

1 John

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Translation

1 John 1:1 What [incarnation of Jesus Christ] was from the beginning [virgin birth of Jesus Christ in hypostatic union], What we [the apostles and their team] have heard [1st advent teachings from Christ himself: oral tradition before the written Word], What we have seen with our own eyes [confirming the reality of the physical body of Christ], What we have observed and our hands have touched [after the resurrection and ascension], concerning Whom [Jesus Christ] is the Word of life [Jesus Christ is the Logos, the Originator of doctrine],

1 John 1:2 (and the Life [incarnate Christ] was revealed [revelation of God to Israel], in fact, we [the apostolic and resident witnesses] have seen [empirical observation] and have testified [in courtrooms] and have proclaimed to you [John's non-resident congregation] that eternal Life [Jesus Christ], Who was face-to-face with the Father [eternal sonship] and was revealed [by oral tradition and Scripture] to us),

1 John 1:3 What [reference to the kenosis and hypostatic union of Jesus Christ] we have seen [they had observed the humanity of Christ on earth with their own eyes] and heard [they heard His teachings from His Own lips], we are now reporting [putting the listeners into the frame of mind where they could also be present to witness things firsthand] to you [non-resident Christians], so that you also [those with non-face-to-face teaching may have fellowship just like those who have face-to-face teaching] might have [subject to your volition] fellowship [non-face-to-face] with us [those who have the privilege of geographical, face-to-face teaching]. Furthermore, in fact, our [true, collective] fellowship

[through private confession of sin to God and the resultant filling of the Spirit] is with our Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4 As a matter of fact, we [John and his resident congregation] write these things [doctrines of Christ] to you [those in John's non-resident congregation], so that our [both resident and non-resident] inner happiness [from supergrace status] might be completed [communicating Truth to other believers, while in fellowship with Christ, can spur your spiritual growth and inner happiness from supergrace to ultra-supergrace: a completed edification complex of the soul].

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we [members of John's resident congregation who saw Christ firsthand] have heard from Him [Jesus Christ in the flesh] and have communicated [as messengers] to you [non-resident members], that God is [by analogy] light [divine essence] and there is no, not any, darkness [analogy for Satan's essence] in Him [no compromise between God's system and Satan's system].

1 John 1:6 If we contend that we have fellowship with Him [living in the sphere of light], but we keep on walking [ordering our behavior] in the sphere of darkness [exiting the sphere of light through sin on a continual basis], we keep on lying to ourselves [divorced from reality] and are not making it a practice to live the Truth [divine standards of virtue, honor, integrity],

1 John 1:7 But if we keep on walking in the sphere of light [inside the operational divine dynasphere] as He [Jesus Christ] was in the sphere of light [inside the prototype divine dynasphere], we keep on having fellowship [being in the sphere of light is the same thing as being in fellowship] with each other [our reciprocal relationship as Christians is based on residence and function inside the divine dynasphere rather than the function of our sin natures], and the blood [representative analogy for the spiritual death of Christ on the cross] of Jesus, His [the Father's] Son, keeps on cleansing [temporary purification] us [those who acknowledge their sins and are walking in the light] from every sin [not the imputed sin from Adam, but every sin we commit that destroys our walk in the light, our fellowship with Christ and therefore each other].

1 John 1:8 If we contend that we do not have a sin nature [perfectionism and its eradication of sin heresy: the conclusion of self-righteous, arrogant ascetics], we are deceiving [deluding] ourselves and the Truth [hamartiology: the doctrine of sin] is not residing in us [darkness: blackout of the soul].

1 John 1:9 If we acknowledge [cite, name] our sins [mental, verbal or overt], He [God the Father through our only intermediary, Jesus Christ] is faithful [trustworthy] and just [integrity] so that He forgives [cancels] our sins and cleanses us [temporary purification] from every category of unrighteousness [unknown sins, human good and evil].

1 John 1:10 If we contend [assert] that we have not sinned [claiming sinless perfection], we [deluded believers in the cosmic system] keep on making Him a liar [fighting God in self-

righteous arrogance] and His Word [especially hamartiology] is not in us [fighting self with negative volition towards doctrine].

1 John 2:1 My students [immature believers in John's non-resident congregation], I am writing [as your non-resident pastor] these things [doctrines] to you so that you might stop living a lifestyle of continual sin [so you won't lose your spiritual momentum]. Nevertheless, if anyone repeatedly sins, we [believers only] always have an Advocate [intercessor] before the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One,

1 John 2:2 Since He Himself [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation [experiential not positional cleansing, temporal not eternal washing] for our [John's resident and non-resident congregations] sins, and not for ours only [not just for the sins of those in my congregations], but also for the entire world [for Christians outside of our fellowship, the church as the Bride of Christ].

1 John 2:3 Furthermore, by this [requirement] we may know [through grace perception] that we have come to know and are continuing to know [intimately] Him [Jesus Christ]: if we continue to execute [obey] His mandates [grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit, etc.].

1 John 2:4 When anyone claims: "I have come to know Him [Jesus Christ]," but does not continually execute His mandates [for residence and function in the sphere of light], he is [living the lifestyle of] a liar [under the illusion of the cosmic system] and the Truth [Bible doctrine] is not in him [he is ignorant of doctrine, and therefore ignorant of God].

1 John 2:5 But if someone keeps on maintaining [studying and applying] His Word [daily intake of Bible doctrine], the virtue love from God is truly being accomplished in him [completion of the edification complex of the soul]. By this [momentum in the spiritual life by means of doctrine and the ministry of the Spirit] we have come to realize that we are [residing] in it [virtue love].

1 John 2:6 Anyone [member of the royal family of God] who claims to reside in it [virtue love] ought to keep walking [continued function in the operational sphere of virtue love] in exactly the same manner as [precisely correct protocol] He Himself [Jesus Christ] also walked [in the prototype sphere of virtue love].

1 John 2:7 Beloved [members of John's unseen congregation], I am not writing a new mandate to you, but an old mandate which you have possessed from the beginning [of the Church Age]; the old mandate is the Word [doctrinal message on residing in the sphere of light and love in order to have fellowship with the Trinity] which you have heard [from Jesus in John 15:9-17].

1 John 2:8 On the other hand, I am writing [repetition] a new mandate to you [to reside in the love complex], which is true [reliable doctrine] in Him [Jesus Christ inside the prototype love complex] and in you [the believer in the operational love complex], because the

darkness [cosmic system] is passing away [the divine system will defeat the cosmic system if you follow this mandate] and the true light [doctrinal thinking] is already shining [momentum in the love complex reflected in your soul].

1 John 2:9 When anyone [arrogant believer] claims he is in the sphere of light [divine system], but hates his brother [fellow believer], he is in the sphere of darkness [cosmic system] up to [and including] the present.

1 John 2:10 He who continues to love [impersonal, virtue love] his brother [fellow believer] resides in the sphere of light [divine system]; moreover, there is no cause for ruin [enticement or temptation to sin] in it [the sphere of light].

1 John 2:11 But when anyone makes it a habit to hate [mental attitude sin] his brother [fellow believer], he is in the sphere of darkness [hatred complex] and is continually walking [advancing into blackout of the soul] in the sphere of darkness [cosmic system], and has not understood in the past and continues not to understand in the present where he is going [disoriented to the plan of God], because the darkness [cosmic system] has blinded his eyes [spiritual perception is blacked-out].

1 John 2:12 I am writing to you [non-resident], children [young believers who need training, motivation and authority orientation], because your sins have been forgiven in the past [clean slate at the moment of regeneration] with the result that they keep on being forgiven [experiential forgiveness after confession] because of His Person [Jesus Christ].

1 John 2:13 I am writing to you [non-resident], fathers [those who have cracked the maturity barrier], because you know Him [occupation with Jesus Christ] Who was from the beginning [since the virgin birth]. I am writing to you [non-resident] young men [spiritual adolescents], because you have overcome [winners in the devil's world] the evil one [Satan as the genius of the cosmic system].

1 John 2:14 I wrote to you in the past, infants [believers learning the basics], because you were beginning to learn about the Father [the essence of theology]. I wrote to you in the past, fathers [believers pressing towards supergrace], because you were beginning to know Him [occupation with Jesus Christ] Who was from the beginning [since the virgin birth]. I wrote to you in the past, young men [spiritual adolescent believers], because you were strong [spiritually self-sustaining], and the Word from God was residing in you [spiritual momentum], and you were beginning to overcome the evil one [passing momentum tests and staying out of the cosmic system].

1 John 2:15 Stop loving [being distracted by, enslaved in] the cosmic system, or anything in the cosmic system [multitude of gates or traps to choose from]. If anyone keeps loving [prolonged residence in] the cosmic system [building scar tissue in the soul], the virtue love from the Father is not in him,

1 John 2:16 Because each category of thing that is in the cosmic system: the lust from the flesh [old sin nature] and the lust from the eyes [mentality of the soul] and the pride of life [arrogant self-sufficiency], is not from the Father, but is from the cosmic system [under Satan's dominion].

1 John 2:17 Moreover, the cosmic system and its lusts [from the old sin nature] will pass away [emphasis on its transitory nature], but anyone who executes the will of God [advancing in the spiritual life] will continue to abide forever [live in their specialized, superior resurrection bodies].

1 John 2:18 Students, it is the last hour [to make progress in the spiritual life], and just as you have heard [previously taught eschatological doctrine] that the Antichrist [Satan's political dictator during the Tribulation] will come, even now [during the Church Age] many antichrists [believers in the cosmic system] exist, from which [high frequency of antichrists] we may understand that it is the last hour [to make progress in the spiritual life].

1 John 2:19 They [negative believers: apostates & reversionists] went out [left the divine system for the cosmic system] from us [reaction vs. response separation], however they [negative believers] were never part of us [they never lived in the divine system], for if they [negative believers] had been part of us [lived in the divine system], they would have surely remained with us [living in the divine system], but rather they separated from us so that they [believers in the cosmic system] might be exposed that they [negative believers] are not all part of us [they broke the inner fellowship].

1 John 2:20 However, you [believers in the divine system] have the anointing [filling of the Spirit] from the holy One [Spirit] and have come to understand [spiritual perception] all manner of things [a complete systematic theology in the soul].

1 John 2:21 I have not written to you because you do not know the Truth [doctrine], but because you have come to know it, and because no lie of any kind comes [originates] from doctrine [the mind of Christ].

1 John 2:22 Who [what sort of person] is a liar [living a lie] if not the one who continually disregards [repudiates by living in the cosmic system] that Jesus is the Christ? This one [born-again believers] who continually disregards [repudiates by living in the cosmic system] the Father and the Son is an antichrist [believers who serve Satan].

1 John 2:23 Each one who makes it a practice to disregard the Son [repudiate by living in the cosmic system], neither does he have [fellowship with] the Father; the one who makes it a practice to acknowledge the Son [by living in the divine system], also has [fellowship with] the Father.

1 John 2:24 As for you [positive believers], what [doctrine] you have heard from the beginning [when you first decided to learn the Word of God] must continually reside in you.

If what you heard from the beginning [Bible doctrine] continues to reside in you, you will also reside in the sphere of the Son and the Father.

1 John 2:25 Likewise, this is the promise which He Himself has promised us: eternal life [social life with God assisted by our resurrection bodies].

1 John 2:26 I have written [non face-to-face teaching] these things [doctrinal warnings] to you [remote congregations] concerning those [apostates & reversionists] who continue to seduce you [trying to lure you into the cosmic system].

1 John 2:27 Furthermore, as for you, the anointing [baptism of the Holy Spirit] which you have received [at salvation] from Him [Jesus Christ] resides in you [indwelling of the Holy Spirit]. Furthermore, you do not have need that anyone [false teachers] should teach you, but instead His anointing [ministry of the Holy Spirit] keeps teaching you [through a person with the communication gift of pastor or teacher] concerning all categories of things [a complete systematic theology]. Moreover, it [doctrine witnessed by the Holy Spirit] is never a lie. In fact, just as it [the filling and teaching of the Spirit] has taught you, keep on residing in it [the divine system].

1 John 2:28 And now [during the Church Age], students, keep residing in it [the divine system], so that when He [Jesus Christ] appears [at the Rapture], we might have confidence and not be ashamed before Him [disgraced from living in the cosmic system] at His coming [at the Rapture].

1 John 2:29 If you know that He [Jesus Christ] is righteous, then you should know that every one who makes it a practice to execute integrity [produces righteousness] has been born from Him.

1 John 3:1 Concentrate on how great a love complex the Father [Inventor of the love complex] has given to us [the royal family], so that we might be designated students of God [under His tutelage]. Therefore [since we reside in the love complex], we are [students of God]. For this reason [our residing in the love complex], the world does not understand us [conflict of the dynaspheres], because it [the world] did not understand Him [Jesus Christ].

1 John 3:2 Beloved [royal family of God], we should be now [in Phase 2 of the spiritual life: experiential sanctification] students of God, and what we shall be [our spiritual status in eternity] has not yet been revealed. We have come to know [through the function of the grace apparatus for perception] that when He appears [at the Rapture], we shall become like Him [having a resurrection body], for we shall see Him [Jesus Christ] just as He is [His glory in hypostatic union].

1 John 3:3 And each person who keeps on having this confidence [while waiting for the Rapture] in Him [trusting in the divine system He tested and provided to us], purifies himself [impeccability inside the operational divine system], just as the unique Person [Jesus Christ] is pure [impeccability inside the prototype divine system].

1 John 3:4 Every person [believer] who makes it a practice to commit sin [perpetual function in the cosmic system] is also committing iniquity [perpetual residence in the cosmic system]. In fact, sin [function] is [walks hand-in-hand with] iniquity [residence].

1 John 3:5 Indeed, you [those who have learned Christology and Soteriology] know that the unique Person [Jesus Christ] was revealed for the purpose of carrying away our [believer's] sins. In fact, sin did not exist in Him [impeccability in the prototype divine system].

1 John 3:6 Every person [believer] who is abiding in it [the divine system] is not sinning. Every person [believer] who makes it a practice to sin [perpetual function in the cosmic system] does not understand Him [Jesus Christ], neither do they know Him [fellowship: intimate relationship].

