach other believers. Evidently John’s statement is not to be taken in an absolute sense. On the other hand, too many lazy Christians simply do not exert the needed effort to absorb truths from God’s Word that they could with more interest and effort.

¹¹⁹ 1 John 2:27 - and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. The editors of the [NASB](#) translated the Greek verb *ménō* ([3306](#)), “abide”, or “remain” as a [Present Indicative](#), “you are remaining in Him.” However, the form of the verb can also be translated as a [Present Imperative](#), “keep remaining in Him!” To me it makes more sense in the context to take the form as a [Present Imperative](#), a command, “keep remaining in Him!” The crux of the anointing’s teaching is to REMAIN IN JESUS CHRIST! The argument of the [NetBible editors](#) is that the [Imperative](#) should not be introduced until the next verse, 1 John 2:28. But again, an [Imperative](#) in 1 John 2:27 more logically fits John’s argument there. In 1 John 2:28 John is reinforcing his prior command to his readers to keep remaining in Jesus by giving them a gripping motivation – “Keep remaining in Jesus so that you will not be ashamed before Him at His [Second Coming](#)!”

- D 1 The command to remain in Jesus: {28} Now, little children, abide in Him,¹²⁰
- D 2 Positive motivation – to assure confidence when He is revealed: so that when He appears, we may have confidence¹²¹
- D 3 Negative motivation – to prevent unashamedness at His [Second Coming](#): and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.¹²²

A 2 THE INDICATORS OF FELLOWSHIP 2:29 - 4:6

B 1 Righteousness within the Family 2:29 - 3:10 (The Test of Relationship to God or Satan)

- C 1 The practice of righteousness indicates Divine birth 2:29.
 - D 1 The major premise – the condition of knowing God’s righteous character: {29} If you know that He is righteous,¹²³
 - D 2 The minor premise – the observation of a human practicing righteousness: you know¹²⁴ that everyone also who practices righteousness

¹²⁰ 1 John 2:28 - abide in Him: “abide” is the 2nd Person Plural [Present Active Imperative](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), to abide, or remain. The verb form here is *ménete*, and it is identical to the form used in the last clause of 1 John 2:27. Though this form is the same as the form for the [Indicative](#) Mood, to me it makes the most sense to translate both verbs in the [Imperative](#) Mood. I believe it is a command in both instances.

“In Him” – i.e., in Christ.

¹²¹ 1 John 2:28 - confidence: the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *parrêsia* (3954), “... an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear; ... (3) in the presence of high-ranking persons *courage, confidence, boldness* (Acts 4:13); (4) in relation to God *confidence, boldness, joyful sense of freedom* (Heb. 10:35),” excerpted from [Friberg](#). If we Christians keep remaining in Jesus, we will have confidence, not dread at His appearing. Most of the earth will weep in terror at Christ’s return (Rev. 1:7). Not so the Christian who keeps remaining in Jesus.

¹²² 1 John 2:28 - at His coming: The Greek word for “coming” is *parousia* (3952). This refers to Christ’s [Second Coming](#), which will occur in two stages. First, Jesus will return for His [Bride](#), the [Church](#) at the event which we call the [Rapture](#). His *parousia* also includes a second stage, when Jesus will return in power and great glory to [judge all survivors of the Tribulation](#) and to set up His [Millennial Kingdom](#) here upon earth.

¹²³ 1 John 2:29 - If you know that He is righteous: If (a condition lacking certainty) y o u know (*oïda*, 6063) He (God) is righteous, then something else is also true, as John goes on to point out. The verb *oïda* here appears to refer to an intuitive knowledge.

The antecedent of “He” in “He is righteous,” looking backward contextually, ought to be Christ. However, the “Him” in the clause at the end of the verse, “is born of Him” more likely refers to God the Father. Therefore, the “He” in “He is righteous” can refer and probably does refer to either God the Son or God the Father.

The adverb “righteous” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of *dikaïos* (1342), referring to persons who, in a moral and ethical sense, are *righteous, upright, just, fair* (adapted from [Friberg](#)). Again, the adjective here describes either God or Christ. Both are equally righteous.

¹²⁴ 1 John 2:29 - you know that everyone also who practices righteousness: “you know” ([Present](#) tense of *ginō’skō*, 1097), probably here combines both meanings (1) and (6).

The next clause reads, literally, “that also every one practicing the righteousness,” where “practicing” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the fluid and common verb *poiēō* (4160), to *make, do, accomplish*, with the translation adapting to the context. The translation here chosen by the [NASB](#) editors conveys the idea of someone who habitually practices righteousness. That is his way of life.

“The righteousness” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *dikaïosunê* (1343), preceded by the article. The effect of the article is to identify the righteousness that this human is practicing as identical to the righteous

D 3 The conclusion about that person: is born of Him.¹²⁵

C 2 The present incentive for righteousness arises from future hope 3:1-3

D 1 The present reality of the Father-child relationship 3:1.

E 1 Eye-catching love: See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us,¹²⁶

G 1 The designation of love: that we should be called children of God;¹²⁷

G 2 The reality of love: and *such* we are.

E 2 Sobering consequence

character of God and Christ. *Dikaíosinê* refers to the quality of *righteousness, uprightness, justice, and integrity* practiced by the one who is *dikaíos*, righteous (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

¹²⁵ 1 John 2:29 - is born of Him: Literally, “has been born of Him,” where “has been born” is the [Perfect Passive](#) of *gennáō* (1080). The meaning is that the person who practices ([Present](#) tense) righteousness does so only because God the Father has spiritually given birth to him in the Family of God. The [Perfect](#) tense here has the sense that, at some time in the past, God fathered this person into the Family of God, a position in which he remains up to the present moment.

¹²⁶ 1 John 3:1 - See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us: It was the Lord Jesus who, in reality, introduced the believing community to the concept that God is a Father (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2), and as such, that He is One who acts on behalf of His own (Luke 11:13; 18:1-8). Jesus’ disciples absorbed Jesus’ teaching. They portray God as One who deeply loves the entire world (John 3:16), but especially those who are His children who obey Him (John 14:21-23; 1 John 2:5; 3:1; 4:7-10, 16).

The noun “love” is the [Accusative](#) of *agápê* (26). This love of God for us connotes an intentional sacrificial behavior on behalf of the one who is the object of affection.

“Bestowed” translates the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the common verb *didōmi* (1325), which has a wide variety of nuances, determined by the context. Its most basic meaning is “to give.” The [Perfect](#) tense indicates that at a time in the past, with results continuing to the present, God demonstrated His love for us with the purpose of calling us His children. The point in past time was the [incarnation](#) of the Word of God in human flesh (John 1:1-3, 14, 18) as the supreme Jewish [Messiah](#). That [incarnation](#) included the [Messiah’s](#) death to pay for the sins of the world, and His resurrection to assure all who believe the same resurrection. This [Messiah](#) is returning to reign over [Israel](#) and all the world (Psa. 2:6-9; Isa. 9:6-7; Zech. 14:9; Luke 1:32-33, 67-75; Rev. 20:4) and save us from ourselves (Isa. 2:1-4; 59:15-21; Rev. 21:1-22:5). What love the Father has bestowed upon us to call us His children!

¹²⁷ 1 John 3:1 - that we should be called children of God: John marvels at the depth of God’s love for us – that we should be called His children, the [Nominative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *téknon* (5043). (See also John 1:12; Rom. 8:16-17) It is assumed that parents will love and care for their children. How much more will the heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him (Matt. 7:11; Luke 11:13)? We are beloved children (Eph. 5:1). As God’s children, we have a glorious future (Rom. 8:17, 21)! We should live as obedient children of God beyond reproach (Php. 2:15; 1 Pet. 1:14).

The verb “called” is the 1st Person Plural [Aorist Subjunctive Passive](#) of *kaléo* (2564). John probably used this verb in two senses: (1) in the sense of “naming” or “identifying;” (2) in the sense of God’s having deliberately and effectively summoning us to Himself. The [Aorist](#) Tense looks at a point in time in the past in the mind of God. The [Passive](#) Voice indicates that the calling was God’s initiative, not man’s. The [Subjunctive](#) Mood, used here in a purpose clause, introduced by *hína* (2443), indicates definite outcome (Rom. 8:30). That is why John could complete his thought with the terse, two-word (in Greek) clause, “and we are!” – where “we are” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb of being *eimi* (1510).

G 1 End result: For this reason the world does not know us,¹²⁸

G 2 First cause: because it did not know Him.¹²⁹

D 2 The certainty of future transformation to be like Christ 3:2.

E 1 The present glorious **reality**: {2} Beloved, now we are children of God,

E 2 Present **uncertainty**: and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.

E 3 Present **assurance**: We know that, when He appears,¹³⁰

G 1 Transformation: we will be like Him,¹³¹

G 2 Perception: because we shall see Him just as He is.

D 3 The hope for the future gives present incentive for righteousness 3:3.

E 1 The condition: {3} And everyone who has this hope¹³² fixed on Him

¹²⁸ 1 John 3:1 - For this reason the world does not know us: The reason the world does not know us is that we are the children of God. The world does not know the Father, and the world does not know those who are His children.

"The world" is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889). John probably had in mind both the [world of humanity](#), but also, and more to the point, the [degenerate system run by Satan](#) and those deluded by him. Neither aspect of the "world" knows us Christians.

"Know" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097). To "know" here means to understand and appreciate and agree with. The fallen world does not adopt any one of these nuances in regard to Christians. The world does not know us Christians in a mutually supportive sense ([meaning #3](#)).

¹²⁹ 1 John 3:1 - because it did not know Him: The [world](#) did not know Jesus when He came to this earth. In fact, His own people, the people of [Israel](#), did not receive Him (cf. John 1:11). Moreover, the leaders of [Israel](#) persuaded the [Gentile](#) authority to put Jesus to death (John 18:28-19:16). So both the sons of [Israel](#) and [Gentiles](#) killed Jesus.

Because the world did not know Jesus, it didn't know God, His Father. After all, Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6). If people really know and appreciate God, they will inevitably know and appreciate His Son (John 8:19).

¹³⁰ 1 John 3:2 - We know that when He appears: We know (*oida*, [6063](#)) that whenever He is manifested. "Whenever" does not indicate uncertainty about the reality of Christ's being revealed, but only uncertainty as to the time of His being revealed.

"Is manifested" reflects the [passive](#) voice of the verb *phanerōō* (5319). This idea is expressed also in Titus 2:13 "Expecting the blessed hope and appearance ([2015](#), *epiphaneia*) of the glory of the great God and Savior of us, Christ Jesus." When Jesus is revealed by God the Father, He will be "clearly exhibited" as to Who He is. See the appropriate footnotes at 1 John 1:2; 3:5 for more about *phanerōō*.

¹³¹ 1 John 3:2 - we will be like Him: The nearest antecedent to "Him" is God, and prior to that, the Father. Yet, the one being manifested surely is Christ. So will we be like the Father, or like Christ? The phrase "for we shall see Him as He is" relates theologically better to Christ than the Father (Php. 3:21), yet grammatically the sense is that we will be like the Father. Perhaps the best solution is that we will be like both of them, for the two are one (John 10:30).

¹³² 1 John 3:3 - whoever has this hope: Literally, "Every one having this hope within himself" Here the reunion with Christ is a *purifying* hope! In Titus 2:13 it is a *blessed* hope! "Hope" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *elpis* (1680). Hope in this context identifies a certain, expected, and beneficial outcome in one's future. Biblical hope, in this context, always is married to faith (see Heb. 11:1, 6). Furthermore hope is linked to that which is invisible, unseen (Rom. 8:24).

- E 2 The practice: purifies himself, ¹³³
- E 3 The standard: just as He is pure.
- C 3 The practice of sin precludes righteousness 3:4-6
 - D 1 The nature of sin 3:4.
 - E 1 The practice of sin: {4} Everyone who practices sin
 - E 2 The concomitant practice of lawlessness: also practices lawlessness; ¹³⁴
 - E 3 The definition of sin: and sin is lawlessness. ¹³⁵
 - D 2 The reason for Jesus' incarnation 3:5.
 - E 1 The fact of Jesus' incarnation: {5} And you know that He appeared¹³⁶

¹³³ 1 John 3:3 - purifies himself: Literally, "is purifying himself." If someone is not purifying himself, then (1) either he has no concept of what Jesus unveiled is like or (2) he doesn't have this hope within himself. "Is purifying" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *hagnízō* (48). This seldom-used verb is employed four times to indicate Jewish ceremonial purification (John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; 24:18). But on three occasions it refers to purifying the heart and soul and inner person (James 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:3).

¹³⁴ 1 John 3:4 - Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness: "...practices" is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *poiēō* (4160), meaning, at its simplest level, "make" or "do" with the meaning adjusted from the context. Here, literally, "Every one practicing the sin also practices the lawlessness;"

"the sin" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *hamartía* (266), preceded by the article. Sin, as the rest of this verse indicates, is the deliberate defiance of God's laws. John is not here, apparently, looking at one particular sin, but at sin as a whole as defiance of God.

The second use of the verb "practices" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of *poiēō* (4160).

"Lawlessness" is the [Feminine](#) Singular [Accusative](#) of the noun *anomia* (458), used by John in this letter only twice, both times in this verse. The noun consists of the common noun "law" (*nómos*, 3551), preceded by the negating letter *a* (Greek alpha). Grammarians call it the "alpha privative." It indicates here the condition of being "without law." In English we have the expression that certain people perceive of themselves as being "a law unto themselves." The meaning is that they think they can do or get away with whatever they wish, and no one has the authority to contradict them or stop them. I can think of certain politicians who are like this, but it would serve no useful purpose to identify them. The truth is that, whenever any one of us commits sin, we are practicing lawlessness. We are violating God's Law. As it turns out the condition of "lawlessness" is a good definition of "sin," as John tersely states in the next clause.

¹³⁵ 1 John 3:4 - and sin is lawlessness: Literally, "And the sin is the lawlessness." The use of the definite article preceding the noun "sin" (the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *hamartía*, 266) and preceding the noun "lawlessness" (the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *anomia*, 458) may be explained in that John is referring to each specific act of sin as a violation of The Law, perhaps here a reference to the Pentateuch or even more broadly, the Torah, the entire O. T. Every sin is an overt expression of lawlessness against The Law! Alternatively, or perhaps, additionally, John was viewing every sin as "flagrant opposition to God" (so [Constable](#)).

¹³⁶ 1 John 3:5 - He appeared: Literally, "...That One was revealed," speaking of the Eternal Logos' having been revealed here upon earth (John 1:1-3). "Appeared" ([NASB](#)) is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *phanerōō* (5319), meaning, in the [Passive](#), become visible, be revealed, become known (Mark 4:22; John 3:21)" ([Friberg](#)). The verb "appeared" is an [Active](#) voice verb. Therefore "was revealed" ([Passive](#) voice) is preferable. This speaks of the Logos' having been [incarnated](#). The Logos (Word of God – 1 John 1:1-3, 14; 1 John 1:1) was [incarnated](#) (was revealed) in order to take away the sins of people (John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 2:2). Other instances of *phanerōō* (5319) in a similar context (His [First Coming](#)) include 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 1:2; 3:5, 8. The following Scriptures use this verb in reference to Christ's [Second Coming](#): Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 John 2:28; 3:2. See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 1:2 for more about *phanerōō*.

- E 2 The purpose of the incarnation – the removal of sins: in order to take away sins; ¹³⁷
- E 3 The qualification for the incarnation – sinlessness: and in Him there is no sin. ¹³⁸
- D 3 The impossibility of remaining in Jesus and habitually sinning 3:6.
 - E 1 The holiness of the one remaining in Jesus: {6} No one who abides in Him sins; ¹³⁹
 - E 2 The alienation of the habitual sinner from Jesus: no one who sins
 - G 1 Absence of perception: has seen Him ¹⁴⁰
 - G 2 Absence of knowledge: or knows Him.
- C 4 The practice of righteousness or sin indicates parentage 3:7-10
 - D 1 The practice of righteousness indicates a Jesus-like righteous condition 3:7.
 - E 1 The warning: {7} Little children, make sure no one deceives you; ¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ 1 John 3:5 - in order to take away sins: Literally, "...in order that the sins He might take away" "...the sins" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Plural of the noun *hamartia* (266), preceded by the article. A major reason the [Messiah](#) came to earth was to die in order to remove *all the specific sins* of all the people of all the ages! We acknowledge, of course, that this removal is effective only for those who place their trust in Jesus, the [Anointed One](#) (Acts 13:38-39). We will learn in 1 John 3:8 that the Son of God was revealed in order to "undo" ([Friberg](#)) the works of the Devil. Cf. also John 12:31; 16:11.

¹³⁸ 1 John 3:5 - and in Him there is no sin: Literally, "...and sin in Him is not." There is no article attached to the word "sin" (*hamartia*, 266). Not only did Jesus not commit any acts of sin; He had no sin nature, no sin virus within. He did not have spiritual AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency toward Sin) – the loss of holiness, the inability to resist the lure of sinning.

¹³⁹ 1 John 3:6 - No one who abides in Him sins: Literally, "Every one in Him remaining is not sinning," where "remaining" is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), to "remain, stay, abide, continue;" "is not sinning" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264), "to miss the mark, be in error, sin, do wrong, transgress." John has already indicated that Christians may commit an act of sin (notice his use of the [Aorist](#) tense) (1 John 2:1). Here it is best to understand him as saying that the person who habitually is remaining in Christ is not habitually sinning. ([Hodges](#) and [Constable](#) both reject this view on grammatical grounds, but [Fanning](#) has shown that the habitual nature of the [Present](#) tense cannot be ruled out.)

¹⁴⁰ 1 John 3:6 - no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him: Literally, "every one sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him. Both "(neither) seen" (*horáō*, 3708) and "(nor) known" (*ginō'skō*, 1097) are [perfects](#). A person who continually is sinning has not in the past with results continuing into the present either seen Jesus or known Him! "Knows" (better, "has known") (*ginō'skō*, 1097) is a combination of meanings (3) and (4).

¹⁴¹ 1 John 3:7 - Little children, make sure no one deceives you: A literal reading: "Little children, let no one keep leading you astray" – evidently some were doing so – where "little children" translates the [Vocative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *teknion* (5040), "little child," used here "figuratively, as a term of affectionate address *my dear children, my good friends* (John 13:33)" ([Friberg](#)).

"...make sure no one deceives" – "no one" translates *mēdeis* (3367); "deceives" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Imperative Active](#) of *planāō* (4105), "(1) active lead astray, cause to wander; [used here] figuratively mislead, deceive, cause to be mistaken (Matt. 24:5)" ([Friberg](#)). This verb is used in the [Passive](#) voice of the planets wandering, straying (the word "planet" comes from this Greek verb and its related noun, *plānē*) (4106). Evidently

- E 2 The righteous character of the one practicing righteousness: the one who practices ¹⁴² righteousness ¹⁴³ is righteous, ¹⁴⁴
- E 3 The comparison with Christ: just as He ¹⁴⁵ is righteous; ¹⁴⁶
- D 2 The practice of sin indicates a devil-like sinful condition 3:8.
- E 1 The diabolical origin of the one who keeps sinning: {8} the one who

some were convincing John's readers that genuine believers can consistently indulge in a life of sin and still be righteous. John ordered them to stop being deceived.

¹⁴² 1 John 3:7 - the one who practices righteousness: Lit., "The one doing, the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *poiēō* (4160) the righteousness." John is not specifying sinless perfection (see 1 John 1:8-2:2). Rather he is describing someone whose lifestyle is characteristically righteous. You would be able to place on this person's tombstone the epitaph, "He (or she) was a righteous man (woman)."

"Righteousness" – see the next footnote.

¹⁴³ 1 John 3:7 - righteousness: Literally, "the righteousness," where "righteousness" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of *dikaíosunē* (1343), preceded by the article. *Dikaíosunē* refers to the quality of *righteousness*, *uprightness*, *justice*, and *integrity* practiced by the one who is *dikaíos*, righteous (adapted from Friberg). [JFB](#), [VI](#), [637](#) opine that the righteousness under consideration here is "... 'the righteousness' of Christ or God."

¹⁴⁴ 1 John 3:7 - is righteous: the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the Adjective *dikaíos* (1342), referring to a person who, in a moral and ethical sense, is consistently *righteous*, *upright*, *just*, *fair* (adapted from Friberg). The one who consistently practices righteousness does so because his character is consistently that of a righteous person.

¹⁴⁵ 1 John 3:7 - just as He: Literally, "that one" – the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the Demonstrative Pronoun *ekeínos* (1565), probably a reference to Christ. See also 1 John 2:6, 21. "Just as" translates the Subordinating Conjunction *kathōs* (2531), "according as." John is making a comparison between the person who practices righteousness. That person is righteous *just as*, or *in the same manner as*, Christ is righteous.

¹⁴⁶ 1 John 3:7 - is righteous: Once again, the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the Adjective *dikaíos* (1342), referring to persons who, in a moral and ethical sense, are *righteous*, *upright*, *just*, *fair* (adapted from Friberg). John is asserting that Christ (or God – the two here are virtually indistinguishable) is always ([Present](#) tense) righteous.

practices sin ¹⁴⁷ is of the devil; ¹⁴⁸

E 2 The sinful track record of the devil: for the devil has sinned from the beginning. ¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ 1 John 3:8 - the one who practices sin: “practices” translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of *poiōō* (4160), an exceedingly common (568X in the [UBS4](#) Greek text) and fluid verb with the basic meaning of “do” or “make” with various connotations indicated by the context. Here John is speaking of one who keeps practicing or performing “the sin.”

“...sin,” literally, “the sin” (the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the Noun *hamartía* (266), with the article). John here views “the sin” as “...an act, a departure from doing what is right, equivalent to *hamartēma* [265] *sin*, wrongdoing (1 John 5:17);” ([Friberg](#)). Exactly what John meant by “the sin” is difficult to determine with certainty. But since his entire thought in the first part of 1 John 3:8 reads as follows (literally), “The one practicing the sin – of the devil is being, because from beginning the devil continues sinning” – it seems logical to conclude that John had in mind the kind of person who is continually motivated by the same active rebellion characterized by the devil, who willfully departed from his original glorious, privileged position to oppose the Almighty (Ezek. 28:11-19; Isa. 14:12-14; see also Matt. 13:38; John 8:44; 1 John 3:10). This kind of human being continually is characterized by rebellion against God much as the one from whom he stems or originates is characterized by rebellion. The human’s rebellion need not be always observable to the casual observer. In fact, he may seem, in many respects, like an upright, moral person bent on doing God’s will. But in fact, he is not. Satan himself often times appears as an angel of light, and so it should be no surprise that his human servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

A friend of mine, whose veracity is unquestionable, once told me about a retired Methodist minister who once commented to him about the resurrection of Christ, “Surely you don’t believe this stuff, do you?” How can you be a genuine believer in the Christ of the Bible, and not believe in His resurrection? And how much damage can you do as a minister to your flock if you have that low a view of the reliability and trustworthiness of Scripture?

¹⁴⁸ 1 John 3:8 - the devil: The [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the Adjective *diábolos* (1228), meaning, adjectivally, “slandorous (2 Tim. 3:3); substantivally ... *the slanderer*, predominantly, as a specific name for Satan as the accuser *the devil* (Matt. 4:1)” ([Friberg](#)).

diabolos AV - devil (35); - false accuser (2); - slanderer (1) [38] [KJV]

1) prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely

1a) a calumniator, false accuser, slanderer, i.e. Satan the prince of the demons, the author of evil, persecuting good men, estranging mankind from God and enticing them to sin, afflicting them with diseases by means of demons who take possession of their bodies at his bidding.

[JTB]: 34 of the 38 uses [in the Greek text behind the AV] of *diabolos* refer to the devil (the article always present). The exceptions are John 6:70 ([anarthrous](#)), referring to Judas as “a devil,” 1 Tim. 3:11 - deacons’ wives are not to be slanderers [KJV; [NASB](#) = “malicious gossips”] (plural, [anarthrous](#)), 2 Tim. 3:3, “false accusers” [KJV; [NASB](#) = “malicious gossips”] (plural, [anarthrous](#)), and Tit. 2:3, aged women are not to be false accusers [KJV; [NASB](#) = “malicious gossips”] (plural, [anarthrous](#)). See a more detailed discussion of [anarthrous](#) uses in the next footnote.

¹⁴⁹ 1 John 3:8 - for the devil has sinned from the beginning: Literally, “because from beginning the devil is sinning,” where “is sinning” translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264), “to miss the mark, be in error, sin, do wrong, transgress” (adapted from [Friberg](#)). The devil’s whole existence is characterized by sinning. “From beginning” indicates that the devil must have transgressed very early in his existence. We know he was already in existence as a malevolent being early in the lives of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3).

“The devil” is identified as *ho diábolos* (1228), “the overthrower,” metaphorically, “the slanderous one.” Here it appears as the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the adjective *diábolos*. It appears 37X in the NT. Almost universally it refers to “the devil,” usually appearing with the article.

