

## CHAPTER THREE

### **1 Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,**

John begins with a command. This verb is an Aorist Imperative in the second person plural: Behold Ye! The aorist sums up all our past dealings and considerations and now bidding us to look again. As each of us considers the manifold and magnificent concept of the love the Father bestowed on us, John commands us to SEE! BEHOLD! "PAY ATTENTION! LOOK AT! OBSERVE!

*eido...* 4 to see, i. e. to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything; a. to pay attention, observe:... (Thayer p. 174; 1492)

John bids us focus on the "*manner of*" love the Father has bestowed on us. This term is only used a few times in the NT. Generally calling forth the introspection and study to assess the sort or quality. But it has seems to emphasize the unusual or special. After calming the sea, the disciples asked "**What manner of man** is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Mt 8:27; The disciples were impressed with the temple and pointed it out to Jesus: "Teacher, behold, **what manner of stones** and **what manner of buildings!**" (Mk 13:1) After Mary had been addressed "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee." she "was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind **what manner of salutation** this might be." (Lk 1:28-29). Peter warned us that since all things will be dissolved in the end "**what manner of persons** ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness." (2 Pet 3:11)

In each of these, there were distinctive characteristics, events or even words that required careful consideration. None of them were surface things. They were unique, special or inward and needed thought and meditation to truly comprehend fully.

*potapos* ... interrogative adj. from the earlier form *podapós* ... which is from *poíos* (4169), what, and *dápedon*, a soil. What, of what kind, sort, manner, spoken of disposition, character, quality, ..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT: 4217)

Hence there is something very unique about the love the Father bestowed on us and John commands us to carefully consider its depth of manner, sort, character and quality. There are many directions as we ponder all the wonderful gifts and blessings that have come into our lives after we made the decision to become his servants and He bestowed His love on us.

*"didomi...* to give... A. absolutely and generally... B. In construction... I to give something to some one, - in various senses; 1. of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow; give as a gift... 2. to grant, give to one asking, let have... 3. to supply, furnish, necessary things..." (Thayer, NT: 1325)

But John asks us to focus on one specific element of that love that was bestowed, granted and given to us in being called sons of God.

### **that we should be called children of God; and (such) we are.**

This love was bestowed on us in order that or for the purpose that (*hina*) ... we may be, can be and are "called" the children of God. We have been invited to participate and enjoy being a child of God. First we were called out of darkness into his Marvelous light and then He called us His children.

*"kaleo...* to call... a. to call aloud, utter in a loud voice... with gen of place, i. q. to call out, call forth from metaph. to cause to pass from one state into another... b. to invite... Metaphorically: to invite one, ... to something i. e. to participate in it, enjoy it; ... (Thayer, NT: 2564)

Do we feel John's excitement. Do we understand the honor, value and greatness described here? As the chapter progresses, John will speak of two families. We began our lives on earth as children of God, but when the commandment came and sin came alive we died and forfeited that relationship. (Rom. 7:9-11; 1Jn 3:8). Now through the death of Jesus we have the right to return to what we lost through our own weakness and evil.

*But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them*

that believe on his name: Jn 1:12

*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: 17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with (him), that we may be also glorified with (him). 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. 23 And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for (our) adoption, (to wit), the redemption of our body. Rom 8:16-24*

Every promise that God has made to man concerning the help He will offer to us while here on earth and the blessings he promises after this life is over are reserved for those who are His heirs. Since His heirs are His children, it is a great honor to be a child of God. Greater far than we can even imagine in this life. As children of God, we can cry Abba Father (with the same confidence and assurance as Jesus our brother.

*For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, . . . 14 Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb 2:11; 14-15*

*but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. Gal 4:4-7*

These and multitudes of other things are now ours because we are the children of God. It is the greatest honor paid at the highest cost and bringing the greatest rewards of anything this life could offer.

**For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.**

One of the interesting consequences of the wonderful blessings of being children of God is the hatred and animosity on the one hand and the contempt and stigma on the other. This is the exact reason why all these problems were coming upon the church. Because they did not recognize the love God had bestowed or the precious gifts those who fully trust in Him will receive, they had no fear to bring these false teachings into the church. Since the world does not recognize the children of God for who and what they are, we must recognize it ourselves to protect ourselves from them.

Without this protection, we are going to be tempted to compromise. We might begin to live a Christianity that blends enough of the world to make it palatable to the world. This hybrid version has enough "world" in it that it can be respected by those in the world. This is what Paul faced with the Jews in Galatians and the philosophers in Greece.

*For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. . . . 22 Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness; 24 but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 1 Cor 1:18*

John bypassed all these arguments for the moment. Instead he focuses upon the most powerful. The true reason that the world will not recognize us as the children of God is because it never recognized Him as the son of God! As Paul pointed out to the Corinthians above, no one among the Jews or the Gentiles was prepared for a crucified savior. The Son of God came to testify against the activities of the world, condemning it as evil and then offering the way of escape. The cross that killed him is the only means of salvation but the stumbling block of the cross is not the simply the cross but the preaching that put him there.

*If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before (it hated) you. 19 If ye were of the*

*world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. Jn 15:18-24*

*Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye when (men) shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you. Mt 5:10-12*

Just as the world did not know Jesus while he was here it did not know the apostles after He was crucified. After the apostles wrote the word, the world did not know that word as the word of God and therefore they do not know those of us who seek to keep that word as they received it from him and wrote it for us.

Note the word “ginosko(know)” and “e-gno(knew)” emphasize again the words of the Gnostic. In this case they do not “*gno (know).*”

## **2 Beloved, now are we children of God,**

This is the second(used in 2:7) of six times John uses this special term of endearment. It is a word based on the love Jesus revealed in John 13:34-35. John addresses his brothers and sisters in Christ(fellow children of God) as those he feels a special closeness(*beloved, esteemed, dear, favorite*).

*“agapetos,... beloved, esteemed, dear, favorite... is applied to Christians as being reconciled to God and judged by him to be worthy of eternal life... Christians bound together by mutual love, are agapetoi to one another...” (Thayer, p. 4-5; 27)*

At this present moment(now), we are the children of God. All that was said in the previous verse is now summed up again. We have been given the greatest honor to now be the children of God, but this is nothing compared to what is coming. Just as we are like Jesus as the Son of God in this life(his disciples), we will be like him also after the resurrection.

## **and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be.**

This is one of those intriguing statements in the Scriptures that makes us want to do what Peter says the OT prophets and even the angels have done. Carefully read Peters words about the intensity of prophets in the Old Testament as they were given prophecies like Isa 53 or Jer 31 and sought to understand what kind of world *the children of God(3:1)* would live in.

*Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that (should come) unto you: 11 searching what (time) or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. 12 To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into. 1 Pet 1:10-12*

They sought and searched diligently about the time and the manner of time of the things we now possess which is all summed up by John in the previous verse(3:1). Even the angels desired(lusted) to *look into(bend, stretch and stoop to see)*.

*For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not. Mt 13:17*

Now we are given the same statement. A new time is coming in which we will be different and it too is not yet manifested. So we know before we begin that we will not fully and clearly understand what “*we shall be*” for it is “*not yet manifested.*” God has not yet made it “*visible* or

known,” he has not yet “exposed to view” we can not “plainly recognize or thoroughly understand.”

*“phaneroo,... to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way... to make known by teaching... b. with an acc of the person, to expose to view, make manifest, show one ... Pass. to become known, to be plainly recognized, thoroughly understood...” (Thayer, p. 648; 5319)*

John is simply saying that it has not yet been revealed. God has not yet explained this to us. It appears the reason has to do with the limits of our understanding. As in all other things we can only go from **the known to the unknown**. All teaching moves in this manner. Each year of school we learned new things based on the things we already knew. From our parents we learned how to talk by imitation. The teachers then took what we said and showed us how to write them in letters. We learned what two shoes looked like or three pieces of candy. Then we went to school to learn the concepts of add, subtract, multiply and divide. We knew the concepts then learned the application. As we moved through school we learned more and more based on what we already knew. We can't learn any other way.

So how does God teach us about something that is completely new? There is nothing in this world that can even begin to illustrate this. Jesus asked this of Nicodemus and John later tells us in Revelation that this is what we shall be.

*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, (even) the Son of man, who is in heaven. Jn 3:11-13*

*And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. Rev 21:5*

Since God makes all things new, there is nothing now in existence in this world that can illustrate or explain it. Jesus used many parables to illustrate these “heavenly things.” He had just used one with Nicodemus about being born again. But there is nothing in this world to illustrate what is coming. So John tells us that this part has not yet been manifested and will not be manifested until Jesus comes again.

Yet just as the OT prophets were not given the full picture, but enough glimpses to make it very exciting so also have we. Remember something Paul said:

*suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God; 9 who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, 10 but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our **Saviour** Christ Jesus, who **abolished death**, and **brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**, 2 Tim 1:8-10*

The material in the following box is what we know now because “we are the children of God,” but it is not a part of John’s writings. You can therefore skip it and continue on in this verse, or like the OT prophets and the angels and ponder them carefully. There are three parts to this. First, life immediately after death. Then, the resurrection and gift of our new body as described here. Finally the creation of the new heavens and the new earth and the city whose builder and maker is God.

### Life after Death

Why do we hope we will continue to live somewhere else when our body has died? Many of us believe this very strongly and our answer is based on our strong desire and confident expectation that God will keep the promises he has made.

God has been open and honest with the children of Adam since the very beginning. Though we brought a terrible curse on ourselves which also brought death, he offers a second chance to those who still love and want to obey him.

Even Abel believed these promises and they led him to live for God and not for himself. Abel is the first man listed in Hebrews 11:4-12 who saw and welcomed God's promises. Abel offered a better sacrifice because he saw and welcomed the promises. Enoch walked with God and God took him because he confessed he was a stranger and exile on this earth. God also used him to verify and establish these promises. Noah built the ark and Abraham and Sarah left their home. It was "all these" who "died without receiving" but "saw and welcomed" and "confessed they were strangers and exiles." After Enoch it was clear that they would not have to wait for these promises. They would begin the moment they died. God took Enoch to show that very thing!

*All these died in faith, without receiving **the promises**, but **having seen them and having welcomed them** from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that **they are seeking a country of their own**. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, **they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for **He has prepared a city for them**. Heb 11:13-16*

God's promise assured them of a "country of their own ... a better country... a heavenly one" and they believed him. This trust pleased God and led him to reveal "He is not ashamed to be called their God." To this day, these promises form the anchor of our soul.

*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, Heb 6:19*

But what are the specifics of these promises? How well can we call them to mind as we live our lives? How often on a starry night do we meditate and consider how wonderful our future will be? It was given to Jesus to "bring life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2Tim 2:8-10). What he says give great comfort. He revealed there are three phases of this promise. First, what takes place the moment we die. Second, what happens at the resurrection. Third, what comes into being as we enter heaven. Each of these has an amazing amount of information written about them. We will begin with some of the amazing things Jesus teaches and illustrates with those from the past. We will begin our examination with Jesus own words to the thief on the cross.

*And He said to him, Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise. Lk. 23:43*

Jesus knew that neither he nor the thief were coming down alive from their cross. He spoke these words about the sixth hour and died about the ninth. A short time later the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves. (Lk 23:44-46; Jn 19:30-33) . What Jesus had revealed in his discussion of the rich man and Lazarus was about to occur(Lk 16:19-31). That very day they would be "carried by angels to Abraham's bosom." Jesus had seen this countless times since the creation. Now he and the thief were to experience it. Only the portal of death now separated them from Paradise. The definition of this word gives some wonderful ideas. "'paradeisos... a garden, pleasure ground; grove, park... 'the garden of Eden' where our first parents dwelt before the fall..." (Thayer, p. 480)

So Jesus spoke of the place that exists for saints after death as a beautiful park or garden. Words fail to describe how exciting and thrilling this day will be to the faithful. Meeting angels, being led to Paradise and being comforted. Many years later Paul also spoke of Paradise. Whether in his body(alive - a vision) or out of his body(dead-separated from his body and really there) Paul was caught up to paradise(2Cor 12:1-4, 7) and heard words he found it impossible to speak. The beauty, peace, comfort and joy of that place were either beyond words, or words not lawful to be spoken, but there was "surpassing greatness" in "these revelations." Though Paul never told us what he saw, he did tell us how he felt about what he saw.

*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do*

*not know which to choose. 23 But I am hard- pressed from both directions, having the desire to*

*depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; Phil 1:21-23*

After what Paul heard and saw, death was not a loss but a gain (profit). He would come out better after death than he had while living. This profit led him to desire (epithumos - often translated lust - "craving and longing"). Death was not a mild desire for Paul, it was an intense powerful desire! He knew it would be "very much better": "kreitton... better; i.e. a. more useful, more serviceable... more advantageous... b. more excellent..." (Thayer, p. 359; 2909).

Lest we think this might be carrying things a bit too far, think of the events at Jesus' transfiguration. We remember that Jesus' face shone as the sun and his clothing became white as the light (Mt 17:1-3). What we may have passed over is the appearance of Moses and Elijah. "behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." (Lk 9:29-31). There are two important things to be observed here. First though they had been dead for hundreds of years, they appeared in glory. Not only did they not lose anything by death, but instead were in glory! Secondly, there was no Jerusalem when Moses died, and the revelation about Jesus' death in Jerusalem was not revealed to either of them. But they had come to speak with Jesus about things they had not known at death. It is clear that they learned and experienced these things after death. So far from being a loss, death is a gain for the faithful Christian.

Jesus said this twice while on this earth. The first time he affirmed: "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." (Jn 8:51). When Jesus, the thief, and Lazarus died, they did not see death. They saw paradise. When Moses and Elijah died, they too did not see death but glory! All who keep Jesus' words will never see death. It is hard for us to grasp this because the only side of death we see is the body empty of a soul. In this way it is exactly like all other journeys. As we watch them drive or fly away, we only see them leaving, but they are still alive and experiencing new things. They can fall asleep in St. Louis and awaken near a beautiful beach or mountain. This is exactly what death is to those who keep Jesus' word.

Jesus spoke exactly the same thing to Martha who was grieving the death of her brother Lazarus. "Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26). Work this one out! If we believe in Jesus we will continue to live even if we die. Everyone (including us) who lives and believes in Jesus will never die. Do we believe this? It is the same story again. "Today you will be with me in Paradise" They continued to live after this died and they never really died at all! Remember what Jesus said to the Sadducees? "Have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." (Mt 22:31-32) Though hundreds of years had elapsed. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still alive. They did not see death.

*For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; II Cor 5:1-2*

### **The Second Coming**

Is it possible that the apostles and early disciples had a better appreciation for his second coming than we do? They had a special relationship with him and they loved and trusted him as a friend and guide. They had never met anyone who cared so much for them. They did not want him to leave by "laying down His life for his friends." Jn 15:13

It is easy to understand such feelings. Most of us have someone in our past who guided us with a special touch. It is a bitter loss to lose them we never forget them and we wish we could see them again. Such was the case with Jesus and his disciples. When Jesus told them he had to

leave they were stunned. Yet Jesus had no choice. To truly love them and us he had to go.

*Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, Where I am going, you cannot come. Jn 13:33*

There was a lot of sorrow that evening. Jesus was leaving. They could not come, and his promise to come back for them was too deep to be understood. But after his resurrection, they were a great comfort to them.

*for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. Jn 14:3*

*Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later. Jn 13:36*

What about us? Do we share in this deep longing? Have we studied the details of this great event and felt the excitement and comfort these truths were designed to give us?

As Jesus ascended into heaven a refreshing and exciting truth was revealed. His leaving was not the end. Nor would it be the last time they would ever see him. Angels were sent with words of consolation and a precious promise. A promise for all who miss him and wish he was still here with us to answer our questions, calm our fears and direct our efforts.

*He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; 11 and they also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched him go into heaven. Acts 1:9-11*

The importance of this information is obvious as it is used to comfort the brethren in one of the first NT epistles. Paul speaks of these truths with excitement, anticipation and comfort.

*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 1 Th 4:13-18*

Jesus will keep His promise! He is coming back for us! Whoever is alive when the Lord returns, along with all who have died will be gathered and taken to be with Him. As He comes he will shout! This is not a word for a yell, but “a stimulating cry ... by which...a signal is given...” Jesus will utter words that will set all this in motion. After Jesus shout, *the voice of the archangel* will be heard. This too isn’t just noise but “...the sound of uttered words...” The archangel will also speak words of comfort, victory, or direction. Perhaps these words are for the angels.

*and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels...41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness... Mt 13:39,41*

*For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds Mt 16:27*

*at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, 2Th 1:7*

After these words of the Lord and the archangel are heard, *the trumpet of God* will sound. There are many uses of the trumpet in the Scriptures. They herald war and danger, along with victory! But the clearest example of the trumpet occurred on Mt Sinai.

*So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning; flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled...19 When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. Ex 19:16,19*

The awesome sound of this trumpet led to fear and trembling. At Jesus return a similar trumpet will be heard all over the world. After the words from Jesus and the archangel and the sounding of the trumpet, *the dead in Christ will rise first*. The dead will hear these words of Jesus and

come forth.

*Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live... 28 Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice 29 and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. Jn 5:25, 28-29*

*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 1 Cor 15:52*

It is difficult to comprehend how we will experience these things. For they will all occur *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*. Such a twinkling occurs when a glint of sun reflects from an eye. It is seen for a split second and then is gone. This is the rapidity with which the Lord's shout, archangel's voice, trumpet sound, the dead raised and those alive are changed.