1 John 3:7 Students [teachable believers], stop allowing anyone to deceive you. When a person [believer only] is performing righteousness [royal family honor code], he is honorable, just as the unique Person [Jesus Christ] is honorable.

1 John 3:8 When a person [believer] makes it a practice [lifestyle] to commit sin, he has become an agent of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning [since his fall]. For this purpose, the Son of God [Jesus Christ] was revealed [at the 1st advent]: that He might destroy the works [cosmic system] of the devil.

1 John 3:9 At the moment when each person [believer] is born of God [at regeneration], he is not committing sin, because His [the Holy Spirit's] sperm [divinely implanted seed] always abides in it [the divine system]. Furthermore, he is not able to sin [while in the divine system], because he has been born from God.

1 John 3:10 By this, students of God and students of the devil are manifest: Every person [believer] who does not make it a practice to manufacture righteousness is not an agent from God [living in His divine system], nor the person [believer] who does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love [infused and acquired inside the divine system] towards his brother [fellow believer].

1 John 3:11 Because this is the message which you have heard from the beginning [of the Lord's ministry on earth]: that we should make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers],

1 John 3:12 Not like Cain was, an agent of the evil one, even [to the point of] cutting the throat of his brother [murder]. And for what reason did he cut his [brother's] throat? Because his production [evil works] was wicked, while that of his brother was righteous [divine good].

1 John 3:13 Stop being shocked, brethren, if [believers in] the cosmic system perpetually hates you [believers residing in the divine system].

1 John 3:14 We know that we [believers in the divine system] have changed our residence [relocated] out from the realm of death [cosmic system] into the realm of life [divine system], because we make it a practice to exercise virtue love. The one who does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love resides in the sphere of death [cosmic system].

1 John 3:15 Every person [believer in the cosmic system] who hates his brethren [fellow believers] is a murderer [hatred is mental attitude murder]; you also know that not every murderer has eternal life residing in him [not all murderers are Christians].

1 John 3:16 By this we [believers] have come to know love [special, discriminating, redemptive, predestinating, sacrificial love]: that He and only He [Jesus Christ is unique] laid down His life on our behalf [believers only]. Consequently, we ourselves ought to lay down our lives [during disaster circumstances] for the benefit of our brethren [even fellow believers we don't like].

1 John 3:17 Moreover, whoever might possess the prosperity [financial wealth] of this world and observes his brother [fellow believer in his periphery] who has extreme poverty [destitution], but shuts off his emotions from him [lack of compassion], how can this virtue love from God be residing in him [wealth – virtue = unhappiness]?

1 John 3:18 Students, let us not make it a habit to exercise virtue love with thought or language only [instruments of means without the correct sphere of operation], but also in function [operation inside the divine system] and doctrine [the Word of God permeating your soul].

1 John 3:19 By this [exercise of virtue love] we may know that we are out from doctrine, even convincing the mentality of our soul [confidence] in His sight [social life with God],

1 John 3:20 Because if the mentality of our soul condemns us [confession of sin and doctrine in the soul are the deciding factors], bear in mind [remember] that God is greater than the mentality of our soul. Furthermore, He knows [omniscience] all things.

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if the mentality of our soul does not condemn us [confession of sin and doctrine in the soul are the deciding factors], we may have increasing confidence [by continued residence and function in the divine system] towards God.

1 John 3:22 Furthermore, whatever we may ask [prayer offered while residing in the divine system] from Him [the Father], we may receive, because we continue to keep His mandates [walk in the Spirit, grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit] and we continue to keep on doing things [function in the divine system] pleasing in His sight.

1 John 3:23 Furthermore, this is His mandate [for positional sanctification], that we believe on the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, and [for experiential sanctification] make it a

practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers], just as He [the Father] gave us the mandate.

1 John 3:24 In fact, he who keeps His [the Father's] mandates keeps on residing in it [the love complex], and He [the Father] in him. In fact, by this we know that He [the Father] resides in us: from the Spirit [love complex] which He [the Father] has given to us [royal family of God].

1 John 4:1 Beloved [members of the royal family], stop believing every personality [influential Gnostic-leaning, self-appointed spiritual leader], but rather keep analyzing [checking their dogma] those personalities whether [one-at-a-time] he is from God [as a teaching representative], because many false teachers have gone out [exited the divine system] for the cosmic system [willing and obedient evangelists for Satan].

1 John 4:2 By this [understanding] you may learn to recognize that personality [influential teacher] from God: Every personality [persuasive speaker] who acknowledges Jesus Christ [deity] has come in the flesh [humanity] is from God [as His representative].

1 John 4:3 Furthermore, every personality [persuasive speaker] who does not acknowledge this Jesus [of orthodox Christianity] is not from God [as His representative]. Furthermore, this [false teaching] is from Antichrist, about whom you have heard that he is coming [during the Tribulation]; even now [during the Church Age], he [the essence of antichrist] is already in the world [believers in the cosmic system are under Satan's control and are therefore antichrists].

1 John 4:4 You [believers in the divine system] are from God, students [points to some progress in doctrine], and have overcome them [momentum tests], because greater is He in you [indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit] than he [Satan] in the cosmic system.

1 John 4:5 They [Gnostic-leaning false teachers] are from the cosmic system, therefore, they make it a practice to speak as agents [representatives] of the cosmic system, and the cosmic system [those believers residing in it] hears them [they are in perfect agreement].

1 John 4:6 We [orthodox pastors & teachers] are from God [as a representative]. He [positive believers] who has come to know God keeps listening to us [orthodox pastors & teachers]; he who is not from God [as a representative] does not listen to us [orthodox pastors & teachers]. For this reason [continual listening to orthodox pastors & teachers], we have come to know the nature [spiritual significance] of Truth [Bible doctrine] and the nature [pervading influence] of error [false doctrine].

1 John 4:7 Beloved [members of the royal family], let us make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers], because virtue love is from God [the Father]. Furthermore, every person who makes it a practice to exercise virtue love has been born [positional truth] from God [the Father] and has come to know [experiential truth: spiritual growth] God [the Father].

1 John 4:8 When anyone [believer in the cosmic system] does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love [lacking virtue which comes from residence in the divine system], he has not come to know [have continued fellowship with] God [the Father], because God [the Father] is love [one of His divine attributes].

1 John 4:9 By this the [sovereign, electing, discriminating] love of God [the Father] was made manifest unto us [the electing love of God preceded the sending of His Son]: that God [the Father] sent His uniquely born Son into the world [cosmic system] so that we might live [experiential: the Christian way of life] through Him.

1 John 4:10 By this [sending of His Son] virtue love came into being – not because we love God [the Father], but because He [the Father] loved us [sovereign electing love] and sent His Son [Jesus Christ], the propitiation [emphasis on experiential rather than positional cleansing, temporal rather than eternal washing] for our [the elect's] sins.

1 John 4:11 Beloved [members of the royal family], if God so loved us [believers only], we also ought to make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers].

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God [the essence of God cannot be seen empirically]. If we make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers], God is residing in us [indwelling of the Father] and His virtue love is being matured in us [invisible God has visible and invisible influence in the believer who is residing inside the love complex].

1 John 4:13 By this we know that we are residing in Him [the Father] and He [the Father] in us [reciprocal communion]: because by means of His Spirit He [the Father] has given it [virtue love inside the love complex] to us.

1 John 4:14 Indeed, we ourselves [John's fellow Jewish believers] have understood and we keep confirming [to those outside Israel] that the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world [Gentile believers scattered throughout the earth, as contrasted to the earlier Jewish dispensation which was exclusivistic].

1 John 4:15 If anyone [Jew or Gentile] acknowledges that Jesus [humanity] is the Son of God [deity], God [the Father] resides in him [positional truth] and he in God [experiential truth].

1 John 4:16 Furthermore, we [believers with Bible doctrine in their souls] have come to understand [perception] and trust [retention] this virtue love which God [the Father] has towards us. God is [by attribute and essence] virtue love. In fact, the one who resides in the love complex is residing in God [the Father] and God [the Father] is residing in him.

1 John 4:17 By this [residence in the love complex], virtue love is being accomplished [matured] in company with us [joint venture between the positive believer and the agape love of the Father], so that we might have confidence [advancing in the plan of God] on the day of evaluation [Judgment or Evaluation Seat of Christ], because just as He was [the incarnate Christ residing in the prototype divine system], so also are we [believers residing in the operational divine system] in this world.

1 John 4:18 Fear [inability to apply Bible doctrine to a given situation when under pressure] does not exist in the love complex. On the contrary, mature [advanced] virtue love drives out [banishes] fear, because fear causes torment [self-induced misery and divine discipline]. In fact, the person who is afraid has not been matured in the love complex.

1 John 4:19 We [believers only] exercise virtue love, because He [God the Father] first loved us.

1 John 4:20 If someone [believer in the cosmic system] alleges: I love God, and yet he hates his brother [fellow believer], he is a liar, for he [believer in the cosmic system] who does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards his brother [fellow believer] whom he has seen, is not able to love God [the Father] whom he has not seen.

1 John 4:21 Furthermore, we have this mandate from Him [the Father]: that he who loves God [personal love] should also make it a practice to exercise [impersonal] virtue love towards his brother [fellow believer].

1 John 5:1 Every person who believes that Jesus is the Christ was born in the past [regeneration precedes faith] from God [being born from above in the past determines who will be born again in the future]. Moreover, every person who loves the One [the Father] who has begotten, should also exercise virtue love towards the person [fellow believer] who was born in the past from Him [the Father].

1 John 5:2 By this we may know that we are exercising virtue love towards the students of God: whenever we keep on loving [motivational virtue] God [the Father] and we continue to execute [functional virtue] His mandates [to reside and function in the love complex].

1 John 5:3 Indeed, this is [motivating virtue] love from God [the Father]: that we might continue observing His mandates [advancing in the spiritual life], and His mandates [when residing and functioning in the love complex] are never difficult.

1 John 5:4 Because every category of person [racial, educational, economic, male-female, slave-free] who has been born from God may overcome the cosmic system [strategic victory as the basis for tactical victory]. Moreover, this is the instrument of victory which overcomes the cosmic system: our doctrine [resident in the soul].

1 John 5:5 Who is the person who is beginning to overcome the cosmic system [in the face of pressure], if not he [the new believer] who has come to believe that Jesus [humanity] is the Son of God [deity]?

1 John 5:6 This One is He who came [Incarnation] by serum [plasma & platelets] and blood clots [red blood cells]: Jesus Christ – not by serum only [which would mean he bled to death], but by serum and blood clots [He dismissed His life in the flesh]. Furthermore, it is the Spirit who testifies [witness to the doctrine of the Incarnation], because the Spirit is truth.

1 John 5:7 As a matter of fact, there are three who continue to bear witness:

1 John 5:8 The Spirit and the water [figurative representation for the Word of God] and the blood [representative analogy for Christ's spiritual death on the cross]. Furthermore, these three are one in purpose.

1 John 5:9 Since we accept the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater [so obviously we should accept it, too], because this testimony [of the preceding three witnesses] is from God [the Father], because He has testified concerning His Son [Jesus Christ].

1 John 5:10 The person who has believed on the Son of God [after regeneration] already has this witness in himself; the person who does not believe God has made Him in the past and continues to make Him in the present a liar, because he has not believed in the deposition [threefold: filling of the Spirit, water of the Word, spiritual death of Christ] which God has testified concerning His Son.

1 John 5:11 In fact, this is the deposition [written account of the three witnesses] that God [the Father] has given to us: eternal life, and this life [especially the qualitative, experiential side] is in His Son.

1 John 5:12 He [the positive believer] who has the Son [fellowship with Jesus Christ] may have this [qualitative] life; he who does not have the Son of God [no fellowship with Jesus Christ] does not have this [qualitative] life.

1 John 5:13 I have written these things [Bible doctrines] to you who have believed on the Person of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life [positional and experiential].

1 John 5:14 In fact, this is the confidence [motivating virtue manufactured in the love complex] which we have towards Him [fellowship], that if we ask anything [through prayer] according to His will, He will hear us.

1 John 5:15 In fact, when we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask [according to His will], we know [confident expectation] that we will obtain the prayer requests which we have asked from Him.

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother [fellow believer] sinning a sin not face-to-face with [terminating unto] death, he [the intercessor] shall ask [in prayer] and He [the Father] will give [temporal] life to him [the carnal believer], for those [carnal believers who are under warning or intensive discipline] who are not committing sin [prolonged residence in the cosmic system] face-to-face with [terminating unto] death. There is sin [prolonged residence in the cosmic system] face-to-face with [terminating unto] death; I do not recommend that anyone should pray [discipline for this believer is under the sovereign hands of God] about that [advanced stage of reversionism].

1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness [wrongdoing] is sin [function of the believer in the cosmic system], and yet there is sin [which can be cleansed by confession] not face-to-face with [terminating unto] death.

1 John 5:18 We have learned that anyone who has been born from God [believer] does not have to make it a practice to sin [a lifestyle of sin is not inevitable]. On the contrary, He [Jesus Christ] who is born from God guards him [the believer who is in fellowship] so the evil one [Satan] does not touch [harm] him [the believer inside the love complex is protected from evil].

1 John 5:19 We have learned in the past and now know with a certainty that we [believers residing in the love complex] are representatives of God [His agents on earth] while the entire cosmic system [every person residing in it] lies under the control of the evil one [Satan].

1 John 5:20 Moreover, we have learned in the past and now know with a certainty that the Son of God has come [1st advent] and has given to us [believers] the faculty for perception [reasoning process] so that we may understand objective reality [the truth]. Furthermore, we are in the sphere of objective reality [veracity] by means of His Son, Jesus Christ. This One [Jesus Christ] is the true [objective reality] God and eternal life.

1 John 5:21 Students [positive believers], guard yourselves from idols [anything that distracts you from learning Bible doctrine].