[Anarthrous](#) appearances include John 6:70, where Jesus called one of His twelve disciples “a devil” (no article). Jesus did not mean that Judas was “the Devil,” but that he had a devil-like character; Acts 13:10, where Paul accused Bar-Jesus, or Elymas, of being, literally, “son of devil” (no article). This was probably a pun by Paul on the name of the false prophet, “Barjesus,” which means “son of Yahweh is salvation.” Paul called him, instead, “son of devil,” by which he meant the devil, Satan. Paul used the word three times without an article, in 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 2:3. In all three of these it appears in the plural without an article and is translated by the [NASB](#) as “malicious gossips.” In 1 Pet. 5:8 Peter warned his readers to be sober and vigilant because “the opponent of you – devil – as lion roaring walks about seeking someone to devour.” Here *diábolos* appears without the article, but the article is placed before “opponent” and does double duty. In Rev. 20:1 John saw a messenger (angel) descending from heaven holding the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain. In Rev. 20:2 the messenger “seized the dragon, the snake, the ancient one, which is Devil and the Adversary (Satan), and bound him a thousand years.” Here *diábolos* again appears without the article, but the article is repeated multiple times, and it is obvious that *the* overthrower, the Devil, is meant.

E 3 The purpose of Christ's having been revealed upon earth – to undo the works of the devil

G 1 The statement of purpose: The Son of God appeared for this purpose,

G 2 The accomplishment of the purpose: that He might destroy¹⁵⁰ the works of the devil.

D 3 The effect of being born of God: The inability to practice sin habitually 3:9.

E 1 The impossibility of persistent sin for the child of God: {9} No one who is born of God practices sin,¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ 1 John 3:8 - to destroy: "destroy" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *luō* (3089), meaning, "(1) literally, as freeing someone or something tied or bound *loose, untie, set free, release* (Mark 1:7; Acts 22:30), opposite *deō* [1210]; ... (2) ... figuratively, as bringing something to an end *do away with, undo* (1 John 3:8)" ([Friberg](#)).

The verb *luō* (3089) has the idea of untying or loosing, frequently of untying or unfastening sandals. In this context, the appropriate synonym would be "unravel." The Son of God came to unravel in one sacrificial act Satan's carefully laid plans and works down through the millennia.

By way of illustration, through eight years former President Barack Obama carefully laid out and implemented extensive plans through executive orders and through regulations to push America into a pro-Marxist, pro-Islamic, anti-Christian direction. When his successor, Donald Trump, became President, he, one after the other, issued directives to unravel President Obama's agenda.

At the cross of Calvary and at the empty tomb, Jesus Christ fatally unraveled and crippled Satan's plans. The final unraveling of the Devil's evil deeds is at least a millennium distant, however.

By way of present-day application, Christ gave His Apostles authority to drive out evil spirits (Matt. 10:1-2). How is the average Christian equipped to resist Satan? The details are laid out in Ephesians 6:10-18. See the author's [Annotated Outline of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians](#).

¹⁵¹ 1 John 3:9 - No one who is born of God practices sin: The entire clause reads, literally, "Every one having been fathered of the God – sin does not keep practicing" "...fathered" ([NASB](#), "born") is the [Nominative Masculine Singular Perfect Passive Participle](#) of *gennāō* (1080). Used (1) in a literal sense, [active](#) voice, "(a) of men [it means] '*father, become the father of*' (Matt. 1:2); (b) of women *bear, give birth to* (Luke 1:13);" used in a [passive](#) voice, "of both men and women *be born (of)* (Gal. 4:23);" used "(2) figuratively; ... (b) [passive](#), of the spiritual new birth *be born, be regenerated* (John 3:3); ..." (adapted from [Friberg](#)). John is asserting here that every person "having been fathered" (in a spiritual sense) of God does not keep practicing sin. John is talking about every individual who has been "born again" (or "from above") (John 3:3, 7; 1 Pet. 1:23); who has been "born of the Spirit" (John 3:5, 6, 8); about those who have become "children of God" because they have "received" Jesus (John 1:11-12), also described as "the ones habitually believing into the name of him" (i.e., Jesus) (John 1:12, [JTB](#)). Here in 1 John 3:9, with the perfect voice, literally, "having been fathered by God," John describes the person who, some time in the past, was fathered by God and continues, in the present, in that same status.

"...practices" translates the 3rd Person Singular, [Present Indicative Active](#) of *poiēō* (4160), an exceedingly common (568X in the [UBS4](#) Greek text) and fluid verb with the basic meaning of "do" or "make" with various connotations indicated by the context. Here John states, literally, that "Every one having been fathered of the God – sin does not keep practicing" In other words, every person who has been fathered by God is not a habitual sinner.

Some argue that the present tense in this verse (and in other instances in 1 John) describes "[absolute action](#)" as opposed to "habitual action." The argument goes as follows. By virtue of his having inherited a fallen, sin nature from Adam, every person is a sinner. But a believer in Jesus receives a new, holy nature from God. Since the new nature mirrors God's Divine nature, it cannot sin. So John's statement that "No one who is born of God commits sin" should be taken in an absolute sense. The nature we received from God cannot sin, and that is what John is here describing.

The difficulty with this view is that it bifurcates man. So my old nature sins, but my new nature is unaffected? But I am not a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde. I am a unity. If my old sin nature sins, my entire person sins. And because I retain a sin nature, I am aging, and I am going to die physically. Jesus had the same issues in a different realm. He was both God and man. As God He was omnipotent. But as man, He grew weary and tired physically, and frustrated at His disciples' inability to trust Him. These emotions and feelings affected His whole person. So I do not believe the "absolute action" is a good exegetical solution. It ends up in a dead-end of saying that the "God" side of me is sinlessly perfect, but the "human" side of me is flawed. That is not reality. As a person who has been fathered by

E 2 The explanation of the impossibility

G 1 The Divine genetic coding: because His seed abides in him;¹⁵²G 2 The inability: and he cannot sin,¹⁵³G 3 The new birth: because he is born of God.¹⁵⁴

D 4 The indicators of spiritual parentage 3:10.

E 1 The easily-recognizable indicators of parentage: {10} By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious:¹⁵⁵

God, my whole person occasionally sins, and my whole person is affected by my sin, and my whole person bears the consequences. I am aging and I get sick and I will eventually die. But as a child of God I do not sin habitually.

I believe John had in mind habitual sin. The one who is born of God does not habitually sin. In the very next paragraph (1 John 3:11-12), John will assert that Cain was not redeemed, but was “of the evil one and slew His brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were [habitually – my addition] evil, and his brother’s were [habitually – my implied addition] righteous” (1 John 3:12). Born again Christians do not habitually sin. They sin occasionally, but not habitually. This is how we can distinguish “the children of the God” (literally) and “the children of the devil.” “Every one not habitually performing righteousness is not of the God ...” (1 John 3:10, literal translation).

“...sin” translates the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *hamartía* (266), which John views as “...an act, a departure from doing what is right, equivalent to *hamártēma* [265] *sin, wrongdoing* (1 John 5:17);” ([Friberg](#)).

¹⁵² 1 John 3:9 - because His seed abides in him: Literally, “...because His seed is remaining in him” “...seed” is the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *spérma* (4690), “...seed; (1) literally; (a) of plants (Matt. 13:24); (b) of human or animal semen *sperm, seed*; by metonymy, as human descendants *offspring, posterity, children* (Mark 12:19); (2) figuratively; (a) as a surviving remnant from which to build a new posterity (Rom. 9:29); (b) as a principle of life implanted by the Spirit *imparted nature* (1 John 3:9)” ([Friberg](#)).

Some interpret “seed” as the [Holy Spirit](#) ([Constable](#) quoting Findlay, note [207]). Is the seed the [Holy Spirit](#)? Yes and No. Stott and Vine suggest that “seed” = God’s Divine nature or life within believers. That is true. On the other hand, it is the [Holy Spirit](#) who imparts that God-life within the believer and abides within him. The Spirit’s act of implanting that Divine life is termed “[Regeneration](#)” (Tit. 3:5) and being “born again” or “born from above” (John 3:3, 7). Jesus linked the new birth in John 3:5-8 to the activity of the [Holy Spirit](#). It is appropriate to say that the gene of Divine life is implanted within the believer by the [Holy Spirit](#), and it is genetically impossible for the believer to sin habitually.

“...abides in him ...” literally, “...because His seed in him is remaining ...” where “abides” translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), which means “...remain, abide (1) intransitively ... [c] figuratively, as remaining unchanged in a sphere or realm continue, *abide, remain* (2 Tim. 2:13)” (adapted from [Friberg](#)). God’s righteous nature, transmitted by the [Holy Spirit](#), continually remains in the believer. For this reason it is impossible for the believer to be a habitual sinner.

¹⁵³ 1 John 3:9 - and he cannot sin: Literally, “...and he is not able to be sinning.”

“He is not able” translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative](#) Middle/Passive [Deponent](#) of the verb *dúnamai* (1410), preceded by the qualifier, “not.” *Dúnamai* speaks “...of capacity or ability *be able, be capable of, can, have power to*; with an infinitive supplied or implied of what one is able to do (Matt. 3:9; 16:3)” ([Friberg](#)).

“...to be sinning” is the [Present Active Infinitive](#) of *hamartánō* (264), “to miss the mark, be in error, sin, do wrong, transgress” (adapted from [Friberg](#)). I believe John is stating that it is impossible for a “[born-again](#)” Christian to sin habitually.

¹⁵⁴ 1 John 3:9 - because he is born of God: Literally, “...because of the God he has been born.” “Has been born” translates the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative](#) [Passive](#) of the verb *gennáō* (1080), here used [passively](#) “...of the spiritual new birth *be born, be regenerated* (John 3:3)” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). See the Glossary items for [New Birth](#), [Spiritual Birth](#), [Born Again](#), and [Regeneration](#). John’s idea here is that if one has been born of God, he has God’s spiritual genetics within him, and he cannot habitually sin.

¹⁵⁵ 1 John 3:10 - By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: In both instances “the children” (*tà tékna*) translates the [Nominative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *téknōn* (5043), preceded by the article, the common word for “child,” here used metaphorically for “the spiritual descendant” of either God or the devil. The

E 2 Two characteristics which reveal that a person is not of God

G 1 Distinguishing characteristic #1 – the absence of habitual righteousness: anyone who does not practice ¹⁵⁶ righteousness is not of God, ¹⁵⁷

G 2 Distinguishing characteristic #2 – the absence of habitual love: nor the one who does not love his brother. ¹⁵⁸

B 2 Love within the Family 3:11-24 (The Test of State: Life or Death)

C 1 Love of the brothers indicates life, not death 3:11-15

D 1 The command to keep loving one another 3:11.

E 1 The nature of the command: {11} For this is the message

E 2 The antiquity of the command: which you have heard from the beginning, ¹⁵⁹

implications world-wide are staggering. Every person on this planet, and every person who has ever existed is in one or the other of these categories. He is either a child of God or he is a child of the devil. There is no third category.

“Obvious” translates the [Nominative Neuter](#) Plural of the adjective *phanerós* (5318), “visible, clearly seen, apparent, evident, plain, clear.” The word order in the Greek text is as follows, literally, “In this is apparent [who] is the children of the God and the children of the devil...” The emphasis is on the word “apparent” or “obvious,” placed at or near the beginning of the sentence. More accurately the sentence could be rendered, “In this it is obvious who are the children of God and the children of the devil –.”

¹⁵⁶ 1 John 3:10 - anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God: A more literal rendering – “Everyone not practicing righteousness is not of the God.” An even more literal rendering of “practicing” is “doing,” the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *poieo* (4160). The sense is that a person who is not habitually, or normally practicing or performing righteous deeds is not in any sense related to the one true God. God’s character is one of righteousness, and the person who does not consistently display righteous genetic traits is not a child of God.

¹⁵⁷ 1 John 3:10 - not of God: Literally, “is not of the God.” He is the one true God, the creator of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod. 3:15-16). Though the God of Islam created the heavens and the earth, he is only the God of Abraham and Ishmael, and not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore the God of Islam is not the true God. On the term, “the God,” note the exclusivity of God. There is only one God. The God I have described is the only true God. All the rest are imposters.

¹⁵⁸ 1 John 3:10 - nor the one who does not love his brother: More literally, “nor is the one not loving (sacrificially) his brother.” “... love ([NASB](#)); “loving ([JTB](#)) is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of *agapáo* (25). The connotation here is an ongoing, self-sacrificial love. The introduction of love indicates a transition to the next topic – love within the family.

¹⁵⁹ 1 John 3:11 - from the beginning: A literal translation – Because this is the message which you heard from beginning, that we should love (sacrificially) one another. “From the beginning” could mean from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (cf. John 13:34-35, “34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”), though technically this command was given just hours before His crucifixion. On the other hand, this command had as its beginning the Law. Leviticus 19:18, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”

Occurrences of “from the beginning” in John: (1) The command to love (1 John 2:7-10); (2) the truth that Jesus truly is the [Messiah](#), resulting in the promise of abiding union with God and with Christ, which is eternal life (1 John 2:22-25); and (3) the command to love one another (1 John 3:11).

- E 3 The content of the command: that we should love one another; ¹⁶⁰
- D 2 The negative example of Cain 3:12-13
 - E 1 The prohibition: {12} not as Cain, ¹⁶¹ 3:12a
 - E 2 The motivation of Cain 3:12b
 - G 1 His source: who was of the evil one, ¹⁶²
 - G 2 His action: and slew his brother.
 - G 3 His motive: And for what reason did he slay him?
 - H 1 Rebellion: Because his deeds were evil, ¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ 1 John 3:11 - that we should love one another: “we should love” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *agapāō* (25), signifying ongoing sacrificial deeds on behalf of fellow Christians.

“One another” translates the 1st Person Plural [Masculine Accusative](#) of the reciprocal pronoun *allēlōn* (240), meaning “one another, each other, mutually” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). The reference here is to other believers in Christ.

¹⁶¹ 1 John 3:12 - not as Cain: Cain was the first person ever born in the world (Gen. 4:1), the first offspring of the first parents, Adam and Eve. The story of his murder of his brother Abel is recorded in Gen. 4:1-16.

¹⁶² 1 John 3:12 - who was of the evil one and slew his brother: There is incredible ill will between God and Satan. Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Cain, who was of the evil one, murdered his brother precisely because his own works were evil, while his brother's were righteous (1 John 3:12). Cain destroyed Abel because of his works; Christ has laid the groundwork – the Cross and the Empty Tomb – for destroying the devil's works. Observation: evil people hate righteousness! Thus today in America, and in many other countries, evil people despise and seek various ways to persecute those who hold to righteousness, morality, and to faith in God and in Christ, the coming King.

“...who was of the evil one” – “was” is the 3rd Person Singular [Imperfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *eimi* (1510), meaning, “to be, to exist, to happen, to be present” ([Thayer](#)). John asserted that Cain was continually existing in association with the evil one, that is, the [Devil](#).

“...slew” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *spházō* (4969). This verb is used only by the [Apostle John](#) in the NT. He used it twice here in this verse, and elsewhere, only in the Book of Revelation. There, it refers 4X to Jesus Christ as “the Lamb slain” (better, “sacrificed”) (Rev. 5:6, 9, 12; 13:8). It refers to followers of Christ who have been killed (we would say “martyred”) (Rev. 6:9). In the [Great Prostitute Babylon](#) was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who had been slain on earth (Rev. 18:24). (Would the word “sacrificed” be better? – “Convert or die?” The Prostitute represents a vile, murderous, counterfeit global religion with great political influence.) The rider with a great sword riding on a red horse took peace from the earth, and empowered men on earth to murder one another wantonly (Rev. 6:4). One of the seven heads of the [Beast out of the Sea](#), a global, murderous dictator, appeared to have been slain, and subsequently healed (Rev. 13:3). This powerful dictator is Satan's impersonation of the genuine Jewish [Messiah](#), Jesus, of Bethlehem and Nazareth. It is no one wonder that, in his impersonation, he mimics the Death and Resurrection of the true [Messiah](#). We can see, therefore, that there is, in this verb, a strong overtone of the ritual sacrifice of animals / people for the purpose of atoning for sins, real and imagined. On the surface, it does not seem that ritual sacrifice fits the context of 1 John 3:12. On the other hand, perhaps it does. Both Cain and Abel were offering sacrifices to God. Because Cain's sacrifice was not accepted, in retaliation, he sacrificed his brother. Perhaps there is a connection, after all. I maintain that the translation of “sacrificed” and “sacrifice” actually is appropriate for this verb in this context. At a point in time, Cain sacrificed his brother.

¹⁶³ 1 John 3:12 - Because his deeds were evil: “Evil” is the [Nominative Neuter](#) Plural of the adjective *ponēros* (4190), “bad, harmful, evil, wicked, malicious.” In the account in Genesis 4:1-7, Cain's evil deeds seem to be his reaction against God. When God accepted Abel and his offering, but did not accept Cain and his offering, Cain became furious with God. When God warned him about the necessity of conquering sin, Cain did not do so. Cain's evil deeds were evident before he killed his brother. The act of murder (Gen. 4:8) only revealed the evil that was already part of Cain's make-up.

It is also possible that Cain was in error because he deliberately brought a non-bloody sacrifice. I am cautious

H 2 Envy: and his brother's were righteous. ¹⁶⁴

E 3 The analogy of the world 3:13.

G 1 The prohibition against surprise: {13} Do not be surprised, brethren,

G 2 The malevolence of the world: if the world hates you. ¹⁶⁵

D 3 Conclusions to be drawn if love for the brothers persists 3:14a.

E 1 There is certainty of life: {14} We know that we have passed out of death into life, ¹⁶⁶

about this explanation, however, because the text in Genesis 4:1-16 never explicitly identifies this as the reason God rejected Cain's sacrifice.

¹⁶⁴ 1 John 3:12 - and his brother's were righteous: We are not told in the text of Genesis 4 what specifically was righteous about Abel's deeds. Many have speculated that Abel's deeds were righteous in that he offered a blood sacrifice, whereas Cain offered only a vegetable sacrifice. Personally, I think that is reading too much into the narrative. The text of Gen. 4:3-5 states that God had regard for *Abel and his offering*, but did not have regard for *Cain and his offering*. I think there was more going on here than just the type of offering. I think that Abel had a heart for God and worshiped accordingly; and that Cain did not have a heart for God, and worshiped accordingly. In John's NT terms, Abel was a child of God, and Cain was a child of the devil. That was evident in their worship, and it certainly became evident in Cain's murder of his brother. Cain killed his brother because Abel's deeds were righteous and his own were evil. That is so obvious in today's society. There are people in today's society who want to destroy those who disagree with them. "If you don't agree with my values, I want to destroy you, and I will do everything I can to achieve my objective." It has not quite gotten to the point in America where the left is willing to kill Christians, but it is getting closer. It is certainly true, however, in places like China, North Korea, and in certain Islamic countries.

¹⁶⁵ 1 John 3:13 - Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you: Literally, "Do not keep being surprised, brothers, if (– and it's true – 1st class) the world keeps hating you."

"...be surprised" is the 2nd Person Plural [Present Active Imperative](#) of the verb *thaumádzō* (2296).

"Brethren" is the [Vocative Masculine](#) Plural of the noun *adelphós* (80), here meaning "fellow-Christians."

The "if" here is the Particle *ei* (1487), used here with the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *miséō* (3404), denoting active hostility of one for another or of one group for another. It is here to be translated as "hate" or "detest" (adapted from Friberg). The construction of *ei* with the [Indicative](#) Mood is what grammarians call a "1st Class Condition." It assumes that the statement is true. "Don't keep being surprised if the world keeps hating you (and it does)."

The "world" here is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889). John uses the word here in reference to the evil, Satan-inspired realm which is antithetical to God, Christ, and believers. See the Glossary entry for [World](#). See also the Word Study on *kósmos*, [meaning #6](#).

¹⁶⁶ 1 John 3:14 - We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren: Literally, "We know that we have departed out of the death into the life because we keep loving the brothers."

"We know" is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oída* (G6063), referring here to knowledge by experience – "we have come to know, recognize, understand" that we have passed out of the state of death into the state of eternal life because we consistently love Christian brothers.

"We have passed" is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *metabainō* (3327), used here in the figurative sense of passing from one state to another.

"The death" here is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *thánatos* (2288), preceded by the article. John here refers to the state of [Spiritual Death](#), alienation / separation from God, into which all humans since Adam, have been born. The infant Jesus is the lone exception. The claim by [Vaticanism](#) that Mary was "preserved free from all stain of original sin" (966) is a myth unsupported in the New Testament. Mary was born with a sin nature in a state of [Spiritual Death](#), as are we all. And for that reason she died [physically](#), as do we all.

"The life" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *dzōē* (2222), preceded by the article. John speaks here of the state of [Eternal Life](#), the present possession of all who believe in Jesus as the [Messiah](#) (John 3:15-16; 20:31; 1 John 5:11-13).

John's whole point, of course, is that we Christians have come to understand that we have passed out of the state of [Spiritual Death](#) into the state of [Eternal Life](#) because we consistently love Christian brothers.

- E 2 The reason for the certainty: because we love the brethren.¹⁶⁷
- D 4 The conclusion to be drawn if one does not persistently love 3:14b
- E 1 The condition: He who does not love
- E 2 The certainty: abides in death.¹⁶⁸
- D 5 The conclusions to be drawn about someone who keeps hating his brother 3:15.
- E 1 The condition of perpetual hatred: {15} Everyone who hates his brother
- E 2 The conclusion: is a murderer;¹⁶⁹

– Signs of genuine Christianity include the following statements in 1 John:

1 John 3:14. **We keep loving fellow Christian brothers:** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

1 John 3:18-19. **We keep loving in deed and truth:** 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

1 John 3:23-24. **At a point in time we chose to exercise faith in Jesus, and we keep loving one another, and keep on observing Christ's commandments by the power of the Holy Spirit:** 23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 5:1-2. **We keep believing that Jesus is the Messiah; we keep on loving God's children; we keep loving God; and we keep observing God's commandments:** 1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

1 John 5:4-5. **We keep conquering the world on account of the fact that we keep believing that Jesus is the Son of God:** 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

¹⁶⁷ 1 John 3:14 - because we love the brethren: Literally, “because we keep loving (sacrificially) the brothers.” “We love” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25). This kind of love connotes an ongoing, self-sacrificial love.

The term “brothers” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Plural of the noun *adelphós* (80), and refers here to spiritual brothers (or sisters) in Christ. The fact that we are sacrificially loving our Christian brothers gives us assurance that we have departed out of the state of [spiritual death](#).

¹⁶⁸ 1 John 3:14 - He who does not love abides in death: Literally, “The one not loving keeps remaining in the death.” “The one not loving” translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25), preceded by the article and the negating particle *mē* (3361). This kind of love connotes an ongoing, self-sacrificial love. The person not actively and continually loving his brother is presently remaining (3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō*, 3306) in “the death.”

John is talking about the state of death (the [Dative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *thánatos*, 2288), preceded by the article. It refers here to the state of [spiritual death](#), or alienation from God. Someone who is spiritually alive, connected with God, does not keep hating his brother.

¹⁶⁹ 1 John 3:15 - Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer: Literally, “Every one hating the brother of him murderer is being.” “One hating” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *miséō* (3404), “to hate, detest, abhor, be hostile toward, treat with contempt,” preceded by the article.

The term “brother,” the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *adelphós* (80), means here a spiritual brother (or sister) in Christ.

“Murderer” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *anthrōpōktónos* (443), used only by John, once in John 8:44, describing the devil, and twice here in 1 John 3:15, describing a professing believer who despises a Christian brother.

The first time in human history that hate erupted into action, murder took place! Cain, to whom John referred in 1 John 3:12, murdered his brother Abel evidently because he hated him (Gen. 4:1-8). The essence of murder is

E 3 The inevitable reality: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.¹⁷⁰

C 2 Love means sacrifice for the brothers 3:16-18

D 1 The obligation of total sacrifice in love 3:16a.

E 1 The proof of love

G 1 The knowledge of love: {16} We know love by this,¹⁷¹

G 2 The sacrifice of love: that He laid down His life for us;¹⁷²

hatred. The logical result of hatred is murder.

By way of illustration, as of June 12, 2017, the *New York Times*, a 20-year corporate sponsor of “New York’s venerated theater organization, the Public Theater,” [continues to support](#) the Theater’s decision to stage a production of William Shakespeare’s play, *Julius Caesar*. That seems innocuous enough, except for this: In this production, [Julius Caesar is deliberately depicted as President Donald Trump](#) – he wears modern business attire with blond hair. The inescapable conclusion is that the Left hates Trump. In their hearts they would exult if he were assassinated.

¹⁷⁰ 1 John 3:15 - and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him: Literally, “And y o u know that every murderer is not having eternal life remaining in him.” “You know” or more precisely, “you have come to know” is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oïda* ([G6063](#)). According to grammarians, this verb is routinely used as a present tense verb. The knowledge here is intuitive. Everyone knows that every murderer cannot possibly have eternal life.

“Murderer” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *anthrōpōktónos* ([443](#)), used only by John, once in John 8:44, describing the devil, and twice here in 1 John 3:15, the first time describing a so-called Christian who hates his Christian brother, and this time stating a universal truth. We know intuitively that every murder does not possess [eternal life](#).

“Does not have” – “is not presently possessing” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *échō* ([2192](#)), “to have, hold, possess,” preceded by the negative particle “not” *ou* ([3756](#)).