Time ends, eternity begins, soul's return, living bodies change, death is swallowed in victory; and mortal puts on immortality all in the twinkling of an eye!

*For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. . . . then, shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 1 Cor 15:53-54*

One moment all will be as it has been from the beginning of the creation and the next these events will occur before we can blink away the twinkle in our eye. As he left so will he return.

*Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. Rev 1:7*

The changes that begin the moment we see him are among the most precious of all the promises God has given to man. The moment we see him the changes that occur are "too good to be true!" We will become like him.

*when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 1 Jn 3:2*

*who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Phil 3:20-21*

*And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. 1 Cor 15:49*

*when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Col 3:4*

*when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed II Th 1:10*

So in this same "twinkling of an eye" the dead and then the living become the same. The dead rise into their conformed body and in the same instant the living change into theirs. Both are then "caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

Soon after(perhaps in the same twinkling eye), as all are caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, another great event begins. All that was done in the first chapter of Genesis is undone and dissolved.

*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. . . . the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. 2 Pet 3:10, 12*

As we read these things do they strike a chord in our heart? Are these passages like old friends we know so well? Our answers to this reveal our own feelings about our love and longing for our Lord. It also reveals our faith and priorities.

*Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be; in holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God,*



## The Resurrection

*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. 1 Jn 3:1*

One can sense the excitement and amazement in John's words! After sin, our future was so bleak, our failure so deep and our path back so steep, we truly were lost forever! But "God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ." (Eph 2:4-5) So now along with Peter we praise: "Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy, begat us again unto a living hope." (1 Pet 1:3) For "the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16-17).

Because we are children of God, our lives are now blessed. God looks upon us with favor and will care for us. "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." (Heb 13:5). All of this and more because we are the children of God!

Yet John places this first to reveal something infinitely better! "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (1 Jn 3:2) Something is coming! It is just over the horizon of time. Something so special and amazing that the language and understanding of man cannot even imagine it. It has not yet been manifested or revealed. How could it be? We have nothing here to use to describe what we shall be at the resurrection. John simply sums it all up with one simple phrase. "When we see him we will be like him."

Whatever Jesus looks like in his glorified body when he returns is what we will look like. "Our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, conformed to the body of his glory." Both of these verses are amazing revelations but we can't get it. For we have never seen him, don't know what he looks like and won't until we see him!

At this moment don't we all feel like that special "someone" Paul referred to? "Someone will say, How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" (1 Cor 15:35) In the remainder of this chapter the Holy Spirit will answer both of these questions to the best of our ability to comprehend. In this matter we need to see ourselves like children. Once we knew basic math, but were sometimes overwhelmed when we had to extend them to algebra, geometry, trigonometry and calculus. So here, the Spirit will use each of the six days of creation to help explain and enlighten us to the possibilities that those two questions create.

### The Third Day of Creation: Vegetation

"And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, (and) fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: (Gen 1:11). Paul uses this event in a manner similar to a parable. By looking at what God did in the first creation it is easier to understand what He will do in the resurrection.

God created each plant to produce seed. Whether grain, herbs nuts, or fruits, every seed reproduces after its kind. God created each seed differently, each plant differently and the fruit of each plant differently, but when planted in the ground they all do exactly the same thing. As the moisture enters the seed the process of corruption begins. As the seed begins to break down it loses its previous form and life and dies.

*You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; 37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. 1 Cor 15:36-38*

its time as a seed is finished. But at the instant of death new life begins to move toward the surface. It can be an acorn, pit, seed, or kernel. But at the moment of death each seed sends a new body to the surface of the ground. The acorn becomes a mighty oak, the pit becomes an orange tree, the seed an apple tree or a tomato plant, the kernel a stalk of corn.

Each seed is given a different body which no one could guess if they had not seen it. Trees; hundreds of feet tall in many different colors and configurations. Plants in every size, shape; color and production. Flowers, vegetables, ornamentals, bushes all come from seeds. What; God did on the third day of creation illustrates and helps us to understand what he will do the; first moments of the new creation. Now we resemble the seed. At death, the seed will begin to; decompose. At the resurrection, the spiritual life of man will burst forth from the material and; become glorious!

### **The Fifth and Sixth days of Creation:**

On the fifth day of creation God created fish and birds. On the sixth: beasts and men. Not only; did each individual in each of these groups receive a different body, but also different flesh.

*All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and; another flesh of birds, and another of fish. 1 Cor 15:39*

Every group has a different flesh because the bodies must do different things. Fish must live; under the water so their flesh and body were created for that purpose. Birds were created to fly; so their flesh and body was created differently than the fish but perfect for their environment.; Each beast lives on land, but with their different purposes they were given a body to perfectly; fulfill that purpose. The flesh and body of man is also different. Created in the image of God,; our bodies were formed to fulfill that purpose.

Each fish, bird, beast and man were given the perfect body to serve him. Man with an eternal; soul and created in the image and likeness of God was given a brain, eyes, ears, nose, nerves; and tongue to perfectly complement these things.

Each beast was also given a body with different functions of brain, eye, ear, nose tongue and; nerves. So also were the birds and the fish. At the resurrection, we will receive a body perfectly; designed for our new home and new needs just as God did for each of these.

### **The Fourth day of Creation**

Lest our minds be limited, Paul moves to an entirely different type of body. Those God created; on the fourth day of creation: the sun moon and stars.

*There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the; glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and; another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 1 Cor 15:40-41*

When God created the earth, its function required a body and God gave it the perfect body for; its purpose. He filled it with all the precious and special things we enjoy so much. He gave; fertile soil and water for life. The elements mixed into molecules of metals, minerals, precious; stones, and energy.

When God created the moon, he gave it an entirely different body with an entirely different; purpose. The sun was designed to bring light and heat for the duration of this creation. He; gave it a body that would perfectly accomplish this. Finally each star was given its own body.; Each heavenly and earthly body contains its own glory and magnificence. When Jesus was; *“transfigured before them; His face shone like the sun.” Mt 17:2* *“And those who have insight; will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to; righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” Dan 12:3*

What a wonderful body God must have in mind for us! For *“So also is the resurrection of the; dead.”*

*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children;*

of God; and we are. 1 Jn 3:1

John wanted God's children to marvel along with him at the wonderful blessings God gave when he paid our debt and allowed us to return to him. Can we even add up all the things we now have as his children we would never have had at all? All the comfort and peace we now possess because of his love and forgiveness. All the successes we have gained because we followed his word. All the self-control and troubles we have avoided. All the prayers God has heard and all the providential things God has done in our lives. We have every spiritual blessing and many material ones due to the "*manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us.*"

Yet all this fades into the background when we consider the most wonderful part of being a child of God. For the "*the Spirit himself*" not only "*bears witness that we are children of God,*" but also that "*if children then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.*" (Rom 8:16-17).

### **Resurrection 2 - Heirs of God and Joint Heirs with Christ**

John knew none of us couldn't even grasp the fullness of being "*heir of God.*" Truly "*it is not yet made manifest what we shall be.*" Jesus promised all who lose anything in this life "*for my sake*" "*shall receive a hundredfold now, and shall inherit eternal life*" (Mt 19:29). We will "*inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.*" Mt 25:34 "*inherit salvation,*" and "*inherit the promises.*" Heb 1:14 6:12

Not only are we *heirs of God*, but also *joint heirs with Christ*. A joint heir is a (*fellow-heir or joint participant*). It is clear that John's promise is part of our fellow participation with Jesus. "*When he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.*" (1 Jn 3:2) At the resurrection we will be joint heirs with Christ because our bodies will be conformed and remade to resemble his. Whatever Jesus looks like when he returns in his glorified body we will also look like him! "*The Lord Jesus Christ: shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, conformed to the body of his glory.*" and "*we will be like him.*"

We are now in unfathomable depths of knowledge. We have no means of going any deeper than the bare facts. We do not and cannot know what this body will be. It is outside both our experience and our knowledge base. There is nothing to build on! All we can do is sift through what the Spirit has revealed.

When asked "*How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?*" (1Cor 15:35) the Spirit took us back to the very beginning and compared the resurrection to things in this life we all know well. Each time we plant a seed, we patiently wait and watch the ground for signs of new life. God created each seed with a body that will spring from the soil.

He also reminded us that God created many different bodies during the six days of the material creation. All vegetation, fish, birds, beasts and man were given bodies. All things in the heavens (sun, moon stars & earth) were also given bodies. God has unlimited power and wisdom to create exactly what he desires. In the same way Jesus will "*shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself*" (Phil 3:21). So as we meditate on the resurrection, we are bidden to contemplate all the bodies God has created and imagine the new one that will perfectly fit our needs there!

### **So also is the Resurrection of the Dead.**

In exactly the way God created these bodies from the "*waste and void*" of the first creation and in exactly the same way a seed is sown and results in the creation of a new body, so (*in the manner spoken of; in the way described*) above is the resurrection. It is:

**sown in corruption;**

**raised in incorruption**

**sown in dishonor;**

**raised in glory**

**sown in weakness;**

**raised in power**

**sown a natural body;**

**raised a spiritual body**

We can't move far from these facts. There is nothing in Scripture to fill in the details, but their

general meaning is very clear. The body we now have is worn out and left behind at death. But God will replace it with an entirely different body. After death our body is *sown*(as a seed it is buried and placed in the ground). When this occurs our old body is in *corruption, dishonor, and weakness*. We have all seen the bodies of others worn out by old age or crushed in a horrible accident. We know someday we will also be in that condition. All bodies bereft of the spirit are in dishonor and corruption. When we think of death in this way it is truly an vicious and terrible enemy. But if we think of death in the context of sowing seed and awaiting new life it puts things into an entirely different light. Like all seeds we sow, it is never the end. It is always a beginning! What is sown is new and entirely different when raised.

Just as a seed from corn produces a body conformed to God's design. Our own body sown in the ground at death will arise in a body conformed to the body of the Christ with whom we are joint heirs. This body will be like his, raised in *incorruption, glory, and power*. At death it is sown a natural body, but when raised, it will be a spiritual body. Though we cannot see this for it has not yet been revealed. One thing is certain, it is far better than the best we can even imagine now!

**A natural body and a SPIRITUAL BODY**

*first man Adam*

**LAST ADAM**

first comes *natural*

first man is *of earth*

**SECOND MAN** is

as the *earthy*

as is **HEAVENLY**

have *borne image* of

shall also **BEAR IMAGE**

*living soul*

**LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT**

then **SPIRITUAL**

earthy

of **HEAVEN**

*earthy*

**HEAVENLY**

*earthy*

of **HEAVENLY**

Once again the Spirit draws a contrast between what we know as simple things here and draws from them things we do not know there but can now see dimly. We were all born of the seed of Adam and Eve with the characteristics of Adam and Eve. God created them with the power to pass on the living soul within themselves to their children. So it has been since the beginning. Yet not only does our living soul come from Adam so does our natural body of earthly dust. As God summed it up: "*from dust you are and to dust you shall return.*" This is a part of the curse that passed to all. We are of the earth, earthy and have borne the image of the earthy. This we know! It is all around us and has been our entire lives. We know well this material creation. Our bodies were created from it and all we do is based on this. Our food and water, the air we breathe, the clothes we wear, the earth we walk upon are all of this creation and bear the stamp of resemblance to this creation.

But at the resurrection, when we see Jesus, this will all change. The second man(Jesus Christ) is also as Adam. Just as we have borne the image of Adam, we will bear the image of Christ at the resurrection. Adam gave us a living soul, but Christ is our life giving spirit. As we have known the earthy, we will come to know the heavenly. There we will be spiritual, of heaven and heavenly for "*in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven.*" Mt 22:30

Just as we were created from the dust of this earth, we will be created from "the dust of" heaven. It clearly will not be dust, but dust is all we know here. We will be made of the same quality of spiritual material in heaven as we are of dust here.

Just as God created this body to allow us full enjoyment, dominion, and the power to subdue this earth, he will create our spiritual body to enjoy and work in the heavenly realm. Since we do not know the spiritual realm we can neither explain, understand or elaborate on this in any way.

We can only trust God's promises and like our fathers before us die "*in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed*" we too are "*strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*" Heb 11:13 For "*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*" ICor 15:42-50.

After this world is no more and the flesh and blood of this world also ceases, all we now know,

will dissolve and something infinitely better will replace it.

we shall all be changed,  
dead shall be raised incorruptible,  
corruptible must put on incorruption,  
mortal must put on immortality.  
Death is swallowed up in victory.

These will be the great changes after the dead are raised. Our new body will not corrupt or weaken with age. Mortal then puts on immortality and death is swallowed up in victory. What a great day is coming! This is the *"inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 1Pet 1:3-4* Then we will *"shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."* Mt 13:43

### Heaven

Heaven is the crown jewel of our hope. The place to be created for our glorious spiritual bodies to enjoy and live in. Though we will not experience its beauty or glory until after the judgment day, we can be "standing on the promises of God."

Obviously the quality of our eternal life will be based on the beauty, complexity and ability to enjoy the place where we live it. After Paul's revelation that our new body will be raised in: *incorruption, glory, power and immortality.* (1 Cor 15:42-44, 56) we can expect a place where such a body can exist in *"an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven"* (1Pet 1:4-5).

God has promised the new world, new home and new body will be remarkable. Just as our resurrected body exceeds all our expectations in its glorious abilities, strength and wisdom. So also our final dwelling place will be filled with beauty, peace, and prosperity, comfort and excitement. The clearer the picture, the greater our anticipation and the greater our anticipation, the easier our sacrifices and the more zealous our obedience.

From the very beginning God promised his saints a *"city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."* which will be placed in *"a better country, that is a heavenly one"* where *"He has prepared a city."* Heb 11:10; 13-16) This country will be found in the *"new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells."* (II Pet 3:13). There *"your reward in heaven is great,"* (Mt 5:12) and *"you shall have treasure in heaven,"* (Mt 19:21).

In heaven God will do it all! He will create the new heaven and earth, the better country and the new city. There our treasures and reward are reserved for us. As *"heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"* (Rom 8:17) and *"heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him."* (Jas 2:5) We will *"inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* Mt 25:34

What will we do there? Will it be like the first heaven and earth where we work to accomplish whatever our heart desires while walking in full fellowship with God? Will we eat and drink? Will we enjoy accomplishments and challenges, have hobbies and work as we do here?

There will be many changes. Those *"accounted worthy to attain that world and the resurrection; neither marry nor are given in marriage, are equal unto the angels and are sons of God being sons of the resurrection."* (Lk 20:35-36). The *"second man is from heaven"* and *"just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."* (1 Cor 15:47-49);

Will it be good to be alone there or will there be a different kind of oneness? What will it be like to be equal to the angels, bearing the image of the spiritual and heavenly, and created from the "dust?" of heaven. Obviously with bodies like His and a home like His we will be able to enjoy life as he does.

Is there more? Is our appetite whetted and our curiosity intense? What else can we learn about heaven?

The final book in the Bible says many things about what is to be when this life ends, but with limitations. The paradox of the book of Revelation is: ***the very symbolism needed to understand heaven is limited by a strong warning:***

*I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. Rev 22:18-19*

So we are warned not to allow our imaginations to run wild, cautious in interpreting the symbolism too freely. The only safe way to read and understand Revelation is by comparing the conclusions drawn from Revelation to other Scriptures.

### **The Tree of Life in the Paradise of God**

*...To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.*

*Rev 2:7*

This passage is found in the letter to the church at Ephesus. There is nothing else symbolic in this section and when compared to other Scriptures it is clear these are actual descriptions and not symbolism. There was a **tree of life** in the garden of Eden.

*And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Gen 2:9*

Obviously it was a real tree that could have given eternal life even to those dead in sin. *"Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Gen 3:22).* Jesus therefore promised that the tree of life will be restored and we will again be allowed to eat from it in the heavenly country.

Yet as important as the tree is the place where Jesus revealed it is located: In the *paradise* of God! In the Bible of Jesus day(Septuagint) this is the same Greek word used thirteen times for the *garden* in Eden. It is also the same word for the place Jesus told the thief they were going the very day of their crucifixion(Lk 23:43) and the place Paul was caught up to and saw(2 Cor 12:4). Clearly a new "*garden*" will be planted made of spiritual things. Beauty, fragrant, delightfully peaceful are the adjectives of a garden. Jesus promised that a new heavenly garden is awaiting us. Will it be based on what God originally gave us? Glorified man will be restored to a spiritual garden and given access to the tree of life! Truly how beautiful heaven must be!

### **Heaven 2 To Him Who Overcomes**

The deepest desires of our heart are those things we long and yearn for with all our being. Such desires change as we live. When we are young our hearts anticipate a spouse, children, and career. When we have gained these we yearn for success and prosperity. At some time or another friends and family, vacations, possessions, hobbies and other things have captured our attention leading to such deep longing.

### **What about Heaven?**

Is heaven among our deep desire, longing and ache in our heart? Did such longings appear in our youth or middle age or will we have to wait for the dark days to dawn when we can no longer pursue or enjoy anything else(Ecc 12)?