Introduction

John currently (as the last apostle) lives in Ephesus, where he ministered to his resident congregation in Ephesus, as well as his non-resident congregations in the Roman provinces of Asia. He wrote this letter to his non-resident congregations to refute two kinds of Gnosticism, Cerinthian and Docetic. Among these groups was a form of asceticism (believed in sinless perfection) and Eradicationists, who believed they could destroy the old sin nature and their personal sins. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) On the practical level these new teachers claimed to have reached such an advanced stage in spiritual experience that they were “beyond good and evil.” They maintained that they had no sin. (F. Bruce) 1 John was apparently designed for a group of congregations in a limited area who found themselves ... in a pagan environment in which Gnostic trends were rife, where the true believers were battling with a false Christology. (R. Schnackenburg) Some of the Johannine Christian community became secessionists and left the larger ranks which remained faithful to John’s teachings. Their secession was due to a Gnostic reinterpretation of the Gospel of John. John wrote this epistle to correct these misinterpretations of his earlier work. (LWB) Every idea of the secessionists can be plausibly explained as derivative from the Johannine tradition as preserved for us in the Gospel of John. (R. Brown) Confessing sin, walking in truth and love, avoiding a loose spiritual life, and being aware of the temptations of the world all stand as important themes of John. (R. Lightner)

This is a homiletical Epistle, the address of a pastor to his flock who are widely scattered beyond the reach of his voice ... Substitute the word “say” for “write” in the passages heading this chapter, and one might imagine the whole discourse delivered in speech to the assembled church. (G. Findlay) Evidently the desire and aim of the writer of this Epistle is to place all to whom it comes in the same advantageous position which he himself and his fellow-apostles enjoyed, as regards the knowledge of God in Christ, and the full enjoyment of the holy and divine fellowship which that knowledge implies. (R. Candlish) Only the context can guide us as to whether his “we” is uniquely apostolic or commonly Christian. (J. Stott) The “we” need not be a body of established church officers nor a group of authoritative teachers, but a group of witnesses. (R. Brown) I follow the conclusions of Thieme, in which the “we” is John’s resident congregation and the “you” is John’s non-resident congregations. (LWB) Their interest is his interest; their joy is his joy; their struggle is his struggle. He writes to them as one who knows their need, which he seeks to supply ... The advanced age at which the Apostle John continued to minister from Ephesus to these Asiatic churches, gradually narrowed the range of John’s personal, direct contact with them. So, instead of speaking to them in person, he presented in the form of a letter, or epistle, his thoughts and earnest desire for them. (R. Gingrich)

The writer of the Epistle speaks throughout with the authority of an Apostle. He claims naturally and simply an immediate knowledge of the fundamental facts of the Gospel, and that special knowledge which was possessed only by the most intimate disciples of the Lord. (B. Wescott) John’s authority in this circle of churches is comparable to Paul’s in his Gentile mission-field ... Because of his personal association with the earliest days of Christianity, he is the embodiment of that tradition – more particularly, the tradition as it is set forth in his Gospel. This tradition, together with him who embodies it, is vested with the authority of the Lord Himself. (F. Bruce) In the clearest possible terms the apostle affirms the regenerate state of his readers when he says, “I have not written to you because you do

not know the Truth, but because you do know it.” He is confident that the Truth is presently “abiding” in them, and he wants it to continue to abide in them, 1 John 2:24. (J. Dillow) His office in this field was not to plant, but to nourish and build up the churches there established ... But this rich soil was rife with heresy and contention; rank weeds marred its prolific growth. (G. Findlay) We may describe the literary genre of 1 John as that of a “paper,” which sets out to expound Johannine teaching and ideas, now preserved in the tradition and theology of the 4th Gospel, for the benefit of the heterodox members of John’s community. (S. Smalley)

John speaks of the conflict of two systems; the one God’s truth, the other Satan’s error and lie. The Spirit of truth was wrestling against the spirits of error ... These errorists boasted of their knowledge, and of their communion with God. (R. Govett) John, as well as Paul, sets forth the difference and superiority of “Agape love” from God over the “Gnosis-Eros love” of sinful, Hellenistic culture. (LWB) The Gnostics were maintaining that a child of God could have sin in his life and still be in fellowship, abiding in Christ! The remaining portions of this letter present several tests of whether or not a Christian is walking in fellowship with God, tests by which the falsity of the Gnostic teaching could be discerned. They are not tests of whether or not these born-again children are really Christians. (J. Dillow) The epistle of John is the epistle of fellowship; it shows us the way into fellowship with God, for He wants His people to be in communion with Him. (H. Ironside) John and his readers, who remained faithful to the original teaching and fellowship, were in the sphere where eternal life might be enjoyed, because their fellowship was with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (F. Bruce) Fellowship with God and fellowship with Christian brethren are closely intertwined. (R. Govett) Take all the writings of the apostle John, and, unless one allusion to a local body, you would never know that a church existed ... Surely there is a vast flood of unspeakable blessing in John, in whose writings the thought or name of the Church never comes. I speak of the Gospel and Epistles. All is individual there. Those who enjoy it being to the Church, and do not put themselves out of the Church mentally in enjoying it; but it is not, for all that, the less individual. (J. Darby)

The present dangers to faith do not arise from open opposition of the truth – from the atheist, and agnostic, and materialist – they arise from those who, professing to give a higher and more reasonable explanation of the contents of that faith, really destroy it altogether. (G. Barrett) The secessionists were not unbelievers; they were deceived Christians. (LWB) The author dubs the secessionists as antichrists who do the work of the devil; his only correction consists in appealing to the inner guidance of the Christians to whom he is writing, a guidance that stems from the knowledge of the truth and from having been anointed with the Holy Spirit. (R. Brown) The antichrists were not unbelievers; they were deceived Christians. (LWB) The secessionists were not content to keep their new beliefs to themselves. Instead they organized a group of itinerant preachers who circulated among the churches and propagated their beliefs with a view to winning people over to their understanding of things. This created confusion among the believers who remained loyal to the gospel as it had been proclaimed at the beginning, the gospel that had come down from the eyewitnesses ... When we read the letters of John, it becomes clear that a number of loosely related churches were operating in fellowship with the author of these letters ... We may, then, justifiably speak of a Johannine community, by which we mean a group

of churches in fellowship with the author. (C. Kruse) Yes, I know most commentators believe the secessionists and antichrists were unbelievers, those who professed to be Christians but in reality were not. That is a philosophical conclusion, not a textual conclusion. I believe they were Christians in reversionism, a view which will be supported when we get to those passages. (LWB)

1 John lacks the typical stylistic features of a letter ... It bears all the marks of being addressed to a specific situation in some church or group of churches known to the author. ... It is a written sermon or pastoral address ... Its purpose was to provide an antidote to the false teaching which confronted his readers. (I. Marshall) It would seem reasonable to deduce from the general nature of the epistle that it was intended for a number of churches. There is evidence, however, that the recipients possessed a certain homogeneity. The facts suggest the intended recipients were located in several towns within a certain well-defined geographical area with the churches bound together by similar sociological factors ... John has detailed knowledge of their spiritual condition ... He was personally and affectionately known. (D. Burdick) His paternal concern for them ... suggests that he felt a real pastoral responsibility for these believers. (Z. Hodges) A developing schism within the Christian community led to the writing of this epistle. The difficulty had already reached a point where some members, including teachers, had separated themselves from the others and were in the process of setting up their own community ... The writer responded to the false teachers by recognizing them as a supreme danger threatening the very life and faith of the community. He saw that what was called for was a positive reaffirmation of the cardinal doctrines of the faith that have been from the beginning. (F. Gaebelein)

The style of John's Gospel and First Epistle is imitated with the greatest care and skill throughout. The student has only to take a good reference Bible, and place the passages side-by-side in parallel columns, to see whether the most satisfactory hypothesis is not that of the common tradition, that Gospel and Epistles all come from one and the same author, and that author is the Apostle John ... Two characteristics of this magic style may be mentioned together: *profundity of thought* and *simplicity of language*. This marvelous combination to a large extent accounts for the power which John's writings exercise over those who listen to them ... Emotion, suppressed under a sense of awe and solemnity, is shown by the involved construction through which his thoughts struggle for utterance. (A. Plummer) In the whole structure of the 1st Epistle there is hardly a single thought that is not found in the Gospel. (A. Robertson, Schulze) Attempts to trace a consecutive argument throughout 1 John have never succeeded ... It is plain to the observant reader that we have here passages in homiletic style interspersed with epigrammatic theses, often grouped in antithetic pairs. (F. Bruce) Some would have it that in this letter the apostle gives us nothing more consecutive or organic than a string of disconnected, or very slightly connected, aphorisms. (A. Plummer) Here's the best structural outline I found in my studies; it came from Roy Zuck's basic interpretative (hermeneutics) textbook. [Start at the bottom and read upwards.](#)

Ascending Structure in 1 John

- 5:13-21 You have several witnesses / therefore you know Him
- 5:6-12 You have faith in Him / therefore you have several witnesses
- 5:4-5 You believe that Jesus is the Christ / therefore your faith overcomes the world
- 4:7-5:3 You have the Spirit of God / therefore love the brethren and believe that Jesus is the Christ
- 4:1-6 You love others born of Him / therefore test the prophets to see if they are spirits of God
- 3:11-24 You are born of Him / therefore love others born of Him
- 2:29-3:10 You remain in Him / therefore you should practice righteousness because you are born of Him
- 2:18-28 You love the brethren / therefore you remain in Him and heretics don't (they depart, deny, deceive)
- 2:7-17 We walk in the light / therefore we should love the brethren
- 1:5-2:6 We have fellowship with Him / therefore we should walk in the light
- 1:1-4 We witnessed the Word of life / therefore we have fellowship with Him

1 John is primarily a paper on experiential sanctification. (LWB) Who will deny the need for a recall to sanctification? Travel through churches (as has been my own privilege these last ten years, in various countries, especially the North American continent) and what do you find? Generally speaking, among the officialdoms and churches of the major Protestant denominations, the witness to Scriptural holiness seems to have become extinct ... Millions of Christians live out their days on earth without ever knowing coherently what is the highest and richest spiritual provision for them in Christ during this present life ... Positional sanctification is objective: something wrought *for* us by God through Christ. Experiential sanctification is subjective: something wrought *in* us by God the Holy Spirit. In Hebrews 10:10 and 10:14 we “have been sanctified ... once for all” and “perfected forever” (positional sanctification), but also, as a present parallel and counterpart of that, we are now “being sanctified” (experiential sanctification) ... Our *state* does not affect our *standing*. What we are in *self* has nothing to do with what we are in *Christ*. Let it be the undying passion of our regenerated hearts that our *state* shall as nearly as possible reflect our *standing*, and that our *positional* sanctification in Christ may be paralleled by a true sanctification of *character*. (J. Baxter) The bulk of 1 John addresses this topic.

The author of 1 John also refutes ethical error ... He uses the language of the 4th Gospel to attack the heretically inclined members of his community. (S. Smalley) People were denying the incarnation and John regarded this as very serious. Its effect was to take the heart out of Christianity. For if Christ did not really become a man and did not really die for us, then no atonement has been made for our sins. So John emphasizes the reality of the incarnation. (L. Morris) This is obviously a heresy that needed to be refuted, but not John's most important thrust, in my opinion. Most commentators agree that there are two primary themes in 1 John: love and fellowship. (LWB) The close union and intercourse of love between the Father and the Son were from all eternity. We, united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, are brought out into this fellowship. (R. Govett) Modern thinking says: Love is a matter of the heart; truth is a matter of the head. Truth leads to arrogance and pride; love leads to service and humility. Truth is cold and intellectual; love is warm and spiritual. One finds none of this sort of thing in John ... Modern thinkers not only misunderstand what John means by *truth*, but also what he means by *love*. (G. Clark) Because there is so much confusion on what Agape love is, and what true fellowship means, I've added a section on each to this introduction. As for reading materials: (1) Nygren's book is the classic on Agape love; (2) Owen sets the stage for fellowship with the Trinity, each Person distinctly and jointly; (3) Thieme puts love and fellowship together with his own unique

teaching aid called the *love complex*. Let's start with Agape love first, and see how its meaning has been perverted over the centuries by non-biblical sources. (LWB)

Love

I do not think that what the Bible says about the love of God can long survive at the forefront of our thinking if it is abstracted from the sovereignty of God, the holiness of God, the wrath of God, the providence of God, or the personhood of God – to mention only a few non-negotiable elements of basic Christianity. The result, of course, is that the love of God in our culture has been purged of anything the culture finds uncomfortable. The love of God has been sanitized, democratized, and above all sentimentalized. This process has been going on for some time ... A partial list of ways in which the Bible speaks of the love of God contains: (1) the peculiar love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father, (2) God's providential love over all that He has made, (3) God's salvific stance toward His fallen world, (4) God's particular, effective, selecting love toward His elect, and (5) God's love directed toward His own people in a provisional or conditional way – conditioned, that is, on obedience. (D. Carson) It is this last expression of the love of God that 1 John has as its primary focus. It is love that is expressed in experiential sanctification, as opposed to the positional expressions of His love in election, predestination, justification, etc. As just mentioned, this is a partial list of the ways in which the Bible speaks of the love of God. None of them should be pursued to the exclusion of the others. If the positional expressions of His love are emphasized to the exclusion of the experiential expressions of His love, the sovereignty of God eliminates our responsibility for executing the Christian way of life. If the experiential expressions of His love are emphasized to the exclusion of the positional expressions of His love, our volitional responsibility kicks God off His throne and makes our will the center of worship (self-idolatry) instead of the Lord. (LWB)