“Eternal life” – literally, “life eternal,” where “life” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *dzōē* ([2222](#)), “life,” here qualified as the kind of life that is “eternal,” the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the adjective *aiōnios* ([166](#)), “eternal, everlasting, unending.” See the Glossary Entry on [Eternal Life](#).

“Abiding” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *ménō* ([3306](#)), meaning, to “remain, continue, abide.” All John’s readers know intuitively that every murderer cannot possibly have eternal life remaining with him. In Rev. 21:8 John used another word for “murderers” – the [Dative Masculine](#) Plural of the noun *phoneús* ([5046](#)), “murderer, slayer, killer” ([Friberg](#)). These kind of people will have their part in the [Lake of Fire and Brimstone](#), which is the [Second Death](#). He used it one other time – in Rev. 22:15, listing murderers in a class of people who are “outside” New Jerusalem.

Of course, John is not denying that murderers can be saved from their sins, forgiven by the grace of God if they trust in Jesus. But he is saying that someone who calls himself a Christian cannot be harboring hatred or resentment within himself toward a Christian brother. If he continues to do so, he must not actually be a Christian, for hatred is murder and murderers will not make it to heaven. This is a powerful incentive for people who are genuinely Christians to rid themselves of hatred and replace it with love by the grace of God and the power of the [Holy Spirit](#).

¹⁷¹ 1 John 3:16 - We know love by this: Literally, “In this we have known ([with certainty](#)) the love, where “we have known” is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* ([1097](#)).

“The love” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *agápē* ([26](#)) preceded by the article. John is talking about the particular love which Christ exhibits on behalf of us Christians. It is the love that motivated Jesus to sacrifice His life for us. His sacrifice on our behalf reinforces the certainty of His love for us.

¹⁷² 1 John 3:16 - He laid down His life for us: Literally, “...that That One, on behalf of us, His life laid down.” The single greatest expression of Jesus’ love for us Christians is this: that Jesus Christ, eternal Son of God, voluntarily sacrificed His life on our behalf! How amazing that God, in the [Messiah](#), should love me enough to die for me!

“Laid down” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *tithēmi* ([5087](#)). This is “a bland verb with a basic meaning *put, place, lay* and the sense often derived from its object and the context” ([Friberg](#)). In this instance Jesus very publicly laid out in full view of the entire world his life, the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *psuchē* ([5590](#)), here meaning His physical life, as opposed to, in other contexts, His immaterial being.

E 2 The ultimate obligation of love: and we ought to lay down our lives¹⁷³

E 3 The object of love: for the brethren.¹⁷⁴

D 2 The absolute necessity of token sacrifice in love 3:17.

E 1 The sufficiency: {17} But whoever has the world's goods,¹⁷⁵

E 2 The observation of need: and beholds his brother in need¹⁷⁶

E 3 The callousness: and closes his heart against him,¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ 1 John 3:16 - we ought to lay down our lives: Literally, "...and we ought, on behalf of the brothers, the lives of us to lay down." "We ought" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *opheilō* (3784), to owe, or be indebted to. It has the idea here of a moral obligation. Since Christ, out of love, laid down His life for us, if we have God's love within us, we have an ongoing moral obligation to lay down our lives on behalf of our Christian brothers.

Years ago Dawson Trotman, founder of Navigators, was at Schroon Lake, Word of Life Camp in New York. A boat capsized and a girl who couldn't swim panicked in the water. He jumped in after her and held her up until help arrived. In the process, he himself drowned.

Larry Moyer tells of the father and two children who set out to climb on Mt. Rainier on Memorial Day weekend. High up on a ridge, a storm suddenly struck and visibility was so poor they couldn't see. A misstep in either direction would plunge them to their deaths below. The father had them trample down a ditch in the snow and placed a tarp over them. He lay in the entrance to protect them should the tarp blow off. The next day a rescue team found the family, but the father had died. The daughter said, "My Dad died for me!"

¹⁷⁴ 1 John 3:16 - for the brethren: Literally, "on behalf of the brothers," the [Genitive Masculine](#) Plural of the noun *adelphós* (80), referring here to Christian brothers. We Christians ought to be prepared to sacrifice our own lives on behalf of the Christian brothers. This is the greatest sacrifice one could make.

¹⁷⁵ 1 John 3:17 - But whoever has the world's goods: Literally, "But whoever might have the [means of] life of the world ..." – meaning food, shelter, clothing.... John is being hypothetical here, presenting a situation which may or may not actually occur. "...might have" ([JTB](#)) translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the common verb *échō* (2192), meaning, in this case, "might have" or "might possess."

"...the [means of] life" ([JTB](#)) is actually simply, "the life," the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the Noun *bíos* (979). In English thinking, "bios" refers to physical life," as in "biology" or "biosphere." In NT Greek thought, however, this noun denotes "...life; (1) of earthly life in its daily functions, such as preoccupation with food, clothing, shelter (2 Tim. 2:4); (2) of the means of subsistence *property, goods, one's living* (1 John 3:17)" ([Friberg](#)). The case John is considering is that in which a person possesses the means of living comfortably.

"...world" is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the Noun *kósmos* (2889), referring here to the physical world in which man lives. The whole clause contemplates a person who has adequate means to survive and even flourish in the world in which we live. See the author's Word Study on *kósmos*, [meaning #2](#).

¹⁷⁶ 1 John 3:17 - and beholds his brother in need: Literally, "and keeps observing his brother having need" "...keeps observing" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *theōréō* (2334); "... a verb of seeing; (1) through sense perception *watch, look on* (as a spectator) (Matt. 27:55);" and/or perhaps also "(2) through mental perception *understand, perceive, notice* (Acts 17:22);" (adapted from [Friberg](#)). John was contemplating someone who is aware of a Christian brother who has ongoing, unspecified survival needs – perhaps he doesn't have enough food or water or clothes or shelter. The person under consideration is aware because *he keeps seeing* this brother experiencing need on an ongoing basis.

John was not ruling out assisting women in need (see Acts 6:1-7). He was referring to *any Christian* who has need. But he did not use the word "Christian" (*Christianós*, 5546) (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). He used the word "brother" (*adelphós*, 80), as he did 15X in 13 verses in this letter. For more information on John's use of the word "brother" see its first occurrence – at 1 John 2:9.

¹⁷⁷ 1 John 3:17 - and closes his heart against him: Literally, "and shuts his bowels from him," where "bowels" is the [Accusative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *splágchnon* (4698). This noun refers to the inward parts of the body, such as "heart, bowels, liver." It occurs only in the plural in the NT. Literally, it refers to the intestines (Acts 1:18), but figuratively, as here, it refers to "the deep, inner seat of tender emotions in the whole personality" In some

E 4 The lovelessness: how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁷⁸

D 3 The methodology of love 3:18.

E 1 The addressees: {18} Little children, ¹⁷⁹

E 2 The admonition: let us not love ¹⁸⁰

E 3 (Not) with mere speech: with word or with tongue, ¹⁸¹

E 4 But with action: but in deed and truth. ¹⁸²

instances it refers to “the heartfelt emotion itself, translated to fit the context *affection, love, deep feeling, compassion* (Php. 1:8)” ([Friberg](#)). In effect John contemplates the person who claims to be a Christian, beholds a Christian brother in need, begins to feel sympathy and empathy for him, but deliberately stifles those reactions and refuses to help the Christian brother. John will next ask, “How can the love of the God be remaining in him?”

¹⁷⁸ 1 John 3:17 - how does the love of God abide in him: Literally, how is the love of God remaining in him? The proper noun “God” appears in the [Genitive](#) construction. Is this “love *from* God” ([Subjective Genitive](#)) or “love *for* God” ([Objective Genitive](#))? This appears to be a [Subjective Genitive](#) in which it is being asserted that God’s love does not remain in the one who closes off his heart from his needy brother, thus denying his Divine parentage. Note that the preceding context, from 1 John 3:1-12 discusses Divine versus Satanic parentage. John introduced the topic of not loving one’s brother as an indicator of not having originated from God (1 John 3:10). John then began to discuss repeatedly the implications of “brother” as indicating parentage. The noun “brother” (*adelphós*, [80](#)) appears in 1 John 3:10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. For example, Cain killed his brother because he was “of the evil one” (1 John 3:12). So the ongoing uses of the word “brother” indicate that one’s parentage is in question. This is family talk. Therefore, it seems best to decide that John is saying that if someone deliberately closes off his heart to his brother in need, how can love from God possibly be residing in him? In other words, God cannot be His Father if he deliberately closes his bowels off from his brother. So the correct meaning of the translation is “love from God,” reflecting a [Subjective Genitive](#).

John’s whole point is this: Because of Jesus’ great love for us, as exhibited by His sacrificially dying for us on the cross, we Christians are obligated to love our Christian brothers by sacrificing our lives for them (1 John 3:16). That is the greatest sacrifice one could make. However, if one has the means to help another Christian brother who has needs, but he deliberately shuts down his compassion and refuses to help, how can the love from God possibly be dwelling in him? He argues from the greater to the lesser. We ought to die for the Christian brothers. But if we can’t even share any food or clothing or money with them when they are needy and we have the ability, how can we possibly call ourselves a Christian? How can God’s love for us be remaining within us? And how can we say that we love God with that kind of unloving exhibition?

¹⁷⁹ 1 John 3:18 - Little children: John uses the diminutive, affectionate designation for his readers – the [Vocative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *teknion* ([5040](#)). John shows his affection for his readers. He considers them to be Christians. John is the only NT writer who employs this term. He quotes Jesus as using it in John 13:33. In this letter he has used it already in 1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, and now in 1 John 3:18. He will use it in 1 John 4:4; 5:21. These are its only uses in the entire NT.

¹⁸⁰ 1 John 3:18 - let us not love: This is the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *agapáo* ([25](#)), preceded by the negative. Grammarians call this a “hortatory subjunctive” – it has the force of an imperative, a command. John is urging his readers continually to avoid loving others merely with speech, but rather, to love them in truth and in deeds of action. The love that John urges here is an ongoing, self-sacrificial love.

¹⁸¹ 1 John 3:18 - with word or with tongue: “with word” is the [Dative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *lógos* ([3056](#)), here referring to the spoken word; or with tongue, the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *glōssa* ([1100](#)), which literally refers to the human tongue as the organ of speech. Other translations translate this second member as follows: “talk” (ESV); “speech” (HCSB and NIV). John’s meaning here is, of course, that we should not love with word or talk, but rather, as he will say momentarily, “in deed and truth.”

¹⁸² 1 John 3:18 - but in deed and truth: “deed” is the [Dative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *érgon* ([2041](#)), a broadly used noun for “work, deed, action.” “Truth” is the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *alêtheia* ([225](#)). John means here that true, genuine love will express itself, not merely in words or speech, but in actions and tangible deeds that reflect sincerity, not hypocrisy. Genuine love expresses itself in sacrificial action, not in mere talk.

C 3 Love has certain results 3:19-24

D 1 Knowledge we are of the truth 3:19a. {19} We will know by this ¹⁸³ that we are of the truth, ¹⁸⁴

D 2 Victory over a condemning heart 3:19b-20.

E 1 Assurance: and will assure our heart before Him, ¹⁸⁵ 3:19b

E 2 The affliction of a condemning heart: {20} in whatever our heart condemns us; ¹⁸⁶

E 3 The greatness of God: for God is greater than our heart, ¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ 1 John 3:19 - We will know by this: Literally, “In this we will know” where “we will know” is the 1st Person Plural [Future Indicative Middle Deponent](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097), meaning here, “[to know intellectually](#).” “In this” or “by this” ([NASB](#)) grants the premise that we believers are not loving merely “with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:18).

¹⁸⁴ 1 John 3:19 - that we are of the truth: Literally, “By this we shall know that of the truth we are” – if we strive to meet our brothers’ needs with actual deeds, rather than merely with words (1 John 3:18). The phrase, “of the truth” (*ek tēs alētheias* – the [Genitive Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *alētheia*, 225) refers to people who have responded positively to, and have embraced, and are living out the truth of God and of Christ as contained in the Scriptures.

What is it that assures people they are “of the truth”? It is when they do “not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

¹⁸⁵ 1 John 3:19 - and will assure our heart before Him: Literally, “and before Him will assure the heart of us.” “Will assure” is the 1st Person Plural [Future Indicative Active](#) of the verb *peithō* (3982), used here in the sense of allaying fears, assuring, conciliating (Matt. 28:14; 1 John 3:19) (excised from [Friberg](#)).

“Our heart” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *kardia* (2588), which refers here, not to the physical organ, but to the source of one’s inner soul and spirit, consciousness, awareness, conscience, emotions, and will.

¹⁸⁶ 1 John 3:20 - in whatever our heart condemns us: “in whatever” – more literally, “that if,” where “if” is the Subordinating Conjunction *eán* ([G1437](#)), in which the Greek syntax indicates a “third class” condition – perhaps our heart blames us – perhaps it doesn’t.

“heart” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *kardia* (2588), which refers here, again, not to the physical organ, but to the source of one’s inner soul and spirit, consciousness, awareness, conscience, emotions, and will.

“condemns” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *kataginōskō* (2607), “condemn, declare to be wrong, judge to be guilty” ([Friberg](#)), “blame” ([JTB](#)). AV - condemn (2); - blame (1) [3] total. Def.: 1) to find fault with, blame, to accuse, condemn. [[JTB](#)]: Occurs elsewhere only in Galatians 2:11, where Paul opposed Peter’s hypocrisy in not eating with Gentiles because Peter “stood condemned.” The occurrences in 1 John 3:20, 21 both speak of a condemning, or blaming heart. In the context, These occurrences in 1 John seem to be a false condemnation or blaming, a pseudo-guilt, if you will.

In other words, John is saying that if we as Christians love others in deed and in truth, rather than merely in words, this will provide assurance for us that we are really genuine Christians should we suffer a falsely condemning heart. The Christian life is a difficult, life-long war against the [flesh](#), the [world](#), and the [devil](#). And we often do fail as Christians. [Satan](#) will attempt, at all costs, to throw Christians off-stride by falsely condemning us through our hearts. The fact is that we are totally unworthy of salvation and acceptance by God. But if we have trusted in Christ, He is our Advocate, our Defense Attorney before the Father when we sin (1 John 2:1-2). We are forgiven because Jesus is the perfect [propitiation](#) (1 John 2:2; 4:10), or “legal satisfaction” for our sins. And when we as Christians confess our sins, admitting we have done wrong, God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

¹⁸⁷ 1 John 3:20 - for God is greater than our heart: There are times when we as Christians are oppressed with anxieties and fears and a (falsely) condemning heart. But God is greater than our subjective heart, and knows what we are really like. Sometimes we Christians simply have to cast ourselves upon the mercy and grace of God. He is greater than the sin-damaged heart we possess and knows the truth about everything.

E 4 The knowledge of God: and knows all things.¹⁸⁸

D 3 Confidence toward God 3:21

E 1 The condition: {21} Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us,¹⁸⁹

E 2 The confidence: we have confidence before God;¹⁹⁰

D 4 Answered prayer 3:22a.

E 1 The truth: {22} and whatever we ask we receive from Him,¹⁹¹

E 2 The reasons

G 1 Obedience: because we keep His commandments¹⁹²

G 2 Good will: and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

“Heart” here is the [Genitive Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *kardia* (2588), which literally refers to the physical organ. But that is not what John has in mind here. He is speaking of the heart as the source of one’s inner soul and spirit, consciousness, awareness, conscience, emotions, and will.

¹⁸⁸ 1 John 3:20 - and knows all things: “knows” is the 3rd Person Singular Present Indicative Active of the verb *ginōskō* (1097). God is omniscient, and he factually knows everything ([meaning #1](#)). He knows the real truth when our heart falsely condemns us. But also implied is a combination of meanings [#3](#) and [#4](#). God knows us relationally as His own, even when our heart falsely condemns us.

¹⁸⁹ 1 John 3:21 - if our heart does not condemn us: Literally, “Beloved, if (3rd class) our heart is not (continually) blaming us”. Once again, the verb “condemn” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *kataginōskō* (2607), “condemn, declare to be wrong, judge to be guilty” ([Friberg](#)), “blame” ([JTB](#)). See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 3:20 for a fuller discussion of the verb. John is saying that if, perhaps this will be true, perhaps it won’t, but if it is the case that our heart does not accuse us, something else follows – we have confidence toward God. (See the next footnote.)

¹⁹⁰ 1 John 3:21 - we have confidence toward God: Literally, “we are (continually) having confidence toward God.” “Confidence” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *parrêsia* (3954), which speaks of “an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and a lack of fear” ([Friberg](#)). In this context, “confidence” and “boldness” (without hubris) are appropriate translations.

¹⁹¹ 1 John 3:22 - ask ... receive: Literally, “and whatever we are (continually) asking we are (continually) receiving from him.” [NASB](#) “ask” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *aitéō* (154), to ask for, or request, as in prayer (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

[NASB](#) “receive” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *lambánō* (2983), here in a more passive sense, “are being the recipient of” (adapted from [Friberg](#)). Factors involved in answered prayer: (1) An uncondemning heart (1 John 3:21); (2) consequent confidence toward God (1 John 3:21); (3) obedience toward God (1 John 3:22); (4) doing those things that are pleasing to Him (3:22).

¹⁹² 1 John 3:22 - because we keep His commandments: Continual obedience is one of the key conditions for answered prayer. “Keep,” literally, “are keeping,” the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *têréō* (5083), meaning here “keeping” in the sense of “observing” or “obeying” (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

“Commandments” here is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Plural of the noun *entolê* (1785). “His” commandments refers to the commandments of God. God is the nearest antecedent in 1 John 3:20, 21, and is implied in 1 John 3:23. “His commandments” refers to all directives and standards of the entire Bible. NT believers are, of course, under no obligation to observe the Mosaic Law as a corpus, with all its sacrifices and offerings, for this Law has been completed for the purpose of righteousness for everyone who believes in Christ (Rom. 7:6; 10:4; Gal. 4:9-11; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:12). Moreover, the Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). We Christians are under the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). However, the moral standards of the OT Law are repeated in the New, and Christ and the Apostles added other specific statutes, which are recorded in the Gospels and the New Testament letters.

D 5 Obedience 3:23-24

E 1 Essential areas of obedience in the family 3:23. {23} This is His commandment,

G 1 Faith in God's Son, Jesus: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ,¹⁹³ 3:23a

G 2 Love for one another: and love one another, just as He commanded us.¹⁹⁴ 3:23b

E 2 Results of obedience 3:24.

G 1 The condition of obedience: {24} The one who keeps His commandments¹⁹⁵

G 2 The first result: abides in Him,¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ 1 John 3:23 - that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ: The summary of God's commandment is two-fold – (1) to believe in the name of His Son, and (2) to love one another.

“Believe” is the 1st Person Plural [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *pisteuō* (4100). The “point-action” of the verb probably refers to the act of trusting in the name of Jesus for eternal salvation. To believe in the name of Jesus, which means “Yahweh Is Salvation,” is to believe in Jesus as God's sole appointed means of salvation (John 3:16-18; 14:6). But the point action also implies that our entire life is devoted to faith in Jesus for salvation. To believe in the name of Jesus is to believe that He is God's Son (1 John 1:3, 7; 2:22, 23, 24; 3:8, 23; 4:9, 10, 14, 15; 5:1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20). To believe in the name of Jesus is also to believe that He is the [Christ](#), the [Messiah](#), God's anointed and ultimate [Prophet](#), [Priest](#), and [King](#) (1 John 1:3; 2:1, 22; 3:23; 4:2; 5:1, 6, 20).

¹⁹⁴ 1 John 3:23 - and love one another, just as He commanded us: This is the second portion of the single command that God gave us as recorded by John in 1 John 3:23. The first portion was the necessity to believe in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Here, “love” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *agapāō* (25). This is a self-sacrificial seeking of the best interests of another Christian. This is a “hortatory subjunctive,” meaning it carries an imperatival force. The [present](#) tense indicates it is an ongoing obligation. Literally, John wrote, “and that we must be loving one another.” “One another” is the 1st Person Plural [Masculine Accusative](#) of the pronoun *allēlōn* (240). This obligation to be loving one another is a reciprocal requirement, not a one-way street.

“Just as He commanded us” – literally, “just as He gave commandment to us.” “He” probably refers to Jesus Christ, the nearest antecedent. “He gave” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *didōmi* (1325), a plastic word with a variety of meanings, suited to the context. It is most commonly translated as some form of the English word “give.” Its [Aorist](#) tense summarizes the life of Jesus. Over-all, Jesus commanded his disciples to trust Himself and to love one another. Repeatedly Jesus chided His disciples for their lack of faith (Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Luke 12:28). Jesus commanded His disciples to love one another in John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17.

The word “commandment” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *entolē* (1785), meaning directive, order, or command.

¹⁹⁵ 1 John 3:24 - The one who keeps His commandments: Literally, “And the one keeping His commandments in Him is remaining.” “The one keeping” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *tērēō* (5083), meaning here “keeping” in the sense of “observing” or “obeying” (adapted from [Friberg](#)), preceded by the article.

“Commandments” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Plural of the noun *entolē* (1785), meaning again, directives, orders, or commands. Contextually “His” refers to God.

¹⁹⁶ 1 John 3:24 - abides in Him: Literally, “in Him is remaining.” “Abides” or “is remaining” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), meaning, to “remain, continue, abide.” The one who observes or follows God's commandments is remaining in Him. That is absolutely essential for a vital, fruitful Christian life (John 15:4-7). This latter passage speaks, of course, of abiding in Christ for fruitfulness. But let us remember that Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30), and to remain in and obey One is to do the same in regard to the Other.

G 3 The second result: and He in him. ¹⁹⁷

G 4 Certainty

H 1 Knowledge of Christ's remaining within us: We know by this that He abides in us, ¹⁹⁸

H 2 The means of knowledge: by the Spirit whom He has given us. ¹⁹⁹

B 3 Acceptance within the Family of God's Revelation 4:1-6 (The Test of Authority)

C 1 About Jesus Christ 4:1-3

D 1 The necessity of testing the spirits 4:1.

E 1 The warning against gullibility: {1} Beloved, do not believe every spirit, ²⁰⁰

E 2 The defense against gullibility: but test the spirits ²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ 1 John 3:24 - and He in him: "He" refers to God, and "him" refers to the believer keeping God's commands. God continually remains in the one continually keeping God's commands.

¹⁹⁸ 1 John 3:24 - We know by this that He abides in us: Literally, "And in this we are knowing that He is remaining in us" "We are knowing" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097), here meaning "[to know with certainty](#)."

"He is remaining" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), meaning, to "remain, continue, abide." We continually know with certainty that God is remaining in us by means of the [Holy Spirit](#) whom He has given to us.

¹⁹⁹ 1 John 3:24 - by the Spirit whom He has given us: Presumably the way we can tell the [Holy Spirit](#) is present within us (1 John 3:24) is by (1) the witness of the Spirit that we are indeed the children of God (Rom. 8:16) and by (2) the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, etc. (Gal. 5:22, 23).

²⁰⁰ 1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit: Having mentioned the [Holy Spirit](#) in 1 John 3:24, John begins in 1 John 4:1 to discuss the reliability of revelation given by spirits. Literally, he wrote here, "Beloved, not every spirit be believing! "...be believing" is the 2nd Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of *pisteúō* (4100). As John will shortly reveal, he is concerned about whether a human prophet is empowered by the [Holy Spirit](#) or by demonic spirits. There is an adage that is as true today in the realm of "mainstream media" as it is in the realm of "Christian" preachers – "You can't believe everything you hear."

²⁰¹ 1 John 4:1 - but test the spirits: Literally, "...but be proving the spirits [to see] if of God they are" "...be proving" ([NASB](#), "test") is the 2nd Person Plural [Present Active Imperative](#) of the verb *dokimázō* (1381), which in this context has the meaning of "...making an examination *put to the test, examine, prove (by testing)* ..." (extracted from [Friberg](#)). Believers are commanded by God, through the [Apostle John](#), constantly to be evaluating the religious messages they hear. They are not blithely and naively to accept as truth everything they hear just because someone "religious" says it. Believers are commanded constantly to be discriminating.

"...spirits" is the [Accusative, Neuter](#) Plural of the noun (*pneûma*, 4151), which has the sense here of "(6) ... an independent spiritual being, not perceivable by the physical senses; [a] of God himself *spirit* (John 4:24a); [b] as the third person of the Trinity, possessed by and proceeding from God or Christ (*Holy Spirit* (Matt. 3:11; Acts 16:7; 1 Thess 4:8; possibly John 3:8a; [c] as a demonic, nonmaterial being, only evil in the NT *spirit* (Matt. 8:16; Mark 1:23); of an angel as a spirit being (Heb. 1:14; perhaps Heb. 1:7)" (excerpted from [Friberg](#)).