A longing is created when we learn of something exciting and we want to do it. The more pleasure and excitement it can bring to us the more we want to do it! Our longing for heaven is based on what we know about it. So the more we learn the stronger our longing. As Jesus spoke to the seven churches of Asia, he used things we will have and enjoy in heaven to motivate them. Those who are faithful in:

Ephesus: eat of the tree of life in paradise of God

Smyrna the crown of life not hurt by second death

Pergamum hidden manna; white stone; new name

Thyatira the morning star

Sardis white garments; name in book of life

Philadelphia pillar in temple and go out no more.

Laodicea sit with me in my throne, as I sat down with my Father in his throne.

These are some of the things we will be given and will enjoy after this life is over. The more we understand and think about them the more excited we will become. What will it be like to taste the fruit of the tree of life in the paradise of God returned to a beautiful garden God planted just as the one in Eden from which we were banished.

In this wonderful place we will all wear a beautiful crown of life. This crown is described as "*incorruptible*" (1Cor 9:25), "*crown of righteousness*" (2 Tim 4:8) and "*crown of glory that does not away*" (1Pet 5:4). This crown signifies victory, glory and power. We are working for it even;

now and in heaven we will wear it with joy and contentment. Some things we work as hard to avoid as those things we want. If we successfully avoid them we see it as a great blessing. Jesus promised that when the second death occurs we will not be hurt by it. For *"He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."* Rev 2:11b

What is "hidden manna?" All we know about manna is learned from Israel in the wilderness. While there God took care of all their needs. Manna was the food from heaven that sustained them the entire forty years in the wilderness. In heaven, Jesus will give his people a spiritual manna. Along with the manna they will also receive a white stone engraved with a precious name no one knows but those who receive it. Just as we give special engraved objects of granite, crystal or precious metals to honor and praise those who are worthy, Jesus will have a white stone of some precious heavenly material for those who are worthy.

His promise to Thyatira can take our breath away. *"I will give him the morning star."* This is among the brightest of all stars. What does it mean to have this for our very own? It is something amazingly wonderful but for now above our comprehension. It will clearly be a possession to cherish and esteem, and it is definitely something meditate upon.

The faithful in Sardis are told they *"will walk with Me in white for they are worthy"* and will be *"clothed in white garments."* Remember at the transfiguration when Jesus garments became white and glistening? The clothing of the heavenly is often described as white (Mt 17:2; 28:3; Jn 20:12; Acts 1:10). After the resurrection we will too will be clothed in such garments as they wear. Jesus also promised the faithful their name would remain in the book of life. Moses first mentioned this book and it has been described by others (Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:28; Phil 4:3; Rev 20:12-15). Our names will be written in that book and then confessed (in great honor) as Jesus promised (Mt 10:32-33). Imagine the glory of hearing our now worthless name confessed to the Father as one of the faithful few!

The symbol of the pillar promised to Philadelphia may be nothing more than that of support and stability conveying permanence. We do not have to fear that we will be removed as we were from the garden of Eden. Added to this is the name of God, new Jerusalem and Jesus. In our role as pillar in the temple, we will be engraved. We belong to God, to Jesus and to the city of New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven. This is clearly the city promised to Abraham. The one whose builder and maker is God! We will see it come down out of heaven and we will be permanent residents! The name of God, the city, and Jesus new name will be written upon us. We will be fully His.

To the faithful in Laodicea Jesus promised they would sit down with him on his throne. So we could not possibly minimize the greatness of this promise Jesus revealed that it would be similar to what he did after his own resurrection. We will *"sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."* (Rev 3:21). This wording is similar to what Paul told Timothy. *"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us"* (2Tim 2:12).

At the very least this brings us back to the time in the garden of Eden when man had dominion over all. At that time we reigned over all God's material creation. Nothing was above our power to control. There was no fears at that time and there will be none in the time to come. So much will change when we enter the new heavens and earth and into the city whose builder and maker is God. But every change will be far better than the best we have every seen here. These words were just given for them. If we do as they did they are also for us. If we are faithful every one of these promises will be our own special possession. Jesus gave us these promises to increase our excitement and strengthen our resolve. But they are only words in a book until we meditate upon them and make them real and tangible within our hearts. *"How beautiful! heaven must be."*

### Heavenly Jerusalem

Some of the most beautiful descriptions of heaven are found in the great symbolism of the final chapters in Revelation. Though they have more to say about the new heavens and earth and heavenly Jerusalem than other Scriptures the information is vague, perhaps figurative and clearly subject to differing views. Some who study these chapters believe they do not speak of heaven at all, but are only symbols of the church still here on earth. Since conclusions we draw,

from these passages must be built on the foundation of promises without symbolism it is harder work to learn them. Today's article is not filled with gold nuggets of truth lying on the surface for easy gathering but rich veins of knowledge which must be dug from the hard rock of the imagery and symbolism of Revelation.

All who read the visions of the seven seals(5-8) seven trumpets (8-11), three woes(8-11), and seven bowls(15-16) are overwhelmed at their breathtaking images. Most are very humble in how they proclaim their interpretations. They were not meant to be easily understood. In times of great persecution their message was only for the saints. The truth of Revelation is learned when we compare the figures and images there to clearer passages elsewhere. This is how God intended this book to be studied.

This is exactly what we must do as we enter the twentieth Chapter. John saw a vision of a throne and a great day of judgment. Punishment meted out to the wicked and reward to the righteous(20:11-15). John saw "a great white throne and him that sat upon it." and "the earth and the heaven flee with no place for them." He also saw "the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is of life." "All the dead were judged according to their works." He beheld "death and Hades cast into the lake of fire" and "any who were not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Is this vision a true picture of what will be or a figure we are to interpret in some other way? What do other Scriptures reveal?

Jesus spoke of sitting on his throne and judging all men(Mt 25:31-32). Peter said the heavens and the earth would be burned up(II Pet 3:10ff) There is a book of life and our names are written in it(Phil 4:3 Rev 3:5). The dead will be judged according to deeds(II Cor 5:10). The wicked will be cast into the fire(Mt 13:42; 18:8; 25:41).

Since what John saw in a vision clearly matches other Scripture, there is little reason to doubt this is an accurate picture of the second coming and the judgment day. With the physical creation removed, judgment complete, wicked cast into the lake of fire and the righteous with Him, God's eternal purpose is complete. What about the next scene?

*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev 21:1-2*

This certainly could be a return to symbolism. It could be a vision of the glorified church on earth after the terrible conflicts are past. But it could also be the glorified church as it enters heaven. What saith the Scriptures?

Peter spoke of God's promise of a new heavens and earth(1Pet 3:12-13) He also clearly revealed the first heaven and earth passed away(dissolved with fervent heat 2 Pet 3:10-12). Nothing is said anywhere else about the sea, but clearly the first part of the verse is based on promises elsewhere.

John then saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Is this the city Abraham was looking for whose builder and maker is God(Heb 11:10)? Is it the city God had prepared for us in the better heavenly country(Heb 11:16)? Jesus himself promised the brethren in Philadelphia that if they overcame:

*... I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of **the city** of my God, **the new Jerusalem**, which **cometh down out of heaven from my God**... Rev 3:12*

This promise from Jesus could only be understood by those who received it as something they would receive in the time to come as part of their heavenly reward. Those words bold and underlined are exactly the same in both verses. What John perfectly described is what Jesus promised.

This city is also described by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews. Where Israel's experiences at Mt Sinai are compared with our own experiences since we have entered the church.

It must have been awesome to see God's manifestation on Mt Sinai. The smoke, earthquake, lightning, thunder and burning fire clearly struck them with great fear and awe. Then the trumpet growing louder and louder and the voice of words giving the Ten Commandments(Heb 12:18-21). "so fearful was the appearance, Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake."



But when compared to our own experience (seen by faith and not by sight) they are insignificant. The Holy Spirit speaks *"of the things that are not seen and are eternal"* blending the spiritual and material parts of our life into a fascinating whole. We are here but we are also there.

Just as the material creation exists within God's spiritual realm where he rules (Isa 66:1), we still live in the material creation but also with him in the spiritual realm (Eph 1:20; 2:6). When we entered the kingdom and became alive in the spirit our citizenship was moved from this world into heaven. Spiritually we truly are strangers and pilgrims. *"While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); ... and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."* 2 Cor 5:6-8

So from the moment of our baptism we have come to *"Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."* We are also in the midst of an innumerable company of angels, where God the Judge of all and the spirits of just men made perfect both dwell. (Heb 12:22-24).

Is this the church in time, the church in eternity, or both? Where is Mt Zion, the city of living God, and heavenly Jerusalem? Where are the innumerable company of angels and God the judge of all? Where are the spirits of just men made perfect and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant?

That the church exists simultaneously in both the material and spiritual realm is obvious for Jesus (in heaven) is the head and we (on earth) are the body. In the church we come to angels, God, Jesus and the spirits of just men made perfect. We are still here in our body, but *"our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (Phil 3:20)"* and only death or the second coming separate us from them.

What began on earth is perfected in heaven. Citizenship in the city of heavenly Jerusalem was something even Abraham understood as a stranger and pilgrim here. So the new Jerusalem does exist. We are already citizens and we are only waiting for that day to dawn.

This is the exact application the Holy Spirit makes:

*... He has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven. Now this, Yet once more, indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.* Heb 12:26b-28

We are already in God's eternal kingdom. But until the things that can still be shaken (heavens and earth) are removed the things spoken of here will not be seen. Once they are removed only the things that cannot be shaken will remain. What then remains is exactly what John saw in Revelation and Peter said about the day of the Lord. The heavens and earth and all their works are burned up (shaken and removed). Then only the things that cannot be shaken (*"Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem"*) remain.

Nothing will begin until the things that are made are removed. When the physical creation dissolves (II Pet 3:11), and there is no more found any place for them (Rev 21:11), it will occur.

This is the exact moment the Spirit of God described in the 21st chapter of Revelation. Obviously this is a true picture of what occurs after the day of judgment. When the old heaven and earth are shaken and removed, the new Jerusalem will come down from heaven.

This doesn't change the symbolism of the rest of the chapter, but it clearly gives us justification to assess it as descriptions of the city whose builder and maker is God. We will still be cautious, and we must never guess! But in our hearts we can rejoice as we look at what God has in mind for those who love Him.

### **All Things New**

Although there is no question that the final visions John saw (Rev 21-22), are of the victorious church, there are differences of opinion about when they were to occur. Some believe it is the victorious church here on earth, while others the victorious church as it enters heaven after the resurrection.

With such differences of opinion it is wise to validate our own conclusions with other more literal Scriptures. John said he saw a *"new heaven and a new earth."* When prophesying of the end of this age, Peter's words are so close to John's they must be the same. Yet Peter spoke of it as a promise from God to create a new heaven and a new earth (II Pet 3:9-13). When John sees the

“*holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God*” he only saw what Jesus promised to those in Philadelphia as a part of their reward (Rev 3:12) and what God promised Abraham (Heb 11:10) as his reward. With this foundation we know that some of this vision is a description of our final home (21:1-2). What about the other things John saw?

God will “*wipe away every tear from their eyes.*” (21:4) This verse is often rightly quoted at funerals to comfort those who mourn over their loss. It is comforting to know that someday this will all be removed. In New Jerusalem God will wipe away all the tears. But why will there be no tears? Because “*Death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.*”

There is a lot of “food for thought” here. When God said there would be no mourning, he was also revealing that all the things that now cause mourning will be removed. Everything that creates sorrow or mourning will be gone forever. What creates sorrow? The loss of something precious to us. When we can no longer suffer the loss of loved ones, the loss of health, finances or ruined plans we will never mourn. This is a promise that everything causing sorrow or bitter disappointment is to be banished.

In the first creation God said, “*Let them have dominion over all the earth.*” (Gen 1:26-27). With “*dominion over all*” whatever was planned was done and whatever was done remained as it was completed. With dominion nothing unforeseen could create a loss. Things could not go wrong. There may have been limitations on this dominion, but they knew what those limits were and did not attempt to exceed them. In heaven we will have a similar dominion that will banish disappointment, sorrow, loss and mourning.

In New Jerusalem there will be “*no pain anymore.*” This means those things that now create pain will no longer exist. Our body will not be subject to cuts, bruises, broken bones, sickness, headaches, depression, or any other thing now causing pain. What a comforting thought to those in their dark days of pain, sorrow and loss (Ecc 11:8 -12:7). As we compare this with Paul’s description of the resurrection we see more detail. We will be raised: in incorruption, in glory, in power, in immortality, and a spiritual body. What a wonderful peaceful world awaits us.

When “*The first things are passed away*” not only will there be no pain, God also promises: “*Behold, I make all things new.*” What does it mean to be new? “*Recently made, fresh, unused, unworn. . . . of a new kind; unprecedented, novel, unheard of*” When the “*first things*” pass away, everything will be “*recently made, fresh, recent, unused, and unworn.*” The heavens and earth given to Adam and Eve was six days old when they entered it. Everything was recently made. So it will be again. But more than this it will also be *of a new kind; unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of.* To gain some insight consider Paul’s description of the resurrection. “*the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*” (1Cor 15:46-47; 49) Since “*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*” (1Cor 15:50) things will be very different. All will be *unprecedented and of a new kind.*

As we grope for what this might mean we are again helped by other Scripture. Jesus said that in the resurrection there will be no marriage for we will be like the angels (Mt 22:29-30). Therefore male or female will pass away with the first things so it will all be of an entirely new kind. A world with no children, and no family relationships as we know them. No longer “*is it not good that the man should be alone.*” No one will need a “*helper suitable for him*” or her. We will be “*like the angels.*” We will be whole with no need for another to become one flesh. There will be no more sexual desire, no more training and raising children. No more working to support a family or staying home to raise one.

Another thing that will be unprecedented is the removal of the curse. No more “*in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground.*” (Gen 3:19) No more ravages of sin either within our heart or against us by the sins of others. The “*physical laws*” that now create accidents and death will be rescinded. No more bacteria or virus to make us ill. These are the novel things indeed!

As inquisitive people we find many things to wonder about and many questions to ask. Will there be a spiritual counterpart to fish, birds and the animals created on the third, fifth and sixth;

day of creation? Will God create spiritual flowers and spiritual trees? Will there be spiritual fruit and nuts? Will we eat spiritual food three times a day? Will we breath in the spiritual realm? Will we drink and sleep? Will we need to do work to have self-esteem. Will we enjoy hobbies, will we learn and grow, will we become skilled and proficient in things? Will we have fun and get excited with anticipation? Will we take dominion as we have done here? Will there be a spiritual garden to tend?

We don't know. All things will be made new so we can't even guess. We simply trust God. Based upon the first creation we can get a shadowy picture of how wonderful things could be there.

One thing is certain: "*These words are faithful and true.*" Since "*it is impossible for God to lie*" and we still have the two immutable things (God *promised* and God *swore with an oath*) (Heb: 6:13-20), all of these promises will surely come to pass. We may not fully understand them, but with Paul we can say: "*I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" (2 Tim 1:12).

With the expression "all things new" the rest of the vision becomes much more complicated and more difficult to interpret. With all made *new* the things in John's vision become as parables. Pictures of things here that illustrate spiritual truths there. Words like gold, precious stones, rivers, water, and months must be understood in a spiritual, *new and novel* sense. If the gold here is the gold there it will not be new. But as a parable gold infers something precious, special and desirable. To envision more than this is to go beyond what is written.

Think of it in this way. Genesis 1-2 reveal a rough sketch of this creation. If we were not here to see exactly what these things are there would be no way to could explain a bird, fish, or a star. So if Genesis were a prophecy we would not be able to explain any of it. Therefore it is not surprising that a similar abbreviate account of the new heavens and new earth also give us little to truly understand and see clearly. While the things revealed about the world to come are similar to Genesis, we can't see them. We can't compare what we read to what is here. When God said birds fish, and stars, how could we know the multitudes of different species and kinds that were made if we were not here to see them.

So when John spoke of a new heaven and new earth. He sought to describe what he saw with those things that are similar here. But his short description will obviously contain much more than what he has written. In the term *earth* we have much to question. Will it be like the garden of Eden? Will it be more wonderful and have more variety than this creation? Will it have formations of spiritual materials as beautiful as our mountains, valleys and meadows? Will it have spiritual equals to our trees, bushes, flowers and plants? Will it have spiritual counterparts to our multitudes of birds and animals? We have no answers yet, but it is exciting to imagine the manifold wisdom of our God at work. God does reveal some things, but we will have to wait until that great day to see all that God has prepared for those who love him.

### **The Wife of the Lamb**

This is the *ninth* article on the wonderful and amazing things God has "*prepared for them that love him*" as the "*hope of our calling.*" Look at the titles. Can we remember a Scripture or a main point for each topic?

1 Life After Death	5	Heaven
2 Second Coming	6	To Him who Overcomes
3 The Resurrection 1	7	Heavenly Jerusalem
4 The Resurrection 2	8	All things New

The goal of these lessons was to help us see that from the instant we die the things God has "*prepared for them that love him*" get better and better. First after death, God has prepared a beautiful place (*paradise*) where we will joyously wait for our Lord in *glory* and *comfort*. Then, we will all see our *Lord at his coming* and experience the amazement God's preparations for that day. At that instant our bodies will be *raised immortal, powerful* and *glorious* bearing the image not only of the heavenly world to which we are going, but of the Lord Jesus himself! We will watch as the material creation is *dissolved* and *melts with fervent heat* and then *stand before the judgment seat* and *receive the things done in the body*. But because *there is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus*, this day will be a day not only of *mercy, compassion,*

and forgiveness but also of reward, praise, and honor.