I like the book “*Agape and Eros*” by Anders Nygren. It is probably “the” classic work on the love of God. Catholics, many denominational churches, charismatic (holyyroller) churches, and program churches all hate this book. The main reason they hate this book is that it is an expose on the erroneous concepts of love that are being touted in the majority of pulpits today. Unfortunately, what is being taught as Agape is a superficial mix of philosophical and satanic concepts; most preachers are oblivious to this fact because they cater to those who ‘butter their bread’. Nygren’s book is a warning to all believers who want to know what the Agape of God is without all the baggage from Gnosticism, Mysticism, Neoplatonism, and a number of other ‘isms’ throughout history. That doesn’t mean it is 100% correct, nor does it claim to be comprehensive. Carson and others take him to task on the semantic range of the words Agape and Eros. Some of their critiques are fair; some of them are not. “We should pay close attention to good word studies; we should also watch-out for possible abuses.” Point taken. On the one hand, there are a number of different Scriptural and extra-biblical meanings for Agape and Eros (avoiding the *illegitimate totality transfer*, the *root fallacy* and *semantic obsolescence*), which Nygren does avoid in my opinion - but not to the level that would make some scholars happy. On the other hand, some of his detractors take exception to his word study. In my opinion, his detractor’s use of different Greek words (agape, phileo, eros) as mere synonyms is a denial of the *verbal*

plenary inspiration of Scripture. God is not tossing out willy-nilly Greek vocabulary words for His amusement. There is a semantic range for every word in the Bible; context always determines how a word is used. We don't want to blur distinctions, nor do we want to make distinctions when there are none. But wait ... this is just an introduction to the topic of love in 1 John, not a treatise. So if you want to read all the viewpoints on love, pro and con, head for the library! It's a great place to be when you have a burning question that just won't go away. (LWB)

Some of the books I came across in my research of Agape used the LXX (Septuagint: Greek Old Testament) extensively in their word studies. The use of Agape in the LXX is quite frustrating. It is employed to represent a variety of meanings according to the changed use of the term in that day and age. (LWB) Agape was not employed by the LXX writers as a special word for the expression of the loftier aspects of love alone, but as a general word to express all kinds and conditions of love. (B. Warfield) Conclusions from the use of the LXX are, therefore, weak and inconclusive. (LWB) In the LXX the word Agape has lost the precision of its specific notion and become merely a general term to express a general idea ... The word itself has suffered loss in thus permitting itself to be applied indifferently to all kinds and conditions of love ... The total effect of this double change was immensely to extend the range of the word. As it was the noblest word for love in Greek speech, its range could be extended, on its becoming the general word for love, but only downward ... A complete revolution has been wrought in the terminology of love – a revolution so radical that the ordinary verb for “to love” in classical Greek has lost that sense altogether in modern Greek, its place being taken by a verb in comparatively infrequent use in the classics - while the ordinary substantive for “love” in modern Greek, formed from this latter verb, does not occur even once in the whole range of classical Greek literature. (B. Warfield) So what about the other Greek words for love? How do they fit in? Do they have different meanings, or are they mere synonyms?

Phileo, Eros, Storge, and Agape

These words are used to express every kind of love, but each with a specific implication which comes clearly into evidence whenever there is occasion for it to do so ... The NT, flanked on the one side by the LXX version of the OT, and on the other by the Apostolic Fathers, forms a compact body of literature in which alone we can observe the revolution in progress ... We can witness the dying of one usage while the other has already reached its vigorous youth ... Each has a particular quality or aspect which it alone emphasizes, and which it alone is fitted to bring into sight. If we should endeavor to hit off the special implication of each with a single word, we might perhaps say that with *Storge* it is nature, with *Eros* it is passion, with *Phileo* pleasurable, with *Agape* preciousness. (B. Warfield) But that's much too simple, especially for the meaning of Agape. The multitude of meanings for Agape in the LXX (as opposed to the NT) has perhaps led to many of our problems. Once you extend the options for translating Agape beyond the breaking-point, it is easy to grab ideas from Eros and Phileo to “dress things up a bit.” In fact, that is exactly what has happened over the centuries. (LWB)

For example, an outstanding feature of definitional change is “the retirement of Phileo into the background and the substitution for it of Agape as the general term for love. We must not permit to fall out of sight the fact that the general adoption of the noblest word for love that language possessed has become the common designation in every-day speech for a sentimentalist concept of love ... It is a plain matter of fact that Agape, a word of essential nobility in its native implications, did gradually through the years become the ordinary term for the expression of love in the most general sense ... The effect of the change on Agape itself naturally was not so happy. The application of it indiscriminately to every form and quality of love unavoidably reduced its current acceptance to the level of every form and quality of love. The native implications of the word could not, to be sure, be entirely eradicated. But they could be covered up and hidden so as not to be noted in the ordinary use of it, and only now and again brought back into view, when in one way or another they were thrown into emphasis ... It is incidental to the free use of any word that it should get its edges worn off in the process, and become more or less a mere symbol for the general idea connected with it, without regard to any specific modifications of that general idea which it may embody ... The term which bore in its bosom the implication of reverent devotion had become for the men of the NT age the general word for love, while the term which expressed in its native suggestion the love of emotional attachment was in process of passing out of use.” (B. Warfield) Since Agape was backloaded with meanings from Phileo, where did the word Phileo come from?

The notion of Phileo can be traced back to the disposition which grows out of an inner community ... to be in a friendly way at one’s side, or to interest oneself in someone in a friendly manner ... the treatment of another as one that is dear to me or my friend ... True friendship is mutual and is found among equals only; Phileo friendship exists only where there can be a return of affection ... In all of its occurrences in John’s Gospel, moreover, except one (12:25), Phileo has a *personal object*. (B. Warfield) Phileo is the love that grows out of the perception of something *in the object* especially attractive to the subject; inner affinity is precisely what is emphasized here. Had Agape been used, the simple fact of the love would be stated, and the fitness, inevitableness, of the love and hatred spoken of would have remained unexpressed. (K. Horn) Agape sometimes has the idea of a higher degree of respect, esteem, value, or prize ... to the extent that someone is prized more, valued more, or set more store by compared to another. (B. Warfield) An interesting passage in Scripture containing both Agape and Phileo is Hosea 3:1 “Go yet and *Agape* a woman that *Agape*’s evil things and an adultress, even as the Lord *Agape*’d the children of Israel, and they have respect to strange gods, and *Phileo*’d cakes and raisins.” (LWB) There is an emphasis on *nobility* and *virtue* of the subject in the 1st and 3rd Agape; it is exhibited regardless of the quality or character of the object. (B. Warfield) The 2nd Agape is that of a woman whose *highest* qualities embrace evil; one can only imagine what her *lowest* Eros qualities would have embraced. These examples of Agape will become important when we get to the terms *virtue love* and the *love complex* in later passages, two phrases I have borrowed from Thieme. They are important terms that relate Agape to the mechanics of experiential sanctification. (LWB)

Part of John's emphasis on experiential sanctification can be seen by the phrases "in the light" and "in love," concepts related to Paul's "in power." Each of these phrases are crucial to having fellowship with God during the Church Age. The Locative of Sphere (Greek syntax) will be investigated when these passages arise, especially when used with Agape. John is faced with two groups which both misinterpret "agape" with their respective traditions: Gnostics with their salvation by "Eros" and Jews with their salvation through "Nomos" (law). Both systems twisted the purity of Christian doctrine into their own traditions. One steered believers toward legalism, the other steered believers toward antinomianism and mysticism. Nomos and Eros, therefore, would be classified as polar opposites; but each one of these polar opposites is nevertheless a form of *fragmentation* from the Christian way of life. Both are rampant in churches today, virtually obliterating fellowship with God and therefore arresting spiritual growth. Both attempt to supplant the true Christian doctrine of Agape love and are completely antagonistic to it. (LWB) Agape is like a blow in the face to both Jewish Nomos-piety and Hellenistic Eros-piety. Agape shatters completely the legal conception of the relationship between God and man. Agape also proposes fellowship between God and man that is instituted by God instead of man, which shatters the ascending works relationship in Gnosticism. (A. Nygren) Let's look at the differences between Christian Agape and Gnostic Eros. (LWB)

Gnosticism

Gnosticism is a disastrous attempt to involve Christianity in the religious syncretism of late antiquity, and to transform it into a Hellenistic-Oriental Mystery religion of the usual type. The main question for all Gnostic sects is that of the destiny of the soul, which originally belonged to a higher world ... a knowledge of the Way of salvation, of the mysterious formulae and passwords which give the soul access to the higher world and bring about its perfect union with the Divine (A. Nygren) Ancient Gnosticism is the precursor for the various meditations and preparations of New Age mysticism and the so-called "charismatic movement" of today. (LWB) Eros is composed of three main things: (1) an acquisitive love that seeks after the divine, (2) man's way to the divine, with emphasis on human effort, and (3) egocentrism, seeking man's happiness. The ascent to the divine used acquisitive love as the means of ascension. Acquisitive love is obtained by prayer, song, desire, mental focusing, and mind/will purification exercises. These are, of course, egocentric by nature; human actors have the most significant role in carrying out spirituality. Agape, on the other hand, is composed of three different things: (1) divine descent to man in the incarnation, (2) grace due to man's inability, and (3) theocentrism, because God is the primary actor in His divine sovereignty. (D. Schwartz)

Eros and Agape are the characteristic expressions of two different attitudes to life, two fundamentally opposed types of religion and ethics. They represent two streams that run through the whole history of religion, alternately clashing against one another and mingling with one another. They stand for what may be described as the egocentric and the theocentric attitude in religion. In the egocentric type, the religious relationship is dominated essentially by man. In the theocentric type, on the other hand, everything centres in God ... Only God Himself can bridge the gulf. Man cannot by means of Eros attain to God. Real

fellowship with God is possible only if God in his Agape condescends to man. It is the egocentric type that has generally predominated in the history of religion. From primitive beginnings it rises to the spiritual heights of Mysticism. (A. Nygren) Let's see how different these two types of love are by these antithetical comparisons.

Eros is acquisitive desire and longing.	Agape is sacrificial giving.
Eros is an upward movement.	Agape comes down.
Eros is man's way to God.	Agape is God's way to man.
Eros is man's effort: it assumes that man's salvation is his own work.	Agape is God's grace: salvation is the work of Divine love.
Eros is egocentric love, a form of self-assertion of the highest, Noblest, sublimest kind.	Agape is unselfish love, it seeks not its own, it gives itself away.
Eros seeks to gain its life, a life divine, immortalized.	Agape lives the life of God, therefore dares to lose it.
Eros is the will to get and possess which depends on want and need.	Agape is freedom in giving, which depends on wealth and plenty.
Eros is primarily man's love; God is the object of Eros. Even when it is attributed to God, Eros is patterned on human love.	Agape is primarily God's love; God is Agape. Even when it is attributed to man, Agape is patterned on Divine love.
Eros is determined by the quality, the beauty and worth, of its object; it is not spontaneous, but evoked, motivated.	Agape is sovereign in relation to its object, and is directed to both the evil and the good; it is spontaneous, Overflowing, unmotivated.
Eros recognizes value in its object - and loves it.	Agape loves - and creates value in its object.

Gnosticism, in the strictest sense, is a Way of salvation; Gnosis is the salvation technique ... Salvation consists in this, that the human spirit breaks away from the sensible and material, and returns to the higher world, passing in its Ascent through the same stages as the Divine traversed in its Descent ... The divine spark in man is hidden under the ashes, on the point of extinction; if it is to burst into full flame, oxygen must, so to speak, be brought to it from the outside ... The whole Gnostic doctrine is built on the Eros scheme, and the thought of Christ is introduced without destroying this scheme. Salvation means nothing but the deliverance of the spirit from the toils of matter. Furthermore, Christ is not, in Gnosticism, Savior in the full Christian sense. He is rather Teacher and Revealer of the Gnostic secrets and Forerunner of the Gnostic Way of salvation. His task is to awaken rather than, strictly speaking, to save. Power to ascend to the Divine life exists already in the imprisoned human spirit; it only needs to be awakened and made effective ... Through its own instrumentality, the soul ascends to the heavenly world ... From these fundamental principles ethical consequences can be drawn in two opposite directions, *ascetic* and *antinomian*, and examples of both are found in Gnosticism. (A. Nygren) Theoretically, then, Judaism and the ascetic branch of Gnosticism were compatible systems. (LWB)

Ascetic Gnosticism rejected the Creation, Incarnation, and bodily Resurrection. The similarities with legalistic Christians ended abruptly once important dogmas were discussed ... Gnosticism also taught a different method of salvation. They believed in the ascent of the soul to Deity, while Christians adhered to the descent of God to lost humanity. Gnosticism, as well as Arminianism, taught self-salvation; Christianity, particularly Calvinism, taught that salvation is a work of God. At the other end of the Gnostic spectrum, antinomianism, we have plenty of examples of epicurianism gone wild. (LWB) For example, the most repulsive form of Gnosticism began with a sumptuous meal, at which even the poor eat flesh and drink wine to excess. After they inflamed themselves in this way “the husband leaves his place at his wife’s side, and says to his own wife: ‘Get up and perform Agape with the brother.’ And the wretches unite themselves with one another.” Then follows the sperma-communion: They communicate their own shame and say: This is the Body of Christ.” (A. Nygren) According to Gnosticism, the urge of the soul away from the world of sense and reason towards the Above and Beyond, past all frontiers towards the point where love and the beloved come together and are one – this upward flight is the true Eros, the meaning of all love. At a time when Eros was holding its popular orgies, looking for piquant stories among the myths of the gods, or seeking romantic adventures in the temples, Maximus was bringing it under the discipline of humanism and Plotinus sublimating it in mysticism. Yet it remains the same Eros, the natural impulse to overcome the limitations of the individual life. (Quell, Stauffer)

Obviously this is not even close to the concept of Agape that John teaches. (LWB) One does not arrive at Agape by refining and sublimating Eros ... There is nothing in the life and activity of the natural man which does not bear the mark of seeking its own. It is therefore wholly under the dominion of sin, and on that basis there is no possibility of manifesting love in the Christian sense of the word, a love that seeks not its own, but loves God with all its heart and its neighbor as itself. (A. Nygren) For literary Greek, it remains generally true that Agape had not yet acquired the breadth of usage which led to its frequent application to the love of sense also ... Agape is not, like Phileo, an inclination attached to the person himself, as called into being by close companionship and fellowship in many things, but a love for which we can give ourselves an account with our understanding; less sentiment than reflection ... Agape expresses a love based on rational considerations ... Phileo is a love founded on nothing outside the object. (B. Warfield) This concept becomes important in those passages where I use the term *impersonal love* as coined by Thieme. Impersonal love focuses on the subject, not the object. Impersonal love is not ruled by emotion; impersonal love is ruled by virtue and a relaxed mental attitude. This is much closer to the concept of Agape in Scripture than that of Eros. (LWB)