I am working on a hypothesis which I have never heard before, but which occurred to me while examining the evidence of the first few verses of this fourth chapter. There are 12 references to spirit (*pneûma*, 4151) in 1 John (1 John 3:24; 4:1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 6, 13; 5:6, 6, 8). 11 of these appear in the singular, and only one in the plural (1 John 4:2) – "test the spirits." Yet John uses the term "every spirit" 3X, in 1 John 4:1, 2, 3. Moreover, the context is one of plural spirits in each case. This is reinforced by the plural, "many false prophets" (1 John 4:1). Moreover, John does not

E 3 The objective of the testing: to see whether they are from God;²⁰²

E 4 The reason for the warning against gullibility: because many false prophets²⁰³ have gone out²⁰⁴ into the world.²⁰⁵

D 2 The standard for testing the spirits 4:2-3

E 1 A spirit that admits Jesus the [Messiah](#) has already come bodily is

urge his readers to test the prophets / false prophets. He urges them to test each spirit. He identifies only two spirit entities by name, the Spirit of the God (1 John 4:2), and the spirit of the [Antichrist](#) (1 John 4:3). And yet in each case, the phraseology “every spirit” (of God) and “every spirit” (of the [Antichrist](#)) seems to suggest multiple lesser spirits. We are accustomed to thinking of demons as carrying out the will of the spirit of the [Antichrist](#) (which spirit is none other than [Satan](#)). Is it possible that John is also looking at [angels](#) (messengers) as spirits doing the will of the [Holy Spirit](#)? Is it possible that when a godly preacher or teacher teaches the word of God in truth, he is being assisted by a good spirit ([angel](#)) acting on behalf of and doing the will of the [Holy Spirit](#) of God? And every time a teacher or preacher preaches false doctrine, denying that Jesus the [Messiah](#) has come in the flesh, he is being assisted by a demonic spirit, acting on behalf of the spirit of the [Antichrist](#), which spirit is [Satan](#)? Two passages speak of [angels](#) as being ministering spirits of God – Psalm 103:19-21 and Hebrews 1:13-14. Though the Psalms passage does not use the term “spirit,” the Hebrews passage uses both the words “[angel](#)” and “spirit.” It is, at least, an interesting conjecture, and one that merits further reflection.

²⁰² 1 John 4:1 - to see whether they are from God: Literally, “if of the God it is.” “It is” literally translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb of being, *eimi* ([1510](#)), meaning, “to be, to exist, to happen, to be present” ([Thayer](#)). [NASB](#) adds the words “to see” to make more sense in English. We Christians are exhorted to test the Spirits in order to determine if a given spirit is from God or not because many false prophets have gone forth into the world.

²⁰³ 1 John 4:1 - many false prophets: *pseudoprophē'tēs* ([5578](#)). A [prophet](#) is one who receives messages directly from God and transmits them to people. Sooner or later, Biblical [prophets](#) predicted something in the future. If their prediction came true, this helped confirm their status as a true [prophet](#). False prophets, on the other hand, do not speak on behalf of God, even though they may claim to do so. False prophets, in this context, are inspired by the spirit of the [Antichrist](#), that spirit being the [Devil](#) himself, or perhaps, one of his [demonic](#) associates. Clearly there are false prophets who prophesy falsely in God’s name (Jer. 14:14, 15; 23:25; 27:15; 29:9, 21; Matt. 7:21-23). By the time John penned this letter there were not just a few, but many false prophets who had gone forth into the world.

It is my view that there have been, for about two millennia, no valid, Biblical prophets. Paul predicted prophecies would be rendered idle or useless (1 Cor. 13:8) when that which is complete arrives (1 Cor. 13:10). With the completion of the canon of Scripture at the time John wrote Revelation in A.D. 96, there have been no new Scriptures added. That is unprecedented if we have Biblical prophets. I do not anticipate any valid Biblical prophets until the time of the [Great Tribulation](#), and the arrival of God’s two witnesses whom He will send. They will prophesy ([Future Indicative Active](#) of the verb *prophēteuō*, [4395](#)) 1260 days (Rev. 11:3). See the article, “[Do Prophets Exist Today?](#)”

And, by the way, I anticipate new Scripture being added when we once again have prophets. The greatest prophet, Jesus, will one day reign as King in the House of God on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. All the nations will stream there so King Jesus may teach them God’s ways and they may walk in God’s paths. The Law (Torah) will go forth from Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-3). I cannot imagine that at least some of the King’s pronouncements and wisdom will not be printed, and will not find their way into the canon of Scripture!

²⁰⁴ 1 John 4:1 - have gone out: The 3rd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of *exérchomai* ([1831](#)), used in this letter only here and in 1 John 2:9, both times in a negative context. John’s point is that many false prophets have gone out or gone forth or proceeded out into the world. From John’s point of view, their departure was at some time in the past, and the results continue to the present.

²⁰⁵ 1 John 4:1 - Because many false prophets have gone out into the world: One way demonic spirits manifest themselves is through false prophets (the [Nominative Masculine](#) Plural of the Noun *pseudoprophē'tēs*, [5578](#)), people who falsely claim they are getting messages from God. Since one cannot automatically trust a “prophet” communicating a message, one must constantly be proving prophets to see if they come from God or from Satan! The same holds true for teachers or scholars, pastors or preachers.

“World” here is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* ([2889](#)). John probably here means the physical world, or the world of humanity, or the inhabited earth, or a combination of these. (See the [Word Study on “World”](#).)

from God 4:2.

G 1 The ability to detect: {2} By this you know the Spirit of God:²⁰⁶

G 2 The positive detection: every spirit ²⁰⁷ that confesses ²⁰⁸ that Jesus Christ has come ²⁰⁹ in the flesh is from God; ²¹⁰

E 2 A spirit that does not admit the truth about Jesus is not from God. 4:3.

G 1 The condition: {3} and every spirit that does not confess ²¹¹

²⁰⁶ 1 John 4:2 - By this you know the Spirit of God: Literally, “By this you are knowing the Spirit of the God:” John is, of course, speaking of the [Holy Spirit](#).

²⁰⁷ 1 John 4:2 - every spirit: John is looking at the spirit behind a given preacher, teacher, or prophet. There are but two possibilities named in this context – the [Holy Spirit](#) of God (1 John 4:2), and the spirit of the [Antichrist](#) (1 John 4:3). Additionally, perhaps, John might have in mind (in 1 John 4:2) an [angel](#), who is a good spirit under the aegis of the [Holy Spirit](#) of God, and (in 1 John 4:3) a [demonic](#) spirit who follows [Satan](#), the supreme evil spirit behind the [Antichrist](#).

²⁰⁸ 1 John 4:2 - confesses: The 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *homologéō* (3670). The basic meaning is “say the same thing.” John is here likely using this verb “in a religious and moral sense, as making a public statement of what one believes *profess, confess, acknowledge* (Rom. 10:9,10)” adapted from [Friberg](#). John used this word 5X in his letter – in 1 John 1:9; 2:23; 4:2, 3, 15. In 1 John 1:9 Christians are urged to say the same thing about their sin that God does – to agree with Him that their action(s) is/are sinful. In each of the other four instances, the sense is one of public confession, profession, or acknowledgment.

²⁰⁹ 1 John 4:2 - has come: Literally, “having come,” the [Accusative Masculine Singular Perfect Active Participle](#) of the verb *érchomai* (2064). John asserts that the spirit (manifesting itself in a human being) who confesses Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh at some time in the past with results continuing into the present is from God.

²¹⁰ 1 John 4:2 - that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh: This statement asserts several components – (1) The human Jesus of Nazareth is the one under consideration; (2) that this Jesus is the [Messiah](#) (Anointed One) predicted in the Old Testament, and characterized by righteousness, faithfulness, and supernatural abilities (Psalm 2:1-12; Isa. 11:1-6); (3) that the [Messiah](#) had, at some time in the past, with results continuing into the present, become incarnate as a “flesh-and-blood” human being (John 1:1-5, 14, 18); (4) that God anointed Him with His Spirit at His Baptism (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34) to be the Supreme Prophet (Deut. 18:15-19), Supreme Priest (Psa. 110:4), and Supreme King of Israel, and by extension, of the world (Ps. 2:4-9; Isa. 11:9-10; Zech. 14:9, 16-19; Luke 1:26-35; Rev. 19:11-21); (5) that as the [Messiah](#), the Son of David, He has a Father/Son relationship with God (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:6-7; Luke 1:32, 35), making Him equal with God, as even the Jewish leaders admitted (John 5:18); (6) that as God’s Servant, the [Messiah](#) would die to pay for the sins of Israel and the world (Isa. 52:13-53:12; John 1:29, 35-36); (7) and that, finally, He will ultimately sit on the (political) throne of David (Luke 1:32); He will reign over the house of Jacob (which is to be distinguished from the Church) forever (Luke 1:33); and His kingdom will never end (Luke 1:33), i.e., it will extend into eternity in New Jerusalem upon New Earth (Rev. 21:1-22:3). It is worth noting that the eternal portion of His kingdom will consist of a co-regency with His Father (Rev. 22:1, 3). It is not to be thought that prophets or teachers who asserted that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh understood every point I have listed, but in the main they would have agreed with that which I have asserted. Every person who acknowledges that Jesus, the [Messiah](#), has been incarnated in human form is of God.

John was attacking the prevailing beliefs of both Platonism and [Gnosticism](#), that the material is evil, and that the [Messiah](#) thus did not come in human form. This heresy denies the full humanity of Christ. [Constable](#) correctly notes that John did not speak of the spirit that *denies* that Jesus Christ came in bodily form, but that he does not *confess* it. “Often heretical teaching masks its deviations from the truth by simply failing to affirm important biblical truth. Rather than proclaiming, ‘Jesus is *not* the Christ,’ they fail to affirm that He *is* the Christ.” In other words, heresy can sometimes be spotted by what it *does not* say, rather than by what it *does* say.

²¹¹ 1 John 4:3 - that does not confess: “confess” literally, “keep confessing,” or “keep affirming,” the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *homologéō* (3670). [Thomas Constable](#) makes the following excellent point:

Jesus

G 2 The conclusion: is not from God;

G 3 The identification: this is the *spirit* ²¹² of the antichrist, ²¹³

H 1 The future [Antichrist](#): of which you have heard ²¹⁴ that it is coming, ²¹⁵

H 2 The presence of [antichrist](#): and now it is already in the world. ²¹⁶

C 2 Through the Apostles 4:4-6

John did *not* say that every spirit that *denies* Jesus, but every spirit that *does not confess* Jesus (v. 3). Often heretical teaching masks its deviations from the truth by simply failing to affirm important biblical truth. Rather than proclaiming, "Jesus is *not* the Christ," they fail to affirm that He *is* the Christ.

²¹² 1 John 4:3 - *spirit*: This noun does not appear in the Greek text, but Greek syntax certainly implies it.

²¹³ 1 John 4:3 - the antichrist: *toû antichristou*, the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *antichristos* ([500](#)), preceded by the article. The words are very specific, referring to the Great [Antichrist](#), Satan's counterfeit of the true [Messiah](#) (OT) or [Christ](#) (NT). The prefix "*anti*" can mean "against" and it can mean "instead of." In this instance, both are true. This [Antichrist](#) will be the Devil's greatest impersonation of the True [Christ](#), the True [Messiah](#). Moreover, the [Antichrist](#) will be against [Christ](#) and against God and against all Christians and all Christian virtues. John is the only one in Scripture who refers to this corrupt, Satan-inspired world leader as "the [Antichrist](#)" (1 John 2:18, 22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7). Though John is the only one to designate him under this title, I believe he is also to be identified with "the [Beast](#) out of the Sea" (Rev. 13:1-10), the "Scarlet [Beast](#)" [this term designates both the ruling individual and his regime (Rev. 17:3-17)], as "the [Beast](#)" (Rev. 19:19-20; 20:10) and as the "[Man of Lawlessness](#)" (2 Thess. 2:3-12). For a more extensive article on this topic, see "[Who is the Antichrist?](#)"

The spirit of the [Antichrist](#) is endemic in the world. In the second Psalm we read, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us'" (Psalm 2:1-3). Satan is the ultimate spirit of the [Antichrist](#), long present in the world. This spirit will culminate in the [Man of Lawlessness](#) (2 Thess. 2:3, 8), the counterfeit "Christ" who is not only against the real Christ, but poses as a legitimate substitute instead of Him!

²¹⁴ 1 John 4:3 - of which you have heard: "have heard" is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *akoúō* ([191](#)). At the close of the first century, John's readers, at some time in the past, with results continuing to the present, had heard of the coming of the future [Antichrist](#). The early believers were well-versed in [eschatology](#). Unfortunately, that is often not the case today. In my opinion that is because most interpreters in the [Church Universal](#) use a [non-literal hermeneutic](#) when interpreting prophetic passages. That is, in my opinion, an incredible blight on the [Church](#).

²¹⁵ 1 John 4:3 - that it is coming: The translators have correctly indicated by "it" that the implied "spirit of the [antichrist](#)" is in the process of coming ([Present](#) tense of the verb *érchomai*, [2064](#)). This is a [Present](#) tense that looks to the future. What John is saying is that even though there presently exist false prophets who have been spawned by the spirit of the [antichrist](#), there is a future singular and monstrous exhibition of the spirit behind [Antichrist](#) who is in the process of coming. Nineteen hundred years later, that is still the case. He has not yet arrived, but he is coming. That spirit behind the future [Antichrist](#) is none other than [Satan](#), symbolized in the book of Revelation as "the Dragon" (Rev. 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:1, 2, 4, 11; 16:13; 20:2).

²¹⁶ 1 John 4:3 - and now it is already in the world: Though the spirit of the [Antichrist](#) is presently in the process of coming in the future, that spirit already exists in the world. That spirit, I believe, is none other than [Satan](#). He is the spirit who is behind all the spirits who are energizing the "many false prophets" that "have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). "World" is the [Dative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* ([2889](#)), used here by John probably in reference to the world of men, the inhabited earth, or perhaps, the earth as a whole. On the other hand, there may well be a touch of depravity in his thinking. "World" in 1 John almost always has a negative connotation.

D 1 The victory of the readers over the false prophets 4:4.

E 1 Divine parentage: {4} You are from God, little children,²¹⁷E 2 Consequent victory: and have overcome them;²¹⁸E 3 Divine strength: because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.²¹⁹

D 2 The alliance of the false prophets with the world 4:5.

E 1 Their worldly origin: {5} They are from the world;²²⁰E 2 Their worldly perspective: therefore they speak *as* from the world,²²¹E 3 Their worldly appeal: and the world listens to them.²²²

²¹⁷ 1 John 4:4 - You are from God, little children: This is a favorite address that John used for his readers. He is the only apostle who addressed his readers in this endearing fashion. He used it once in his gospel, attributing it to Jesus (John 13:33). In this first letter, he used it seven times, always in the [Vocative](#) case, [Neuter](#) gender, Plural number, and this is the sixth time (1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). The two-word term “little children” translates the single Greek word *teknion* ([5040](#)), which is the diminutive of a much more common noun *téknon* ([5043](#)), which is the word for “child” or “children.” This latter word is used 5X in four verses in 1 John (1 John 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2), and in the entire NT, 99X.

John is asserting here that his readers, whom he terms as “little children,” have their origin from God, and that they have consequently conquered the spirits of the false prophets. This is true because the one in them, i.e. the [Holy Spirit](#), is greater than the one in the world, i.e. the spirit of [Antichrist](#).

²¹⁸ 1 John 4:4 - and have overcome them: Literally, “and have conquered them,” where “have conquered” is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *nikáō* ([3528](#)); “...them” appears in the plural, and evidently refers back to the nearest plural antecedent, “false prophets” in 1 John 4:1. These believers have conquered the false prophets by not being seduced by them, by not succumbing to them and giving them heed.

²¹⁹ 1 John 4:4 - because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world: “He who is in you” refers back to “the [Spirit of God](#)” in 1 John 4:2.

“...he who is in the world” refers to “the spirit of the [Antichrist](#)” (1 John 4:3), “the spirit” being code for Satan. At the cross Jesus conquered Satan (John 12:31) in the latter’s ongoing war to trap humankind in his kingdom of darkness.

²²⁰ 1 John 4:5 - they are from the world: “They” refers back to the false prophets (1 John 4:1), who are inspired by the false spirits (1 John 4:1).

Literally, the entire phrase reads, “They of the world are being” ([Present](#) tense). In this context, as is typical in 1 John, “[world](#)” (appearing in the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos*, [2889](#)) connotes an evil earthly system that is run by [Satan](#) and his demons and is antithetical toward God, [Christ](#), Christians, and Christian values. It is no wonder that false prophets, who are of the [world](#), introduce destructive heresies into their teaching. Remember that even [Satan](#) himself, the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4), masquerades as an angel of light. It should be no surprise that his human servants do the same (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

²²¹ 1 John 4:5 - therefore they speak *as* from the world: The false prophets customarily speak from the viewpoint of the [world](#), which has an anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Christian perspective. Sometimes the error may appear to be slight, but in the end, the error is enough to enslave and lead people down the wrong path.

²²² 1 John 4:5 - and the world listens to them: The [world](#), with its anti-God, anti-Christ perspective, listens to and gives heed to false prophets, who share the same perspective. False prophets have been in existence for millennia (Isa. 9:15; Jer. 5:31; Matt. 7:15). But the [world](#) will *really* fall prey to false prophets during the [Tribulation](#) period (Matt. 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). Moreover, the whole [world](#) will be amazed and follow after “the [beast](#),” will worship the dragon, and will worship the [beast](#) (Rev. 13:3-4, 8). During this time the anti-Christian values of the [world](#) will be clearly evident (Rev. 13:5-7).

D 3 The significance of stance toward apostolic testimony 4:6.

E 1 The Divine **origin** of the [Apostles](#): {6} We are from God; ²²³E 2 The consequent **receptivity** toward the [Apostles](#) of those who also know God: he who knows God listens to us; ²²⁴E 3 The **rejection** of the [Apostles](#) by those who are not of God: he who is not from God does not listen to us. ²²⁵E 4 The consequent **disclosure** of spiritual truth and error: By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. ²²⁶

A 3 THE IMPLICATIONS OF FELLOWSHIP 4:7 - 5:21

B 1 In Regard to Love 4:7-21

C 1 There is the **obligation** of love within the family 4:7-12

D 1 The command for love within the family 4:7.

²²³ 1 John 4:6 - We are from God: Literally, "We of the God are being." It is almost certain that by "We," John is referring to himself and his fellow [Apostles](#), personally appointed by Christ. In my opinion, it is equally certain that the twelve [Apostles](#) included Saul / Paul, Jesus' personal choice (Acts 9:1-19; 1 Cor. 1:1, etc.), and excluded Mathias (Acts 1:15-26), a choice engineered by Peter, but not by Jesus. John was asserting that the 12 [Apostles](#) are of God and are to be trusted as authentic witnesses to the truth. By implication, the false prophets (1 John 4:1) were *not* to be trusted or listened to because they did not adhere to [apostolic](#) testimony.

²²⁴ 1 John 4:6 - he who knows God listens to us: Both then and now, still, true believers listen to and follow the [Apostles](#), whose words are written for us in NT Scripture. In the early days of the church, when there were few written copies of letters and treatises written by the [Apostles](#), there was a lot of reliance upon oral tradition from the [Apostles](#). But that is no longer the case today. We have a complete collection of communications from the [Apostles](#) collected in the NT. When I say, "complete," I mean that in the NT Scriptures, God the [Holy Spirit](#) has given us all the information He intended to preserve for posterity. Consequently there are limits to [Apostolic](#) authority. There is no authority in so-called "apostolic tradition" outside the Scriptures. The traditions of whatever segment of the church universal, be it the [Vatican Church](#) (Roman Catholic), the Protestant Church, the Orthodox Church, or other, smaller segments, such as the Coptic Church have no authority that can in any sense be equal to Scripture. As far as New Testament theology is concerned, only tradition that can be verified by Scripture is valid. The rest consists of the opinions of mere men. It has no authority. He who knows God listens to the teaching of the [Apostles](#). The teaching of the [Apostles](#) is only that which is found in Scripture. The rest consists merely of the opinions of men. "[Apostolic Fathers](#)" of the Church such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Papias of Hierapolis sometimes provide interesting and helpful insight, but their writings are not inspired. Sometimes these "[Church Fathers](#)" have erroneous beliefs that cannot be supported by NT Scripture. Only the writings of Scripture are inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:16-21). See also "[Who were the early church fathers?](#)"

²²⁵ 1 John 4:6 - he who is not from God does not listen to us: Those church people who are not of God, and all who are not of God refuse to listen consistently to the teachings of the 12 [Apostles](#). There is only one way we can know the teachings of the 12 [Apostles](#). That is through the NT Scripture. He who is not of God does not give heed to the New Testament.

²²⁶ 1 John 4:6 - By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error: By "we" John referred to himself and the other [Apostles](#). But he probably included [all genuine believers](#) as well. John was not here distinguishing whether the listeners were believers or unbelievers, but whether that which was being taught originated from "the spirit of the truth" (meaning the [Holy Spirit](#)) or from "the spirit of the error" (meaning [Satan](#)). John was giving standards by which to distinguish truth from error. His standards were twofold: a correct understanding of who Jesus, the [Messiah](#) is (1 John 4:1-3), and agreement with [Apostolic](#) teaching (1 John 4:4-6) as outlined in NT Scripture. When Christians start adding external data, such as Church Tradition, to authoritative truth, they can be led into grievous error. I personally have seen this happen, both in history and in real time.

- E 1 The substance of the Divine command: Beloved,²²⁷ let us love one another,²²⁸
- E 2 The reasons for the Divine command 1 John 4:7b
 - G 1 The Divine origin of love: for love is from God;²²⁹
 - G 2 The characteristics of every person loving: and everyone who loves²³⁰
 - H 1 His Divine parentage: is born of God²³¹
 - H 2 His ongoing knowledge of God: and knows God.²³²
- D 2 The significance of failing to love 4:8
 - E 1 The loveless condition: {8} The one who does not love²³³

²²⁷ 1 John 4:7 - Beloved: Literally, “Beloved ones” These Christians are beloved by God as well as by the [Apostle](#)! *Agapêtoi* is the [Vocative](#) Masculine Plural of the adjective *agapêtós* ([27](#)). John uses this endearing title with regard to his readers in 1 John 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11.

²²⁸ 1 John 4:7 - let us love one another: Literally, “Beloved ones, let us be loving one another” where “let us be loving” is the 1 Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *agapáo* ([25](#)) which means to love in a self-sacrificial way. We call this a “[Hortatory](#) (exhortational) [Subjunctive](#),” which carries the force of an [imperative](#). The [present](#) tense indicates it is an ongoing obligation.

²²⁹ 1 John 4:7 - for love is from God: Literally, “because the love – from the God is being.” “The love” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *agápê* ([26](#)), preceded by the article. People all over the world claim to know about love, but this is the particular love that originates from the one true God. It inevitably seeks the good of the one loved regardless of the response from that person. God loved all the people of the world to such a degree that He offered up His [only-born Son](#) to die for them, that they might have eternal life, their sins forgiven (John 3:16). That great love should not be misrepresented as saying that a loving God could not possibly consign those who do not respond to His love to eternal hell. God’s great love spurned is eternal torment earned (Rev. 20:10-15).

²³⁰ 1 John 4:7 - and everyone who loves: Literally, “and every one loving,” where “loving” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *agapáo* ([25](#)). John envisions each person who maintains a life-style of seeking the best interests of others around him.

²³¹ 1 John 4:7 - is born of God: Literally, “of the God has been born,” where “has been born” is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *gennáo* ([1080](#)). The [Passive](#) voice indicates that the person in question had nothing to do with his birth. The one who (in this case, spiritually) fathered him, God, is solely responsible for his birth as one of His spiritual children. The loving did not instigate the birth. Trusting in Jesus is man’s responsibility in allowing spiritual birth. John’s point here is that the one who is constantly loving others does so because he has been fathered by God. God is the ultimate Person who loves, and anyone who loves continually does so because God is his Father; which means that he has been, at some time in the past, with results continuing to the present, born of God.

²³² 1 John 4:7 - and knows God: Literally, “and is knowing God,” where “knowing” is the 3rd Person Singular, [Present Indicative Active](#) of *ginō’skō* ([1097](#)), [Meaning #4](#). John is underscoring the importance of continually loving other Christians. The one loving has been born of God and is continually knowing God intimately.

²³³ 1 John 4:8 - The one who does not love: Literally, “The one not [continually] loving,” where “[continually] loving” translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular, [Present Active Participle](#) of *agapáo* ([25](#)), which refers to self-sacrificial loving. John is saying that the person who does not continually love others in a self-sacrificial way never knew God.

E 2 The dire corollary: does not know God,²³⁴

E 3 The explanation: for God is love.²³⁵

D 3 The manifestation of God's love 4:9

E 1 The fact of manifestation {9} By this the love of God was manifested in us,²³⁶

E 2 The "how" of manifestation: that God has sent His only begotten Son²³⁷ into the world²³⁸

²³⁴ 1 John 4:8 - does not know God: "does [not] know" represents the [NASB](#)'s translation of the 3rd Person Singular, [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of *ginō'skō* (1097), ([Meaning #3](#); [Meaning #4](#)). I believe this is a "Gnomic" (timeless) [Aorist](#). The person not loving does not now **know** God and never has. You could put a summary title over his life, "This person does not know God." [Thomas Constable](#) argues that John's statement that a person who does not love God does not know God "...does not necessarily show that he was never born of God." But I don't see how one could reach any other conclusion: If you don't know God, God doesn't know you (John 10:14-15; 25-29), and therefore you have not been born of God (1 John 4:7-8). Those who have come to know God are keeping His commandments (1 John 2:3, 4, 5), and the person not loving is not keeping God's commands. Moreover, the one not keeping God's commands is a truthless liar if he claims that he has come to know God (1 John 2:4). In short, 1 John 4:7-8 does nothing if it does not link loving one another with having been born of God and knowing God.