Are we truly “standing on these promises of God” and “begotten again unto a living hope?” How excited are we about the wonderful “glories to be revealed” which “are unworthy to be compared with our present suffering?” Since God has promised a future much more pleasant than the present, are we “strangers and pilgrims” looking not at the “seen(temporary) but at the unseen(eternal) things?”

This was the purpose of these articles: to encourage, exhort and strengthen our knowledge of these things. For those already excited with anticipation, it is a wonderful refresher and for those who have not yet had the opportunity to learn a real eye opener! Only when we are excited about these things in this life will we be able to use them to motivate us to greater sacrifice and efforts. It will be too late after we see them to wish we had done more and far too late if we lose them before we even see them. Promises that motivate must be known and exciting to do their work. we must know them.

*Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor 7:1*

John’s final words and final visions(Rev 21-22) contain some of the most vivid descriptions, but they are clothed with the same symbolism as the other visions in Revelation. The key to break their coded messages is to compare them with other literal Scripture. As long as we use the clear promises Jesus and his apostles revealed and compare them to these visions we are on safe ground.

The angel described John’s final vision as “the bride, the wife of the Lamb(the holy city, Jerusalem).” Since as we carefully proved the first vision was the church in its glory after the judgment, so must this one be.

In the first, John saw “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven.” in the second an angel “ carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.” In both it is “the holy city” “Jerusalem,” and “coming down out of heaven” that John saw.

So now we must take these words and carefully meditate upon them and imagine what John saw. John is either standing upon the mountain watching the city descend or the city is descending onto the mountain. What follows has enchanted and amazed all who have lived before us. Many of our songs about heaven have been written based upon them. But before we begin to take John’s words and build our own image of what he saw we must remember what God said in the previous vision:

**“Behold, I make all things new.”**

Even the words the Spirit used to describe what John saw reveal that they are very different from what we would see here. The precious things he described resemble things here, yet each is subtly different. The city was *pure gold like unto pure glass*. The streets are *pure gold as it were transparent glass*. The gates are *pearls* large enough to walk through. There is a fountain of the water of life, yet it is spiritual water. There is a tree of life bearing twelve fruits and though in eternity he speaks of months. It is evident that what we know here is used as a parable. They resemble what we know, but they are not really what we know at all.

Remember this. The things in these visions are new and they are spiritual in their nature and in their substance. What is a spiritual diamond or emerald? What is it they are selected to represent? Is it the stone itself, the color, or the precious nature that they resemble? Could be any or all of them. We have borne the image of the earthy and so have they. In heaven as we will bear the image of the heavenly and so will they(1Cor 15:46-49). There will be months and fruit, water, precious stones and metals but all spiritual and all eternal. But we will have to experience it before we can fully understand it. One thing is clear throughout the vision. It will far surpass the best we have ever seen here!

The size of the city is breathtaking. It is 12,000 furlongs. A “furlong” or “stadium” was a standard measure in Rome and Greece.

*“Stadion...a stadium, i.e. 1. A measure of length comprising 600 Greek feet, 625 Roman feet, or 125 Roman paces... one eighth of a roman mile[ i. e. 606 ¾ Eng. Feet...” (Thayer,*

P. 585; 4712)

This works out to about 1/8 of our mile also. If we multiply this by 12,000, we see city approximately of 1,500 miles. Since it is foursquare it is 1,500 miles in width, length, and height. The NAS simply gives the English dimensions:

*And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. Rev 21:16(NAS)*

This is a big city!!! It's height and length make it 2.25 million square miles. To put this in perspective the continental United States is only 3.1 million! But when we then add in the height of 1500 miles it is then 3.4 billion cubic miles. But once again this is all relative to whatever distance and space mean in the spiritual realm. Here we could not live in a city that high. Our atmosphere ends at 62 miles but even in an airplane at 18,000 feet(3 miles) we need oxygen to live.

All we know is that this city whose builder and maker is God is a grand city in size and in preciousness! One that truly makes us only strangers and pilgrims here.

### **We know that, if he shall be manifested,**

This is what has been manifested and revealed and therefore we know(*oida -understand perceive*). Since this if is joined to an Subjunctive Aorist this is one of those times when the "if" should have been translated *when* or *whenever* which all the later translations have done.

"*ean*... I. a conditional particle(derived from *ei an*), which makes reference to time and to experience, introducing something future, but not determining, before the event, whether it is certainly to take place; *if, in case* ... 1. with the subjunctive, according to the regular usage of the more ancient and elegant classic writers. **a.** with the subjunctive present:... if it be the case, as to which I do not know, that ... **b.** with the subjunctive aorist, corresponding to the Latin future perfect: ... if thou shalt have... **c.** irregularly, but to be explained as an imitation of the Hebrew . . . **ean with the subjunctive aorist is used of things which the speaker or writer thinks will certainly take place, where *hotan, when, whenever, should have been used.*** . . . **d.** sometimes when the particle is used with the subjunctive aorist the futurity of a thing is not so much affirmed as imagined, it being known to be something which never could happen. . ." (Thayer, p. 162-163; 1437)

There is no doubt he will be manifested

*And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven. Acts 1:10-11*

*Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen. Rev 1:7*

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 17 then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1Thes 4:16-17*

### **we shall be like him;**

At the moment Jesus appears all will be revealed and made clear. What we shall be will be seen in him. At the last trump we will look up to Jesus in the clouds coming in glory. We will look up to see him and then when our gaze returns to ourselves and those around us, there will be a change and we will be "*like*" him.

"*homoios*... *like similar, resembling*: a. *like* i.e resembling... b. *like* i.e. corresponding or equiv. to, the same as..." (Thayer p 445; 3664)

It is difficult to know exactly how far to take this passage. The word like can mean either "*similar*" or "*resembling*" or it can mean "*corresponding to*" or "*the same as.*" So which is it here? Either way it will be amazing, but how far do we take it? If this were all the revelation we had we would leave it with the question and wait and see. But Paul also speaks of this same event in several places. It still does not completely answer which, but it gives clearer insight. First carefully read his words in Philippians.

*For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, (that it may be) conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself. Phil 3:20-21*  
As here in John, Paul speaks of the return of Jesus. When he returns he will “*fashion anew the body of our humiliation.*” This refers to what we are today. Our physical body is still under the curse of sin, only our soul has been redeemed. But at his return he will fashion it anew. This word means that we will be transformed, our outward appearance will change.

“*meta-schematizo*,... The verb means to transform, “to alter,” “to change the outward appearance of a person or thing,” Kittel TDWNT 3345)  
Into what then will it be changed? It will “*have the same form*” be “*similar*” and “*conformed to*” the body in which Jesus will appear.

“*sum-morphos*,...*having the same form as another...* (Vulg. *conformis, configuratus*); *similar, conformed to...*: (Thayer, p. 596; 4832).  
It will also be manifested in glory.

*When Christ, (who is) our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. Col 3:4*

When we add to this What Paul says in Corinthians, we get about as clear a picture is possible before the actual event occurs.

*So also is the resurrection from the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1 Cor. 15:42-44).*

*However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Cor 15:46-49*

Whatever glory Jesus had with the Father before the world was will be used as the template for the body we will receive at his coming.

*And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. John 17:5*

### **for we shall see him even as he is.**

The final piece of revelation appears to maximize what we are to understand. At the end we are to “see” him. This term is often used of seeing Jesus after his resurrection. Most certainly at the second coming he will “*allow himself to be seen.*”

“*optano* in the middle voice signifies “to allow oneself to be seen.” It is rendered “appearing” in Acts 1:3, “being seen,” of the Lord’s “appearances” after His resurrection; ...” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary 3700)

But this time he will allow us to seem him “*even as*” he is. This is the word of proportion and degree. It is like the balancing scales in perfect alignment. When so aligned what is on one side is even as, like as, in proportion and degree to what is on the other side.

“*kathos*,...1. *according as, just as, even as*: in the first member of a comparison:...2. *according as* i.e. *in proportion as, in the degree that*:...3. *since, seeing that, agreeably to the fact that.*” (Thayer, p. 314; 2531).

So when we “see” him at his coming we will not see an image, or how he looked while he was in a body of flesh. When we see him at the second coming we will see him exactly as he truly is in his eternal spiritual body. Then we will find our own body conformed to and like his.

### **3 And every one that hath this hope (set) on him**

Now for a very important practical application. There are no exceptions. Every class, every kind every individual who possess and holds fast to this hope will always do this. Thus his promises united to faith creates this hope and once created it leads to a very important and life changing decision.

### **purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**

There are several terms for “purify” in the NT. This one is closely aligned with the word “holy.” First the verb then the noun.

“*hagnizo*... *to purify*; 1. ceremonially... to cleanse themselves from levitical pollution by means of prayers, abstinence, washings, sacrifices... the pass. has a reflexive force, *to take upon one’s self*

a purification... 2. morally..." (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit. p. 7; 48)

"hagnos, ... 1. exciting reverence, venerable, sacred ... 2. pure ... a. pure from carnality, chaste, modest,... b. pure from every fault, immaculate ..." (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit., p. 8; 53).

"hagnos, like *hagios* is a verbal adjective of *azomai*. It originally signifies "that which awakens religious awe." 1. It signifies "moral purity and sincerity," as in relation to Christ ... It has the meaning of "innocence" in regard to a matter... (Kittel TDWND ; 53)

Just as Jesus was morally pure, sincere and innocent, so should we be seeking to cleanse ourselves from all spiritual and moral defilement.

*Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you, 18And will be to you a Father, And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 1 Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2*  
Cor 6:17-18; 7:1

#### 4 Every one that doeth sin

This is one of those passages that ties together so many concepts revealed in both covenants regarding law and sin. But before we can fully appreciate what John revealed about the nature of sin to law, we need to understand the basic nature of *sin* itself. What does this word mean to us? The foundation for all our knowledge of sin and its consequences is the first sin committed in the garden of Eden. God warned Adam and Eve that the day they ate of the fruit of that tree they would surely die. So the consequences of a single sin is death. This ties in perfectly with Romans 3:23 where the wages of a sin (singular) is death:

*For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 6:23*

Regardless of how many other Scriptures we look at, this basic idea never changes. Sin is falling short of the glory of God which is also a failure to hit the mark God had set for us at the creation. We were destined to be his children, holy, blameless and faithful. The severity of failure to measure up to something is tied to the consequences. Some failures bring death, others cost a job, spouse, liberty, or enjoyment. But this missing of the mark brings death.

*“hamartia... a failing to hit the mark... a bad action, evil deed ... In the N. T. always in an ethical sense, and 1. equiv. to ... a sinning, whether it occurs by omission or commission, in thought and feeling or in speech and action... 2. that which is done wrong committed or resultant sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act... 3. collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many...” (Thayer, p. 31; 266)*

One of the primary purposes of Scripture is to help us identify and recognize the severity of sin. From the time of Adam to the present death has passed to all men because all sinned.

*Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:-- Rom 5:12*

So God has revealed sin so that we can avoid these death causing actions. John now gives one additional important observation about sin. Sin is lawlessness.

This passage makes sin the noun and then uses a present active participle. The “sin doing one” or “the one who is doing sin” is one who is continuously practicing (*poieo* – producing, making, doing) sin. This is not something done once and then put to death through repentance and confession. This is a continuous production of sin, without any break or end.

#### **doeth also lawlessness;**

Using the same term (*poieo* – producing, making, doing) but changing to a present indicative active verb, now instead of a verbal noun, it becomes someone who is continuously doing. Like “The runner is running,” or the swimmer is swimming” “the sin producer is doing lawlessness. The relationship between sin and law is something Paul spent a great deal of time dealing with in Romans. Remember Paul used the first three chapters of Romans to prove that all needed the gospel because all had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). He too dealt with the law: “Through the law (cometh) the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:19-20), sin is not imputed when there is no law. (Rom 5:12-13), I had not known sin, except through the law: apart from the law sin (is) dead, for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me (Rom 7:7-13).

*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaks to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: 9 because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for **through the law (cometh) the knowledge of sin.** Rom 3:19-20*

*Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:-- 13 for until the law sin was in the world; but **sin is not imputed when there is no law.** Rom 5:12-13*

*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, **I had not known sin, except through the law:** for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet: 8 but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: **for apart from the law sin (is) dead.** 9 And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; 10 and the commandment, which (was) unto life, this I found (to be) unto death: 11 for **sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me.** 12 So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. 13 Did then that which is good become death unto*



me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good;-- that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful. Rom 7:7-13

This is exactly what John is saying in this verse. By definition sin is working outside of the law or refusing to live under boundaries of the law is a "lawless" person. John simply puts the prefix that negates law and makes it un-law. Thus the producing sinner is continuously doing things that violates law or is doing things without the sanction and permission of law.

"*anomia* ... The privative prefix and the content of the word *nomos* give two shades of meaning to *anomia*. The ref. is either a. to a fact. "there is or was no law," "without a (the) law," or b. the word means "against the (a) law," with an implied judgment, since it is assumed that there is in fact a binding law. This gives *anomia* the sense of "wrongdoing," "sin." In fact, of course, the two meanings cannot be sharply differentiated from one another in the majority of cases. The difference is merely one of emphasis." (TDWNT 458)

The Holy Spirit wants us to understand a very important point about sin and the law. There can be no sin without the violation of the Law. Only through the law can an understanding of good and evil bring us to the place where we can sin. So the primary role of those who are walking in the light is to operate within the boundaries of the law so that we never miss the mark.

### **and sin is lawlessness**

With a verb of being the two are equated. Like I am a man, or Alan is old, sin is lawlessness. There can be no sin without the violation of law and all violations of law are sin.

### **5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins;**

Once again we return to the concept of knowledge (*oida*) and its proper application. The one thing Scripture revealed over and over about the coming Messiah and which we have come to know (perfect indicative active) and still know is that Jesus was "manifested" to take away sin. This is something we learned long ago and still know. Jesus was "*made known and visible*" for the express purpose of "taking away" sin.

"*phaneroo* to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way; (Thayer's Greek Lexicon NT:5319)

"*airo*... to raise up; a. to raise from the ground, take up... b. to raise upwards, elevate, lift up... 2. to take upon one's self and carry what has been raised, to bear... to bear away what has been raised, carry off; a. to move from its place... d. to carry off, carry away with one... to take out of the way, destroy..." (Thayer, P. 16-17; 142)

From the very first sin God had promised He would take it out of the way and destroy not only the sin, but the serpent(devil) who had tempted man to do it.

*And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Gen. 3:14-15

As time passed and God become more specific about the nature of this one born of the seed of the woman. He would "carry away and take out of the way" sin.

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . 10 Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see (his) seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, (and) shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.* Isa. 53:5-6; 10-12

The primary purpose for the word becoming flesh and dwelling among us was to bring salvation by creating a way to redeem us from sin.

### **and in Him is no sin.**

Added to this is the truth that Jesus never sinned. He was the sinless son of God.

*Him who knew no sin he made (to be) sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor 5:21

For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 1 Pet 2:21-22  
For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Rom 8:3

These are two powerful additional reasons why the servants of God should purify themselves first through confession and forgiveness(1Jn 1:9) and second by working as diligently as possible to remove all sin from their lives. Jesus made it very clear that all things that lead us into sin must be removed no matter how painful or how important they have become in our lives.

43 And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. ... 45 And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. ... 47 And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; 48 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 49 For every one shall be salted with fire. Mark 9:43,45, 47-49

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin: Heb 12:4

### **6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not:**

With the phrase “whosoever” (Literally *pas ho* – “all the ones who” “everyone who”) John stressed that this is a universal truth for all who “abide” (*meno... to remain, abide; ... to continue to be*) in him This is also a present ative participle, the abiding one or all who are abiding. The term “abide” was introduced by John in a similar context at the end of the previous chapter which was the beginning of this line of thought.

And now, (my) little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him. 1 Jn 2:28-29

At first glance the term “sinneth not” seems to contradict what John said in the first chapter(1Jn 1:8-10). Since that is impossible we must not carry these words to the degree where **we create** a contradiction. We must harmonize “*If we say we have no sin we deceive...,” “If we confess our sins...,”* and “*If we say we have not sinned ...*” with this passage. We must find a way to “*sin not*” and not “*say we have no sin.*” We must *confess our sins* and “*not sin.*” At first glance we might think this is impossible but as we examine the grammar of each Greek verb, we find a way to harmonize them all. There is a small but distinct difference between “**have** no sin” “**have not sinned**” and “**sinneth not.**” In the first term “**have** no sin” we are affirming we have(continuous action in the present modment) no sin. Day by day by day we continuously have no sin. We never commit sin. In the second “**have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**” (Perfect Indicative Active) we are affirmed we have never sinned and there is no affect of sin in our lives up to this present moment. The third here “**sinneth not** also (Present Indicative Active). It affirms we do not continuously sin. This is committing a sin, not repenting, then another, not repenting, another and another and still no repentance. This verb states we are continually sinning without a break. So it is completely different. In the first two we are affirming that we have never sinned and have no sin no matter what we do, which is the very lawlessness John described above. What John affirmed here is that we can’t continually sin and still abide in Him. In order to abide in him, we must be continually repenting and confessing each sin we commit thus putting it to death.

“Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: ‘The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.’ 13 When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. 14 Again, when I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, 15 if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 16 None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live. Ezek 33:12-16

This is one of the first things taught in the gospel. It is our sins that destroy us and anger God. These things are to be repented of and destroyed. Since Jesus died to clear of these things, abiding him requires that we too remove ourselves from these things. If we continually abide in sin we can't continually abide in him and if we continually abide in him we can't continually abide in sin. They are mutually exclusive.

**whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him.**

Everyone who continues in sin(Present Active Participle) "*the sinning one, the sinner*". Participles are an interesting part of the grammar of a language. A participle takes the action of a verb and turns it into a person, place of thing(noun). The one who sins becomes the sinner. The one who continuously sins becomes the "*continuously sinning one.*" The "*continuously sinning one*" has not "*seen*" him. This is the same word John used in 1:1-3 when he spoke of that which they had seen of Jesus. What they had seen led them to fight to destroy sin and remove it from their lives. Those who are not fighting sin, but continually in sin have never really seen Jesus. More importantly they do not know him either. This is a play on the words of the previous verse. Since he was manifested (revealed and made known) to take away sin, how can we truly see him as he is without acknowledging that? Sin must be removed. Those who continuously sin have never seen, known or understood him

## **7 (My) little children, let no man lead you astray:**

Once again John returns to the same loving address Jesus used to speak to his apostles during his last night on earth (Jn 13:33). He loves his brethren and speaks to them in this endearing way. What he has just said is such a fundamental part of the gospel and relationship with God and his Son Jesus Christ that they must not be led astray or deceived. No matter what arguments are put forth, if they accept them they will only be led astray and become deceived.

### **he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous:**

Once again John uses a present active participle, he takes the verb "doing" and makes it into a person. There is a person who is doing righteousness and he is "the doing one," or "the doer." This "doing righteousness one" has two choices. He can be the "doing one" (doer) of righteousness or the "doing one" (doer) of sin. If we are continuously doing righteousness then we are righteous even as he is righteous. This is something God revealed even in the creation. Everything produces after its kind. Whether it be vegetation or life in the water, air or land everything produces offspring exactly like itself.

*12 And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good. . . . 21 And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good. . . . 25 And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and God saw that it was good. Gen 1:12; 21; 25*

This is exactly the same principle Jesus gave in the sermon on the mount.

*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. 16 By their fruits ye shall know them. Do (men) gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Mt 7:15-20*

No matter what kind of character they portray and no matter how eloquent their arguments and charismatic their demeanor, no one can avoid these clear signs. No matter how eloquent the arguments and kind and gentle the teacher, if an apple tree is producing ripe apples you cannot be deceived that they are oranges. So also, God is righteous. The fruit of the gospel is to be righteous. If any one of us is "the doing one" of righteousness then we truly are righteous just as if the tree is "the doing one" of apples it is an apple tree. There is no way to avoid or contradict this conclusion.

### **8 he that doeth sin is of the devil;**

By the same reasoning, "the doing one" of sin is of the devil. This too is a present active participle, like the runner is running the sinner is sinning. When he stops sinning (by repentance and confession) he is no longer a sinner (present active participle) but was a sinner. But the sinner (doer of sin) is of the devil.

*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: 13 neither present your members unto sin (as) instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members (as) instruments of righteousness unto God. Rom 6:12-13*

*Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves (as) servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; 18 and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. Rom 6:15-18*

*I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members (as) servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members (as) servants to righteousness unto sanctification. 20 For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. 21 What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. Rom 6:19-22*

We are either servants of sin or servants of righteousness. When we are servants of sin we are committing sin and sin is the main purpose of our life. We may stray into righteousness from time to time, but sin is the main service of our lives. This is how each of us comes to the gospel. But once we learn of God and his righteousness, we begin to change our entire view of life and we become servants of righteousness. We may stray into sin from time to time, but our main focus and goal is to serve God and righteousness.

Here John speaks more of family resemblance. There are characteristics of God that lead us to resemble him and be one of his children. There are also characteristics of the devil that lead us to resemble him and become one of his children. We all begin as children of God, but in time with our own free will we decide whether we enjoy sin and resemble the devil or we enjoy righteousness and resemble God.

All the gnostic teaching here is destroyed. It is not matter that is evil, it is Satan. We cannot remove the terrible nature of sin by succumbing to it. There are no beings between God and the creator of this world. The creator of this world is good and the devil sinning from the beginning has created all that terrible things we now associate with the physical creation.

The main characteristic of God that those after his kind(his children) will reflect is righteousness. The main characteristic of the devil that those after his kind(his children) will reflect is sin.

### **for the devil sinneth from the beginning.**

Once again John used the present indicative active to describe the kind of action of the devil's sins. He has been continually sinning from the beginning. Literally "*the devil **is sinning** from the beginning.*" The preposition here is the most important element in this phrase.

"*apo... preposition with the Genitive, from, signifying now Separation, now Origin... apo is used I of Separation; and 1. of local separation, after verbs of motion from a place, (of departing, fleeing, removing, expelling, throwing, etc. ... 2. of the separation of a part from the whole; where of a whole some part is taken... of any kind of separation of one thing from another by which the union or fellowship of the two is destroyed; a. after verbs of averting, loosening, liberating, ransoming, preserving... b. after verbs of desisting, abstaining, avoiding, etc. ... c. after verbs of concealing and hindering... 4. of a state of separation, i.e. of long distance...*" (Thayer, p. 57-59; 575)

"*apo,... preposition with the Genitive, from, signifying ... Origin ... apo is used ... II Of Origin; whether of local origin, the place whence; or of causal origin, the cause from which... 2. of causal origin, or the Cause; and a. of the material cause, so called, or of that which supplies the material for the maintenance of the action expressed by the verb:... b. of the cause on account of which anything is or is done, where commonly it can be rendered for... c. of the moving or impelling cause... d. of the efficient cause, viz. of things from the force of which anything proceeds and of persons, from whose will, power, authority, command, favor, order, influence, direction, anything is to be sought;*" (Thayer, p. 57-59; 575)

This preposition has basic ideas which seem to merge here into one truth. The Spirit used a preposition that leads our minds in one of two directions. Either the origin of the devil's sinning was the beginning, or the separation of the devil into sin was from the beginning. Does this mean that the devil began sinning in the beginning? Does this passage affirm that the first sin the devil committed was in the garden of Eden and he has continued to do so since? Or, is he revealing that the origin of all sin in this world began with Satan? The only other passage we have to verify what is revealed here is another passage John wrote.

*Ye are of (your) father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. John 8:44*

Jesus revealed that the devil was a murderer from the beginning. He used the law of God as the means to bring death to Eve and then Eve brought death to Adam. He also revealed that the devil is the father of all lies. Which makes it clear that the devil introduced sin through murder and deception. All subsequent acts of sin originate in him and not in God. We can say for certain that the origin of all sin from the beginning came from the devil. To know whether this was also the origin of his sinning can only be known with certainty at the day of judgment if God chooses to reveal it then.

*The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us*

*and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut 29:29*

All sin originated with Satan. He sinned when he led Eve to sin. It did not originate in God or in man. The fact that he was a murderer implies that man was a victim of Satan's deception. Not an innocent victim but a culpable and responsible victim who should have known better and not allowed the deception to destroy him. The point is simple. If we hate what Satan did to our race, we will flee and despise sin. Sin originated and continues in him. If we love sin, we are of the devil and if we hate sin, we are opposed to the devil.

**To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.**

John now reveals the true purpose the word who became flesh and revealed himself to be the Son of God was manifested to accomplish. The Word who was with God, was God, and created all things was manifested as the Son of God for a very specific purpose. He had always existed and had been involved in every facet of the creation. But until the gospel, he had not yet been manifested. The Father revealed him to us for the specific purpose (*hina* - purpose and end: *to the intent that; to the end that, in order that*) the "works" of the devil might be destroyed. It was the intent of God that the "*business, employment, and occupation*" of the devil be destroyed by Jesus manifestation. He wanted all that had been *accomplished by hand, art, industry, or mind* of the devil be destroyed.

*"ergon... 1. business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied... 2. any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind... 3. an act, deed, thing done: ..."* (Thayer, p. 248; 2041)

That this was the purpose was made clear even at the moment of sin.

*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." Gen 3:15*

We see the conflict that began in the time when Jesus started his ministry in the temptation. Satan sought to destroy Jesus and Jesus stood firm so he could destroy the works Satan had wrought.

Since the work of the devil is sin from the beginning, and Jesus came to destroy that work, what should the children of God also be seeking to do? The term "destroy" means "*to annul, subvert; to do away with; to deprive of authority*" and "*to overthrow, do away with*" these works.

*"luo... to loose any person (or thing) tied or fastened: prop. the bandages of the feet, the shoes... 2. to loose one bound, i.e. to unbind, release from bonds, set free: one bound up... 3. to loosen, undo, dissolve, anything bound, tied, or compacted together:... Laws, as having binding force, are likened to bonds; hence luein is i.q. to annul, subvert; to do away with; to deprive of authority, whether by precept or by act... to loose what is compacted or built together, to break up, demolish, destroy... to dissolve something coherent into parts, to destroy... metaph. to overthrow, do away with..."* (Thayer, p. 384-385; 3089)

Do we see the obvious conclusion. All that the devil has been about from the very beginning is "sin." Jesus came to destroy that which the devil had been doing. Therefore we must not build up or continue to accomplish the very thing Jesus came to destroy.

**9 Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin,**

John now affirms through the Holy Spirit that without exception, those who are "truly begotten" of God will not produce sin. This is a perfect passive participle. Thus it is an action that was done at some point in the past, but the affects of that action have continued right up to the present moment. Sin is the pivotal point of contact. If we have been truly begotten by being born again, then we repented of all sins, initially only recognizing their evil and God's hatred of them. But now we learn something even more important.

We must always remember that our relationship to God and to Satan hinge on this one thing. Once begotten of God, right up to this present moment, this will always be true. So our first inquiry centers on being "begotten" of God. The word "begotten" simply means being born of. In the first sixteen verses in the book of Matthew this word is used forty times to list the genealogy of Joseph from Abraham to his birth. It is the general word for a mother and father having a child. But John develops the word in his gospel as he does here in this epistle.

*But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, (even) to them that believe on his name: 13 who **were born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12-13*

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one **be born** anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man **be born** when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and **be born**? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one **be born** of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God! 6 That which **is born** of the flesh is flesh; and that which **is born** of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must **be born** anew. John 3:1-7

Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We **were not born** of fornication; we have one Father, (even) God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. John 8:41-42

Thus there is one specific act and time when we are “born again” and become “begotten of God.” This act occurs through the gospel and the Word of God.

For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet (have ye) not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel. 1 Cor 4:15

Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:18

Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: 23 having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. 24 For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls: 25 But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you. 1Pet 1:22-25

When we add to this truth that we are begotten through the word of God by the preaching of the gospel how this actually occurred, we are drawn inexorably to baptism. First the gospel and the word are joined to water and the water is clearly baptism.

that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, Eph 5:26  
And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, (here is) water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 (And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.) 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. Acts 8:35-38

Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. Acts 10:47-48

Paul clearly summed up the above and validated it as the truth.

But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, 5 not by works (done) in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:4-5

So once we have obeyed the gospel and been baptized, we no longer “do sin.”

Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with (him) in the likeness of his death, we shall be also (in the likeness) of his resurrection; 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with (him), that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; . . . 10 For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: 13 neither present your members unto sin (as) instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members (as) instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. Rom 6:3-6; 10-14

**doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him:**

Once again we have a present indicative active verb. The one begotten of God does not continually produce and make sin. Unlike the devil, unlike the world, and unlike what we did before we were baptized and begotten again of God we now do not practice sin on a continual basis. We may stumble into it. We may commit it “seventy times seven” or “seven times in a

day” but we do not continually commit it.

*Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Matt 18:21-22*

*Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. Luke 17:3-4*

Each time we sin, we can only stop sinning through confession and repentance. This is how we put these things to death if we stumble into them, while we are struggling with all our heart to remove them completely from our life.

*For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Rom 8:13-14*

*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Col 3:1-9*

The one truly begotten of God will never continue to practice sin with no stopping and without repentance and confession.

### **because his seed abideth in him:**

John gives the most powerful reason why this cannot happen after we are begotten again. His seed abides in him. Once again we return to Gen 1 and everything producing after its kind. This takes us back to everything producing after its kind. Since God is righteous and the devil a sinner. Since the son of God was manifested to take away sin, if we are begotten again and have his seed within us we simply cannot continuously practice sin. What is this seed? When did it enter? How does it remain in us?

*Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: 25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. . . . 37 And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil (one); 39 and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. Mt 13:24-25; 37-40*

*Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 And those by the way side are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And those on the rock (are) they who, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of (this) life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience. Lk 8:11-15;*

*having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and abides. 1Pet 1:23*

Once the seed (the word of God) enters into our heart we become the good seed and if all is as it should be we will produce fruit. The most important fruit of all is the removal of sin. Once this seed enters, we “cannot sin.”

### **and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.**

The term “cannot” is the negation (’ou) of the word for “power.” He does not have the power, is incapable and unable to do it.

*“dunamai... to be able, have power, whether by virtue of one’s own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom... to be able to do something... to be able, capable, strong, powerful...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p.*



158-159; 1410)

The reason he doesn't is because he has truly been begotten of God and the power of that birth is so strong in the hearts of those who have truly experienced it that they are simply unable to continually sin(Present Infinitive).

Think about it!!! A serpent has no choice but to do what serpents do. A corn plant, a star, a shark or dolphin. All have been begotten from parents who gave them no option but to be what they were. Although we have a choice in the sense of doing or not doing. We have no choice if we are truly begotten of God to do what God would have us to do.

*Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."*  
John 8:42-47

**10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil:**

It is in the midst of this very thing that the true children of God and the true children of the devil are made known. This is the genuine fruit that separates these two distinct groups. This is what fully reveals who we are “after their kind.” Just as an apple, pear and fig on the one hand and thorns, thistles and nettles on the other the seed/fruit reveals it. It is in the midst of the above that we see what truly reveals the children of God and the children of the devil.

**whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God,**

Literally “*all the not doers of righteousness*” No matter what is said, no matter what the arguments etc. One thing is clear. If we are not doers (present active participle - the doing one) of righteousness we are not of God. The preposition “of” comes from our word for exit.

“*ek...* It denotes as well exit or emission out of, as separation from, something with which there has been close connection; opp. to the preposition *eis* into and *en* in: *from out of, out from, forth from, from...* I. of PLACE and 1. univ. of the place from which; from a surrounding or enclosing place.. from the interior of... II of the ORIGIN, SOURCE, CAUSE; 1. Of generation, birth, race, lineage, nativity... 2. of any other kind or origin... 3. Of the material out of which a thing is made, etc...” (Thayer, NT: 1537)

Those whose origin, source or cause is God are the ones continually doing righteousness. Those who are not born of God are the ones not doing righteousness.

**neither he that loveth not his brother.**

A clear transition now occurs. Not only do the quality of deeds in regard to God and the doing of his commandments truly reflect our kinship to God or Satan, so also does our love for our brother. It is very important at this point in the book that we fully understand the nature of “*agape-love*.” So John will begin with this verse and continue for the next two chapters.

## 11 For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another:

The “for” always reminds us to go back to the previous verse, because what is now being said is being built on a previous foundation. This is reason why the one who does not love his brother is not of God but of the devil. Loving one another has been a part of the message from the beginning. No one who has read Jesus words on his final night with his disciples will ever forget them and John certainly did not.

*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Jn 13:34-35*

This was the mandate Jesus had given his apostles and prophets as he sent them to all the nations “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: (Mt 28:20) As they preached the gospel, this was one of foundation principles of their preaching. We see this very clearly as Paul wrote one of his first letters to the young church in Thessalonica.

*We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention (of you) in our prayers; 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; 1Th. 1:2-3*

*Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you: 12 and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also (do) toward you; 1Th. 3:11-12*

*But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; 10 for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren that are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more 1Th 4:9-10*

All the brethren in the first century were taught these things. This was the true identifying mark of all true children of God.

It is interesting how the event recorded in Genesis four is expanded and developed in the New Testament. All we know from Genesis is that they both brought sacrifices, God accepted Abel and rejected Cain. We don’t know why or what occurred that led Cain to kill him. But in the NT these details are filled in for us. For our purposes here, all we will consider are the facts revealed here. If you want to see the whole picture please read the information in the box.

### The Story of Cain & Abel

After Adam and Eve were banished from the garden of Eden the Scriptures record the birth of two of their children. These two boys grew up and chose occupations that suited them. Cain became a husbandman or farmer and Abel became a shepherd.

*And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with (the help of) Jehovah. 2 And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Gen 4:1-2*

The story gives no details, but only the fact that as the boys lived and continued to grow, their hearts turned to worshiping God. Each brought a gift to God. During the patriarchal age, God revealed himself directly to those he was working with through direct communication. This was no exception. God immediately made his preferences known by doing something that made it clear he respected Abel and his offering. He also made it clear that he did not respect Cain and his offering. Sadly this only made Cain very angry.

*And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. Gen 4:3-5*

Since we know that God is not a respecter of person, it had to do with the manner in which they offered and not because he liked one of them more than another. Jesus captured the real issue in worship many years later.