The distinction between the two great conceptions of love, Agape and Eros, should by now be sufficiently clear for us to proceed further and point out how each of these two motifs tends to carry with it *a whole complex system* of associated ideas, images and sentiments in such a way that we can distinguish between an “Agape system” and an “Eros system.” Strictly, it is improper to speak of the Christian idea of love as a single idea, for in fact it includes a series of different conceptions. It would take too long here to outline *the entire system of ideas* in which the Christian Agape motif finds expression, and to show how it

differs from that dominated by the Eros motif, but before we go on to study the later history and the conflation of the two motifs, it will be in place to give at least a few examples of the kind of ideas which belong to each *system*, to that we may have a readier eye for the occurrence of either motif ... (1) Eros is a question of man's way to God, while Agape is a question of God's way to man. (2) The contrast between Eros and Agape has a habit of appearing as the contrast between "works" or human achievement, and faith. The humble receptivity of faith is the proper attitude of mind and heart in Agape. (3) Eros starts with the assumption of the Divine origin and worth of the soul. The soul is a pearl, which has become lost and defiled, but which retains none the less its imperishable value. Agape, on the other hand, starts with the conviction of one's own lack of worth. When man has fallen away from God, he is wholly lost and has no value at all. (4) Whenever the natural immortality of the soul becomes the fundamental religious dogma, we can be fairly certain that we are within the sphere of Eros. But where the Agape motif is dominant, it regularly expresses itself in belief in the resurrection of the dead. (A. Nygren) John fought Gnostic syncretism in his day. What about centuries later? Were there influential people writing about love, identifiable by name? Yes, but unfortunately Augustine was one of them. (LWB)

Caritas

Augustine is credited for considerable study on the doctrine of love, but not in a beneficial light as far as Christianity is concerned. Augustine would be classified as a syncretist; he took some valid points about Agape and combined them with philosophical views from Neoplatonic Eros. (LWB) The Augustinian doctrine of predestination, from one point of view, is the most emphatic confession of the unmotivated and spontaneous nature of Divine love ... His "caritas" includes *a whole complex of ideas* ... such as acquisitive love, which seeks the satisfaction of my own need, my own "bonum," directed upward toward God and the eternal – as opposed to "cupiditas" which is directed downward toward the world and the temporal ... God is the highest good (summum bonum) and we find meaning in life only when our desire is directed to Him ... One of Augustine's fundamental axioms was that all men without exception seek their own happiness (egocentric psychology of desire), and that *all without exception love God*, whether they know it or not. The sinner does not know it, and so he roams about in the temporal sphere; nevertheless it is really God whom he seeks even there, for he seeks his happiness, and happiness is God ... Caritas seeks God and finds Him because it seeks in the right place; Cupiditas seeks Him, but does not find Him, because it seeks Him in the wrong place and cleaves to His creatures instead of to Himself ... Caritas enjoys God and uses the world, Cupiditas enjoys the world and uses God. Good men use the world in order to enjoy God, whereas bad men want to use God in order to enjoy the world. (A. Nygren)

This doctrine of Caritas love, so far at least as our analysis has yet dealt with it, rests substantially on the foundation of Eros and has very little in common with Agape love. Behind Caritas we detect the "heavenly Eros" of Platonism, behind Cupiditas "vulgar Eros." In the history of ideas, Augustine's Caritas theory must be regarded as a continuation of the endless discussions of ancient philosophy about what is the "highest good." Amor Dei (love for God) is the right kind of love, for it seeks its satisfaction in a *real bonum*; Amor sui (love

of self) is a false love, for it seeks its bonum in a fiction; Amor mundi (love of the world) is a false love, for it seeks its good in a substitute ... Another axiom of Augustine's doctrine of love is the *ascent to God*. It may seem peculiar that Augustine, who lays such stress on grace, can speak as easily as he does about human merit (meritum) and can actually describe the way to fellowship with God as an ascent by the ladders of virtue (fulfilling the law), speculation (transcending the body and spirit to taste God), and mysticism (seeking God within your self by way of introspection) ... But if grace is to have any real value for us, it must be a *power* intervening in our actual life, really effective here and now. There must be *an infusion of God's unmotivated love* to enable Caritas to dwell in our hearts by grace. (A. Nygren)

Augustine found love in the form of Neoplatonic Eros – the soul's home-sickness for its heavenly origin, its bold flight up to the world that is beyond all transience, where all its yearning and desire reach full satisfaction, where its striving comes to rest for ever. This Neoplatonic idea of love encouraged him to subsume the whole of Christianity under the aspect of love. Augustine finds the synthesis of the ascent of the soul and the vision of God in his doctrine of Caritas ... a synthesis which Catholicism afterwards lived for centuries ... The Reformation, particularly in the hands of Luther, smashed to pieces this synthesis which Catholicism in general and Augustine in particular had contrived – to make room for the renewal of the Agape motif ... Any study of Agape love cannot ignore the enormous influence of *Neoplatonic Eros* and *monastic piety* on the subject. Mediaeval theology is a theology of merit ... with the function of grace merely making it possible (by way of mystical infusion) for man's ascent to God ... enhanced by keeping the law (virtue) and deeper levels of speculation (the contemplative mind). Over a thousand years of Catholic fellowship was based on this "climbing Jacob's ladder" concept from Neoplatonic Eros ... which later developed its own contribution to love through passion-mysticism, love-poems, an emotional-romantic yearning, and a sublimated, spiritualized love attainable only by monks living in isolation from the rest of the world – all concepts far removed from that of the New Testament. (A. Nygren)

During the whole of the Middle Ages, Eros had been a living reality – but it was *imprisoned* in the Caritas-synthesis. As perhaps the most important element in this synthesis, Eros had largely molded the interpretation of Christianity without anyone realizing what a transformation of Christianity it effected ... Historically, the Renaissance took up the Eros motif, the Reformation the Agape motif. In the Eros motif, philosophy is a Way of salvation, the Way of Eros. Through contemplation, mysticism and ecstasy, we have daily to break the fetters that bind us to the sensible world. The Platonic and Neoplatonic elements laid the emphasis on man in his temporal existence: empirical man is made, in a way such as never before, the centre of the universe. In a word, it is a question of the *human god* ... a pronouncedly anthropocentric form whose main thesis is the *divine nature of the soul* ... The deepest import of the great religious revolution that occurred in the Reformation, might be summed up briefly by saying that in this event theocentric religion asserted itself ... especially in Luther's campaign against Catholic Christianity ... his primary objection being Catholic piety *putting man's own self in God's place*. This *egocentric perversion* must be

first rooted out if there is to be room for true fellowship with God, which has its centre in God Himself.

However much Catholicism might speak of God's love, the centre of gravity in our relation to God was nevertheless placed primarily in the love we owe to God, rather than God's love to us. Theocentric fellowship with God is on the basis of our own sin and God's groundless love, not of works-righteousness. (A. Nygren) Augustine's view of love has exercised by far the greatest influence in the whole history of the Christian idea of love. He lived on the frontier of two separate religious worlds, those of Hellenistic Eros and primitive Christian Agape. His significance lies chiefly in the fact that these two worlds really meet in this person and form a spiritual unity ... In Augustine a new view of love emerges. The meeting of the Eros and Agape motifs produces a characteristic third which is neither Eros nor Agape, but Caritas. (A. Nygren) Luther, among others, did not appreciate Augustine's syncretism. Everything in the system of Eros is branded by Luther as self-love and is the "essence of the sinfulness of sin" without any qualification. (LWB)

Ultimately, there are only two different religions, that which builds on faith in Christ, and that which builds on reason or emotions and one's own works. Christianity, therefore, is bound to regard this false religion as its real adversary. Every attempt to make one's way to God by self-sanctification runs counter to the message of Christ's self-offering. This latter falls like a thunderbolt and annihilates the righteousness which comes from the law ... Man is justified not by ascending to God in Caritas, but solely by receiving in faith God's love, which has descended to us in Christ. With this, the Caritas-synthesis has fallen to pieces, vanquished by God's Agape ... He who relies, in his relationship with God, on good works and merits, really makes himself God, thrusts God from His throne and sets himself in His place, since he ascribes to himself the work which appertains to God alone ... "Climbing to heaven" by thinking or reasoning, speculation, keeping the law by moralistic piety, or the ecstatic religiosity of Mysticism are all doomed to failure ... They are all part of the system of Eros, man's way to God, instead of the system of Agape, God's Way to man. (A. Nygren) Eros is a kind of Phileo; when Phileo goes to excess, that is Eros. (Aristotle)

When Augustine speaks of Caritas, he always thinks primarily of *love to God* ... Law and grace point each to the other, yet with the fulfillment of the law as the ultimate aim. According to Caritas, the replacement of the Old Covenant by the New does not mean a radical change in the character of fellowship with God. Man's love to God is still the main thing, only the intervention of grace has improved its position ... Augustine has done more than any other, by combining things Neoplatonic and Christian, to import the Eros motif into Christianity and to procure ecclesiastical sanction for it. For Augustine, Neoplatonic Eros became the means of discovering Christian Agape. (A. Nygren) During the Reformation, the battle for the purity of Agape resurfaced, especially in Martin Luther. (LWB) Luther calls the Eros motif a fundamental error, a devilish perversion ... Christian love is not produced by us, but it has come to us from heaven. Christian love, so to speak, is the extension of God's love. The Christian is not an independent centre of power alongside of God. The love which he can give is only that which he has received from God. Christian love is through and through a Divine work. Man is merely the tube, the channel, through which God's love

flows ... Blessedness means no less than fellowship with God. Therefore, only one who by faith lives in that blessed fellowship with God is open to receive the supplies from above, which he is then able to pass on in love. (A. Nygren)

Nomos

There is also a tendency for those who are immersed in the Old Testament to read the law (nomos) into the purity of Christian Agape. (LWB) It was a superhuman task to assert the idea of Agape in circles which so essentially derived their spiritual nourishment from the OT, and what was specifically Christian was almost bound to be obscured ... On the one hand the OT must be retained for the sake of the Agape motif; on the other, its retention involves the constant risk of legalistic interpretation, a risk to which post-apostolic Christianity succumbed. Instead of Nomos (law) being the background and being at the same time superceded by Agape, it becomes the leading motif and Agape is subordinated to it ... It is no longer the overmastering, paradoxical love from God which calls forth in the Christian an entirely new kind of love, by which all ordinary human limitations are broken down; but instead, love meets us here as the *loftiest human achievement*. The centre of gravity has changed; love is no longer God's Way to man, but man's Way to God ... In the Apostolic Fathers, love occupies the highest place in the Christian life, yet it is so superficially conceived as to be almost a synonym for almsgiving ... and an ascending scale of meritorious works – prayer, fasting, almsgiving. Agape comes to be regarded as the requirement of a new and more exacting law. (A Nygren)

Nomos is the proper Way of salvation for those immersed in the OT. As a condition of salvation, God requires man to have fulfilled His will as revealed in the Law; He requires man to give Him complete satisfaction. By doing what is well pleasing to God, man has in the strictest sense of the word to merit his salvation; and the best means to this is an ascetic life. By good works man can make God His debtor ... Those remnants of the Agape motif which can be found have been fitted into the nomistic scheme and rendered ineffective ... If the thought of *God's love* recedes into the background, and the *Commandment of Love* comes to the fore, then Agape's fate is sealed. Love to neighbor is no longer a love born of God, which, being of the same nature as the Divine love which is its source, overflows its channel, but is it the highest possible human achievement. We have here not the indicative of Agape, but the imperative of Nomos ... The point of departure is not *the love God gives*, so much as *the love He requires of man*. ... Origen, in fact, lived his religious life in both of the two rival spiritual worlds. He is by fullest conviction a Christian, but an equally convinced Platonist. Thanks to the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, he could also regard Platonism as the hidden, spiritual meaning of Christianity. (A. Nygren)

The Agape motif had to prosecute its campaign on two fronts in post-apostolic times: against the Nomos motif from Judaism, and against the Eros motif that threatened it from the surrounding world. On the latter, the anti-Hellenistic front, the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists were in many points victorious. On the former, however, they did not succeed in rescuing the Agape motif from the clutches of the Nomos (law) ... As converts from Judaism brought their legalistic scheme with them and tried to fit Christian Agape into it, so

converts from Hellenism brought the Eros scheme and tried to introduce something of the idea of Agape into it ... What made possible the confusion of Agape with both Nomos and Eros was *the allegorical interpretation of Scripture*. In general, it may be observed that allegorism and syncretism readily go hand in hand – for obvious reasons. Allegorism is arbitrary, and can make anything mean anything; contours are obliterated and different motifs run easily into one another. (A. Nygren) This method of interpretation has also given us amillennialism and post-millennialism, two eschatological heresies. (LWB) The synthesis of Agape and Eros is responsible for much of what is seen as misguided theology. (D. Schwartz)

Whenever a synthesis seems to have been reached and the two motifs are united, it becomes the task of a succeeding generation to untie the knot and thereby bring about a deeper understanding of the true nature of the Christian love-motif. (A. Nygren) Dispensational theology leads the Christian world in recovering the Bible from both allegorical interpretation and the correct understanding of Agape as part of experiential sanctification reliant on the filling of the Holy Spirit. (LWB) The Johannine Agape is explicitly the love which comes down. More than that, it is a heavenly reality which comes down into this world as it were from stage to stage ... In brotherly love the circle which consists of the Father and the Son and those who belong to Him becomes a fellowship which is not of this world. God's love is life's ultimate reality for this fellowship, and to abide in His love is the law of its life ... This love is a movement of life, a form of existence. (Quell, Stauffer)

There is a blending of divine and human activity in one sanctifying process. (J. Burnaby) God provides the system and the power; man resides and functions in the system. (LWB) Only when man has the Agape of God, can he love his fellow man in a proper way. (P. Pamudji) This can't be done by caritas, eros, nomos, or any Gnostic practice. The Mosaic law, in particular, is of no avail. All legal forms and guarantees from the OT economy which set forth God's relationship to His people have been abrogated for the Church Age believer. Agape love in the filling of the Spirit has taken its place. Agape love transitions naturally into fellowship with God; the two are intimately connected. We must be residing and functioning in the light, in the sphere of His Agape love, in order to be in fellowship with Him. This is one of our mandates for living the spiritual life during the Church Age dispensation. 1 John 1:9 (confession of sin) is the key that opens the door to experiential sanctification and fellowship with God in Agape love. Before launching into the topic of fellowship, though, please read and reread this last set of quotes by Thieme. So far, his exegesis of 1 John is the best I've heard or read and I adhere to the vast majority of it in my own work. (LWB)

God's system is designated the "sphere of love" or love complex to emphasize love as the supreme Christian virtue. The NT commands us to love, but no one can obey these commands without understanding that love is an entire sphere, a complex of interrelated elements, a system of power. I have coined a term for this divine system from the Greek nouns *dunamis*, "power," and *sphaia*, "sphere": the divine *dynasphere*. This descriptive synonym emphasizes the efficacy and sustaining strength of the love complex ... By

consistently living in this power system, the believer obeys all God's mandates. Since divine mandates can be organized into eight categories, the divine dynasphere has eight "gates."