²³⁵ 1 John 4:8 - for God is love: Literally, "because the God is love." The presence of the article "the" before "God" (*theós*, [2316](#)) denotes God, not "love" (*agápē*, [26](#)) as the subject of the sentence, even though both nouns appear in the [Nominative](#) case. "Love" serves as a [Predicate Nominative](#). This means that, to a limited degree, love defines God. That is why those who know God replicate his love on a continual basis. This is not sinless perfection for us believers, but a general characteristic. Some people like to portray love as God's only characteristic. But that is not a true picture. John has also stated that God is spirit (John 4:24); and that God is light (1 John 1:5). This means that there is no darkness whatever in Him. That means He is perfectly holy and cannot tolerate any evil whatever. We also read, for example, that God is righteous (1 John 2:29), and that He is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). God's love coordinated with His holiness perfectly when He sent His Son to die for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16-18; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 2:1-2). God cannot overlook sin, but He Himself, through Jesus, the God-Man, paid for all sins. Of course, it is up to individuals to accept Jesus' payment, or else it does them no good whatever. And that is not God's fault.

²³⁶ 1 John 4:9 - By this the love of God was manifested in us: Literally, "In this was made known the love of the God in us," where "was made known" ([JTB](#)) translates the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *phanerōō* ([5319](#)), used 9X in 8 verses in 1 John. John used this verb 9X in 7 verses in his letter. These include 1 John 1:2 (twice); 1 John 2:19, 28; 3:2 (twice); 1 John 3:5, 8; 4:9. See the footnotes at 1 John 1:2; 3:5 for more about *phanerōō*. This is John's final use of this verb. A fitting paraphrase in this context is, "was clearly exhibited." God's love for us was "clearly exhibited" in that He "sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9).

²³⁷ 1 John 4:9 - that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world: Literally, that the Son of Him – the only born – the God has sent into the world in order that we might live through Him. "Only begotten" is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the adjective *monogenēs* ([3439](#)). This word is used 3X by Luke in reference to someone's only son (Luke 7:12; 9:38) or daughter (Luke 8:42); once by the writer of Hebrews in reference to Isaac being Abraham's uniquely begotten son [of promise] (Heb. 11:17); and 5X by the [Apostle John](#) in reference to Jesus being God the Father's only-born Son (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). In reference to Jesus, this cannot possibly mean that God biologically fathered Him. It can only refer to the unique Father / Son relationship between the two in a spiritual and essential sense by virtue of the [Holy Spirit](#)-engineered Virgin Birth of Christ. John's use of the term "only-born" (*monogenēs*, [3439](#)), comes from *mōnos* ([3441](#)), "only," and *gēnos* ([1085](#)), "descent," "birth," "race," "offspring," "descendant." I contend that being "only-born" can only be true of one who has been born. One must be "born" in order to be "only-born. This term "only-born" could only be true of God's Eternal Logos *after* He had been born.

For some time I have been wondering if the Father/Son relationship between God and Jesus has to do with the [Davidic Covenant](#). David wanted to build God a house (2 Sam. 7:1-3). God said, "No, I will build you a house" (2 Sam. 7:11). I will raise up your seed after you, and he will build Me a house (2 Sam. 7:12-13). "I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to Me" (2 Sam. 7:14). That prophesy applied directly to Solomon, David's immediate descendant. But it also applied to the Davidic kings, and especially to the Ultimate Davidic King, Jesus, Son of

E 3 The “why” of manifestation: so that we might live through Him.²³⁹

D 4 The initiative of God's love 4:10.

E 1 The statement of ultimate love: {10} In this is love,²⁴⁰

E 2 Negatively – not our love for God: not that we loved God,²⁴¹

David. There is much testimony that corroborates Jesus’ Son/Father relationship to God on the basis of His being the Anointed One, the Davidic [Messiah](#) (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34). Even the writer of Hebrews connects Jesus’ more excellent name of “Son” (Heb. 1:5) to the [Messianic](#) passages of Psalm 2:7 and 2 Sam. 7:14. Moreover, John connects Jesus’ relationship as Son to the Father with His being the [Christ](#), the Anointed One (1 John 1:1-3).

Here in 1 John 4:9, however, John’s term “only-born” refers, I believe, to the miraculous conception and delivery of Jesus by Mary, empowered by God’s [Holy Spirit](#). It is interesting to note that the [Apostle John](#), the only writer who applies the term “Only-Born Son” to Jesus, used the term “word” (*lógos*, [3056](#)) to describe Jesus’ pre-incarnate existence (John 1:1-4, 14; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). Once again, the term “only-born” is fitting only *after* Jesus’ birth.

²³⁸ 1 John 4:9 - into the world: “world” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* ([2889](#)). John, more than any other NT writer, uses the word “[world](#)” in an ethical sense, an evil, Satanically-inspired realm which is antithetical to God, to Christ, and to followers of Jesus. However, it also seems here that John was referring here to the world of people, or even the physical realm of the planet Earth, inhabited by people. In fact, I believe that both meanings are present here.

²³⁹ 1 John 4:9 - so that we might live through Him: “so that” is the Subordinating Conjunction *hína* ([2443](#)). It is employed here with the commonly used [Aorist Subjunctive](#) “to introduce a clause that shows a purpose or goal” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)).

“...we might live” translates the 1st Person Plural [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *dzáō* ([2198](#)). John’s meaning here includes physical living in a resurrected state (John 5:25; 11:25) and eternal living (John 6:53-54; 11:26).

“...through Him” indicates the means by which we who believe live – it is through, or by means of faith in God’s “only-born Son,” Jesus (John 6:57, 58; 14:19; 1 John 4:9).

John frequently used the noun/adjective phrase “life eternal” – “life” (*dzōē*, [2222](#)) “eternal” (*aiōnios*, [166](#)) (John 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2; 1 John 3:15; 5:11, 20). Once he reversed the words, “eternal life” (*aiōnios*, [166](#)) (*dzōē*, [2222](#)) (John 17:3). Twice he added qualifying articles, “the life, the eternal” (1 John 1:2; 2:25), and once he inserted a verb between the two words, “that life *you might have* – eternal” (1 John 5:13). The [Apostle John](#) is far and away the most frequent user of the concept of “eternal life” in the NT.

²⁴⁰ 1 John 4:10 - In this is love: Literally, “In this is being the love. “...this” is the [Dative Neuter](#) Singular Adjective used as a Demonstrative Pronoun, *houtos* ([3778](#)). John is about to identify the supreme expression of love this planet has ever witnessed. “...is being” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the most common verb of being, *eimí* ([1510](#)). This is a [Gnomic Present](#), that is, a timeless [Present](#) in which God’s love manifested in Jesus is a timeless truth. “...love” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the Noun *agápē* ([26](#)), prefixed by the article, “the.” *Agápē* ([26](#)) identifies love that is self-sacrificial, manifesting itself in action that is for the benefit of the person or thing loved. John here is saying, in effect, “If you want to know what the ultimate expression of love is, “the love,” here it is – .

²⁴¹ 1 John 4:10 - not that we loved God: Literally, “not that *we*, we have loved the God” “...we loved” is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáō* ([25](#)), which includes, in this context the idea of being fond of, looking out for the best interests of, and thus responding in obedience to God and Jesus (John 14:15, 21, 23, 24, 28; 21:15, 16; 1 John 4:11, 20, 21; 5:2). For emphasis, John prefixed the pronoun “we”, the 1st Person Plural [Nominative](#) of the pronoun *egō* ([1473](#)) to the Plural form of the verb *agapáō* ([25](#)). In so doing he was emphatically *denying* that *our* having loved God in the past – with the results continuing to the present time – was the supreme example of love! Far rather, as he is about to say, the supreme example of the love was *God’s* love *toward* us!

E 3 Positively – God’s love for us: but that He loved us ²⁴²G 1 The demonstration of God’s love: and sent His Son ²⁴³G 2 The purpose of God’s love: *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ²⁴⁴

²⁴² 1 John 4:10 - but that He loved us: Literally, “but that He Himself loved us ...” The word “Himself” translates the 3rd [Masculine](#) Singular, [Nominative](#) case of the pronoun *autós* (846). *Autós* is here used “... (1) as an intensive pronoun to emphasize identity, setting the individual person or thing apart from others ... (a) in the nominative case to intensify the subject ...” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). John is speaking, in this context (1 John 4:10), of the supreme love, “the love.” He is denying that the supreme love is that we *ourselves* have loved God, but is rather asserting that the supreme love is that He *Himself* loved us!

“He loved” is the 3rd Person [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25). The [Aorist](#) tense indicates it was at a point in time that God Himself loved us. The connotation of the verb in this context is that it was a self-sacrificial love with which God Himself loved us. The next clause indicates the nature and the event of “the (supreme act) of love.

²⁴³ 1 John 4:10 - and sent His Son: The coordinating conjunction “and” (*kai*, 2532) links John’s assertion of the nature of the supreme act of love – that God Himself loved us at a point in time – with what follows – the content of that love. God loved us in that, literally, “He sent the Son of Him.” The verb “He sent,” like the preceding verb “He loved,” appears as a 3rd Person [Aorist Indicative Active](#). The verb is *apostéllō* (649), meaning to “send forth” or “send out.” God sent forth His Son at a point in time. This refers to the [Incarnation](#). God loved us at a point in time, demonstrated by His sending forth His Son at a point in time. God sent forth His Son from the glories of heaven to become a humble, common human with a Divine mission. This sending forth was unique and unparalleled, however. God sent the Eternal Word of God to become also Man (John 1:1-4, 9-18). God’s supreme act of love consisted of his sending forth His Son at a point of time. The next phrase highlights God’s purpose in sending Him forth.

²⁴⁴ 1 John 4:10 - *to be* the propitiation for our sins: This is an amazing revelation. God’s greatest act of love at a point in time coincided with his specific sending forth of His Son also at a point in time – at almost the same point in time, I might add. And for what purpose did God send His Son? That He might serve as, literally, “propitiation concerning the sins of us.” Frankly, God’s love for us humans is nothing short of gargantuan. This was the only way He could remain true to His perfect standards and yet rescue us humans. Man’s defiance of God’s standards carried with it an inevitable consequence of death, which included not only [physical death](#) (separation of soul/spirit from body), but also [spiritual death](#), man separated from His Creator, God. Most humans fall far short of recognizing the utter depravity and the deadly consequence of any sin. And they fall short of recognizing the holiness and perfection of God that He cannot sacrifice to deal adequately with the raging cancer of sin. And they fall far short of recognizing God’s incredible love in sacrificing His Son to become one of us, and to die an ignominious death, dying [physically](#) and dying [spiritually](#) in order to rescue us human sinners. These are three stunning and life-changing truths. We must be incredibly significant that God sacrificed His best to overcome our worst!

The word “propitiation” *hilasmós* (2434) is used only by the [Apostle John](#) and only twice, both times in this document: 1 John 2:2 and 4:10. It means “legal satisfaction.” This was not a ransom paid to Satan. God’s own righteousness was at stake. God had to placate His own fury and sense of injustice at sin, yet provide a way for man to achieve righteous apart from the Law (Rom. 3:21-26). To do so God sent Jesus to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world to serve as a legal satisfaction for all those sins. The enormity of man’s sins is dwarfed by the enormity of God’s love in Jesus in sending Him to be the perfect and complete legal satisfaction for the sins of all mankind (1 John 2:2), and especially for the sins of us Christians (1 John 4:10). By that I mean that the only legal avenue of escape from inevitable consequence is valid only if the escape and the Provider of the escape is believed in and appropriated for oneself. Ignoring the one provision for escaping God’s fierce anger at sin and rebellion assures inevitable and eternal doom, described in the Bible as “[Second Death](#)” (Rev. 20:6, 14-15).

Let me here remark that there are only two words in the Greek NT that are translated “propitiation” in the [NASB](#). These two words are, as already indicated, *hilasmós* (2434) (1 John 2:2; 4:10), and its close relative, *hilastérios* (2435) (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:5). The latter word focuses on “the means by which sins are forgiven *having atoning power, bringing about reconciliation*; substantively ... [the] *means of forgiveness* (Rom. 3:25); by metonymy, with a focus on the place where sins are forgiven by means of the blood from an atoning sacrifice placed there *place of forgiveness, place where God forgives sins*, often translated *mercy seat* (Heb. 9:5)” ([Friberg](#)). In the [NASB](#), *hilastérios* (2435) is translated as “propitiation” in Rom. 3:25, and as “the mercy seat” in Heb. 9:5. The phrase, “to make propitiation” in Heb. 2:17 is the [NASB](#)’s translation of the verb *hiláskomai* (2433), used in the NT only in Luke 18:13 and in Heb. 2:17.

The Greek word *hilasmós* (2434) is used 7X in the [Septuagint](#), the Greek translation of the OT: Lev. 25:9; Num. 5:8; Ps. 129:4; Ezek. 44:27; Dan. 9:9 ([Theodotion Rescension](#)); Amos 8:14; 2 Maccabees 3:33.

The Greek word *hilastérios* (2435) is found more frequently in the [LXX](#), 28X in all: Exod. 25:17, 18, 19, 20,

D 5 The implication of God's love – love within the family 4:11.

E 1 The settled truth: {11} Beloved, if God so loved us, ²⁴⁵E 2 The perpetual obligation: we also ought to love one another. ²⁴⁶

D 6 The result of love within the family – a living demonstration of God 4:12.

E 1 The timeless truth of the invisible God: {12} No one has seen God at any time; ²⁴⁷

20; 25:21, 22; 31:7; 35:12; 38:5, 7, 7, 8; Lev. 16:2, 2, 13, 14, 14, 15, 15; Num. 7:89; Ezek. 43:14, 14, 14, 17, 20; Amos 9:1; 4 Macc. 17:22.

²⁴⁵ 1 John 4:11 - Beloved, if God so loved us: A more literal, but also periphrastic translation would read, “Beloved ones, if, to such a degree, the God loved us”

“Beloved” translates the [Masculine Plural Vocative](#) case of the adjective *agapêtós* (27). It means, in the plural “beloved ones,” or “those who are loved by someone.” In the [Synoptic Gospels](#), Jesus is sometimes identified as God’s “beloved” and “beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Luke 3:22; 20:13). More frequently than any other writer, Paul refers to the saints corporately and individually as people beloved by God or by himself (Rom. 1:7; 11:28; 12:19; 16:5, 8, 9, 12; 1 Cor. 4:14, 17; 10:14; 15:58; 2 Cor. 7:1; 12:19; Eph. 5:1; 6:21; Php. 2:12; 4:1, 1; Col. 1:7; 4:7, 9, 14; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Philemon 1:1, 16). John does not use the term at all in his gospel. But he uses the term multiple times in two of his letters: 1 John 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; 3 John 1:1, 2, 5, 11. In the latter letter, he seems to be referencing one person, Gaius. This adjective conveys the idea that the subject who is bestowing the love upon the objects of his love is solicitous of their well-being. The adjective, however, focuses on those who are the objects of the subject’s love and solicitousness. The adjective is passive, that is, the word does not identify the subject of the love. The context must do that. In this instance (1 John 4:11) it is clearly God who is the one loving. The Christians to whom John is writing are the recipients of God’s prodigious love.

“...if” – *ei* (1487), a subordinating conjunction, or conditional particle, usually translated, “if” or “since.” It is used, as here, “(1) with the [indicative](#) to express a condition of fact regarded as true or settled *since, because* (Rom. 2:17)” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). More periphrastically, John is stating, “Beloved ones, if God so loved us (and it is true that He did)” Or, we could accurately translate, “Beloved ones, since God so loved us”

“...loved” – the 3rd Person Singular, [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáo* (25). God loved us sacrificially at a point in time – the time when He sent His Son to become a man, coinciding, in the grand scheme of things, with the time that Son died on the cross on account of our transgressions, and was raised again on account of our justification (Romans 4:25).

²⁴⁶ 1 John 4:11 - we also ought to love one another: “...we ought” is the 1st Person Plural, [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *opheilō* (3784), which means “... owe, be indebted (to); ... (2) figuratively; (a) of a sense of indebtedness to someone for something *ought, be under obligation* (Rom. 13:8); ... (b) predominately in the NT to express obligation, necessity, duty *be obligated*; with an [infinitive](#) following [as here in 1 John 4:11] *must, ought to* (John 13:14)” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). What John is saying is that, in view of God’s extravagant love for us, we Christians are perpetually indebted to God and obligated to other Christians to be loving one another.

“... to love ...” is the [Present Active Infinitive](#) of the verb *agapáo* (25). This represents a self-sacrificial love.

“... one another” is the 1st Person [Masculine Plural Accusative](#) of the pronoun *allēlōn* (240). In this context, John is saying that Christians are perpetually indebted to God to reciprocate sacrificial love to one another.

²⁴⁷ 1 John 4:12 - No one has seen God at any time: Literally, “God – no one at any time has seen.” This agrees with John’s statements in John 1:18; 1 John 4:20 and Paul’s statement in 1 Tim. 6:16. However, one’s mind immediately runs to such passages as Exod. 33:11 and Deut. 34:10, which speak of Moses’ talking to God visibly and intimately. How does one reconcile the seeming discrepancy? I believe [Thomas Constable](#) has a good explanation: “No one has seen God in His pure essence without some kind of filter (cf. John 1:18). Instances in which the biblical writers said that people saw God were *theophanies*, manifestations of God in human or angelic form (e.g., Gen. 18:1-22; Exod. 33:18-23; et al.).” In my opinion, the appearances of God in the OT were [Christophanies](#), or manifestations of the [pre-Incarnate Christ](#).

- E 2 The condition – reciprocal love: if we love one another,²⁴⁸
- E 3 The two resultant truths
 - G 1 God is visualized within us: God abides in us,²⁴⁹
 - G 2 God's love is tangibly completed within us: and His love is perfected in us.²⁵⁰
- C 2 There is **assurance** through God's loving gift of the Spirit 4:13-16a
 - D 1 The Spirit provides assurance of union with God 4:13.
 - E 1 The statement of mutual remaining: {13} By this we know that
 - G 1 The status of believers: we abide in Him
 - G 2 The status of God: and He in us,²⁵¹
 - E 2 The cause of mutual remaining: because He has given us of His Spirit.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ 1 John 4:12 - if we love one another: "If" is *eán* (1437), a conditional subordinating conjunction, indicating, as here, with the [Subjunctive](#) Mood of the verb "love," the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of *agapáo* (25), a degree of uncertainty. John is saying, in effect, "perhaps we will continually love one another; perhaps we won't; but IF we Christians *are* continually loving one another, then two other things are sure to be true also – God is remaining within us, and His love within us exists as having been completed.

²⁴⁹ 1 John 4:11 - God abides in us: Literally, "the God in us is remaining" "...abides" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present](#) Indicative [Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), meaning, in this context, "continues," "remains," or "abides." The [Present](#) tense intensifies the meaning, as in "continually continues," or "continually remains," or "continually abides." John is saying that if we Christians are continually loving one another, God is continually inhabiting us.

²⁵⁰ 1 John 4:12 - and His love is perfected in us: More literally, but mildly periphrastic: "His love within us exists as having been completed." In other words, since God is a Spirit, He is invisible. You cannot see Him. However, if we Christians are loving one another, that is tangible evidence (1) that God resides within us and that (2) His love within us has been completed. Therefore people see God reflected in us because of our God-inherited love for one another!

²⁵¹ 1 John 4:13 - By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us. Literally, "In this we are knowing that we are remaining in Him and He in us – " Both "knowing" and "remaining" appear in the present tense; "know" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of *ginō'skō* (1097). John means here, to [know with certainty](#).

"Abide" ([NASB](#)) (perhaps better, "remaining" or "continuing") is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of *ménō* (3306).

This certainty of [Assurance of Salvation](#) comes from the [Holy Spirit](#). (See the next phrase.)

²⁵² 1 John 4:13 - because He has given us of His Spirit: Not a significant advance over 1 John 3:24. We take the presence of the [Holy Spirit](#) by faith and begin to see His fruit (Gal. 5:22-23), e.g. love! I don't think our possession of the [Spirit](#) is necessarily a *felt* experience. Rather, I think John is stating a fact – the reason we know we are remaining in God and He in us is due to the fact that we have the [Holy Spirit](#) within us, given to us by God. I think, furthermore, that someone who does not have [assurance of his salvation](#) is either poorly taught, or else he is a fleshly, or "carnal" Christian, not living in obedience to God, or else he is not truly a believer.

On a personal level, I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was four years of age. Occasionally, as a child and as a young person, I would have doubts about my salvation. When that occurred, I would go through the process of verbally trusting in Jesus once again, at least once, with Bible in hand. I can remember at least two occasions. The final occasion was when I was a freshman at Bible College. I sat in the library one Saturday morning, wondering if I had really trusted in Christ. Bible in hand, I went through the promises of Scripture and went through the process of verbally placing my trust in Christ. I have not been bothered with that doubt since. I also have spent a lot of time

D 2 The reliability of apostolic testimony about Jesus 4:14.

E 1 The first-hand observation in the past: {14} We have seen²⁵³E 2 The ongoing nature of the testimony: and testify²⁵⁴E 3 The content of the testimony: that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior²⁵⁵ of the world.²⁵⁶

D 3 Believers in Jesus assured of union with God 4:15.

E 1 The necessary confession: {15} Whoever confesses²⁵⁷ that Jesus is

studying the Scriptures, since that time, outlining every book of the Bible. I have also written articles explaining the passages, particularly in Hebrews, that might seem to indicate one can lose his salvation. These include articles on Hebrews 6:1-8 – [Can Christians lose their salvation?](#); and Hebrews 10:26-31 – [Can Christians lose their salvation?](#)

Interestingly enough, as a junior in a Christian high school, I panicked when I realized I couldn't prove the existence of God. My geometry teacher explained that we make all kinds of assumptions in geometry. We accept them as givens, even though we cannot prove them. If the logic all works out, we can demonstrate or prove things. He suggested I begin with the assumption of "The God who has revealed Himself in Scripture." That satisfied my intellectual panic. I assumed the God of the Bible, and all of life (even evil and evil people) makes sense. I have never since doubted the existence of God.

²⁵³ 1 John 4:14 - We have seen: Lit., "And we have seen", where "we have seen" is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative](#) Middle / Passive [Deponent](#) of the verb *theáomai* (2300). As used by John here this verb means "to look upon with intensity and discernment." It is used by him in John 1:14, 32, 38; 4:35; 6:5; 11:45; 1 John 1:1; 4:12, 14. The "we" refers to John and the other [Apostles](#). In the past, they had seen with acuity that the Father had sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. What they had observed intently continued to remain with them.

²⁵⁴ 1 John 4:14 - and testify: Lit., "and are testifying," the First Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *marturéō* (3140), to bear witness or testify or report or declare of facts or events based on first-hand knowledge or experience. Coupled with the phrase "and we have seen," this verb states the incontrovertibility of what John and the other [Apostles](#) were testifying. The early Christians were so bent on telling the truth concerning the risen Christ that they were willing to die rather than compromise their testimony. Thus the noun "witness" (*mártus*, 3144) became synonymous with "martyr," one executed for his unwavering belief in Christ. John used the verb *marturéō* (3140) 6X in this letter (1 John 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10).

²⁵⁵ 1 John 4:14 - that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior: "The Father" speaks, of course, of God the Father; "has sent" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *apostéllō* (649), to send on a mission.

"Savior" is the [Masculine Accusative](#) Singular of the noun *sōtēr* (4990), the agent of salvation or deliverance *savior, deliverer, rescuer* ([Friberg](#)). This salvation should not be limited merely to salvation from sins. Jesus' salvation should be looked at in the broadest possible sense. It also includes salvation of the human body, salvation of the nation of Israel, in both a spiritual and political sense, and salvation of the physical universe. The latter will take place when God creates a [New Heaven](#) and [New Earth](#), governed by the theocratic co-regency (Rev. 22:1) and the rule of the redeemed (Rev. 22:5) from [New Jerusalem](#).

²⁵⁶ 1 John 4:14 - Savior of the world: "world" is the noun *kósmos* (2889), meaning here, the world of men. [Reformed Theology](#) interprets this phrase as meaning that Jesus is the Savior of the world "of the elect." But the text does not say that. It says that Jesus is the Savior of the world. This is to be understood in the sense that Jesus' death was valuable enough to pay for the sins of the entire world. However, we understand from other passages that Jesus' death does no good at all for the one who does not place his faith in the [Messiah](#). Jesus' salvation is extended to all. It is operative only in those who believe. See also the discussion under [Limited Atonement](#).

²⁵⁷ 1 John 4:15 - Whoever confesses: Literally, "Whoever might confess," where "confess" is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *homologéō* (3670), which means "to say the same thing as." In this context, the verb amounts to a sober promise, binding the speaker to maintain his affirmation at all costs (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

the Son of God,²⁵⁸

E 2 The correlative truth of the confession

G 1 The activity of God: God abides in him,²⁵⁹

G 2 The activity of the believer: and he in God.²⁶⁰

D 4 The apostolic assurance of the reality of God's love 4:16a.