*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshiper. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. John 4:23-24*

God only seeks worshipers who will worship him in spirit and truth. This means worshipers who will listen carefully to God's word (truth Jn 17:17) and use their spirit to wholeheartedly comply with God's desires. Cain had failed to do this. The account in Genesis does not tell us exactly what Cain did wrong, but the Hebrew writer tells us. Abel's offering was more excellent than Cain's because he offered his by faith (hearing the word of God - truth - Rom 10:17).

*By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. Heb. 11:4:*

Abel had faith and Cain did not. Cain was not a genuine worshiper because he was not listening to the truth. This is a pivotal point to understand the way of Cain. Faith was the missing ingredient. It led Cain to walk in his own way, which opened the door to a path that multitudes have walked since. Since faith can only come by hearing, God had already instructed both boys regarding his wishes before the offerings were brought.

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17*

At that point they had to decide whether they would trust in Him with all their heart that He had given them the best possible information, or lean on their own understanding.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. Prov 3:5-7*

Unfortunately, Cain made a mistake and leaned on his own understanding, while Abel trusted in God with all his heart. God immediately made his feelings known by accepting Abel's offering and rejecting Cain's. Since Cain had not listened to God, God could not reward him. This is the gateway into the "way of Cain." When any one refuses to listen to God because he thinks he has a better way than what God has revealed, then he will be rejected just as Cain was. It doesn't matter which command is ignored. When it is ignored, that one walks the way of Cain. There was no way to misunderstand God's response. Cain knew immediately that his offering was not acceptable. His countenance fell because it was not what he expected. He expected praise and acceptance. Like so many since, Cain felt that God ought to accept his good intentions and sincerity. His lack of submission to God's command did not concern him. But it disturbed God to the point where He rejected him. The principle is expressed many years later:

*Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he also has rejected you from being king." 1 Sam 15:22-23*

When someone thinks they will be rewarded without obedience to the Word, they are walking in the way of Cain. Though Cain thought God would accept his offering, God could not. No matter what Cain expected, God cannot reward rebellion. He established at the beginning that compliance to His will is the highest priority. Cain was being disrespectful with his offering and God could not reward him. God loved Cain though and tried to help him succeed:

*So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." Gen. 4:6-7*

God warned Cain that to do well he must repent of his error and offer a gift by submissive faith. The door was not yet closed. He could still repent and offer the same more excellent sacrifice that Abel had. God also warned him of the extreme danger he faced. Sin, crouching like an animal ready to pounce was even then seeking to destroy him. Only Cain could rule over it.

*And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. Gen 4:8*

Once again, Cain refused to listen to God. He did not rule over his anger. He and Abel were out in the field talking and Abel said something that made Cain so angry that he slew him. How do we know it was something that Abel said? Actually we know even more than this. We know that

Abel became God's prophet and through inspiration began to preach God's word to Cain. Cain became angry at the words Abel spoke and killed him because of his anger that his works were evil and Abel's were righteous. We know this because Jesus told us that Abel was a prophet and since prophets preach by inspiration, all of this must be true.

*that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. ...” Lk. 11:48-51*

But the Holy Spirit later revealed to John that the reason Cain killed his brother was because his works were evil and Abel's works were righteous. Abel's good works proved that Cain's were evil. By accepting Abel, God showed Cain what was right. Cain was given a chance to fix his error, but his pride kept him from it. Instead of repenting, he destroyed the source that shamed him. He then became the first persecutor of God's people who wanted to do right, and a true child of the devil.

*In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ... 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. I Jn. 3:10,12*

Jude warns us that Cain created a path that many have followed. There are many today who are walking in the same path of Cain. People who do not listen to God. Who change God's word to suit their own ideas and who become angry when others point it out to them.

*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentious and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. Jude 1:3-4*

### **12 not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother.**

Though Adam and Eve were created in the image and likeness of God, something happened when Eve then Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Not only did they become aware of evil by experiencing it and not only did they die spiritually, but they were also now given a choice. They could struggle to remain in the image of God though marred, or they could give themselves completely to evil and become like the devil. Abel chose the former and Cain the latter.

Cain was of the evil one because he did not love his brother. Did this start after the worship or was there always an enmity in his heart toward Abel? All we know is that Abel was the first prophet whose blood was shed for telling someone the truth.

*that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary: yea, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. Lk 11:50-51*

Cain killed Abel because Abel as a prophet was warning Cain about his conduct.

### **And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.**

John gives us even more information. Cain killed Abel because the works which Cain had done were evil while his brother's were righteous. This gives us much clearer insight into why Cain was so angry. Just as much that God had rejected him, he had accepted Abel. There was a clear jealousy and envy problem. Evidently the pride of life had taken deep root in Cain's heart. Abel was the first of many who sought to influence others to a better way of life, only to find that this offended their pride and led them to lash out. This reveals the great chasm between the children of God and of the Devil. It is not just ignorance, although it may begin that way. It is a hardening of the heart that leads to anger, hatred and persecution of those whose lives or words condemn them. Remember before Abel spoke to Cain in the field God himself had already spoken to him and warned him of his peril. He refused to listen to God and when he heard the same words from Abel his anger erupted. This is why Cain slew Abel and it is also why the world hates us today:

### 13 Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you.

This passage is something each of us has experienced. Thinking we were doing an act of love and kindness to another, we were treated with contempt and anger. It is always something that shocks, surprises and leads to the very thing that John warns us against. The root meaning is to look at and contemplate. Then it takes on the idea of being surprised, astonished and unable to comprehend.

*"thaumazo... thaumazein; and the underlying thauma ... and theaomai whose root is linked with thea "vision," and theaomai "contemplate," ... the verb means "to be astonished," and it often expresses an attitude of criticism, doubt or even censure and rejection, though it may also express inquisitiveness and curiosity. ... Secondly, the verb means "to wonder at," "to look on with astonishment," followed by a subsidiary clause ... thus the adjective often expresses that which is surprising or noteworthy or incomprehensible. (TDWNT 2296)*

There is always that danger of being so shocked and amazed that we begin to rethink our convictions. If our new found faith and love is responded to with such hatred and rancor, then possibly the problem is with the message and not with the messenger(us) or the hearers(our friends, family, loved ones). So the Spirit warns us not to be amazed or surprised when it happens. Jesus himself addressed this danger with his apostles. The world hated him. Not because he did something wrong. Not because the message he gave them was wrong. The world hated him because the world does not want the evil that it does to be brought out into the light. That's why they hated and killed Jesus. That's why Cain killed Abel, and that is why they will hate, persecute, and possibly even kill us.

*If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before (it hated) you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. Jn 15:18-20*

*I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Jn 17:14*

*And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. Jn 3:19-20*

### 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.

With this verse, the critical need to love the brethren is revealed. Our knowledge of our relationship between life and death is based upon it. Again, John uses the word knowledge to reveal the fallacies of the knowledge of the *Gnostics*. We "*understand and perceive*" clearly something entirely different from them.

*"oida,... 1. like the Lat. novi it has the signification of a present to know, understand; and in the plpf. the signif. of an impf. 1. to know,... 2. to know I. e. get knowledge of, understand, perceive; a. any fact... b. the force and meaning of something that has definite meaning:... c. as in class. Grk., foll. by an inf. in the sense of to know how(Lat. calleo, to be skilled in ...Phil 4:12)..." (Thayer, p. 174; 1492).*

The knowledge of the *Gnostic* was selfish and sterile. It only led to pride and a self-centered smugness that looked down upon others who were less capable than themselves. This quality of knowledge only confirmed they had no relationship with God. Without that relationship they have not yet "*passed out of*" death.

*metabaino from Homer down; to pass over from one place to another, to remote, depart: (Thayer 3327)*

One of the surest signs of salvation is the love we have for our brethren. The reason for this has to do with the nature of this love. This is a divine love, not a human one. Those who spoke Greek had two words for love. The first is one we use and have always used. It means we care for, enjoy and take pleasure in. We long for it, enjoy it and savor it. It is the very essence of selfishness, but in a good way. When I say I love you or I love that, you understand that it gives me great pleasure.

But when Jesus came, that word did not correctly convey the right meaning. He still found many uses for it, but when he began to teach about the love of God and the love that we are to

develop in his kingdom a different word was chosen. A word that removes most of the selfish pleasure and enjoyment and replaces it with true concern for the state of others. Sacrifices and loss are the nature of this word. Peruse the following section if you want to get a clearer idea.

### Two Words for Love

Since the time of our early youth, love has played a vital role in our growth and development. Infants need to be loved, caressed and held. At a very early age, we feel a strong need to say: "I love you" to our parents, siblings and toys. We blow kisses, cuddle, and show affection. By the time we are in school, we love our family, our pets, our friends and our teacher. By the time we graduate, we have also learned to love our hobbies, certain subjects in school, certain possessions, places, people, food, beverages, etc.

The elasticity of love allows us to speak of anything we feel passion and desire for as something we love. If it makes us feel good, if we get excited about it, if we have tender emotions called up and find it an enjoyable experience, then we can safely say that we love it.

If we do not like it, have no feelings of enjoyment or passion, then we cannot use the term love to describe our feelings toward it. The Greek speaking people in the days of the writing of the NT had a word just like ours.

The Holy Spirit selected it to capture exactly the feelings we have just finished expressing. As in English there is a noun and a verb. **philos** is the noun and **phileo** is the verb." Greek scholars who have studied both the language and the Bible give us the following definitions of the term.

*"philos...friendly... to be friendly to one,... a friend... one who finds his pleasure in a thing..."*  
Thayer, p 654

*"phileo... 1. to love; to be friendly to one,... to love, i.e. delight in, long for, a thing... to love to do, i.e. to do with pleasure... 2. to kiss..."* Thayer, p. 653; 5368)

*"phileo, philos... the original sense of the verb phileo is "to regard and treat somebody as one of one's own people." It thus denotes natural attraction to those who belong, love for close relatives... The word is thus used for the love of parents for children... of spouses for one another, ... of masters for servants... In a further development... then shifts from that which belongs to that which is chosen... It is then used esp. for the love of friends, which like that of married couples is based on reciprocity ... Kittel Vol 9 p 115-116*

Thus, the primary meaning of **philos/phileo -love** corresponds nearly exactly to our English term. It takes in feeling friendly, finding pleasure in, delight in, long for, natural attraction, and it is based on reciprocity:

- ☞ a young man or woman in expressing their love to each other.
- ☞ feelings toward a newly acquired hobby or possession we find great pleasure and enjoyment doing.
- ☞ feelings toward a new car or home that delights us.

This love can only occur when it finds something in another person or thing with which it can ignite. **philos/phileo-love** is therefore in the strictest sense a self-centered emotion. We can only love in this sense when we get something out of it. When it makes us feel good, when we see something attractive, when we find a reason we like. This is neither wrong nor unnatural, it is both right and wholesome. We want those we love to need us like this. We want our hobbies to grab us and give us delight. We want to feel great joy and delight in them.

This quality of love is so right and necessary. It is the glow and ardor of a soul on fire for another. But in all honesty, the fire kindles in the breast because a strong need felt there is fulfilled.

This was Peter's answer to Jesus (Jn 21:15-17) Lord I love you with a glow and ardor deep in my soul. You have so touched and warmed my heart toward you that I will do anything for you.

love for the praise of others (Mt 6:5);

Our love of life (12:25)

the love of parents more than Jesus (Mt 10:37)

The worlds love for its own (15:19)

Love of chief seats and salutations (Mt 23:6-7)

The Father's love for the disciples

(16:27)

Judas Kiss (Mt 26:48)

The love of the Father for the Son (Jn 5:20)  
chastens (Rev 3:19)

Jesus love for Lazarus (11:3)  
make lies. (Rev 22:15 )

A man's love for the Lord ( I Cor 16:22)

Jesus for those he rebukes and

The love of some to

In each of these instances the Holy Spirit used ***philos/phileo -love*** to describe the love of delight, longing and need. For those not striving to be Godlike, this is the only kind of love there is. When most people say "I love you" they can only mean "I find in you some emotional, physical or intellectual quality which draws me to you and makes me feel emotionally attracted to you."

Since this is all ***philos/phileo -love*** means, a new word had to be found if more than this needed to be expressed. Jesus wanted to reveal that there is so much more to this quality than ***philos/phileo*** can describe. He chose a term that had been in the Greek language for many years, and the Jews were familiar with it for its use in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term "love- ***hassad.***" The Greeks themselves had not used the term in any significant or positive way. Jesus and the Holy Spirit completely changed that. Though the worldly Greeks had little use for the ideas conveyed by this word, the Holy Spirit used it often!

From the time of the NT writings ***agape*** and ***agapao*** have become two of the most discussed terms in the Bible. It is unfortunate, but there is no English equivalent for this term. We must therefore learn to use ***agape*** and ***agapao*** when speaking of them.

*"agapao.. to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of..." (Thayer, p. 3-4; 25)*

*"agapao and ... agape present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, enquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the N.T... Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to "all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith," Gal. 6:10.... (Vine Vol 3 p 20-21)*

*"agape,... a purely bibl. and eccl. word... in signification it follows the verb AGAPAO; consequently it denotes 1. affection, good-will, love, benevolence:... "(Thayer, p. 4-5; 26)*

***agape/agapao -love*** is a word based in God's revelation. It is not used in cultures where Christianity has no influence. We would not even understand or comprehend it if it were not for God's showing it to us.

*7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son (to be) the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: . . . 19 We love, because he first loved us. | Jn 4:7-12, 19*

This love can overlap that of ***philos-love***, but it comes from an entirely different set of circumstances and reasons. The first comes because we have some stake in the outcome. For whatever reason, those with ***philos-love*** will be benefitted. It makes them feel good, gives them delight, will enrich or help them in some way and therefore they take great delight in it. This is the wonderful quality of marriage, family, work and life.

God reveals that there is a higher and more exalted motivation for gaining the exact same



delight. Unselfish concern for the needs of others in which we have no stake or benefit to ourselves. We may not have any reason for philos-love, but agape-love: is greater, higher, more noble and exalted: I Cor 13:1-13; Mt 5:43-48; John 13:31-35; Eph 3:17-20

From the number and manner in which each term is used in the NT, it is clear that **agape** is the superior term.

VERB	NOUN	TOTAL
<b>phileo</b> 25 uses (21 in gospels)	<b>philos</b> 30 uses(23 in gospels)	55 (11 in epistles)
<b>agapao</b> 134 uses (73 in gospels) 250 in NT	<b>agape</b> 116 (9 in gospels)	(168 in epistles)

The clearest passage to help see the distinctive use of each term is found in the inquiry of Jesus into Peter's love for him after his denial.

*So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love(agape) Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love(philos) You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love(agape) Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love(philos) You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love(philos) Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love(philos) Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love(philos) You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. John 21:15-17*

There is so much to be gained by learning as much as we can about each of these terms. They are both noble emotions that lead to great acts of Christian service. But the latter takes us higher than the former.

Development of **agape-love**

As we look into the eyes of an infant child, what does our love mean to them? At some point, children begin to imitate what they understand. This is when our love for them comes back to us in obedience, loyalty, and submission. A child who was loved by his parents is tied to them with a bond that cannot easily be broken. A circle of concern is being built. A child's initial circle of concern revolves only around himself. In time a child learns to imitate his parents unselfish concern for him by slowly learning the emotions that lead on to give up what they want or need in order to give to others.

As time passes the circle of concern continues to grow as new friends, pets, teachers, and other things begin to gain the attention. This is how human love grows and develops. But there is a limitation to human love that led God to develop another word. Agape-love takes in all that phileo-love encompasses and then goes far beyond it. agape-love is true and genuine concern based on God's revelation to man. It forces to make every sacrifice for the true well-being of others. Jesus deals with the scope of this in the parable of the Good Samaritan(Lk 10:27-37) and in the Sermon on the Mount by asking us to draw this circle of concern around our enemies and those who abuse and mistreat us(Mt 5:43-48).

The growth and development necessary to reach this pinnacle of love takes up many pages of the NT. God is vitally concerned with this part of our maturity. It is a part of his character that he wants us to work very hard to develop within ourselves. If we have this love then we are begotten of God know God, and abide in God . If we do not have this love then we do not know God.

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. I Jn 4:7-8*

*And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. I Jn 4:16*

The entire second chapter of Philippians is designed to train and lead us more deeply into this love and service. We can outline the chapter in the following manner:

**The five motivations necessary to help us grow in our love. Phil 2:1-2**

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Exhortations in Christ   | 4. Tender mercies and compassion |
| 2. Consolations of love     | 5. Make full my joy              |
| 3. Fellowship of the Spirit |                                  |

**A description of how this love manifests itself. Phil 2:2-4**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Be of the same mind.                             | 6. In lowliness of mind.                         |
| 2. Have the same love.                              | 7. Each counting other better than himself.      |
| 3. Be of one accord.                                | 8. Not looking each to his own things.           |
| 4. Of one mind.                                     | 9. But each of you also to the things of others. |
| 5. Do nothing through faction or through vainglory. | 10. Have mind in you which was in Christ Jesus.  |

- 2:5-11 The supreme example of Christ.  
2:12-18 Further instructions and motivation.  
2:19-24 Timothy - I have no one like minded  
2:25-30 Epaphroditus - A great example of service.

**The Mind of Christ**

*Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient (even) unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Phil 2:5-8*

Those who do not ponder the significance of this passage cannot develop and grow in love. The only way to become like Jesus is to understand the Scriptures on this subject. We cannot have the mind which was in Jesus unless we understand exactly what was in that mind.