1. The power gate: the filling of the Holy Spirit
2. Objectivity: basic Christian *modus operandi*.
3. Teachability: enforced and genuine humility.
4. Spiritual momentum: perception and application of Bible doctrine.
5. Motivational virtue: personal love for God.
6. Functional virtue: impersonal love for mankind.
7. Momentum testing: acceleration of spiritual growth.
8. The winner's gate: spiritual maturity, sharing the happiness of God.

Because all eight gates are engaged as one dynamic unity, I also designate the love complex as the "interlocking system of love." Maturity, the goal of the Christian's life, is achieved through steadfastness in the divine dynasphere, where the believer acquires capacity for life, for love, for happiness, for "greater grace" or supergrace (James 4:6) beyond God's faithful sustenance of all believers ... Through his tenacity to reside and function in the love complex ... the believer can attain an honorable status in his soul that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The only way you are going to follow my exegesis of the Johannine epistles, especially the treatment on the true meaning of *agape* love, is by understanding some of this technical vocabulary coined by Thieme. I wholeheartedly recommend his book "*Christian Integrity*" to assist you in getting there. It is available free of charge through R.B. Thieme, Jr. Bible Ministries in Houston, Texas. (LWB)

Fellowship

Agape is first and primordially the spirit of communion willing the divine relationship between Father and Son as the ground and pattern of the fulfillment of all things. (D. Williams) So how do we enter into that agape communion? We enter through the door of confession. (LWB) Confession is the one condition of fellowship, forgiveness and cleansing. First John 1:1 to 2:2 concerns the Father's dealing with His children who have sinned. Sinless perfection is not demanded by these passages. It is not a command for the Christian to become light, or what God alone is: it is rather that there may be an immediate adjustment to the light which God has shed into the life by the Spirit. He has required of us confession. When He convinces us of sin, or is grieved of sin, that sin is to be dealt with at once ... When we were saved He forgave us "all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). This is judicial forgiveness and means the removal of the grounds of condemnation forever. There is still parental forgiveness to be exercised toward the sinning child. It is not exercised in order to rescue the child from destruction and condemnation; but it is exercised in order to restore him from a state wherein he is out of fellowship, into the full blessing of communion with the Father and with His Son. It is wholly within the family circle and the restoration is unto the full enjoyment of those blessings. It is not restoration to sonship, of that the Bible knows nothing. It is restoration to fellowship. The unregenerate are forgiven as a part of salvation when they believe. The child of God is forgiven when he makes a full confession. David did not pray that his salvation might be restored after his great sins; but he did

pray: “Restore unto me the joys of my salvation,” and that after his full confession had been made. (L. Chafer)

No one is competent to deal in detail with this wonderful book who is not familiar with the evangelical system as a whole, and able therefore to appreciate the bearing of John’s line of thought in connection with it ... It contains a spiritual treatise on communion with Christ, and with the Father in Him, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us. We can have no communion with the Three in Jehovah but as we have a distinct Scriptural knowledge of the revelation given concerning Them in the sacred record ... The grand theme is fellowship with God in and through Christ. Where that is enjoyed by individual saints, it necessarily leads to fellowship one with another ... Nowhere else in the Word are we so often called upon to close self-examination and unsparing testing of ourselves. (A. Pink) Human effort, whether man’s righteousness in good works or self-abasement in repentance and penance, is simply insufficient. Man cannot bridge the gap between God and himself to institute fellowship with God. Fellowship must come from God to man in condescending Agape. (D. Schwartz) Few believers enter into this communion with God. Positive believers who are on the road to supergrace status share this privilege with other supergrace believers. (LWB) A new circle is formed, narrower in range. The love here is applied to a smaller circle, an inner circle, consisting of many fellow believers in Christ. It starts from an altogether new center of life and affection, provided by God to us in Agape and returned to Him by our remaining in the sphere of its divine influence. (D. Schwartz) That means all believers who are willing to remain in the sphere of light, in His Agape, can have fellowship with God. (LWB)

All Christians may have fellowship or communion with each Person of the Trinity. A superb handling of this topic was written by John Owen in Volume 2 of his encyclopedic works, titled: *Communion with God: Each Person of the Trinity, Distinctly - in Love (the Father), Grace (the Son), and Consolation (the Spirit)*. Three comments about his book follow:

“It is a most glorious Truth, though considered but by few, that believers have, or may have, distinct communion with the three persons, Father, Son and Spirit. This is attested by the finger of God, and solemnly owned by the first and best age of Christianity.” (Lewis Stuckey)

“It is to be noted, that there is a distinct fellowship with each of the persons of the blessed Trinity.” (Samuel Clarke)

“The very highest of angel’s food is here set before you - things that minister unto grace, and comfort, to holy life and liveliness.” (Daniel Burgess)

The topic of fellowship is now presented in a 4-point outline which I gleaned from Owen. All of these concepts are covered by John in this epistle, as well as by Paul in his writings. Refer to this outline as often as needed while studying 1 John. I have taken the high points of Owen’s treatise and added comments of my own alongside certain relevant passages of Scripture.

1. The saints have communion with God through the Word:

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

That this communion is *positional*, no one may doubt. But there is also a communion as to *state* and *condition*, by means of fellowship in the Word, which is *experiential*. This communion is voluntary and by consent.

This **fellowship with us** is not *positional* fellowship with all believers, but is an *experiential* fellowship which has as its prerequisite a *true fellowship* with God - which is based on fellowship in the Word (1 John 2:5), i.e. if you are not *communing* in the Word, you are not in *true fellowship* with God, and therefore you are not in *true fellowship* with other believers. This is most definitely *experiential*.

- Eph 2:18 For **through Him (Christ)** we have access **by one Spirit unto the Father**.

Ephesians 2:18 ὅτι **δι'** αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφότεροι **ἐν** ἐνὶ πνεύματι **πρὸς** τὸν πατέρα.

Our access unto God (wherein we have fellowship with Him) is:

through Him (Christ)	δι' αὐτοῦ
in (by means of) the Spirit	ἐν πνεύματι
unto the Father	πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

The persons here are considered as engaged *distinctly*, and in this case, fellowship includes the Spirit, as well as the Father and Son (from 1 John 1:3). Fellowship with God is always fellowship with the Trinity.

- John 14:23 If a man loves **Me**, he will keep **My** words, and **My Father** will love him, and **We** will come unto him, and make **Our** abode with him.

John 14:23 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου **τηρήσει**, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτόν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα.

The personal pronouns ME and MY both refer to Jesus Christ.

The personal pronouns WE and OUR refer to the Father and the Son.

Love from the Father is conditioned on keeping the Son's Words.

The Father's & Son's abiding with you is conditioned on keeping the Son's Words.

It is by this communion in the Word wherein the Father and Son do make their abode with the soul of the believer. The Greek word **τηρέω** means *to pay attention to* and *to guard zealously* and *to obey*. These are all *experiential* concepts, not *positional* concepts. The basis of being *loved* and *abiding* is therefore twofold: **paying attention to** (studying as *motivational virtue*) and

obeying (exercising what you have studied as *functional virtue*) the Word of God. This is so simple, yet so complicated for most believers to understand: Communion with God is through His Word.

2. **Communion with God is distinct: different emphasis on each Person**

- 2 Corinthians 13:13(14) The **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the **love** of God, and the **communication** of the Holy Spirit, *be* with you all. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:13 Ἡ **χάρις** τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ **ἀγάπη** τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ **κοινωνία** τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.

2 Corinthians 13:13 **gratia** Domini nostri Iesu Christi et **caritas** Dei et **communicatio** Sancti Spiritus cum omnibus vobis amen

The essence of fellowship, or intimate relationship with, each person of the Trinity can be seen by the different words used in this verse:

Jesus Christ	grace	χάρις	gratia
Father	love	ἀγάπη	caritas
Spirit	communication	κοινωνία	communicatio

Remember the Latin word “caritas” that we discussed in the introduction? Augustine used the Latin *caritas* instead of the Greek *agape* in much of his writing. Even though his use of *caritas* became a syncretist invention of his own, the two words are essentially the same.

“**Grace** be with all them who love our **Lord Jesus Christ** in sincerity” Eph. 6:24

“If any man love the world, the **love** of the **Father** is not in him” 1 John 2:15

“The **Comforter**, He shall **teach** you all things”

That there are verses where these words are used *jointly* by each person of the Trinity is agreed. All three Persons provide grace, love and teaching to the believer. It is where they are used *distinctly* that they are usually overlooked. Most commentators fly past these verses as if nothing were there. Dig a little deeper.

Using Colonel Thieme’s teaching aid (gates in the divine dynasphere), these three distinct words comprise **motivational virtue**. Motivational virtue is needed for the believer to grow from a babe to a mature adult by means of the Word. If the believer stays in fellowship, he is assisted in his growth as follows:

grace orientation	Jesus Christ
impersonal & virtue love	the Father
teachability	the Spirit

Each person of the Trinity works distinctly, and in unison, in helping the believer grow in grace, love and knowledge. Are you beginning to see some of the patterns Owen saw in the 17th century?

- 1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are diversities of **gifts**, but the same Spirit.
 1 Corinthians 12:5 And there are differences of **administrations**, but the same Lord.
 1 Corinthians 12:6 And there are diversities of **operations**, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

1 Corinthians 12:4 Διαίρεσεις δὲ **χαρισμάτων** εἰσὶν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα·
 1 Corinthians 12:5 καὶ διαίρεσεις **διακονιῶν** εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος·
 1 Corinthians 12:6 καὶ διαίρεσεις **ἐνεργημάτων** εἰσὶν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

1 Corinthians 12:4 divisiones vero **gratiarum** sunt idem autem Spiritus
 1 Corinthians 12:5 et divisiones **ministratorum** sunt idem autem Dominus
 1 Corinthians 12:6 et divisiones **operationum** sunt idem vero Deus qui operatur omnia in omnibus

Not only is there a distinct Trinitarian difference in the *motivational virtues* provided (grace orientation, impersonal & virtue love, teachability), but there is also a distinct difference in the *functional virtues* provided (gifts, administrations, operations).

Gifts	χαρισμάτων	gratiarum	everyone has at least one
Administrations	διακονιῶν	ministerium	communication office
Operations	ἐνεργημάτων	operationum	geographical location

The possibility for manifesting a **spiritual gift(s)** is given to every believer by the Spirit. The possibility of receiving and utilizing a **communications' office** is given to a particular set of believers by the Son. The extent or boundary of each person's **geographical location**, or mission field, to which each believer's gift can be exercised during his sojourn on earth, is given by the Father.

The exercise of any spiritual gift is classified as *functional virtue*, with rewards issued for the effective function of each and every one of these gifts. We must be reminded, however, that spiritual gifts can only be *truly* exercised when the believer has reached spiritual maturity, i.e. maximum doctrine, the Mind of Christ, in his soul. A spiritual moron may have one or more spiritual gifts given to him, but they are useless to him and others as long as he remains ignorant of God's Word. Any attempt to exercise spiritual gifts while being (a) out of fellowship, and (b) ignorant of God's Word, is mere *energy of the flesh* and will not receive a reward - it will be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ as dead works: wood, hay or stubble.

3. What is the ground of these distinctions?

The Father does it by way of **original authority**.
The Son does it by way of a **purchased treasury**.
The Spirit does it by way of **immediate efficacy**.

The Father “quickens whom He will” John 5:21
The Son “made His soul an offering for sin” Isaiah 53:10
The Spirit “He shall do it by the Spirit that dwells in you” Romans 8:11

The grounds of these distinctions are a bit more subtle than the other distinctions we have seen so far, but they are nevertheless present.

4. Special emphasis on the Father’s Agape Love

- 1 John 4:8 God is love.

This refers specifically to the Father, as is later pointed out in verse 9, where He is distinguished from His only begotten (uniquely born) Son Whom He sends into the world, and continues in verse 10, where He sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.

- John 16:26 The Father Himself loves you.

Jesus states that He does not need to pray to the Father to ‘coerce’ Him to love us, because the Father Himself already does love us. Resolved of this *positional* issue, now we have the *experiential* issue of whether we may hold communion with Him *in it*.

- Romans 5:5 The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

This love of the Father is clearly distinguished from that of the Spirit which is given to us, and is distinguished from the Son in verse 8, for it is from this love of the Father that the Son is sent.

- The Father’s **positional love**, as the purpose of His will, is never altered. The Father’s **experiential love**, as the dispensations of His grace, changes from day-to-day as we change from day-to-day.