E 1 Experiential knowledge: {16} We have come to know²⁶¹

E 2 Active faith: and have believed²⁶²

E 3 The content of faith: the love which God has for us.²⁶³

C 3 There is **removal of the fear of punishment** 4:16b-18

²⁵⁸ 1 John 4:15 - that Jesus is the Son of God: Literally, “the Son of the God.” “Son” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *huiòs* (5207). See the footnote at 1 John 1:3 on Jesus Christ as “Son.” See also the article entitled, [“In What Way is Jesus the Son of God?”](#)

²⁵⁹ 1 John 4:15 - God abides in him: Literally, “God is remaining in him” where “abides” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), remain, abide, continue. God stays within the person who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. God’s remaining in him is a constant, ongoing process.

²⁶⁰ 1 John 4:15 - and he in God: No verb is present, but the reader borrows the verb from the preceding clause – “and he himself [is remaining] in God.” Once again, the person who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God is constantly remaining in God.

²⁶¹ 1 John 4:16 - We have come to know: Literally, “And we have come to know,” where “come to know” is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097), which speaks of knowledge known [intellectually](#) and with [certainty](#). This knowledge (of God’s love for us) was gained at some point in the past, and it continues to the present time. The “we” is probably speaking of the writer [John](#) and his fellow [Apostles](#). Alternatively, it could be the experience of both [John](#) and his associates *and* the community of believers to which he was writing.

It is my belief that this knowledge of God’s love is a Divine gift. Similarly, Jesus told Peter that his understanding that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God” was not due to a human revelation, but rather, due to a revelation from the Heavenly Father (Matt. 16:16-17). Jesus said, furthermore, that no one could come to Him unless the Father who sent Him would draw that person (John 6:44). In other words, no one will understand or appreciate God’s love unless God takes the initiative and does a work in his heart. The [perfect](#) tense conveys the idea that we believers came to know God’s love at some time in the past, and the knowledge remains within us.

²⁶² 1 John 4:16 - and have believed: “have believed” translates the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *pisteúō* (4100), “believe, be convinced of, accept as true.” John is saying that at some time in the past, with results continuing to the present, he and the others of whom he was speaking came to accept as true – the love God has for us.

²⁶³ 1 John 4:16 - the love which God has for us: Literally, “in us.” “The love” translates the [Accusative](#) case of the noun *agápē* (26), preceded by the article. “Love” is an attitude and posture of loyalty and commitment arrived at by deliberate choice. We as believers in Christ have come to know by experience and have come to believe the love which God possesses and exhibits within us. In the modern era we dwell, oftentimes unfortunately, on the matter of “self-esteem.” At the root of the Christian’s opinion of himself is utter amazement and appreciation of the fact that God loves me. On a human level, I received and continue to receive inner strength and confidence because I know my wife loves me and is loyal to me. How much greater is the inner strength and confidence I have because I know God loves me!

The verb “has” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *échō* (2192). God constantly exhibits His love for us within us.

D 1 Those who remain in God's love for us remain in God and He in us 4:16b.

E 1 The personification of love: God is love,²⁶⁴

E 2 Indicator: and the one who abides in love²⁶⁵

G 1 Continuing identification: abides in God,²⁶⁶

G 2 Continuing reciprocation: and God abides in him.²⁶⁷

D 2 The results of the acceptance of God's complete love in Jesus 4:17-18

E 1 Confidence in the day of judgment 4:17

G 1 Completion of love: {17} By this, love is perfected with us,²⁶⁸

G 2 Confidence in judgment: so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment;²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ 1 John 4:16 - God is love: Literally, "The God – love is being." The God, the one true God, is constantly being / exhibiting / manifesting, the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *eimi* (1510) love, the [Nominative](#) case of the noun *agápē* (26). In other words, God is the Personification of Love. He is love wrapped up in a Person. Now don't make the mistake of saying that God is only love. That is not true and that is not what John is saying here. God is a great many things. For example He is righteous, He is holy, He is true. But it is also true that He is love wrapped up in a Person. God consists of love. John's point here, which he will proclaim in a moment, is that, since God is love, the person who remains in love also remains in God, and God remains in him.

²⁶⁵ 1 John 4:16 - and the one who abides in love: Literally, "and the one remaining in the love," where "the one remaining" translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), *remain, abide, continue*, plus the article "the."

"In the love" translates the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *agápē* (26), *an attitude and posture of loyalty and commitment arrived at by deliberate choice*, preceded by the article "the" and the preposition "in." The presence of the article with "love" indicates that John is identifying "the love" in which the believer is remaining as being the same love which God personifies.

John's point is that the one remaining in the love that characterizes God also is remaining in God, and God in him.

²⁶⁶ 1 John 4:16 - abides in God: literally, "in the God is remaining," where "is remaining" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), *remain, abide, continue*. The person continually remaining in the love that characterizes God is also continually remaining in God. That is true because God is love personified.

²⁶⁷ 1 John 4:16 - and God abides in him: literally, "and the God in him is remaining," where "is remaining" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ménō* (3306), *remain, abide, continue*. The person continually remaining in the love that characterizes God is continually remaining in God and God is continually remaining in him.

²⁶⁸ 1 John 4:17 - By this, love is perfected with us: Literally, "In this the love has been completed with us," where "the love" is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *agápē* (26), *an attitude and posture of loyalty and commitment arrived at by deliberate choice*, preceded by the article "the." "The love" of which John speaks is the love of God for us which has been reproduced within us; "has been completed" is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *teleiōō* (5048), which has here the idea of having accomplished or completed a goal or objective.

²⁶⁹ 1 John 4:17 - so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment: "confidence" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *parrēsia* (3954), which speaks of "an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and a lack of fear" (Friberg). In this context, "confidence" and "boldness" (without hubris) are appropriate translations. This is the third time John used this word (1 John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14). See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:28 for more information about this word.

H 1 Perfection: because as He is, ²⁷⁰

H 2 Replication: so also are we in this world. ²⁷¹

E 2 Removal of the fear of punishment in the [Day of Judgment](#) 4:18.

G 1 Exclusion: {18} There is no fear in love; ²⁷²

G 2 Expulsion: but perfect love casts out fear, ²⁷³

“In the day of the judgment” (a literal rendering), wherein “the judgment” is the [Genitive Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *krisis* (2920), the ultimate assessment by the Ultimate Judge as to the quality and viability of a human’s life, preceded by the article; that this is a particular moment and act of the final judgment is borne out by the term, “*the day*” of “the judgment,” wherein “day” is the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *hêméra* (2250), preceded by the article. “Day” is used here figuratively, not as the time of sunlight, or as a 24-hour period, but as a general, yet specific time at which an event, here “the judgment,” takes place. We are not to presume that “the day of judgment” will last a particular length of time. That is not the point. The point is that event of accountability will inevitably take place. “The day of the judgment” has an ominous sound. Few people look forward to assessment and accountability. Yet John’s whole point here is that the Christian who loves is able, not only to stop dreading the day of the judgment, but to have boldness and confidence at that time.

The one who is remaining in the love which God has for us is a loving Christian. This results in his having confidence in the day of judgment, which is, for the believer, the [Judgment Seat of Christ](#) (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12). This is not a judgment to determine eternal destiny, whether heaven or hell, but a judgment to reveal one’s faithfulness to Christ, or his lack of faithfulness (1 Cor. 3:12-15). God places a high premium on loving. And the one in whom God’s love has been completed will do the same. See also “[Will Christians Undergo a Future Judgment?](#)”

²⁷⁰ 1 John 4:17 - because as He is: It is difficult to know exactly what John meant here. In the context, I think the author meant that God is the epitome of love (1 John 4:7, 8, 16). If His love has been completed in us, we also will be the epitome of love in the world, as the rest of this verse implies.

²⁷¹ 1 John 4:17 - so also are we in this world: God, in Jesus, was love in this world (John 3:16). If we have been completed in His love, we also will be loving in this world.

There is a caveat, however. God’s love does not exist in a vacuum. He is love, but He is also true and righteous. He cannot overlook evil, or “sweep it under the carpet,” as the saying goes. In that respect, one of the things that characterizes God is that He is untainted by the [world](#) (*kósmos*, 2889). In 1 John 2:15-17, we Christians are forbidden to love the [world](#) or the things in the [world](#). If anyone loves the [world](#), the love of the Father does not exist in him (1 John 2:15). As James says, “friendship with the [world](#) is hostility toward God.” “Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the [world](#) makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4). In the sense in which I am speaking, “the [world](#)” here refers not to the [world of men](#), whom God loves (John 3:16), but to the [Satanically-inspired realm](#) of human thought and endeavor inimical to God, Christ, Christian values, and Christians. See the author’s “[Word Study on World \(kósmos\)](#).”

²⁷² 1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love: Literally, “Fear is not existing in the love;” fear is the [Nominative](#) case of the noun *phóbos* (5401), in a negative sense as here, “fear, dread, alarm” ([Friberg](#)). John used *phóbos* but three times, all in this verse.

“Is [not] existing” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *eimi* (1510), “to be.”

“The love” is the [Dative](#) case of the noun *agápē* (26), *an attitude and posture of loyalty and commitment arrived at by deliberate choice*, preceded by the article “the.” “The love” refers to the love that John has been describing – the love that exists inherently in God, and, when completed, exists in us Christians also. What John is saying, in context, relates to the coming [day of judgment](#) (1 John 4:17). We will not fear [the day of judgment](#) if we continually act in love toward God and toward others.

By way of application in another area, if we truly love another person, we will not be afraid of him or her. If we are afraid of someone else, it indicates we do not truly love him or her, as will be made clear in subsequent statements in this verse.

²⁷³ 1 John 4:18 - but perfect love casts out fear: Literally, “but the completed love is casting out the fear.” “Perfect” (better, “completed”) is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the adjective *téleios* (5046). The chief component of this word is “totality, as opposed to partial or limited” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)).

John wrote of “the completed love,” the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *agápē* (26), *an attitude and posture of loyalty and commitment arrived at by deliberate choice*. Love that is complete expels fear.

“Casts out” translates two words in Greek: the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *bállō*

G 3 Explanation: because fear involves punishment,²⁷⁴

G 4 Condition: and the one who fears is not perfected in love.²⁷⁵

C 4 There is a **rationale for loving** 4:19-21

D 1 A response to God's love 4:19.

E 1 The fact of our love: {19} We love,²⁷⁶

(906), to propel with the arm by casting, throwing, or hurling, and the adverb *éxō* (1854), “outside, without, out of doors (Mark 11:4),” excerpted from Friberg. John is saying that completed love for others keeps displacing fear.

“The fear” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the articulated noun *phóbos* (5401), used here in a negative sense, “fear, dread, alarm,” excerpted from Friberg. “The fear” is the particular fear which began (in Greek) this sentence, the fear of the coming [day of judgment](#) (1 John 4:17).

In context John is stating that (*agápē*) love that has been completed within us continually is casting out the dread in connection with the day of judgment (to which John referred in 1 John 4:17).

By way of application, this would also hold true, for example in

- 1) Guy / girl relationships or husband / wife relationships
- 2) A situation in which one Christian feels ill-at-ease with another
- 3) Mental/emotional fear
- 4) Of course, one's relationship to God and Christ!

Completed love casts out dread and anxiety in all these relationships.

²⁷⁴ 1 John 4:18 - because fear involves punishment: Literally, “because the fear (constantly) has punishment.” “Punishment” is the [Accusative](#) case of the noun *kólasis* (2851), *retribution, punishment* (Friberg). As [Zane Hodges \(TBKC\)](#) put it,

Fear carries with it a kind of torment that is its own punishment. Ironically, an unloving believer experiences punishment precisely because he feels guilty and is afraid to meet his Judge.

²⁷⁵ 1 John 4:18 - and the one who fears is not perfected in love: Literally, “moreover, the one being made to fear has not been made complete in the love.”

“The one being made to fear” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Passive Participle](#) of the verb *phobéō* (5399), meaning be alarmed, frightened, fearful (adapted from Friberg). This verb appears only in the [passive](#) in the NT.

“Has not been made complete” is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Passive](#) of the verb *teleiōō* (5048). This verb appears 4X in this letter, in 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18. It has here the idea of the person in question not having accomplished or completed or fulfilled the desired goal or objective in the area of love (adapted from Friberg).

“The love” is the [Dative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *agápē* (26), preceded by the article. The one constantly being caused to dread the coming [judgment](#) has not yet been completed, with continuing results, in the area of assurance of God's great love for us.

The point being made here is that if we are afraid of the coming [day of judgment](#), we have not yet reached a stage of completion in our love, either for God, or for others. Jesus, for example, although He knew the cross was coming, did not routinely fear what was coming. (In fairness, He understandably did experience profound anxiety in the Garden of Gethsemane – Matt. 26:36-39; Mark 14:32-36; Luke 22:41-44.) He loved God completely, and He loved us humans completely. Realistically, it is extremely difficult for us mere mortals to love the way Jesus did. The reason is, of course, that love has not been fully completed in us. Completed love should be the goal of each of us. If we fear the [day of coming judgment](#), it is because we don't comprehend the greatness of His love toward us. If we bask in His love, His love drives away any fear of Him we might have.

The question might be raised – How, then, does the “fear of the Lord” (e.g., Prov. 1:7; Acts 9:31) relate to this discussion? The best answer I can give is that the noun *phobos* (fear) has different flavors, or nuances. The fear of which John speaks here in 1 John 4:18 is an unhealthy fear of judgment. There is a healthy fear – fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31), and a wife is to fear (*phobéō*) her husband (Eph. 5:33). I take it that in both these cases the believer fears to disobey or disrespect the Lord, and a wife fears to disobey or disrespect her husband.

²⁷⁶ 1 John 4:19 - We love: Literally, “We are loving,” the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25). John speaks of loving with an ongoing, self-sacrificial, committed type of love that seeks the good of the person being loved. The [Present](#) tense indicates this is an ongoing process.

- E 2 The reason for our love: because He first loved us.²⁷⁷
- D 2 Claims to love an invisible God must be matched by love for a visible Christian brother 4:20.
- E 1 The hypothetical assertion of love for God: {20} If someone says,²⁷⁸ “I love God,”²⁷⁹
- E 2 The concomitant hatred of his Christian brother: and hates his brother,²⁸⁰
- E 3 The inevitable conclusion: he is a liar;²⁸¹
- E 4 The preposterous oxymoron
- G 1 Failing to love a visible brother in Christ: for the one who does

²⁷⁷ 1 John 4:19 - because He first loved us: Literally, “because He Himself first loved us.” “because” accurately translates the Subordinating Conjunction *hōti* (3754), which gives the reason why we are loving. We are loving because (God) Himself first loved us.

We know that “God” is the unstated antecedent of the Pronoun *autós* (846), appearing here in the [Nominative](#) case, because God is in the immediate context and is the nearest antecedent (1 John 4:16, 20, 21).

“Loved” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25), here indicating God’s selfless, sacrificial act of loving us at a point in time by sending the eternal Word of God to become man and to die and rise again on behalf of the eternal redemption of all who place their trust in Jesus. Of course, from God’s standpoint, He eternally predestined Jesus’ propitiatory execution on our behalf (Acts 4:27-28).

²⁷⁸ 1 John 4:20 - If someone says: “If someone says” is a [Subjunctive](#) construction in a 3rd class condition, which conveys, in effect, a hypothetical situation. Perhaps someone will say this, perhaps he won’t. The verb translated “says” is the 3rd Person Singular 2nd [Aorist Subjunctive Active](#) of *légō* (3004), a very common verb meaning simply, to “speak” or “say.” The 2nd [Aorist](#) form of *légō*, *eípon*, followed as it is here by the conjunction *hōti* (3754), indicates indirect discourse ([Friberg](#)). The [Aorist](#) here probably has a Gnomic or timeless aspect.

²⁷⁹ 1 John 4:20 - “I love God”: “I love” is the 1st Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of *agapáō* (25), the sacrificial, committed kind of love. John contemplates the hypothetical condition of someone maintaining verbally that he continually is loving God, but at the same time he is actively engaging in hating his brother. If that case exists, John will conclude something terribly wrong about that person’s character.

²⁸⁰ 1 John 4:20 - and hates his brother: literally, “and the brother of him he is hating”; where “brother” is the [Accusative](#) case of *adelphós* (80), here not referring necessarily to a physical, blood brother, but to a Christian brother, a fellow believer. In the Greek text, the word “brother” appears in the emphatic position, so John is emphasizing the contradiction that someone claiming to love God – but the *Christian brother* of his he is hating! That, for John, is unthinkable, preposterous.

The word “he is hating” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *miséō* (3404), to hate, detest, despise, or hold hostility toward another. John is still writing in the [Subjunctive](#) mode, contemplating a hypothetical situation in which someone claims to be loving God, but at the same time he is actively despising his Christian brother. He is about to conclude something terrible about this hypothetical person.

²⁸¹ 1 John 4:20 - he is a liar: literally, “liar he is.” “Liar” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *pseûtes* (5583) “liar, one who speaks what is not true” (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). John is saying, in black-and-white terms, that if someone claims he is loving God and at the same time he is hating or detesting his Christian brother, he is a liar. Jesus called the devil a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). Paul placed liars in the company of immoral men, homosexuals, and perjurers (1 Tim. 1:10). A prophet of the Cretans placed Cretans in the company of liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons (Tit. 1:12). Elsewhere in this letter John said that if we say that we have not sinned, we make God out to be a liar (1 John 1:10). He also said that if someone says he has come to know Jesus, but does not keep His commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4). Moreover, John identified as “the liar” and “the antichrist” the one denying that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 2:22). Finally, John stated that the one who does not believe God in the testimony He has made concerning His Son has made Him a liar (1 John 5:10).

not love his brother whom he has seen,²⁸²

G 2 Nullifies the assertion of love for an invisible God: cannot love God whom he has not seen.²⁸³

D 3 An obedient response to the command to love 4:21.

E 1 The existence of the command from Jesus: {21} And this commandment²⁸⁴ we have from Him,²⁸⁵

E 2 The object of the command: that the one who loves God²⁸⁶

E 3 The obligation of the command: should love his brother also.²⁸⁷

B 2 In Regard to Faith 5:1-20

C 1 There is birth from God 5:1-5

D 1 Assuring love from God's other children 5:1-3

²⁸² 1 John 4:20 - for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen: Literally, “for the one not loving the brother of him whom he has seen ...” “Not loving” is the [Nominative Masculine Singular Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *agapāō* (25), preceded by the negating particle *mē* (3361), “not.”

“The brother of him” – “brother” is the [Accusative Masculine Singular](#) of the noun *adelphós* (80), here referring to the subject’s brother (or sister) in Christ.

“He has seen” is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *horáō* (3708), here meaning to see with one’s eyes.

²⁸³ 1 John 4:20 - cannot love God whom he has not seen: Literally, “the God whom he has not seen it is not possible to be loving.”

“Has not seen,” where “has seen” is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *horáō* (3708), here meaning, again, to see with one’s eyes.

“It is not possible,” where “possible” is the 3rd Person Singular Present Indicative Middle/Passive Deponent of the verb *dúnamai* (1410), speaking of “capacity or ability *be able, be capable of, can, have power to*; with an infinitive supplied or implied of what one is able to do (Matt. 3:9; 16:3)” (adapted from Friberg).

“To be loving” is the [Present Active Infinitive](#) of the verb *agapāō* (25), speaking here of [acting sacrificially in the best interests of God](#).

With impeccable logic, John argues that the person who does not keep loving the visible Christian brother whom he has seen cannot possibly be loving the invisible God whom he has not seen. All three occurrences of the Greek verb “love” (*agapāō*, 25) in 1 John 4:20 appear in the [Present](#) tense.

²⁸⁴ 1 John 4:21 - commandment: the [Accusative Feminine Singular](#) of the noun *entolē* (1785), *commandment, precept, ordinance, decree* (adapted from Friberg).

²⁸⁵ 1 John 4:21 - from Him: Possibly a reference to Jesus Christ, since Jesus clearly issued the command to love one another (John 13:34). It is equally plausible, however, that John was here referring to God since “God” appears repeatedly in the immediate context (1 John 4:15, 16, 20, 21). Moreover, God certainly issued the command to love in the OT (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5).

²⁸⁶ 1 John 4:21 - that the one who loves God: literally, “that the one loving the God,” where “loving” is the [Nominative Masculine Singular Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *agapāō* (25), “love,” which, in this context, incorporates the ideas of sacrifice (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10, 11), commitment (John 3:35), obedience (John 14:15, 23, 31; 1 John 5:2), and perpetual loyalty (John 17:24).

²⁸⁷ 1 John 4:21 - should love his brother also: “should love” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *agapāō* (25), “love.” The [Subjunctive](#) is used here in a Purpose / Result clause and indicates definite outcome. See the preceding footnote for the definition of “love” in this context. The love envisioned is ongoing. “Brother,” here the [Accusative](#) case of the noun *adelphós* (80), indicates a Christian brother, a fellow-believer.

E 1 Present, ongoing faith in Jesus as the Christ indicates a prior birth from God 5:1a

G 1 Condition: {1} Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ ²⁸⁸

G 2 Inference: is born of God, ²⁸⁹

E 2 Those who love God also love His children 5:1b-3

G 1 Condition: and whoever loves the Father ²⁹⁰

G 2 Corollary: loves the *child* born of Him. ²⁹¹

H 1 By loving God 5:2a

J 1 Recognition of love: {2} By this we know that we love the children of God, ²⁹²

²⁸⁸ 1 John 5:1 - Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ: Literally, “Every one believing that Jesus is the Anointed One”, where “believing” is the [Nominative Masculine Singular Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *pisteúō* (4100), used here as an intellectual act of giving credence to, believing, being convinced of a fact. Here John speaks of any person who continually is believing or giving credence to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is God’s Anointed [Messiah](#).

²⁸⁹ 1 John 5:1 - is born of God: Literally, “of the God has been born”, where “has been born” is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *gennáō* (1080). See a detailed discussion of this verb in the [Passive](#) tense at the appropriate footnote in 1 John 3:9, “No one who is born of God practices sin.” John speaks here of he [New Birth](#), or [Regeneration](#), of which he also speaks in John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5, 8. Every person believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God at some time in the past with results continuing up to the present time. He is thus a part of God’s family.

²⁹⁰ 1 John 5:1 - and whoever loves the Father: Literally, “and every one loving the One having begotten”, where “the one loving” is the [Nominative Masculine Singular Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25). In this case, loving is an ongoing commitment to act in God’s best interests with one’s whole being. This necessitates continual obedience (see 1 John 5:2, 3). See the author’s [Word Study on agapáō, Meaning D](#).

The One “having begotten” is the [Accusative Masculine Singular Aorist Active Participle](#) of the verb *gennáō* (1080). The verb here is used figuratively of God’s having given [spiritual birth](#) to those who had been dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), but who had received the true Light, the Word of God, continually believing in His name (John 1:12-13). These are later described as those having been [born again](#) / from above (John 3:3), and as having been born of water and Spirit (John 3:5).

²⁹¹ 1 John 5:1 - loves the *child* born of Him: literally, “is loving the one having been born of Him.” “Is loving” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25). This love means continually acting in the best interests of the person having been fathered by God.

“Having been born” is the [Accusative Masculine Singular Perfect Passive Participle](#) of the verb *gennáō* (1080). This refers to those who have experienced the [new birth](#) by virtue of their faith in Christ (John 1:12-13; John 3:3, 5).

It makes perfect sense, of course, that the person who is continually loving God is necessarily also a person who is continually loving one of God’s offspring. God will continually defend His own children whether we happen to like them or not. If we claim to value God, we had better be valuing His offspring. If we don’t, we don’t really value God.

²⁹² 1 John 5:2 - By this we know that we love the children of God: Literally, “In this we are knowing that we are loving the children of the God”, where “we are knowing” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097). The knowing here is [knowing with certainty](#).

“We are loving” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *agapáō* (25), indicating an ongoing sacrificial posture on behalf of God’s children, whom He has fathered.

“Children” is the [Accusative Neuter Plural](#) of the noun *téknon* (5043), speaking here of those who have been [born again](#) / from above spiritually, by virtue of their faith in and reception of Jesus, God’s only-born Son (John 3:16), cf. John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5).

J 2 Practice of love: when we love God ²⁹³

H 2 And obeying His commands: and observe His commandments. ²⁹⁴ (5:2b) 5:2b-3

J 1 Definition of love: {3} For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; ²⁹⁵ 5:3

J 2 Commentary on obedience: and His commandments are not burdensome. ²⁹⁶

D 2 Assuring the conquering of the world 5:4-5

E 1 Every entity born of God conquers the world: {4} For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; ²⁹⁷ 5:4a

John has just stated in 1 John 5:1 that whoever loves the Father loves the one who has been [spiritually born](#) of Him. Now his point in 1 John 5:2 is that we are knowing we are loving God's children when we are loving God and obeying His commandments.

²⁹³ 1 John 5:2 - when we love God: literally, "whenever we are loving the God," where "we are loving" translates the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *agapáo* (25), [putting God's interests first](#).