**1. Existing in the form of God - Being on an equality with God.**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. John 1:1-3*

*God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, who he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; 3 who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Heb. 1:1-3).*

*And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. John 17:5*

Jesus had all the attributes of God. He was with God and was God having glory equal to God. It is hard for us to grasp how great Jesus was so God gives us one example. He created everything that exists. Nothing that now exists did not come from him. Note how God the Father speaks of him in **Hebrews 1:8-11**. He calls Jesus God, states that his throne is forever, then

goes on to say that Jesus laid the foundations of the earth and that the heavens are the work of Jesus hands. Jesus was on such an equality with God that he created the sun moon stars and the earth and all the works therein! Yet that doesn't quite say enough!

*who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; 17 and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. Col 1:15-18*

We cannot fully understand the mind of Jesus in the context of this section(serving others and counting them better than ourselves) until we understand this. John made this same point just before the foot washing.

*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all the things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God. Jn 13:3*

**2. Did not count (it robbery to be # 1 - KJV/NKJV) # 1 as something to be grasped(ASV/NAS).**

*"harpagmos,... the act of seizing, robbery,...a thing seized or to be seized, ... a thing to be seized upon or to be held fast..."*

The KJV/NKJV expresses that Jesus did not feel that he was being robbed or cheated, while the ASV/NAS views it that Jesus did not feel he had to seize and hold fast to this position. Since the context is that of counting others better than ourselves and sacrificing our own time and needs to that of helping others. How does the definition above help with our understanding of this? Jesus dwelled throughout the long ages of eternity in the form of God. He was God and he dwelled in God form. During all this time he had received the honor, dignity and deference which belonged to that position. As he prepared to leave the outward form, God wants us to understand his feelings. Robbery and grasping both have the common thought of something precious which someone does not want to lose. Jesus did not count it a robbery of himself when he willingly gave it up, nor did he consider it something he had to cling to. He considered the needs of man as of more importance than his own needs. You can see this in his words as he leaves heaven to enter the womb.

*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, But a body didst thou prepare for me; 6 In whole burnt offerings and (sacrifices) for sin thou hadst no pleasure: 7 Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God. . . By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb 10:5-7, 10*

**3. Emptied himself taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of man.**

*And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. Mt. 1:21-23*

He was called Immanuel(God with us). Jesus emptied himself of the "form of God" and took the "form of a servant".

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), Jn. 1:14*

The word was God and the word became flesh. There was no loss of essence, he was still God. He still retained his deity. He simply emptied himself of the form of God. He made himself poor to help us be rich.

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. II Cor 8:9*

#### **4. Found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto the death of the cross.**

What Jesus really was shone through at the transfiguration.

*And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. Mt 17:1-2*

He took on the veil of flesh to fit him to be the servant who would die. As long as he lived in the world, only the outward form(servant) was seen.

*For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Isa. 53:2-3*

Jesus humbled himself unto death. In order to serve man, he emptied himself of all the blessings and honor of deity and took on all the weaknesses and troubles of humanity. The purpose was to pour out his soul unto death and pay for the sins of man.

*Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.... Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa. 53:4-5, 12*

He served us! Our God and Creator, became man to serve us and fulfill our needs. Once we understand this mind set, we can begin to practice it ourselves! As human beings we all have things we can either grasp and count it robbery to have removed from us(our rights!) or we can empty ourselves as Jesus did of all our own rights and become servants of one another, who count others better than ourselves, and do not look only to our own things but also to the things of others. This is the knowledge husbands are to dwell with wives with(I Pet 3:7) how parents are to raise the children, how brethren are to dwell together in unity. If we know this, blessed are we if we do it.

#### **The Essence of Agape Love**

From our earliest memories, the most pleasant things we remember are the things we loved. A stuffed toy, a pet, a bicycle, doll, game, parents, brothers and sisters, friends, etc. This is the essence of human love. It has strong ardor, passion, and strength, but at it's heart it has become a selfish emotion. It only ignites when we find something lovely or beautiful about it.

There are many stuffed animals, but often only one captured our fancy. There are many toys and games, but only those we enjoy reach the level of our love.

It is therefore only natural when we read about love in the Bible, we give it this meaning. But if we are to rightly divide the Scriptures, we must be very careful here. There is a great magnitude of difference between God's love and man's.

*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. Isa 55:8-9*

God's love is so much higher than our own that it exceeds our ability to comprehend it. Even when Jesus came to earth and manifested it for us to study and strive to understand, the Holy Spirit reveals that it exceeds our ability to grasp(**Eph 3:16-19**):

*that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

God's love is so much greater and higher, that even with the Spirit strengthening our inner man with revelation, and being rooted and grounded in this revealed love, Christ's love will still pass our comprehension. It is simply too large a concept for us to grasp. But if we can realize this, and begin working toward it, we will be well on our way toward the upward call of God:

As was noted earlier the Spirit selected two Greek words for Love. **philos** is human love.

*"philos...friendly... to be friendly to one,... a friend... one who finds his pleasure in a thing..."*  
Thayer, p 654

*"phileo... 1. to love; to be friendly to one,... to love, i.e. delight in, long for, a thing... to love to do, i.e. to do with pleasure... 2. to kiss..."* Thayer, p. 653; 5368)

It refers to all that we remember in our youth and all that is natural affection. All the joy, passion, and excitement of the things in life that please us is captured by this word. It is not a religious word, and has little to do with God's Love. It is only used 55 times in the NT and 30 of those times it is translated "friend"

**agape** love is the love of God. It is used 250 times in the NT. As was noted last week, it had little use among those who do not believe in God. Fallen mankind does not understand or need this emotion.

*"agapao and ... agape present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, enquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the N.T..."*

*"agapao.. to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of..."* (Thayer, p. 3-4; 25)

With all this in mind, the command to not be fashioned according to this world, but to be transformed(Rom 12:2) takes on a great and powerful application:

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

If we are to love as God loves, and not simply continue to love as man does, then we are going to have to renew our mind. We are going to have to realize that **agape** love is something new and different. Something that is not found outside of the revelation of Jehovah. John made this very clear:

*We love Him because He first loved us .I Jn 4:19*

We could not have loved(**agape**) God without His first loving us. All we had to offer Him was **philos** and that is not at all what God wants. First God demonstrated this love:

*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. Rom 5:6-10*

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16*

Then God defined it:

*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. 1 Cor 13:4-8*

Then He commanded it:

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35*

"New" is the word *kainos*.

*"kainos... new, i.e. a. as respect form; recently made, fresh, recent, unused, unworn... new, which as recently made is superior to what it succeeds... b. as respects substance; of a new kind; unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of, ... : (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 317-318; 2537)*

Paul prayed earnestly that we would gain the wisdom and knowledge to do this:

*And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, Phil 1:9-10*

**He that loveth (present active participle) not abideth (PIA) in death.**

If we do not have such love, then we have completely failed to understand the gospel, the God who gave it and the Savior who died for it. Since the wages of sin is death, John makes it clear that if we do not love, we are in sin. This is James 4:8 in action.

To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. James 4:17

If we do not have an unselfish care and concern for our brethren that leads us to do all we can to help and be a blessing to them, then we are truly still abiding in death. Reflecting the will of our father(the devil),others

### **15 Who soever hateth his brother is a murderer:**

Anyone who has read the Sermon on the Mount knows exactly what John is speaking about here.

*Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. Mt 5:21-22*

The emotions of anger and hatred are the first step to becoming a murderer. These were the emotions that Cain had toward Abel and the emotions of the devil.

*miseo ... "to hate," is used especially (a) of malicious and unjustifiable feelings towards others, whether towards the innocent or by mutual animosity, ... (b) of a right feeling of aversion from what is evil; said of wrongdoing, ... (c) of relative preference for one thing over another, by way of expressing either aversion from, or disregard for, the claims of one person or thing relatively to those of another, ... Note: In 1 John 3:15, he who "hates" his brother is called a murderer; for the sin lies in the inward disposition, of which the act is only the outward expression. (Vine's Expository Dictionary 3404)*

Hatred can be "*malicious and unjustifiable feelings towards others*"(Vine). But it can also be "*personal aversion*" a "*slight*" being "*despised*" (Kittel), "*feeling of aversion from what is evil*" "*preference for one thing over another, ... expressing aversion or disregard*" (Vine). When we feel such emotions we need to realize how sinful they are. They are the first step toward murder and God has already marked us as one.

### **and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.**

With another "you know" he swipes again at the false philosophy of *Gnosticism*. It is simply impossible for a murderer to have eternal life. They are a contradiction in terms. John is not even dealing with repentance and forgiveness. The truth is that for those who live in such emotions toward others would not seek repentance. They are not even aware that it is a problem.

### **16 Hereby know we love,**

Literally "*in this*" within this boundary. Inside of this simply truth is all we need to know to understand the true quality of *agape*-love. We "*know*" that we "*know*" love by this one simple fact. We know that we understand it and we know we are practicing when we do these things.

### **because he laid down his life for us:**

This is the very core and foundation of Christianity. Jesus the faultless and pure Son of God who had committed no sin and had no personal gain but only loss came to this earth for the express purpose of giving his life to save ours. That no man could think of such a deep love is clear from Paul's words in Romans. One might do it for a good or righteous man, but for enemies and sinners in hope of restoration? It is not something man could even comprehend.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16*

*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. Jn 15:12-15*

*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath (of God) through him. 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; Rom 5:7-10*

Yet it has already been done and it has become the standard for each of us to follow.

### **and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

The term “ought” is a strong word for obligation and duty. We “owe it.” We are a *debtor* and *bound* to this standard by our own salvation.

*“opheilo... to owe, a. prop. to owe money, be in dept for... b. metaph... absol. to be a debtor, be bound... foll. by an inf. to be under obligation, bound by duty or necessity, to do something; it behooves one; one ought; used thus of a necessity imposed either by law and duty, or by reason, or by the times, or by the nature of the matter under consideration...” (Thayer, p. 469; 3784)*

This was the standard even on the night of his betrayal. Jesus gives the command that we love as he loved and then reminded them of the depth of his love.

*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:12-13*

Paul spoke of it in a slightly different way.

*And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? 2 Cor 12:15*

### **17 But whoso hath the world’s goods, and beholdeth his brother in need,**

John understands that though the above is the fullest extent to which this love can extend itself, it is not the general way in which it will be fulfilled. The more practical aspects of this love will be in the every day treatment we give them. When they are naked or in lack of daily food, what will love demand of us?

*If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Jas 2:15-16*

Talk and good intentions are easily manifested. But what of the actual deeds? If we have an ability, we have an obligation. Paul spoke of this exact issue in his request to the Corinthians that they manifest this love by giving for the needy saints in Jerusalem.

*But now complete the doing also; that as (there was) the readiness to will, so (there may be) the completion also out of your ability. 12 For if the readiness is there, (it is) acceptable according as (a man) hath, not according as (he) hath not. 2Cor 8:11-12*

No matter how much love we have, if we do not have the ability, then God looks at the heart and knows of our love. But if we have this worlds good and then see a brother in need, we have an obligation.

### **and shutteth up his compassion from him,**

This is actually an idiom translated in a way we can understand. Literally it is “shut up or close the bowels” which obviously means nothing to us today. But to the Greek speaking people in that day it meant the tender emotions of “*kindness, benevolence, compassion.*”

*“splanchnon,... bowels, intestines(the heart, lungs, liver etc.... b. in the Grk. poets fr. Aescchyl. down the bowels were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, such as anger and love; but by the Hebrews as the seat of the tenderer affections, esp. kindness, benevolence, compassion....hence l. q. our heart [tender mercies, affections, etc...]” (Thayer p 584-585; 4698)*

If we see what ought to kindle the tender emotions of kindness, pity and compassion, and we



shut them down then we have done what this verse states. Whenever we see a brother in a difficult situation and we are not moved to help them then there is something wrong with our heart. It is not reflecting the true disposition of our Father in heaven.

### **how doth the love of God abide in him?**

How can the love of God abide in such a person? When God saw the plight of the human race he felt compassion and a strong desire to help. How can we accept that from him and then not have it for our fellow man. Though a different topic, Jesus dealt strongly with this.

*Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not (wherewith) to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took (him) by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owe. 29 So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. 31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besought me: 33 shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. 35 So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts. Mt 18:21-35*

The incompatibility between a man accepting God's love and then refusing to offer that same thing for another is so powerful that God sees such a one as unworthy of it being given to him.

### **18 (My) Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue;**

As noted above it is easy to speak of love and of the desire that they receive help. But if it is only with the mouth when the ability to alleviate it is present, then it is only talk and profits nothing. John warns his little children (ie those he loves and respects for following God's word) that them must never do this.

### **but in deed and truth.**

The thoughts and the words must be matched with the effort and activities. There must be an *act, deed and thing done*. We must *produce* something.

*"ergon... 1. business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied... 2. any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind... 3. an act, deed, thing done: ..."* (Thayer, p. 248; 2041)

## 19 Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth,

This is an important passage for all who truly seek the truth. It offers an objective means to see if we are of the truth or not. "Hereby" is literally "in the midst of this." Sometimes this phrase points forward to what is then said and sometime it points back to what has previously been said. Consider the uses John has made of this term and the direction it points toward:

3 Now **by this we know that we know Him**, →if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. □ **By this we know that we are in Him**. →6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 John 2:3-6

16 **By this we know love**, → because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 19 And □ **by this we know that we are of the truth**, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 24 **And by this we know that He abides in us**, → by the Spirit whom He has given us. 1 John 3:16, 19, 24

**By this you know the Spirit of God**: →Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. ... 6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. □ **By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error**. 1Jn. 4:2-3, 6

It is easy to see that this one must be pointing back, because there is nothing to point after. So it is in the midst of what John had previously spoken that we can find this knowledge. These are the fruits by which we will know. But how far back does it go? It may only be the previous verse, but since this entire section has focused on love there is no good reason to limit it:

### in the midst of this: We Know

*Passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.  
If hate brother a murderer: no murderer hath eternal life.  
Love: he laid down his life for us: we lay down our lives for brethren.  
With this world's goods we open the heart of our compassion.  
Don't love in word or tongue; but in deed and truth. 1 Jn 3:14-18*

There are two important things we need to remember in order to fully understand. These verses do not stand alone. All churches regardless of doctrine or morality can do these things and yet they are still not in the midst of these things. These are the practical applications that prove we have already done the doctrinal portion. Remember Paul's prayer to the Philippians.

And this I pray, that **your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment**; 10 so that ye may **approve the things that are excellent**; that ye **may be sincere and void of offence** unto the day of Christ; 11 being **filled with the fruits of righteousness**, which are **through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God**. Phil 1:9-11

agape - love is much more than feelings. Love operates in the midst of knowledge and discernment. It requires that we make the tiny distinctions necessary to approve of only those things that are excellent. Only in this way can we be truly sincere and void of offense in the day of Christ.

John was assuring disciples of Jesus that if in addition to knowing the truth we must have the fruits. Jesus said the same things in the John's gospel.

"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Jn. 8:31-32

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**" Jn. 13:34-35

It takes both! We must be abiding in Jesus words to know the truth, but we must also be applying those words in our daily lives in order to know we know the truth.

**and shall assure our heart before him:**

Not only will we know, but we will also give our own hearts the assurance and confidence each disciple is striving for. With all the error and false teaching in the world, along with the need to be faithful we all need an objective standard that gives us the confidence in His presence. When we do the things in the box above we can “*assure*” our heart

*“peitho... 1. Active; a. to persuade, i.e. to induce one by words to believe... to cause belief in a thing... c. to persuade unto i.e. to be induced to believe...to trust, have confidence, be confident...”* (Thayer, p. 497-498; 3982).

We can be *persuaded* and *induced to believe*. We can *trust, have confidence* and *be confident*. But this confidence is not simply within our heart. It is also a confidence we can feel *before Him — in His presence*.

*emprosthen ... adverb of place and of time (from en and prosthen, properly, in the fore part); ... before. ... it serves as a preposition, with the genitive ... a. before, i. e. in that local region which is in front of a person or a thing: to go before one, ... b. before, in the presence of, equivalent to opposite to, over against one: (Thayer NT: 1715)*

We are not like Cain who “went out of the presence of the Lord,” we seek to live in His presence. As we live day by day conscious of his continual presence watching, assessing and remembering, we can feel assurance and confidence if the things in the box above are the manner in which we live our lives.

### **20 because if our heart condemn us,**

There are obviously two outcomes to the above statement. Either our own heart feels very good about it as we survey our own life, or our heart feels very uncomfortable. It’s like Paul said to the Romans.

*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: Rom 8:16*

It takes both! Our spirit alone is not enough. The Spirit without compliance with our spirit is not enough. But when the the Spirit of God and our own spirit agree on something then we know! Think of it in the context of our salvation. The Spirit witnesses that in order to be saved one must hear(Rom 10:17), Believe(Jn 8:24), Repent(Acts 17:30), Confess(Rom 10:9-10), and be baptized(Acts 2:38). This testimony is clear and easily understood. But this truth alone will not save anyone. Our own spirit must bear witness that we have done each of these things as directed by the Holy Spirit. When our spirit follows through and does each of these things, then our spirit bears witness with the Holy Spirit that we are saved.

In this passage John did exactly the same thing. The witness of the Spirit is in the box above. Our own spirit (heart) will either condemn or assure our hearts.