Woe to us should He ever change in His *positional* love for us, or take His kindness from us. But He will rebuke us, chasten us, and hide His face from us in *experiential* love when we reside in unconfessed sin. We will always be vessels in His house, loved in eternity past and throughout eternity future, but whether we become *vessels of honor* or *vessels of dishonor* in His house depends on us.

I added this brief section on *fellowship with God* to help explain why I believe many of the fellowship passages in 1 John (His residing in us, our residing in Him) are referring to the Father, rather than the Son or Spirit. It is because of the uniqueness of the Father's distinct relationship to *love* and our encouragement to abide in His *love complex* or system that led me in that direction. When we get to those passages, you will see that it is almost impossible to force the Son or the Spirit into either the Greek language or the context of those passages on fellowship.

Battle of the Spheres

There is one last topic that John spends considerable time on that I have yet to introduce. What happens when a believer sins and is no longer residing or functioning in the light? God designed a sphere for all believers to operate in. It is called by many names: the sphere of light, the sphere of agape love, the sphere of divine power. When a believer sins, he immediately exits this divine sphere and enters into one of two spheres operated by Satan. They are also called by many names: the sphere of darkness, the sphere of pride and arrogance, the sphere of hatred. There is a continual battle going on between the divine and satanic spheres. Believers are the center of the battle. There is one way and one way only to enter the divine sphere: by confession of sin. Satan, however, has a multitude of ways to enter into his spheres. Sin is far more complicated than holiness. The many entrances into Satan's spheres have been categorized and recategorized over the years by theologians who follow the ministry of R.B. Thieme, Jr.

These frameworks, regardless of the number of entrances or gates into the satanic realm, are all teaching aids. They are combinations of like sins into categories. For you theology students out there, these entrances or gates into the satanic sphere are a combination of hamartiology, anthropology, and satanology. There is an unseen angelic conflict going on around us at every moment. The conflict over who becomes a believer and who does not was settled in eternity past. Since we don't know who God's elect are, we preach the gospel to anyone who is willing to hear. He takes care of the results. The conflict we fight on a daily basis is whether we choose to live in the sphere of God's power (filling of the Spirit) or in the sphere of Satan's power (sin). The two spheres are mutually exclusive. At any point in time, you cannot live in God's sphere and one of Satan's spheres at the same time. There is no straddling the fence. You cannot put one foot in one sphere and the other foot in the other sphere. John is going to elaborate on these spheres and issue commands to the believer to get into the divine power sphere and stay there as long as possible.

You make continual decisions to either remain in the divine power sphere or to remain in one or both of the satanic power spheres. Every time you are filled with the Spirit, you are saying YES to residence and function in the divine power sphere. Every time you sin and refuse to immediately confess that sin, you are saying NO to the divine power sphere and you are residing and functioning in one or both of the satanic power spheres, i.e., also known as *cosmos diabolicos*, Satan's world system. R.B. Thieme, Jr. calls the two satanic spheres Cosmic 1 and Cosmic 2. Cosmic 1 is the *arrogance complex* of sins; Cosmic 2 is the *hatred complex* of sins. The believer in Cosmic 1 is fighting himself; the believer in Cosmic 2 is fighting God. When most of us sin, we enter Cosmic 1 because we are arrogantly preoccupied with ourselves. When

believers live in sin for a long period of time, many of them enter Cosmic 2 and spend their time hating and fighting God in one way or another. Both spheres are in Satan's kingdom of darkness. Believers in Cosmic 2 actually go beyond mere sin to living in a constant state of evil. As a believer, you need to know when you have entered one of these satanic spheres so you can confess those sins and get out asap!

I'm going to present the entrances or gates into each of the satanic spheres according to the framework begun in 1981. It has more detail than the summarized versions that are in print today. What can I say? I like details! I'm going to list 26 categories of sin in Cosmic 1 first, followed by 9 categories of sin in Cosmic 2. When you sin, you essentially open the door or gate to one or more of these categories and walk right into Satan's domain. Once you enter his domain, he has a labyrinth, a virtual smorgasbord of additional sins for you to embrace. Once you do that, he's got you by the scruff-of-the-neck and you are his slave. Your spiritual momentum in God's plan has come to a screeching halt. The only way out of his domain is by confession of sin. If you realize while reading these categories (gates) of sin that you have embraced one or more of them, it's time to stop right where you are and confess them to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ so the filling of the Spirit will return to you and you may re-enter the divine power sphere.

Cosmic 1: Arrogance complex of sins

1 – Mental attitude arrogance: revenge, bitterness, implacability, vindictiveness, guilt complex

2 – Negative volition arrogance: rejects Bible doctrine, self-righteous during times of prosperity, self-pity during times of poverty, instability

3 – Abusive arrogance: abuse of authority in marriage, over children, at work; verbal sins such as maligning, slandering, gossiping, habitual lying

4 – Institutional arrogance: rejects the legitimate authority, policies, purposes and objectives of those above you at work, at home, in church

5 – Blind arrogance: self-righteousness, self-sacrifice, divorced from reality, legalism, claims unique emotional experiences

6 – Conspiracy arrogance: rejection of civic authority

7 – Criminal arrogance: terrorism, con artist, solves problems by violence and theft

8 – Crusader arrogance: vigilantes, protest movements, your standards are "above the law"

9 – Psychopathic arrogance: totally divorced from reality, egocentricity, emotions control the reasoning faculties, imbalance, instability

10 – Sexual arrogance: self-gratification, homosexuality or lesbianism, rape, pornography

- 11 – Genetic arrogance: preoccupied with inheritances, pursuing “greatness” in life thru genealogies and family history
- 12 – Political arrogance: selects any number of human panaceas for the problems in life
- 13 – Client nation arrogance: individuals and countries are destroyed by embracing communism, socialism, the welfare state, and other forms of tyranny
- 14 – Authority arrogance: fails to transfer organized (enforced) humility in the home to freedom and (genuine) humility in life; your soul is your only authority, so you rebel against everyone else who stands in your way; no capacity for happiness, chaotic soul, guilt complex
- 15 – Ignorance arrogance: unable to concentrate on Bible doctrine; pride and reversionism robs you of your talents and success
- 16 – Unhappiness arrogance: erroneous idea on what happiness is; needs of wants a lot of attention; expects others to make them happy; martyr complex; trys to control other people who won’t go along with them; makes others miserable who won’t cater to your needs; seeks to dominate the environment and everybody in it; leads to blackout of the soul
- 17 – Disillusionment or Disenchantment arrogance: iconoclast, feet of clay syndrome; creates people into idols and smashes them when their faults are discovered; disappointment with friends, family, loved ones, pastor, boss
- 18 – Morality arrogance: salvation by morality or spirituality by morality, legalism
- 19 – Emotional arrogance: loss of rational thinking, drug abuse, converts ritual into fantasy, falls apart under pressure, tongues movement
- 20 – Pseudo-generosity arrogance: approbation lust, desire to buy friendship
- 21 – Christian service arrogance: rejects doctrine but stays in the church “doing things,” loss of momentum in the spiritual life due to works orientation
- 22 – Discouragement arrogance: falls apart under pressure, self-pity, unfair treatment, maligned or mistreated, adversity without momentum
- 23 – Lust arrogance: unrestrained desire
- 24 – Pseudo-intellectual arrogance: superimposes their human IQ over spiritual IQ, rejects divine viewpoint, glorifies human speculation
- 25 – Pseudo-love arrogance: faking the spiritual life, faking a close relationship with God

26 – Suicidal arrogance: the ultimate in preoccupation with self and disorientation to life

Cosmic 2: Hatred complex of sins

1 – Negative volition: destruction of God consciousness, suppression of the truth, mental darkness; they become fools, they fight with God continually; antagonism, reversionism, emotional instability

2 – Degeneration: abuse of freedom, vandals, drug addicts, rebels, violence, crime, sexual perversion, no integrity, pathological liars, intensely frustrated with life

3 – Antiestablishment: no respect for authority in society, at work, or in the home; violates the privacy, property, and volition of others; rejects government institutions, lawless, treacherous, hates parents, has no honor code, envies the rich

4 – Cosmic panacea: replaces God's institutions with human solutions such as communism, socialism, welfare state, social action, destruction of private enterprise, false premises, utopianism, terrorism, social engineering, globalism

5 – Religion: Satan's policy of evil; includes legalism, works righteousness, rituals & ceremonies, asceticism, Scripture twisting; emphasizes "church work or missions" over knowledge of the Word of God; traditionalism, Catholicism, cults, mysticism, environmentalism, charismatic movement

6 – Demonism: fallen angels are controlling mankind, demonic activity, sorcery, witchcraft, confusion, subjectivity, false ideas; doctrines of demons have entered into the soul that has repeatedly rejected Bible doctrine

7 – Anthropocentric academic speculation: philosophy, psychology, academic speculation in the realm of science, total antagonism towards God's truth, pseudo-intellectualism, total human viewpoint as opposed to divine viewpoint

8 – Old sin nature: mind controlled by Satan through many temptations, waging war in the mind, habitual sinning without repentance

9 – Evil policy of Satan: self-destruction, no discernment between good and evil, deceit, violence, terror, Satanic system of ruling the world

There you have a detailed outline of Satan's two cosmic dynaspheres. As I said earlier, they are teaching aids. Thieme has combined and made simpler versions that are easier to memorize. All of these gates can be found in the Word of God. You need to know them and avoid them by remaining in the divine system. (LWB) The Word of God is designed to vanquish the evil human viewpoint of the world along with its instigator, the devil. (R.B.

Thieme, Jr.) If you are going to be able to defend yourself against the Devil, you will have to have a good knowledge of the Word of God. The reason so many believers are succumbing to the sins of the world is that they are not studying the Word of God. (J. McGee) We can't draw the sword from someone else's scabbard. If we don't wear it, we can't wield it. If the Word of God does not abide in us, we will reach for it in vain when the enemy strikes. But if we do wear it, it lives within us, what mighty warriors we can be! This has been the secret of God's great spiritual warriors. They have saturated themselves with the Word of God. (J. Piper) God's perfect system – the Christian way of life – is greater than any human system or individual Christian. God's plan works in every generation, for anyone who will follow its mandates. The divine system transforms all kinds of believers into mature Christians, winners in the devil's world. In God's system the *purpose* is to glorify Jesus Christ; the *policy* is grace; the *authority* is the sovereignty of God. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Chapter 1

LWB 1 John 1:1 What [incarnation of Jesus Christ] was from the beginning [virgin birth of Jesus Christ in *hypostatic union*], What we [the apostles and their team] have heard [1st advent teachings from Christ himself: oral tradition before the written Word], What we have seen with our own eyes [confirming the reality of the physical body of Christ], What we have observed and our hands have touched [after the resurrection and ascension], concerning Whom [Jesus Christ] is the Word of life [Jesus Christ is the *Logos*, the Originator of doctrine],

KW 1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard with the present result that it is ringing in our ears, that which we have discerningly seen with our eyes with the result that it is in our mind's eye, that which we have gazed upon as a spectacle, and our hands handled with a view to investigation, that which is concerning the Word of the life -

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John uses four relative clauses in the first verse to refute the Gnostics. Each of them begins with the word “what.” Why do I translate the relative pronoun as “what” instead of “that” like the King James Version? Both words are acceptable translations, but “what” is a better translation when there is no participle. The KJV follows each relative pronoun with the word “which,” but that implies the use of an attributive participle and there is no participle here. The first “what” is a reference to the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The phrase “from the beginning” refers to the

virgin birth of Jesus Christ in hypostatic union (Imperfect tense). The deity of Christ existed in eternity past, but the humanity of Christ “began” at the virgin birth. The second “what” is a reference to the 1st advent teachings of Christ. In effect, the oral tradition preceded the written Word. The apostles and their team heard these words as well (Extensive Perfect tense) – they had audio as well as visual. They saw with their eyes (Latin: *ocular*) and observed His life on earth.

The third “what” refers to those who actually saw (Extensive Perfect tense) the physical body of Christ on earth. He lived and walked among them during His 33-year ministry on earth. He was not a ghost or phantom, but lived in a human body. The fourth “what” is a reference to those who not only saw but also touched His physical body (Dramatic Aorist tense) after the resurrection and ascension. Again, even after the resurrection he returned to them in a body that could be touched and felt. He did not return as a spirit or phantom being. All of these relative clauses describe something (neuter) about Jesus Christ in one manner or the other, i.e., His virgin birth, His teachings, His physical body before the resurrection, and His physical body after the resurrection. The last phrase points to Jesus Christ as being the Logos, the Word. Logos is in the masculine, since He is the Originator and the embodiment of doctrine.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The true doctrine of kenosis: taking on the form of humanity, depriving Himself of the function of His divine attributes, and walking in the prototype divine dynasphere, which was invented to sustain Him. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Does *logos* refer to Christ Himself? That would make *logos* masculine not only in grammar, but in reality also. Or does *logos* mean the gospel as proclaimed? If *logos* is the message, the neuter is appropriate; but if the *logos* is the person, it is perplexing. (G. Clark) The neuter conveys more than the masculine would, namely in addition to the person all that this person was and is and ever will be for us. (R. Lenski) The Greek word *logos* can mean *doctrine* as well as a *word*. (G. Clark) In a most true sense Christ is the gospel. Had he done so, the unity of the person and the message, which so many people mistakenly try to separate sharply, could have been clarified. (Wescott) John begins his letter with a relative pronoun in the neuter gender, “that which.” The reference is to things relating to the Lord Jesus. We are not to understand the expression as equivalent to “He who.” This speaks of the things concerning our Lord, rather than of Him personally. (K. Wuest)

There is a gradation. Seeing is a more convincing proof than hearing of; handling, than even seeing. (R. Jamieson) “That which was from the beginning” refers to the time Christ came into this world at Bethlehem. (J. McGee) There can be no doubt that John opposes Doceticism, the view that Christ was a sort of phantom or ghost. (G. Clark) A person is his mind. A person is his thoughts ... God is a spirit, an intelligence, a mind; God is truth, and the message is a part of that truth. Therefore the proclamation of the gospel is the proclamation of Christ ... The message and the person cannot be separated. (G. Clark) The structure of the sentence covering the first two and a half verses of chapter 1 (with the parenthesis in verse 2) is unusually complicated for the Johannine writings, and an English version will be more readily intelligible if it takes four sentences to say what the Greek texts says in one. (F. Bruce) Seeing might be momentary; beholding implies that steady contemplation, for which the beloved disciple had large and abundantly used opportunities ... John piles verb upon

verb, and clause upon clause, to show that he speaks with the authority of full knowledge. (A. Plummer)