²⁹⁴ 1 John 5:2 - and observe His commandments: Literally, "and the commandments of Him we are performing." "Commandments" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Plural of the noun *entolê* (1785), referring here to the directives, injunctions, commands, instructions, imperatives of God. In the OT God's commands were embodied specifically in the [Law of Moses](#), but elsewhere in the exhortations of the prophets. In the New Testament, God's commands are embodied in the teachings of Jesus and the instructions of the [Apostles](#) and their associates in the letters of the NT. For more information on this word, see the footnote on "commandments" at 1 John 2:3.

"We are performing" translates the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *poiéo* (4160), an exceedingly common verb that appears 568X in the NT. Its basic meaning is to "do" or "make" with the meaning adapted to the context. John's thought here is that continually loving God entails continually observing / keeping His commandments.

²⁹⁵ 1 John 5:3 - For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: Literally, "For this is the love of the God – that the commandments of Him we are observing."

"Love" here is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *agápê* (26), here referring to actions taken by humans [in the best interests of God](#).

"Commandments" here is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Plural of the noun *entolê* (1785), referring here to the directives, injunctions, commands, instructions, imperatives of God. (For more information on this word see the previous footnote and also the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:3.)

"We are observing" is the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *têrêō* (5083), used here figuratively in the sense of continually observing and obeying God's commands.

Two observations are in order stemming from 1 John 5:2, 3:

1) The easiest way to love God's children is to love and obey Him.

2) We will find motivation to love God's children when we first commit ourselves to loving and obeying God.

²⁹⁶ 1 John 5:3 - and His commandments are not burdensome: Literally, "and the commandments of Him – heavy are not!" "Burdensome" ([NASB](#)) translates the [Nominative](#) case of the adjective *barús* (926), literally, "heavy," typically used "figuratively in the NT; (1) of rules and regulations *difficult to obey, burdensome, oppressive ...*" (excerpted from [Friberg](#)). That seems to be the sense used here. God's commands are not difficult to obey because each person having been born of God continually is conquering the world by means of the conquest of the faith (1 John 5:4).

²⁹⁷ 1 John 5:4 - For whatever is born of God overcomes the world: Literally, "Because each entity having been born of God continually is conquering the world."

"whatever" is the correct translation of *pás* (3956), which appears here in the Singular number, [Nominative](#) case, [Neuter](#) gender. (Had it appeared in the [Masculine](#) gender, we would have translated it "whoever.") It means here, "every item in the class of things having been born of God."

E 2 The conquest of the world is achieved through the faith 5:4b

G 1 The conquest: and this is the victory that has overcome the world—²⁹⁸G 2 The body of truth in which we believe: our faith.²⁹⁹

E 3 Those who conquer the world are they who believe Jesus is God's Son 5:5

G 1 The identification of the conqueror: {5} Who is the one who overcomes the world,³⁰⁰G 2 The faith of the conqueror: but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?³⁰¹

“having been born” translates the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular [Perfect Passive Participle](#) of the verb *gennáō* (1080). This refers to the [New Birth](#) or [Regeneration](#) of those who receive Christ (John 1:12-13). Another term for the same event is being “born of the Spirit” (John 3:3, 5, 6). This is what happens to those believing in Jesus (John 3:16).

“continually is conquering” translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *nikáō* (3528), *overcome, defeat, conquer* ([Friberg](#)).

“world” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889), which refers here to an evil, Satanic-inspired, negative influence and system of thought prevalent upon the earth beginning in Genesis 3 and continuing to this present day. See the author’s Word Study on “[World](#)” ([kosmos](#)).

The connection between conquering the world and God’s commandments not being burdensome or difficult is obvious. God’s commandments are not impossible to keep because everyone who has been born of God is conquering the world! Young men of the faith have conquered the evil one as well (1 John 2:13, 14)!

²⁹⁸ 1 John 5:4 - and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith: Lit., “And this is the conquest, the one having conquered the world – the faith of us.” My translation retains the assonance of the Greek text.

“Conquest” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *nikē* (3529), meaning *victory, success* ([Friberg](#)), and occurring only here in the NT.

“having conquered” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular [Aorist Active Participle](#) of the verb *nikáō* (3528), *overcome, defeat, conquer* ([Friberg](#)).

“world” is again here the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889), which refers here again to the corrupt system on earth run by Satan and evil (though often educated) men who are against God, against Christ, and against Christians, against Christianity, and against Truth.

²⁹⁹ 1 John 5:4 - our faith: literally, “the faith of us.” “the faith” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *pístis* (4102), preceded by the article. What is “the faith” that has conquered the world? I believe “the faith” incorporates the entire content of the [Apostolic](#) faith – “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 1:3), i.e., the New Testament. However, that “faith content” incorporates a very specific faith in a specific person, as 1 John 5:5 states. Our faith in the revealed Word of God is what conquers the sinister world run by Satan and his minions. That is why we Christians must resist every attempt to minimize, manipulate, misinterpret, distort, discard, or ignore the Word of God among fellow Christians. Many who call themselves Christians have watered down the Word of God, leaving themselves and their audiences increasingly defenseless.

³⁰⁰ 1 John 5:5 - Who is the one who overcomes the world: The essential component of the faith that conquers the world – it is faith in Jesus as the Son of God. As John states it, literally, “Who is the one continually conquering the world except the one continually believing that Jesus is the Son of the God?”

“the one continually conquering” translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *nikáō* (3528) *overcome, defeat, conquer* ([Friberg](#)), preceded by the article.

“world” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *kósmos* (2889), which refers here again to the corrupt system on earth run by Satan and evil men.

³⁰¹ 1 John 5:5 - but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God: literally, “except the one continually believing that Jesus is the Son of the God.” “the one continually believing” translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *pisteúō* (4100), preceded by the article. “Believing” here means to give mental assent to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God; continually believing” recognizes the [Present](#) tense. This is a tenacious

C 2 There is eternal life through believing God's testimony 5:6-12

D 1 The object of the testimony – Jesus Christ 5:6a

- E 1 The nature of the arrival of the Messiah^{6} This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ;³⁰²
- E 2 Not only at His [immersion](#): not with³⁰³ the water only,³⁰⁴
- E 3 But at both His [immersion](#) and His propitiatory sacrifice: but with³⁰⁵ the water and with the blood.³⁰⁶

D 2 The three-fold nature of the testimony 5:6b-8

E 1 The participation of the Spirit in the witness 5:6b

belief.

The two Greek words I have translated “except” limits the preceding clause. The only ones continually conquering the world are those continually believing that Jesus is the Son of God.

“believing that Jesus is the Son of God” means, in my estimation, believing that Mary, through the power of the [Holy Spirit](#), gave birth to a baby, Jesus, who partakes of the same essence as His Heavenly Father – i.e. that Jesus is truly both human but also Divine. He is just as much God as God the Father is. They share the same essence.

³⁰² 1 John 5:6 - This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: Literally, “This is the One having come through water and blood, Jesus Christ”, where “the One having come” translates the [Nominative Masculine Singular Aorist Active Participle](#) of the very common verb *érchomai* (2064) to come or go, appearing 632X in the NT. The [Aorist](#) tense looks at a point in time at which Jesus, the [Messiah](#), came by water and blood.

Likely, the reference to Jesus the Christ having come by water refers to His baptism, at which point God the Father anointed Him to be the [Messiah](#) – the ultimate [Prophet](#), [Priest](#), and [King](#).

Having come by blood, refers, of course, to the [Messiah's](#) having given His life's blood to secure the payment for the sins of all mankind.

Evidently John was refuting the view of a man named Cerinthus. “Cerinthus taught that the divine Christ descended on the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion. Thus he denied that one Person, Jesus Christ, came by both water and blood. Cerinthus was doubtless not alone in such views, which John regarded as utterly false and contrary to the true testimony of the [Holy Spirit](#).” ([Zane Hodges](#), [TBKC](#))

³⁰³ 1 John 5:6 - with: [NASB](#) footnote – “Lit in”

³⁰⁴ 1 John 5:6 - not with the water only: Literally, “not in the water only,” where “the water,” the [Dative Neuter Singular](#) of the noun *húdōr* (5204), preceded by the article. I believe John is referring to Jesus' immersion by John the Immerser, immediately after which God the Father anointed with the [Holy Spirit](#), empowering Him for ministry and anointing Him to be the greatest [Prophet](#), [Priest](#), and [King](#). At that point God the Father spoke from heaven, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Matt. 3:17). See also the following articles: [Jesus Christ as Prophet](#); [Jesus Christ as Priest](#); [Jesus Christ as King](#).

³⁰⁵ 1 John 5:6 - with: [NASB](#) footnote – “Lit in”

³⁰⁶ 1 John 5:6 - but with the water and with the blood: Literally, “but in the water and in the blood.” We have already identified “the water” as being the water of Jesus' [Immersion](#) by [John the Immerser](#) and the Father's anointing Jesus with the Spirit as His [Messiah](#) (Matt. 3:13-17); “and in the blood” refers to Jesus' having died on the Cross to atone for the sins of all the people of the world, and effectively, of those who believe in Him (1 John 2:1-2; 4:14). “The blood” is the [Dative Neuter Singular](#) of the noun *haîma* (129). The Eternal Word (Lógos, 3056, John 1:1-3) of God came to this earth not only to serve as God's Anointed [Prophet](#), [Priest](#), and [King](#), referring to His having come in water at His Baptism, but He came also to pay the all-sufficient sacrifice for man to be redeemed, referring to His having come in blood. The sons of Israel as a whole did not understand that the [Messiah](#) had to be sacrificed – put to death – in order to fulfill all God had decreed through Him. He could not be the Ultimate [Priest](#) if He did not offer up Himself as the Ultimate Sacrifice. John's whole point here is that it was necessary for the [Messiah](#) to have been sacrificed.

G 1 The testimony of the Spirit: It is the Spirit who testifies,³⁰⁷

G 2 The impeccability of the Spirit's testimony: because the Spirit is the truth.³⁰⁸

E 2 The triune nature of the witness 5:7-8

G 1 The identity of the three: {7} For there are three that testify³⁰⁹ (5:7) 5:7-8

H 1 {8} the Spirit³¹⁰ 5:8a

³⁰⁷ 1 John 5:6 - It is the Spirit who testifies: Literally, "And the Spirit is the one bearing witness." "the Spirit" is the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *pneûma* ([4151](#)), preceded by the article, and refers, of course, to the [Holy Spirit](#).

The Spirit's witness may be thought of as coming through the prophets (including John the Baptist). The Spirit's witness, then, was augmented by the historical realities involved in "the water" and "the blood." ([Zane Hodges, TBKC](#))

This clause may also mean that the [Holy Spirit](#) continually testified of His having Anointed Jesus, making Him the Anointed One (the [Messiah](#)) by virtue of the miracles Jesus performed in the power of the Spirit ([John Gill](#)).

"the one bearing witness" translates the [Nominative Neuter Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *marturéō* ([3140](#)). The fact that the [Holy Spirit](#) is *continually* bearing testimony means that, throughout the present era, at least, He is continually testifying silently but perceptibly to the hearts of those who will or who have responded to God's drawing them to Christ (John 6:44). The [Holy Spirit](#) gives assurance of the [Deity](#) of Christ and He also gives [assurance of salvation](#). (See this excellent off-site discussion of the [Assurance of Salvation](#).) John used the verb *marturéō* ([3140](#)) 6X in this letter (1 John 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10). It is obviously an important concept here in the 5th chapter of 1 John.

³⁰⁸ 1 John 5:6 - because the Spirit is the truth: The ongoing testimony of the [Holy Spirit](#) is valid and must be accepted because the [Spirit](#) (the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *pneûma*, [4151](#)) is the truth (the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *alêtheia*, [225](#)). Truth is an essential characteristic of each of the members of the Godhead. Jesus claimed He was the truth personified (John 14:6). He promised He would send His disciples the Spirit of truth from the Father (John 15:26). Paul wrote to Titus that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

³⁰⁹ 1 John 5:7 - For there are three that testify: The rest of 1 John 5:7 and the beginning portion of 1 John 5:8 is apparently a [gloss](#), a copyist's addition to the original text. No Greek Mss until the 15th Century has it. It appears in an obscure 4th Century Latin Mss. The [gloss](#) is represented here in italics as comprising a portion of 1 John 5:7-8: v. 7 For there are three that testify *in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that testify on earth: v. 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.* Apparently, some copyist of a Latin translation originated the [gloss](#) to smooth out or otherwise enhance the text he saw before him. This Latin [gloss](#) later appeared in Greek translations. For a good explanation of the textual issue read Daniel B. Wallace's "[The Textual Problem in 1 John 5:7-8](#)."

A literal rendering of this clause is as follows: "for there are three – the ones bearing witness" (the [Nominative Masculine](#) Plural [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *marturéō*, [3140](#)). This means here a continual bearing witness or testifying or reporting or declaring of facts or events based on first-hand knowledge. John used the verb *marturéō* ([3140](#)) 6X in this letter (1 John 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10).

³¹⁰ 1 John 5:8 - the Spirit and the water and the blood: John identifies the three that are continually, from the time of Christ onward, bearing witness, in the manner stated above. These three are "the [Spirit](#)" (the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *pneûma*, [4151](#)), "the water" (the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *húdōr*, [5204](#)), and "the blood" (the [Nominative Neuter](#) Singular of the noun *haima*, [129](#)).

These three continually testify that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:5). The [Holy Spirit](#) does so by means of the [prophets](#) (including the OT prophets, [John the Baptist](#), and the NT prophets), whose testimony is preserved infallibly in the Scriptures. The [Holy Spirit](#) also continually testifies in the hearts of the [elect](#).

The water continually testifies in that we have the record of Jesus' baptism, immediately after which God anointed Him with the [Holy Spirit](#), making Him the [Messiah](#), God's anointed [Prophet](#), [Priest](#), and [King](#). God audibly testified that Jesus was His beloved Son (Matt. 3:17).

The blood continually testifies in that this stupendous event, Jesus' shedding of His [propitiatory](#) blood in His crucifixion, paid for the sins of all people in the world, past, present, and future. Only the blood of the Son of God would be sinless and would have sufficient value to pay for all the sins of all of mankind. And of course we acknowledge that only faith secures this limitless payment for the individual. This is true not only in the NT (John

H 2 and the water

H 3 and the blood;

G 2 The unity of the three: and the three are in agreement. ³¹¹ 5:8b

D 3 The superiority of the testimony 5:9

E 1 The reliability of human witness: {9} If we receive the testimony of men, ³¹²

E 2 The superiority of Divine witness! the testimony of God is greater; ³¹³

G 1 The identification of the testifier: for the testimony of God is this, ³¹⁴

G 2 The object of His testimony: that He has testified concerning

3:16; 1 John 2:1-2), but also in the OT (Gen. 15:5-6).

³¹¹ 1 John 5:8 - and the three are in agreement: Literally, “and the three in the one are being,” where “are being” translates the 3rd Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *eimi* ([1510](#)).

Deuteronomy 19:15 states, “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.” In John 8:17-18, Jesus claimed two witnesses, He Himself and His Father: “Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.” Mark records, in Mark 14:56, 59, that the witnesses at Jesus' trial could not agree in their testimony: ⁵⁶ “For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent....” ⁵⁹ Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.”

To recapitulate, these three witnesses are testifying as follows: the Spirit = the [Holy Spirit](#), with whom Jesus was anointed immediately after His baptism, and who enlightens our spiritual eyes through His anointing (cf. 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:1-6); the water = Jesus' baptism, specifically, the Father's testimony that Jesus was His beloved Son, in whom He was well-pleased (Matt. 3:17); the blood = Jesus' death. “John is correcting the false teacher Cerinthus, who claimed that the Spirit came on Jesus at His baptism but left Him before His death (see 4:2, 3)” (*The Nelson Study Bible*, quoted by [Thomas Constable](#)).

³¹² 1 John 5:9 - If we receive the testimony of men: Literally, “If (and it's true) the witness of men we are receiving” John is conceding that we humans customarily accept the testimony of mere men.

The word testimony, or witness (here the [Feminine](#) Singular [Accusative](#) of the noun *marturia*, [3141](#)), refers to “concrete and objective information given in proof of something *testimony*,” ([Friberg](#)) and specifically here, probably to testimony of men given in a court of law or even in a non-legal setting. For a complete rendering of [Friberg's](#) definitions of this word, see the appropriate footnote at 1 John 5:11. The noun *marturia* ([3141](#)) is important in this section. John used it 6X – 3X in 1 John 5:9; 2X in 1 John 5:10, and once in 1 John 5:11.

³¹³ 1 John 5:9 - the testimony of God is greater: We receive human testimony from two or three witnesses (Matt. 18:16). Surely we will receive the testimony of God – His testimony is greater than man's! God's testimony is greater precisely because (1) God is greater than man. (2) God here testifies concerning His Son, not mere man (see 1 John 5:11). (3) God testified in history and through His Spirit. The word “testimony” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *marturia* ([3141](#)). For a definition, see the preceding footnote.

³¹⁴ 1 John 5:9 - for the testimony of God is this: John does not actually give God's testimony until 1 John 5:11, but what is so significant about this testimony of God is that He has testified it concerning His Son!!! The word “testimony” here is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *marturia* ([3141](#)). For a definition, see the first footnote in 1 John 5:9. This is the third time John has used the noun *marturia* in this verse!

His Son.³¹⁵

D 4 The reactions toward the testimony 5:10

E 1 The one who believes: {10} The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself;³¹⁶

E 2 The one who does not believe: the one who does not believe God³¹⁷

G 1 The unthinkable conclusion: has made Him a liar,³¹⁸

G 2 The awfulness of the crime: because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.³¹⁹

³¹⁵ 1 John 5:9 - that He has testified concerning His Son: What makes this testimony of God so significant is that He has testified this testimony concerning His Son! The word “testified” is the 3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *marturéō*, [3140](#)).

“Son” is the [Genitive Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *huiós* ([5207](#)). In my study, Jesus’ being God’s Son has to do with His humanity as the [Messiah](#). Though the Second Person of the Godhead has always, as the term implies, been God, but in a unique way He became the Son of God at His birth as a human, and especially, as the [Messiah](#) immediately following His [immersion](#) by John. It was upon the occasion of God’s anointing Jesus with the Holy Spirit (that’s when He became the [Messiah](#)) that the voice from heaven declared, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased!” (Matt. 3:16, 17). For more information on this topic, see the author’s article, “[In What Way is Jesus the Son of God?](#)” See also the author’s article, “[When Did the Man Jesus Become ‘The Christ’?](#)”

³¹⁶ 1 John 5:10 - The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself: The initial clause in this verse is, literally, “The one believing into the Son of the God is possessing the witness in himself.” “The one believing” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *pisteuō* ([4100](#)). It is worth noting that the person John is describing does not merely believe in a set of facts about the Son of God, though he also does that (cf. 1 John 5:1; John 3:15; 20:30-31). He literally is believing “into” *eis* ([1519](#)) the Son of God. This implies motion into the sphere of the Son of God. This is predominately a characteristic way of speaking of the Apostle John. In each of the following references the Greek text uses the preposition *eis*, though the [NASB](#) editors always translate it as “in” – John 1:12; 2:11; 2:23; 3:16; 3:18; 3:18; 3:36; 4:39; 6:29; 6:35; 6:40; 7:5; 7:31; 7:38; 7:39; 7:48; 8:30; 9:35; 9:36; 10:42; 11:25; 11:26; 11:45; 11:48; 12:11; 12:36; 12:37; 12:42; 12:44; 12:44; 12:46; 14:1; 14:12; 16:9; 1John 5:10; 5:10; 5:13.

Insofar as John is concerned, the all-important thing is that we constantly be “believing into the Son of the God.” This is critical to John, and to God, and it is critical to every person on this planet. If you are believing into the Son of God, you have eternal life (1 John 5:11); and if you are not believing God, you have made Him out to be a liar because you haven’t believed the testimony which He testified concerning His Son!

“Has” – literally, “is possessing” – is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *échō* ([2192](#)).

“The testimony in himself” – “testimony” or “witness” is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *marturia* ([3141](#)), used by John in this letter 6X – 3X in 1 John 5:9; 2X in 1 John 5:10; and 1X in 1 John 5:11. For a fuller definition of this noun, see the first footnote on the word in 1 John 5:9.

What does John mean? He means that the [Holy Spirit](#) successfully internalizes His testimony within the one believing into the Son of God, providing him with [assurance of salvation](#).

³¹⁷ 1 John 5:10 - the one who does not believe God: Literally, “the one not believing the God.” “Not believing” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *pisteuō* ([4100](#)), preceded by the negating particle *mê*’ ([3361](#)), “not.” John will say something rather dramatic about this person – he has made God a liar!

³¹⁸ 1 John 5:10 - has made Him a liar: “Him” refers to God. “Liar” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *pseústēs* ([5583](#)), appearing in the emphatic initial position in the clause. A liar is one who speaks that which is not true. God, on the other hand, can only speak the truth. It is impossible for Him to lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). The tragedy is that if one does not believe God, he has committed a sin of horrific disrespect – “Liar – he has made God out to be!” John, who speaks in black and white terms, is fond of the word “liar.” He has used it more than any other single writer, and he has used it 5X in this letter – 1 John 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10.

³¹⁹ 1 John 5:10 - because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son: In what way has he made God a liar? Because he has not believed (3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *pisteuō*, [4100](#)) in the testimony (*marturia*, [3141](#)) that God has testified (3rd Person Singular [Perfect Indicative Active](#)

D 5 The content of the testimony 5:11

E 1 The gift of eternal life: {11} And the testimony is this,³²⁰ that God has given us eternal life,³²¹

E 2 The sphere of the gift: and this life is in His Son.³²²

D 6 The implications from the testimony 5:12

of the verb *marturéō*, [3140](#)) concerning His Son. John will give the content of that testimony in 1 John 5:11. John used the verb *marturéō* ([3140](#)) 6X in this letter (1 John 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10). This verse marks the last time. If one fails to believe the testimony that a father gives in a court of law concerning his son, he has heaped the ultimate disrespect upon that father. How much more heinous the crime of failing to believe the testimony God, the Ultimate Father, has testified concerning His Son?!

³²⁰ 1 John 5:11 - And the testimony is this: Literally, “And this is the testimony,” where “this” (the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the Demonstrative Pronoun *hoûtos*, [3778](#)) appears in the *emphatic* position at the beginning of the sentence – “And *this* is the testimony” – John is *finally* informing his readers of that which is the *content* of the testimony that he first began discussing in 1 John 5:6. The word “testimony” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *marturia* ([3141](#)), which refers to “concrete and objective information given in proof of something *testimony*; (1) active *giving of a witness, testimony, declaration* (John 1:7); (2) passive, as the witness given *testimony, evidence, record* (John 1:19) (3) as facts presented in court *evidence, testimony* (Mk 14:55); as a good report received *reputation* (1 Tim. 3:7) (5) as divine and human witness, with Christ as the content testimony, *witness* (John 3:33); as a formula for the gospel message ... *witness of (or about) Jesus* (Rev. 19:10)” ([Friberg](#)).

John is probably using the word in sense (2), but also in sense (3), of evidence eventually to be given in God’s Divine Court of Law at the Judgments of unbelievers, who have not responded affirmatively to God’s testimony.

The noun testimony (*marturia*, [3141](#)) is used by John 6X in this letter, in 3 verses in close proximity: 1 John 5:9 (3X); 1 John 5:10 (2X), and once in 1 John 5:11. Likewise, John uses the corresponding verb, testify (*marturéō*, [3140](#)), 6X in 6 verses in this letter, in 1 John 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10.

John is about to give an exceedingly important, foundational truth for the believer. John is here tying the testimony of God with the eternal salvation and [assurance of salvation](#) of the believer in Jesus. The wise believer should commit 1 John 5:11-13 to memory.

³²¹ 1 John 5:11 - that God has given us eternal life: Literally, and the Greek word order is important, because the emphatic words appear earliest in the clause, “that life eternal gave to us – the God.” This is the important testimony / witness of God: He has given us believers LIFE; and that life is ETERNAL. He GAVE it to us believers. And the One giving us it to us is the GOD.

“life” is the [Feminine Accusative](#) Singular of the noun *dzōê* ([2222](#)). The life of which John speaks is not merely physical life, which, because of man’s sin, inevitably ends in [physical death](#).

Rather this life is [life eternal](#), the [Feminine Accusative](#) Singular of the Adjective *aiōnios* ([166](#)), that which partakes of the nature of God’s life, that which is eternal, everlasting, unending, the highest quality of life. The believer in Christ presently possesses [eternal life](#) (1 John 5:11, 12), even though his physical body is in the process of dying. Once the believer is resurrected, he will begin to experience [eternal life](#) in the fullest sense, unencumbered by the prospect of [physical death](#) resulting from his fallen, sinful nature. [Eternal life](#) will ultimately be unmarred by tears, pain, or sorrow (Rev. 21:4), or by the presence of any evil or any evil people (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:8; 22:15). We will reign with Christ from [New Jerusalem](#) for forever and ever (Rev. 22:5). In this letter John used the word “eternal,” *aiōnios* ([166](#)), 6X (1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20).

“gave” is the 3rd Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the simple verb *didōmi* ([1325](#)). At a point in time, the moment we trusted in Jesus, God gave us believers [Eternal Life](#)! What a precious and eternal gift!