If after reading the above, our heart “condemns us” for not measuring up, the *fault, blame* and *accusations* we think and feel within us are only the beginning.

*kataginosko perfect passive participle . . . to find fault with, blame: ... he had incurred the censure of the Gentile Christians; ... Galatians 2:11; to accuse, condemn: any one, 1 John 3:20... (Thayer NT:2607)*

For if our own heart condemns us for not measuring up, God is even greater than our heart.

### **God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.**

The term “greater” is a relative term. It pushes things to the furthest limit that we can understand or imagine.

*“meizon adj., (the comparative of mégas (3173), great, strong, large). Greater, more, older...”* (Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament NT: 3187)

God is greater in many different ways. He is greater in power, greater in his thoughts and ways and greater in His knowledge.

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Eph 3:20*

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isa 55:8-9*

*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Heb 4:13*

*O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are*

acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. Ps 139:1-4

The knowledge we possess in our own hearts are limited, but His is infinite. There is so much we don't know. So much that we don't even know how much! But God knows everything. If with our limited knowledge our heart condemns us, then God will have much more to charge us with.

**21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,**

With a term of love and endearment, John addresses the true children of God. If we are growing and developing within the midst of the box above, and our heart does not blatantly condemn us for not doing them, then we have fulfilled the condition above.

The change from selfishness to an unconditional care and concern is a long and steep road that we continue to climb. We will always see further ahead and be struggling to get there. Paul spoke of this to the Philippians. We are pressing on toward the high calling of God. We see farther than we can walk yet, but God is pleased as long as to the degree we have attained we are walking. Paul and John ask the same thing.

*Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I could not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing (I do), forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before. 14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: 16 only, whereunto we have attained, by that same (rule) let us walk. 17 Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. Phil. 3:12-17*

This is not seeking perfection. It is truly impossible for us to reach this goal, but to be striving for it and to the degree we have attained in it we are walking, then that is all God is asking from us. We will never fully comprehend it! Let alone fully and completely practice it.

*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God. Eph 3:17-19*

**we have boldness toward God;**

This is the second of four times this word is used in First John. It describes the emotion and mind set of a "free and fearless confidence," and "cheerful courage" in our relationship with God.

*"parresia... 1. freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, ... openly, frankly, i. e. without concealment... 2. free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance, ... of the undoubting confidence of Christians relative to their fellowship with God... 3. the deportment by which one becomes conspicuous or secures publicity..." (Thayer, p. 491; 3954)*

*little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed. 2:28*

*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God 3:21*

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

*And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us: 5:14*

This concept must be balanced with other Scriptures. This is not pride or arrogance. It is not boasting of more than we have. Jesus gave a parable to put it in perspective. It was the publican and not the Pharisee who had the right to be bold.

*Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. 13 But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner. 14 I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Luke 18:10-14*

But how could he be bold under such circumstances?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness 1Jn. 1:8

We are bold, not because we trust in ourselves, but because we believe His promise. Paul shows the humility that goes with this boldness.

*But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 1 Cor 4:3-4*

So what then is this boldness?. It is a humble, submissive and cautious confidence that God through the blood of Jesus will do all he can for us as long as we do all we can for him. No boldness allows us to relax, or feel confident about ourselves. The only confidence we receive when our heart does not condemn us is that for the moment we are in compliance. But we must always be prepared to confess and struggle for more. This is a difficult boldness to maintain, but it is the only safe boldness we can possess.

*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1Cor. 15:10*

*Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other. 7 For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? 8 Already are ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have come to reign without us: yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. 1Cor. 4:6-8*

## **22 and whatsoever we ask we receive of him,**

With such a humble and contrite attitude toward our own worth, and full confidence in his desire to save, help and bless us, we know that he will not withhold anything from us now.

*But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath (of God) through him. 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; Rom 5:8-10*

*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Rom 8:32*

What ever requests we make of him, we will receive. Two things keep this from being an unlimited promise. First in this passage it clearly states that the reason we receive is 1) because we keep his commandments. 2) Because we do the things that are pleasing in his sight. Both of these are the conditions to receiving whatever we ask. Second, John will repeat this very statement and give the same general limitation that will keep us from carrying it too far. We do have *boldness*, but it is a boldness that forces us to ask only according to his will.

*And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: 15 and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him. 1Jn. 5:14-15*

Our boldness, confidence and knowledge that he will give us all that we ask are confined into the narrow path of his *commandments, things pleasing in his sight and according to his will*. But when we fulfill all these conditions, we know!

## **because we keep his commandments**

The key is our relationship to His commandments. We “*attend to carefully,*” “*hold firmly,*” and “*observe*” them.

*“tereo... to attend to carefully, take care of; i.e. a. prop. to guard... b. metaph. to keep, ... to hold firmly... c. to observe ... d. to reserve...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 622; 5083)*

This is exactly what God had told Joshua as he began his work for the Lord.

*There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do*

according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Josh 1:5-8

Our relationship to the Lord is based entirely upon the keeping of the commandments. It has been this way ever since the Garden of Eden. The desire to do God's will and keep his instructions as closely as possible is what separated Abel from Cain, and led to the downfall of Nadab and Abihu, Saul, and the nation of Israel. If we seek for boldness and answered prayer, keeping his commandments is the only path. Jesus also spoke of this.

*"If you love Me, keep My commandments. ... 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." John 14:15, 21*

*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ... 17 These things I command you, that you love one another. John 15:10-12, 17*

**and do the things that are pleasing in his sight.**

In the midst of keeping his commandments is a secondary consideration. We must truly desire to do what pleases him. He is watching our thoughts and words and deeds. He watches our decisions and what we base them upon. He watches our worship and multitudes of things no one else can see. He wants us to love him and to think of him as we make these decisions. Making God happy with us should be the most important task in our life. This was the conclusion Ecclesiastes.

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. Eccl 12:13*

**23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ,**

For the purposes of the Holy Spirit in this letter all of God's commands center on this one consideration. This is exactly what God told the apostles at the transfiguration. It is also the words the Hebrew writer begins with and Matthew ends with.

*While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. Matt 17:5*

*For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; 23 that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him. John 5:22-23*

*God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, 2 hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in (his) Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; Heb 1:1-2*

*And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Matt 28:18*

The respect we show to Jesus as God's spokesman is the respect we show to God. God's single command for this dispensation is to believe in the name. First notice that John expressly called Jesus both God's son and the Christ. Both of these are the very crux of the false teaching then and now. Because Jesus is the Son of God all other spokesmen pale into insignificance. From Moses and the prophets to all the religious leaders of all the nations both before and after they have nothing to say. God wants us to recognize Jesus as his son.

Note the progression of thought in the gospel of John,

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. 18 He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. ... 35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him Jn 3:16-18, 35-36*

*For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel. 21 For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will. 22 For neither doth the Father judge*

any man, but **he hath given all judgment unto the Son;** 23 **that all may honor the Son,** even as they honor the Father. **He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.** Jn 5:20-23

For **this is the will of my Father,** that **every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life;** and I will raise him up at the last day. Jn 6:40

Not only is there great power in referring to him as son, but also as Christ. God had made some powerful prophecies about the coming Christ (the anointed one God would send to save mankind). He had become God's prophet, priest and King.

Jehovah **saith unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.** 2 Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: **rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.** 3 Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power, in holy array: out of the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of thy youth. 4 Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: **Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.** Ps 110:1-4

Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, **against Jehovah, and against his anointed,** (saying), 3 Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will have them in derision. 5 Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure: 6 Yet **I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.** 7 I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, **Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.** Ps 2:1-7

**Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted,** and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. 36 **Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.** Acts 2:33-36

So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him, **Thou art my Son,** This day have I begotten thee: 6 as he saith also in another (place,) **Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek.** Heb 5:5-6

Jesus is Lord and Christ, the only begotten of the Father. All who acknowledge this are keeping the command of the Father.

**and love one another, even as he gave us commandment.**

Once again we go back to John 13:34-35.

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Jn 13:34-35

Jesus wanted the true badge and identifying feature of his disciples to be the love that they shared with each other. This is the second part of the command that God wanted man to observe.

**24 And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him.**

John now ties together all that has been said since the end of the second chapter. We seek to abide in him because only when we are in fellowship with Jesus are we in fellowship with God. Remember the parable of the vine and the branches and his final prayer.

In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. John 14:20

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. Jn 15:4

Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, (art) in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. 22 And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we (are) one; 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me. 24 Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. John 17:20-24

All of this for those who keep his commands and none for those who do not.

**And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.**

There is an important point to consider before we can fully understand the passage. John

began the letter by reminding these readers that there were a group of men (apostles) who had been chosen by the Lord to give eyewitness testimony. He referred to these men with the personal pronoun "**WE**." In the first five verses, he used **WE** and **YOU** differently than he does in other parts of the book.

#### The Distinction between "**WE**" the Apostles and **YOU** the Readers

*That which was from the beginning, that which **WE** have heard, that which **WE** have seen with **OUR** eyes, that which **WE** beheld, and **OUR** hands handled, concerning the Word of life 2 (and the life was manifested, and **WE** have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto **YOU** the life, the eternal (life), which was with the Father, and was manifested unto **US**); 3 that which **WE** have seen and heard declare **WE** unto **YOU** also, that **YOU** also may have fellowship with **US**: yea, and **OUR** fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: 4 and these things **WE** write, that **OUR** joy may be made full. 5 And this is the message which **WE** have heard from him and announce unto **YOU** that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 1 Jn 1:1-5*

There is a clear distinction made between the apostles who were eyewitnesses (**WE**) and the people who were then receiving the letter (**YOU**) and us today who are also those in the (**YOU**). This distinction is made throughout the New Testament.

*For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **WE were eyewitnesses** of his majesty. 2 Pet 1:16*

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will **teach YOU all things, and bring to YOUR remembrance** all things that I said to **YOU**. John 14:26*

*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, (even) the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall **bear witness** of me: 27 and **YE also bear witness, because YE have been with me from the beginning**. John 15:26-27*

*I still have **many things to say to YOU**, but **YOU cannot bear them now**. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide YOU into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and **He will tell YOU things to come**. John 16:12-14*

*21 **Of the men therefore that have companied with US** all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among **US**, 22 beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from **us**, of these must one become a **witness** with **US** of his resurrection. . . . 32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof **WE all are witnesses**. . . . Acts 1:21-22; 32 and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof **WE are witnesses**. Acts 3:15;*

*33 And **with great power gave THE APOSTLES THEIR witness of the resurrection** of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. . . . Acts 4:33;*

*32 And **we are witnesses of these things; and the Holy Spirit**, whom God hath given to them that obey him. . . . Acts 5:32;*

*39 And **WE are witnesses** of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. 40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, 41 **NOT TO ALL THE PEOPLE, but UNTO WITNESSES THAT WERE CHOSEN BEFORE of God, (even) to US, WHO ATE AND DRANK WITH HIM AFTER HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD**. 42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God (to be) the Judge of the living and the dead. . . . Acts 10:39-42;*

*31 and he was seen for many days **of THEM THAT CAME UP WITH HIM FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM, WHO ARE NOW HIS WITNESSES** unto the people. Acts 13:31*

**Jesus appeared to Paul for the same purpose.**

*And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. 15 For **THOU shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what THOU hast seen and heard**. . . . 16 But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for **to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein THOU hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto THEE**: ACTS 22:14-15 Acts 26:16*

*and last of all, as to the (child) untimely born, **he appeared to ME also**. . . . 9 For **I am the least of the apostles**, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the*



church of God. . . . 12 Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: 14 and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Yea, we are found false witnesses of God; because **WE witnessed of God that he raised up Christ:** whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: 1 Cor 15:8-9; 12-16

**Clearly the witnesses were the apostles.**

That being the case, the "**WE**" are the apostles and the **YOU** are all the Christians who believe on him through their word. Jesus made that same distinction in his final prayer:

*As thou didst send me into the world, **even so sent I THEM into the world.** 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. **20 Neither FOR THESE ONLY do I pray, BUT FOR THEM ALSO THAT BELIEVE ON ME THROUGH THEIR WORD;** Jn 17:18-20*

Then, John made a transition with no explanation but context. In the context it is evident that he has changed from **WE the apostles** to **WE the Christians**.

*"If **WE** say that **WE** have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, **WE** lie, and do not the truth: but if **WE** walk in the light, as he is in the light, **WE** have fellowship **one with another,** and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth **US** from all sin. 8 If **WE** say that **WE** have no sin, **WE** deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in **US**. If **WE** confess **OUR** sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive **US** our sins, and to cleanse **US** from all unrighteousness. If **WE** say that we have not sinned, **WE** make him a liar, and his word is not in **US**." (1 John 1:6-10)*

As we now move into Chapter Four, there is another shift in these pronouns, and once again the apostles and brethren are distinguished.

*All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them. And by this **WE** know that he abides in **US**, by the **Spirit** which he has given **US**. 1 **BELOVED,** do not believe **every spirit,** but test the **spirits** to see whether **THEY** are of God; for many **FALSE PROPHETS** have gone out into the world. 2 By this **YOU** know the Spirit of God: every **spirit** which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every **spirit** which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the **SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST,** of which **YOU** heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already. 4 **YE** are of God, (my) little children, and have overcome **THEM:** because greater is he that is in **YOU** than **HE** that is in the world. 5 **THEY** are of the world: therefore speak **THEY** (as) of the world, and the world heareth **THEM**. 6 **WE** are of God. **Whoever knows God listens to US,** and **he who is not of God does not listen to US.** By this **WE** know the **spirit** of truth and the **spirit** of error. 1 Jn 3:24; 4:1-6*

Note the nouns **BELOVED** and **SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST / FALSE PROPHETS** and the pronouns **YOU, THEM,** and **HE**. But what do we do with the **WE** that follow these nouns? There is no doubt that the **YOU** are the **BELOVED** disciples to whom John writes. Also that the **THEM** and the **HE** are those who follow the **SPIRIT OF THE ANTICHRIST,** and are **FALSE PROPHETS**. What about the **WE**? Is this the apostles alone, or the apostles in one sense and the rest of us in the other?

It depends on how we interpret the passage. The direct knowledge that God abides within Christians was only given to the apostles. They are the ones who received the "power of the Holy Spirit" and could work miracles, lay their hands on others and preach and write inspired Scripture. But since we are in fellowship with them, when we trust their writings we have the same knowledge but in a secondary sense. We know they had the Holy Spirit, so we know that we have the Holy Spirit when we abide in their teachings. So it could be both here in 3:24, but not in 4:6

*We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1 John 4:6*

There is no easy answer. But if it is the apostles it is an objective standard we can all measure. If it is us, it becomes more subjective.

The reason this needs to be decided is that it completely changes our understanding of the concept "by the spirit which he gave us." There are two distinct gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is the miraculous measure Jesus promised the apostles and that they freely used throughout their

ministry to validate their testimony. There is a second way that "he gave us the spirit" that includes all Christians:

*Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; 22 who also sealed us, and gave (us) the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Cor 1:21-22*

*Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 2 Cor 5:5*

*in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of (God's) own possession, unto the praise of his glory. Eph 1:13-14*

Yet it is difficult to see how this actually proves anything. The only way we even know we have the spirit is through the word of the apostles so it would not be a direct proof. Even if we affirm it, we would still have to prove it by the veracity of the apostles who revealed this.

But if we see the "**US**" as the apostles, then we clearly and objectively know he abides in us. Peter used this gift in the very first sermon he preached and it was used often thereafter. He cited what the audience "saw and heard" (*sound as of a rushing of a mighty wind*) tongues like as of fire on each one of them; speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance). Since they could clearly see the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, there was no doubt of the veracity of what Peter was saying.

*And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. 4 And **THEY were all filled with the Holy Spirit**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave **THEM** utterance. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear**. . . 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear**. Acts 2:2-4; 33*

*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which **at the first** began to be **spoken by the Lord**, and was **confirmed to us by THOSE WHO HEARD HIM**, 4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will. Heb 2:3-4*

Later when "the apostles heard that Samaria had received the word they sent Peter and John" so they "could receive the Holy Spirit." Simon could clearly see the truth. It was obvious that "through the laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Spirit was given." Once again there is nothing subjective here. It is clearly an objective manifestation that no one could argue with.

*Now when **the APOSTLES that were at Jerusalem** heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them **Peter and John**: 15 who, when **THEY** were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: 16 for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then **laid THEY their hands** on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that **through the laying on of the APOSTLES' hands** the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14-19*

Paul told the Corinthians who had received this gifts from his hands exactly what these gifts were and how they were to be used. He first made the same point John did here. The idols they had left did not have such power. These gifts were "word of wisdom;" "word of knowledge;" "faith," "gifts of healings;" "workings of miracles;" "prophecy;" "discernings of spirits" "(divers) kinds of tongues;" and "interpretation of tongues." Those with these gifts did not have subjective feelings. They had a power that was beyond their own ability.

*Now concerning spiritual (gifts), brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that when ye were Gentiles (ye were) led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led. 3 Wherefore I make known unto you, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor 12:1-3*

*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: 9 to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; 10 and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; to another (divers) kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will. 1 Cor*

12:7-11

It was this Spirit that was in and came through the apostles in the first century that gave them this assurance. It put the stamp of inspiration and Scripture on their writings and gives us the assurance they are from God. I am convinced that the change of “we” and “you” begins with the phrase “the spirit which he gave **US**.”