³²² 1 John 5:11 - and this life is in His Son: Jesus Himself said, “I Myself am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6, [JTB](#)). [Eternal life](#) inheres in Jesus because He is completely God, and, as sinless man, He paid the ultimate sacrifice to secure endless fellowship with God. Moreover, He was raised from the dead never to die again! In John 11:25-26, Jesus declared to Martha, “I, even I am the resurrection and the life; the one believing into Me, even if he should die, will live, and every one living and believing into Me shall not die into the age. Are you believing this?” ([JTB](#) literal translation).

E 1 Of possession of the Son: {12} He who has the Son has the life;³²³

E 2 Of non-possession of the Son: he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.³²⁴

C 3 There is assurance of eternal life through believing in God's Son 5:13

D 1 The targeted audience: {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,³²⁵

D 2 The expected outcome: so that you may know that you have eternal life.³²⁶

³²³ 1 John 5:12 - He who has the Son has the life: Literally, "The one possessing the Son is possessing the life." "The one possessing" is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *échō* (2192), preceded by the article, "with a basic meaning have, hold, with a wide range of meanings derived from the contexts and accompanying terms..." (Friberg).

"is possessing" is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *échō* (2192).

"the life" is the [Feminine Accusative](#) Singular of the noun *dzōē* (2222), preceded by the article. This refers to the particular life which inheres in God and the Son, and is, therefore, [eternal life](#).

If we possess Jesus, we possess His life (John 1:4; 14:6), which is God's life, which is [eternal life](#). [Eternal life](#) is a present possession of the believer, because through Jesus we are eternally united with God, both of whom are the essence of life. Our future prospect, after the [Resurrection](#), is to have all the benefits of [eternal life](#), including a rejuvenated body impervious to death and decay in unmitigated harmony and fulfillment and service (Rev. 22:1-5).

³²⁴ 1 John 5:12 - he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life: Literally, "The one not possessing the Son of the God – the life is not possessing." Both occurrences of "possessing," the verb *échō* (2192), appear in the [Present](#) tense in 1 John 5:12. If one does not presently possess Jesus, God's Son, he does not presently possess eternal life. See the Glossary entry, "[Book of Life](#)."

³²⁵ 1 John 5:13 - These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God: A literal translation of the entire verse reads as follows: "These things I wrote to you in order that you may have come to know that life you are possessing – eternal – to the ones [continually] believing into the name of the Son of the God."

"I wrote" is the 1st Person Singular [Aorist Indicative Active](#) of the verb *gráphō* (1125). John is preparing to finish his letter, and he is looking back over the entirety of the letter, encapsulating it with the "point action," "I wrote."

"in order that you may have come to know" translates the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *oída* (6063), "know." The [Perfect](#) tense conveys a settled knowledge, arrived at some time in the past and continuing to the present. However, Grammarians insist that the [Perfect](#) tense of this verb is routinely used in Greek as a [Present](#) tense.

"life" is the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of *dzōē* (2222), "life," here qualified as being "eternal," the [Accusative Feminine](#) Singular of *aiōnios* (166), "eternal, unending, everlasting, stretching into the age."

"you are possessing" translates the 2nd Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *échō* (2192), "with a basic meaning have, hold, with a wide range of meanings derived from the contexts and accompanying terms..." (Friberg).

Who is it that John wants to know that they possess eternal life? He is writing "to the ones believing into the name of the Son of the God," where "the ones believing" translates the [Dative Masculine](#) Plural [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *pisteúō* (4100).

To believe in the name of Jesus (which means "Yahweh is Salvation") is to believe in Jesus as God's means of salvation. It also means, in this context, an acknowledgment of, and embracing of the fact that Jesus, as God's Son, partakes of the same essence as His Father. He is God-come-in-the-Flesh (John 1:14) who fully explains God (John 1:18).

³²⁶ 1 John 5:13 - so that you may know that you have eternal life: "know," *eidēte*, is the 2nd Person Plural [Perfect Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *oída* (6063). It is typically translated in the [Present](#) tense, but, in my estimation, the [Perfect](#) tense is better translated here, "so that you may have come to know that you have eternal life." According to Stott, to know here means "not gradually [to] grow in assurance but possess here and now a present certainty of the life they have received in Christ (J. R. W. Stott, 1 John, p. 184)."

The [Subjunctive](#) mood here, in this purpose clause, "so that" (*hina*, 2443) speaks of definite outcome. The practical application is that those of us who believe in Jesus, literally, "the ones believing into the name of the Son of the God," can have full [assurance of eternal life](#). In fact, that is the reason why John wrote this portion of his letter.

For comments on "have eternal life," see the preceding footnote. The difficulty here is that the English word

C 4 There is assurance of answered prayer 5:14-17

D 1 If the request is according to His will 5:14-15

E 1 The hearing 5:14

G 1 The confidence: {14} This is the confidence which we have before Him,³²⁷

G 2 The condition of submissive asking: that, if we ask anything³²⁸ according to His will,

G 3 The assurance of hearing: He hears us.³²⁹

E 2 The answering 5:15

G 1 The condition of hearing: {15} And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask,³³⁰

G 2 The granting: we know that we have the requests which we

order here in 1 John 5:13 does not match the Greek word order.

³²⁷ 1 John 5:14 - This is the confidence which we have before Him: “confidence” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *parrêsia* (3954), which speaks of “an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and a lack of fear” ([Friberg](#)). In this context, “confidence” and “boldness” (without hubris) are appropriate translations. This is the fourth and final time John used this word in this letter (1 John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14). See the appropriate footnote at 1 John 2:28 for more information about this word.

³²⁸ 1 John 5:14 - if we ask anything: “Ask” is the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Middle](#) of the verb *aitéō* (154), “to ask (for) or request” including asking in prayer. The [Middle](#) voice indicates we are asking *for ourselves*. The [Subjunctive](#) mood indicates a level of conditionality. Perhaps we will ask according to His will, perhaps we won’t. But if we do continually ask according to God’s will He continually hears us.

³²⁹ 1 John 5:14 - He hears us: Literally, “He is hearing us,” translating the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *akoúō* (191) Compare 1 John 3:21-23 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and 22 receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us (NIV).

Four minimal conditions for answered prayer then are (1) asking according to His will, (2) obeying His commands and pleasing Him, (3) loving other Christians. It goes without saying that (4) we must obviously have faith in His Son!

³³⁰ 1 John 5:15 - And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask: Literally, “And if (3rd class condition) we have come to know that He is hearing us – whatever we might be requesting for ourselves”

“if” is the subordinating conjunction *eán* (1437) expressing what we call “third class conditionality” – perhaps we have come to know, perhaps not – but if we *have* come to know that God is hearing us, then something else is inevitably true

“we have come to know” translates the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oída* (6063), and suggests a completed knowledge.

“he is hearing translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *akoúō* (191), which, coupled with the following [Genitive](#) of the 1st Person Plural of the Personal Pronoun *egō* (1473), “us,” indicates that God is continually giving audience to our requests.

“– whatever” translates the [Accusative Neuter](#) Singular of the relative pronoun *hós* (3739).

“we might be requesting for ourselves” translates the 1st Person Plural [Present Subjunctive Middle](#) of the verb *aitéō* (154), to ask or request, preceded by the verbal particle *eán* (1437), which contributes to the deliberately indecisive nature of the requesting – “whatever it might be” conveyed by the [Subjunctive](#) mood. The [Middle](#) voice conveys the idea that we are requesting something for ourselves, and the [Present](#) tense connotes a continual or ongoing asking.

have asked from Him.³³¹

D 2 If there is sin not leading to [physical death](#) 5:16-17

E 1 The types of sin 5:16

G 1 Sin *not* leading to [\(physical\) death](#)

H 1 The condition: {16} If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death,³³²

H 2 The command: he shall ask³³³

H 3 The expected outcome

J 1 Life: and *God* will for him give life³³⁴

³³¹ 1 John 5:15 - we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him: Literally, “we have come to know that we are possessing the requests which we have requested from Him.”

“we have come to know” translates the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oída* (6063), and suggests a completed knowledge.

“we are possessing” translates the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *échō* (2192) “with a basic meaning have, hold, with a wide range of meanings derived from the contexts and accompanying terms...” ([Friberg](#)).

“requests” translates the [Accusative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *aitēma* (155), the content of that which has been requested, petitioned, or demanded. It is to be distinguished from *dēsis* (1162), a plea or entreaty (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

“we have requested” translates the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *aitēō* (154), to ask or request.

What John is saying is that if we know God hears our requests, we know we are possessing the answers to the requests which we have requested of Him.

The whole subject of prayer is a mysterious thing. One thing we know is this, that John stipulated in 1 John 5:14 that we must be asking according to God’s will. Prayer seems to be, then, far more our subordinating of our desires to God’s will than it is God’s subordinating His desires and responses to our will. Jesus’ example was “...yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39). Note that the Holy Spirit, One who prays supremely effectively, always prays according to God’s will. And thus, He is always heard (Romans 8:26-27).

³³² 1 John 5:16 - a sin not leading to death: More literally, “sin not to death.” No article precedes “sin” in the Greek text. The whole clause reads, literally, as follows: “If a certain one shall see the brother of him sinning sin not to death” So John is speaking of a Christian seeing another Christian brother “sinning,” the [Masculine Singular Accusative Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264)

“sin,” the [Accusative Feminine Singular](#) of the noun *hamartía* (266), “...an act, a departure from doing what is right, ... *sin, wrongdoing* (1 John 5:17);” ([Friberg](#)).

“not to death” (*thánatos*, 2288), here probably meaning [physical death](#). The wages of sin is always death (Romans 6:23a), and inevitably sin leads to [physical death](#) sooner or later. But John appears to be speaking about [physical death](#) as a Divine discipline for a sinning Christian. In other words there is a category of sin that does not automatically result in [physical death](#) for the Christian brother. John does not identify what that sin is, so no one can be dogmatic.

³³³ 1 John 5:16 - he shall ask: The 3rd Person Singular [Future Indicative Active](#) of the verb *aitēō* (154), to ask or request, used here as an [Aorist Imperative](#). The burden of asking seems to fall on the one who observes his brother sinning sin not to death. He is to ask, and God will grant (physical) life to the sinning individual who has evidently fallen prey to some physical malady. If nothing else, devout Christians ought to inquire if there is sin involved in sickness.

³³⁴ 1 John 5:16 - and *God* will for him give life: “life” is the [Accusative Feminine Singular](#) of the noun *dzōē* (2222), “life.” I believe John here is talking about physical life, not spiritual [\(eternal\) life](#). A Christian brother by definition already has spiritual life. So this has to be physical life. Evidently a Christian can commit a type of sin that results in [physical death](#). Here John is talking about the type of sin that does *not* result in [physical death](#). Prayer on behalf of this individual will result in the preservation of his physical life. We are left to Biblical examples to ponder

J 2 Condition: to those who commit sin not *leading* to death.³³⁵

G 2 Sin leading to [\(physical\) death](#)

H 1 The grim reality: There is a sin *leading* to death;³³⁶

H 2 The exemption: I do not say that he should make request for this.

E 2 The clarification of sin 5:17

as to what John may have been talking about. He is more than elliptical. More about that in just a moment.

³³⁵ 1 John 5:16 - to those who commit sin not *leading* to death: More literally, “to the ones sinning not to death.” The verbal form “sinning” in my translation is the [Dative Masculine](#) Plural [Present Active Participle](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264), “literally *miss the mark, be in error*; figuratively, of offending against God, man, religious or moral law *sin, do wrong transgress*, opposite *agathopoiéō* (15) (*do what is right*)” (Friberg).

“death” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *thánatos* (2288), here, again, probably referring to [physical death](#).

³³⁶ 1 John 5:16 - There is a sin *leading* to death: More literally, “There is sin to death.” “Sin” is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *hamartía* (266), “...an act, a departure from doing what is right, ... *sin, wrongdoing* (1 John 5:17);” (Friberg).

“death” is the [Accusative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *thánatos* (2288), here, again, probably referring to [physical death](#).

In the Greek text no article precedes “sin,” and of course, there is no participle “leading” in the Greek text, as the [NASB](#) editors concede with their italics. John had no specific sin in mind. He simply made the statement that there exists such a thing as sin to death. What is sin toward death? Here are suggestions made by various commentators. Sin leading to death is

- a. A specific sin, e.g. capital offenses (The list in Lev. 20:1-27 stipulates the death penalty for such offenses as murder, kidnapping, homosexuality, adultery, etc.). [Clement of Alexandria](#) divided sins into two categories: forgivable and unforgivable; venial and mortal sins. However, the New Testament never identifies such a ranking.
- b. Apostasy. But can a Christian born of God apostatize (cf. 1 John 3:9)?
- c. Blasphemy against the [Holy Spirit](#) (Matt. 12:28). But clearly this sin, actually committed by the religious leaders of Israel, is one committed by unbelievers – people who deny Jesus’ [Deity](#) and Messiahship by saying His power source is Satanic, rather than from God’s Spirit!
- d. The [Roman Catholic view](#) is that John is distinguishing between mortal (unpardonable) and venial (pardonable) sins. But the only unpardonable sin listed in the Bible is that committed by unbelievers, attributing the power source of Jesus in His miracles to the [Devil](#) instead of to the [Holy Spirit](#) (Matt. 12:31-32; cf. Matt. 12:22-24). So Rome’s view is not helpful at all.
- e. The [present author's](#) view is that the death described is physical, not spiritual; that the sin toward death could be different things for different people. For Ananias and Sapphira, the sin was dishonesty flowing from pride (Acts 5:1-11). For the carnal Corinthians, it was partaking unworthily of the Lord’s Table, i.e. celebrating the death of Christ for the forgiveness of sin while at the same time creating serious divisions within the church (1 Cor. 11:17-34). “For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep [in death] (1 Cor. 11:30).” Of the man living in incest in Corinth, Paul had determined “to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5).” Commenting on this verse, the [Ryrie Study Bible](#) notes “Persistent sin often leads to physical punishment”

Zane Hodges, in his commentary on 1 John ([TBKC](#)), made this observation:

All sin ultimately leads to death, but the expression “that does not lead to death” (*mē pros thanaton*) should be understood in the sense, “not punished by [physical] death.” The distinction is between sins for which [physical death](#) is a rapid consequence and sins for which it is not.

I once knew of a farmer who had his deceased brother’s widow evicted from her home on his property on the day of her husband’s funeral. That was a slap in the face of God, who has special compassion for widows and other vulnerable people (Ex. 22:22-24; Ps. 68:5; 146:9). Within two years that same farmer was grieving over the death of his own adult son in a car accident. I cannot prove this, but I think that farmer had committed sin leading to death – in this case not his own death, but that of his son.

G 1 The characterization: {17} All unrighteousness is sin,³³⁷

G 2 The gracious reality: and there is a sin not *leading* to death.³³⁸

C 5 There is sure knowledge 5:18-20

D 1 Of the security of God's children

E 1 No constant sin: {18} We know³³⁹ that no one who is born of God sins;³⁴⁰

E 2 Continual self-preservation: but He who was born of God keeps him,³⁴¹

³³⁷ 1 John 5:17 - All unrighteousness is sin: "Unrighteousness" is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *adikia* (93), generally, *disregard for what is right*,... opposite *dikaiousinê* (1343) (*righteousness, uprightness*) (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

"Sin" is the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the noun *hamartia* (266), "a departure from doing what is right," ... often viewed by John "as a moral condition of human beings in revolt against God *sin, being evil, sinfulness* (John 9:34; 15:24)" (adapted from [Friberg](#)).

John's point is that any kind of unrighteousness is a grievance against God, yet there are some sins that lead to a premature [physical death](#), and others that do not.

³³⁸ 1 John 5:17 - and there is a sin not *leading* to death: More literally, "and there is sin not to death." The article "a" preceding "sin" does not appear in the Greek text. John is not looking at any particular sin. He is saying that there is such a thing as sin that does not result in premature [physical death](#). He does not define that category of sin, but merely is stating that there exists such a thing as sin that does not result in premature [physical death](#).

³³⁹ 1 John 5:18 - We know: The three occurrences of "we are knowing" in vv. 18, 19, 20 translate the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oida*, (6063), here meaning to know intuitively and completely, i.e., by Divine revelation as opposed to personal experience.

³⁴⁰ 1 John 5:18 - We know that no one who is born of God sins: Literally, "We have come to know that every one having been born of the God does not continually sin." "We have come to know" translates the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oida*, (6063), here meaning to know intuitively and completely, i.e., by Divine revelation as opposed to personal experience.

"having been born" translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Perfect Passive Participle](#) of the verb *gennáo* (1080), referring here figuratively to [Spiritual Birth](#) (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Tit. 3:5).

"continually sin" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *hamartánō* (264), "literally *miss the mark, be in error*; figuratively, of offending against God, man, religious or moral law *sin, do wrong transgress*, opposite *agathopoiéo* (15) (*do what is right*)" ([Friberg](#)). The [Present](#) tense indicates habitual or continual sinning.

³⁴¹ 1 John 5:18 - but He who was born of God keeps him: Literally, "but the one having been born of the God is preserving himself" The [NASB](#) editors assume that the person doing the keeping is none other than Jesus Christ, thus the capitalized "He." Others disagree, stating that the believer is keeping himself. After studying the issue, I am forced to give a slight nod in favor of the latter interpretation. The biggest argument in favor of this latter interpretation is that if John is referring to Christ, this is an unusual way for him to do so. Elsewhere, he is unafraid to call Jesus the "only-born (*monogenēs*, 3439) Son of God" (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). Moreover, both instances of the phrase "born of God" in this verse, use the [participial](#) mood of the identical verb *gennáo* (1080). The burden of proof rests on the one who says the two individuals having been born are *not* the same person. In favor of the [NASB](#) view, the preserving ability of Christ to preserve me from sinning is far greater than my ability to preserve myself. Nevertheless, at this point, I am reluctantly siding with the "non-Christological" understanding of "the one having been born."

"having been born" translates the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular [Aorist Passive Participle](#) of the verb *gennáo* (1080), referring here, as I have said to the believer in Christ, who, by definition, has been born of God. This refers to the [New Birth](#), referenced in such passages as John 1:12; 3:3, 7; Tit. 3:5. John also speaks several other times in this letter of the one who has been born of God (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18).

"is preserving" translates the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *têréō* (5083). This verb conveys the basic meaning of *keep in view, take note of, watch over* ([Friberg](#)). Here in this context it has the idea of

- E 3 Protection from Satan: and the evil one does not touch him.³⁴²
- D 2 Of the separateness of God's children: 5:19
 - E 1 Our origin – God: {19} We know that we are of God,³⁴³
 - E 2 The world's origin – Satan: and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.³⁴⁴
- D 3 Of the presence of God's Son: {20} And we know that the Son of God has come, 5:20a
- D 4 Of the gift of understanding: 5:20b
 - E 1 The gift of understanding: and has given us understanding³⁴⁵
 - E 2 The purpose of understanding: so that we may know Him who is true;³⁴⁶

preserving oneself from sinning. This does not mean sinless perfection of course, a state which John himself denies in this letter (1 John 1:8, 10; 2:1). Rather, it refers to a way of life.

If the translation I have offered is correct then the pronoun which appears here in the 3rd Person [Masculine Singular Accusative](#) of the Pronoun *autós* (846) is to be translated reflexively, “himself.” If the [NASB](#) understanding is correct, and the One having been born of God refers to Christ, then the Pronoun is to be translated, “Him.”

³⁴² 1 John 5:18 - and the evil one does not touch him: The “evil one” is “*ho ponêròs*, the [Nominative Masculine Singular](#) of the adjective *ponêrós* (4190), preceded by the article, here referring, substantively, to “the evil one,” i.e., the [Devil](#), who is the embodiment of evil.

“does not touch” is the 3rd Person Singular [Present Indicative Middle](#) of the verb *háptō* (681), meaning, with the [Middle Voice](#), to touch someone for one’s own benefit. In other words, John is saying that we know that every person having been born of God does not keep sinning, but, because he has been born of God, he keeps preserving himself from perpetually sinning, and the [Devil](#) does not keep touching him for the [Devil’s](#) own benefit.

³⁴³ 1 John 5:19 - We know that we are of God: Literally, “We have come to know that of the God we are existing.” “We have come to know” is the 1st Person Plural [Perfect Indicative Active](#) of the verb *oída* (6063), suggesting complete knowledge.

“we are existing” translates the 1st Person Plural [Present Indicative Active](#) of the verb *eimí* (1510), “to be, to exist.” What have we believers come to know? That we presently are existing in a state of being “of God.”

³⁴⁴ 1 John 5:19 - and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one: Not only do we believers know that we are existing of God, but we also know that, literally, “and the whole world in the evil one is reclining.”

“world” is the [Nominative Masculine Singular](#) of the noun *kósmos* (2889), “[world](#).” Here *kósmos* refers to the entire created earth and all the people and systems that are not part of the kingdom of God. See the author’s [Word Study of the World](#).

The whole [world](#) is comfortably “reclining,” the 3rd Person Singular, [Present Indicative Middle/Passive Deponent](#) of the verb *keîmai* (2749), to lie or recline, in the influence, philosophy, outlook, authority, and control of “the evil one,” the [Dative Masculine Singular](#) of the adjective *ponêrós* (4190), speaking here of the [Devil](#) himself, who is by nature wicked, evil, malevolent, anti-good, anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Christian. John refers to “the evil one” in 1 John 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18, 19. Since the [world](#) comfortably reclines under the jurisdiction and values of “the evil one,” Christians are forbidden to be friendly toward (James 4:4) or to love the [world](#) (1 John 2:15).

³⁴⁵ 1 John 5:20 - and has given us understanding: “understanding” is the [Feminine Singular Accusative](#) of the noun *diánoia* (1271) “... as a function of the intellect resulting in insight *comprehension, understanding, idea* (1 John 5:20)” ([Friberg](#)). The arrival of the Son of God has directly resulted in the ability of us humans who trust in Jesus to *comprehend* and *understand* the True One, i.e. God Himself.

³⁴⁶ 1 John 5:20 - so that we may know Him who is true: literally, “in order that we might know the true one,” i.e., God Himself. “we may know” is the 1st Person Plural Present [Subjunctive Active](#) of the verb *ginōskō* (1097), which suggests a growing knowledge by way of experience.

D 5 Of placement in God through Jesus 5:20c

E 1 and we are in Him who is true,³⁴⁷E 2 in His Son Jesus Christ.³⁴⁸

D 6 Of the true God and eternal life 5:20d

E 1 This is the true God³⁴⁹E 2 and eternal life.³⁵⁰**B 3 In Regard to Idolatry: There is a warning to guard against it 5:21**C 1 The addressees: {21} Little children,³⁵¹C 2 The exhortation: guard yourselves from idols.³⁵²

³⁴⁷ 1 John 5:20 - and we are in Him who is true: Literally, “and we are in the True One,” a reference to God Himself.

³⁴⁸ 1 John 5:20 - in His Son, Jesus Christ: Literally, “in the Son of Him, Jesus Christ.”

³⁴⁹ 1 John 5:20 - This is the true God: “true” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the adjective *alēthinós* (228), meaning here, the only real, genuine God. All other so called gods are false gods, utterly impotent. They are characterized by deceit and treachery. The true God alone is utterly dependable.

³⁵⁰ 1 John 5:20 - and eternal life: Literally, “and life eternal.” “life” is the [Nominative Masculine](#) Singular of the noun *dzōē* (222). What makes this life that comes from God supremely different is that it is eternal, the [Nominative Feminine](#) Singular of the adjective *aīōnios* (166). Life from God is unending, everlasting, endless. Its ultimate habitat is [New Jerusalem](#) and [New Earth](#).

³⁵¹ 1 John 5:21 - Little children: These two English words translate a single Greek word, the [Vocative Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *teknion* (5040). It is the diminutive of *téknon* (5043). It is a term of endearment, one John used frequently in this letter (1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).

³⁵² 1 John 5:21 - Guard yourselves from idols: “Guard” is the 2nd Person Plural [Aorist Active Imperative](#) of the verb *phulássō* (5442), to guard, protect, watch over. This is a command given corporately to the readers and to each individual among the readers.

“yourselves” is the 2nd Person Plural [Accusative Neuter](#) of the reflexive pronoun *heautoú* (1438), referring the action, “guard” back to the subjects, “little children.” The plural reflexive means that the readers, identified as “little children,” are individually to guard themselves, and perhaps, to a lesser degree, corporately, to guard one another, though John did not use the word *allēlōn* (240), “one another.”

“from idols” is literally, “from the idols,” the [Genitive Neuter](#) Plural of the noun *eidōlon* (1497), “strictly form, copy, figure; hence (1) an object resembling a person or animal and worshiped as a god *idol, image* (Rev. 9:20); (2) *idol, false god*, with reference to a demonic power involved in idol worship (1 Cor. 10:19)” (Friberg).

This is probably a concluding instruction John gave to his readers to beware of, and to stand guard against false teachers. However, the term “idols” refers to an inferior copy of the real thing. Its application is necessarily broad. Idolatry is anything of sufficient attraction to draw us away from the true God and His Son!

For example, there is a temptation among us who call ourselves Christians to tolerate substitutes for the real God and real worship. I personally believe, for example, that many churches, both Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic, frequently allow church tradition to take precedence over the Scriptures. I have seen it happen. We are under command to guard ourselves against that!

Analysis of 1 John

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Updated October 26, 2018 7:45 AM

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