Our Lord is the logos of God in the sense that He is the total concept of God seen through a human medium, His humanity consisting of His human body, His human limitations, and His human life lived on earth in the power of the Holy Spirit. (K. Wuest) The Son's assumption of flesh and blood opened a new era, changing as it did the world's calendar from A.M. (anno matrydom) to A.D. (anno domini). If the reference is to the Divine incarnation, and more specifically still to the human nature which the Son of God took unto Himself, all difficulty vanishes. (A. Pink) The author begins his letter with a reminder of the origins of the gospel, the message concerning "the Word of Life" which constitutes the basis of the fellowship in which he wants them to continue ... When the author describes the Word of life as "that which was from the beginning," he is in fact speaking primarily of the Word of life incarnate in Jesus Christ, not the Word existing with God prior to the foundation of the world. (C. Kruse)

Gnostic Christians interpret resurrection in various ways. Some say that the person who experiences the resurrection does not meet Jesus raised physically back to life; rather, he encounters Christ on a spiritual level. This may occur in dreams, in ecstatic trance, in visions, or in moments of spiritual illumination ... The Nag Hammadi explains that Jesus was not a human being at all; instead, he was a spiritual being who adapted himself to human perception ... Instead of coming to save us from sin, he comes as a guide who opens access to spiritual understanding. But when the disciple attains enlightenment, Jesus no longer serves as his spiritual master: the two have become equal, even identical ... Gnosticism believes that the psyche bears *within itself* the potential for liberation or destruction ... and the Kingdom is a state of transformed consciousness ... The Gnostic model and the psychotherapeutic model stand close together ... There are also practices in Gnosticism where they chant sacred words and vowels that assist them in entering into an ecstatic state. (E. Pagels) Gnostics regard the term resurrection as a word-symbol for true spiritual awakening ... and Jesus is not equated with the second person of the Trinity in any fashion. (S. Hoeller) This is a mixture of Hinduism, psychotherapy, and the Occult - not Christianity. (LWB)

1 John 1:1 **What** (Subj. Nom.; 1st advent, incarnation of Jesus Christ) **was** (εἶμι, Imperf.AI3S, Descriptive) **from the beginning** (Adv. Gen. Time; the virgin birth of Jesus Christ in *hypostatic union*), **What** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **we** (the apostles and their team) **have heard** (ἀκούω, Perf.AI1P, Extensive Present, i.e. completed act; empirical approach, 1st advent teachings from Christ Himself: oral tradition before written Word), **What** (Dat. Adv.) **we have seen** (ὁράω, Perf.AI1P, Extensive Present, i.e. completed act) **with our own** (Poss. Gen.) **eyes** (Instr. Means), **What** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **we have observed** (θεάομαι, AMI1P, Dramatic, Deponent; contemplation, view attentively; confirming the reality of the physical body of Christ) **and** (continuative conj.) **our** (Poss. Gen.) **hands** (Subj. Nom.) **have touched** (ψηλαφάω, AAI3P, Dramatic; after the resurrection and ascension), **concerning Whom** (Adv. Gen.

Ref.; Jesus Christ) is (ellipsis, verb supplied) the Word (Obj. Gen.; Jesus Christ is the *Logos*, the Originator of doctrine) of life (Descr. Gen.),

^{BGT} **1 John 1:1** Ὁ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐώρακάμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς-

^{VUL} **1 John 1:1** quod fuit ab initio quod audivimus quod vidimus oculis nostris quod perspeximus et manus nostrae temptaverunt de verbo vitae

LWB 1 John 1:2 (and the Life [incarnate Christ] was revealed [revelation of God to Israel], in fact, we [the apostolic and resident witnesses] have seen [empirical observation] and have testified [in courtrooms] and have proclaimed to you [John's non-resident congregation] that eternal Life [Jesus Christ], Who was face-to-face with the Father [eternal sonship] and was revealed [by oral tradition and Scripture] to us),

^{KW} **1 John 1:2** And this aforementioned life was made visible, and we have seen it with discernment and have it in our mind's eye, and are bearing witness and bringing back to you a message concerning the life, the eternal life, which is of such a nature as to have been in fellowship with the Father and was made visible to us.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Verse 2 is parenthetical and stands alone grammatically in this chapter. The life which was revealed by God to Israel (Dramatic Aorist tense) was none other than the incarnate Christ. In fact, the apostolic and resident witnesses saw Him in Person (Dramatic Perfect tense) with their own eyes. He inhabited a body; He was a real person. The list of empirical observations numbered in the hundreds, even thousands. Some of these same witnesses would have sworn an oath in court (Perfective Present tense) that Jesus was a real person. John and those in his resident congregation have proclaimed to the members of his non-resident congregations (Perfective Present tense) all the details about Him that they saw firsthand. Jesus Christ was and is eternal Life. He was face-to-face with the Father in eternity past (Durative Imperfect tense) and was revealed to John's congregations by oral tradition. Today we read about Him in the completed, written Canon of Scripture. It is quite an amazing thing to realize that eternal Life actually came down to earth, entered time, and lived among men in a human body. Even more amazing, He is going to share His eternal life with us so we can fellowship with Him forever.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The life here referred to is a Person, for it requires a person to have fellowship. A mere abstraction can have no fellowship. The life here is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who is said by John to have been in fellowship with the Father. (K. Wuest) The first few verses are a condensed summary of John's account of our Lord's life. (A. Knoch) This epistle

asserts the manifestation of the eternal Christ in time. The context shows that John heard, saw, looked upon, and handled the Son of God. That was possible only in time, not in eternity. Hence, he proclaimed that the eternal Son of God was before the beginning and He was manifested in time for His elect. In time He came, died, rose, and became Advocate ... Jesus Christ was manifested in the *past* on earth for the salvation of the elect. He is manifested in the *present* in heaven for their sanctification. He shall be manifested in the *future* for their glorification ... The sin problem in 1 John is sanctification rather than justification. Christ's death deals with the judicial aspect of sin. His life deals with the practical aspect of sin. Sanctification involves the advocacy of Jesus Christ. (W. Best) The expression "eternal life" here does not denote an impersonal quality of life that comes from the Father, but refers to the Word of life, the Son of God, who was with the Father prior to His incarnation, and in Whom eternal life is found. It was the eternal life which was with God from the beginning which has appeared to us incarnate in Jesus Christ. (C. Kruse) Only God possesses eternal life. Since John speaks of Christ as "the eternal life, which was with the Father," this verse assigns full and absolute deity to Christ. (R. Lightner)

He is life essentially, He is life manifestatively, He is life communicatively. Christ may well be styled "The Life" for the natural life of all creatures is in Him and from Him. He is the spiritual life of angels as well as the Church. From heaven He came to earth to exhibit a life which had no beginning, no limitation, no end, and for the express purpose of conquering death, and becoming eternal life to His people ... Since fallen creatures could not ascend to heaven in their sins, the Son descended to earth to be a Saviour for the lost. In order for the Life to be evident and apparent, the Infinite took upon Himself the limitations of the finite. In order that the Invisible might become visible, He was clothed in flesh and blood ... The apostles had beheld Christ in a manner that the patriarchs and prophets had not done, for they had seen Him only in prophecy and promise, in types and visions. Though He had occasionally appeared unto them in human form (theophanies) they had not looked upon Him as actually incarnate, clothed with flesh and blood, dwelling among and conversing with them as He did with the apostles ... The manifestation of Christ in the flesh is one thing, the manifestation of Him to the heart, by His Spirit and Word, is another. Have you, dear reader, an experiential acquaintance with Him? Have you proved Him to be "the Word of Life" by His effectual working in your own soul? (A. Pink)

1 John 1:2 [and (continuative) the Life (Subj. Nom.; incarnate Christ) was revealed (φανερώω, API3S, Dramatic; revelation of God to Israel), in fact (emphatic conj.), we (apostolic and resident witnesses) have seen (ὁράω, Perf.AI1P, Dramatic; empirical observation, eye witness) and (continuative conj.) have testified (μαρτυρέω, PAI1P, Perfective; would swear an oath to what we saw in court; recall of the empirical evidence for inclusion in the Canon) and (continuative conj.) have proclaimed (ἀπαγγέλλω, PAI1P, Perfective; told you all the details) to you (Dat. Adv.; John's non-resident congregations) that (Acc. Gen. Ref.) eternal (Acc. Extent of Time, Qualitative) Life (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ), Who (Subj. Nom.; "the very one") was (εἰμί, Imperf.AI3S, Durative) face-to-face with the Father

(Acc. Intimate Fellowship; eternal sonship) **and** (connective conj.) **was revealed** (φανερῶ, API3S, Dramatic; transition from oral tradition to the written Canon of Scripture) **to us** (Dat. Adv.)],

^{BGT} **1 John 1:2** καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἐώρακάμεν καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν-

^{VUL} **1 John 1:2** et vita manifestata est et vidimus et testamur et adnuntiamus vobis vitam aeternam quae erat apud Patrem et apparuit nobis

LWB 1 John 1:3 What [reference to the kenosis and hypostatic union of Jesus Christ] we have seen [they had observed the humanity of Christ on earth with their own eyes] and heard [they heard His teachings from His Own lips], we are now reporting [putting the listeners into the frame of mind where they could also be present to witness things firsthand] to you [non-resident Christians], so that you also [those with non-face-to-face teaching may have fellowship just like those who have face-to-face teaching] might have [subject to your volition] fellowship [non-face-to-face] with us [those who have the privilege of geographical, face-to-face teaching]. Furthermore, in fact, our [true, collective] fellowship [through private confession of sin to God and the resultant filling of the Spirit] is with our Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

^{KW} **1 John 1:3** That which we have seen with discernment and at present is in our mind's eye, and that which we have heard and at present is ringing in our ears, we are reporting also to you, in order that as for you also, you may be participating jointly in common with us [in our firsthand knowledge of the life of our Lord]. And the fellowship indeed which is ours, is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The phrase “What we have seen” is a reference to the kenosis and hypostatic union of Jesus Christ. John and others had observed the humanity of Christ on earth (Latin: video) with their own eyes (Dramatic Perfect tense). They also heard Him (Dramatic Perfect tense) teach from His own lips (Latin: audio). And now they are reporting by word of mouth and by writing (Epistolary Aorist tense) what they were eyewitnesses to firsthand. These very words of John eventually became part of the Canon of Scripture. Why did John and others make such an effort to record everything they heard? The purpose he gives here is to that all the members of his non-resident congregations might have fellowship in Christ with him, even though they are separated by geographic location. Those who read about Jesus Christ can have fellowship with Him just as those who were present with Him on earth had fellowship with Him. You don't have to be face-to-face with John or any other pastor to have fellowship with him in Christ. The Tential Present tense and the Potential Subjunctive mood, however, both point to an act of your volition. You have to decide that you want to have fellowship with Him and with John. And besides, true

fellowship is not with men, but with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Every believer who is currently alive and is filled with the Spirit at this moment is in fellowship with the Trinity and with every other believer who is likewise filled with the Spirit.

The only time believers have true fellowship one with another is when each individual believer is having fellowship with the Father and the Son. The entire concept of ‘fellowship’ being a physical meeting of believers in a geographical location (church, tent, temple) comes from the papist usage of the Latin word *societas* (society, assembly, public meeting) for the Greek word *κοινωνία* does NOT carry the ‘physical meeting place’ derivation that the Latin word carries. *Fellowship* in the Greek and Biblical sense of the word means ‘in union or agreement with others’ on a matter of consideration, transcendent of time or place. (Kittel) In other words, *fellowship* is a state of agreement or sphere of existence that a certain group of believers share with each other upon meeting certain conditions. All believers, by definition, are in *positional fellowship* with Christ and with each other: that is called justification-salvation. Some believers, by continual confession of sin to the Father through Jesus Christ, are in *temporal fellowship* with Christ and each other: that is called sanctification-salvation. Even fewer believers, by reaching the goal of spiritual maturity, will be in *inheritance-salvation*, being partakers & sharers in His Millennial Reign: that is called glorification-salvation. Therefore, there are several kinds of spiritual fellowship and none of them require face-to-face proximity to one another.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

True believers are those who dwell in Christ – that is to say, in the fellowship which embraces all the members of Christ. (F. Bruce) The object of fellowship is occupation with Christ. Men try to get up fellowships, and they are poor things at best. The only fellowship I know anything about is the fellowship of God’s dear Son. Men may have these fellowships if they will, but, thank God, every believer has been called into the fellowship of God’s Son ... Fellowship means common thoughts and interests. Have you learned to know a Saviour’s love? Do you enjoy the precious things that the Apostle John is telling us about? Has the glorious truth of eternal life as revealed in the Son of God become a reality to you? Then let us share it together. (H. Ironside) Kenosis means to empty oneself, to deprive oneself. Christ voluntarily took upon Himself humanity and deprived Himself of His divine attributes to instead walk in the prototype divine dynasphere (God the Father’s 1st birthday present to Christ at the virgin birth). He didn’t “empty” Himself of deity. God invented the Christian life at the virgin birth and Jesus was the test-pilot for it in the *prototype* divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Don’t get weird on me if you have never heard the term divine dynasphere. It is a teaching aid developed from the Greek word “dunamis” and the Locative of Sphere. Look it up in the glossary. (LWB) The manifold purpose of the Apostle is to preserve his readers in the fellowship with God. (K. Braune)

To have fellowship with other Christians is to enter into fellowship with the Father. The fellowship or *κοινωνία* of the church is based on what we hold in common. In many churches it would be hard to recognize that Christians have anything in common except that they tend to worship together at a certain fixed time on Sunday morning. Christian fellowship ... at its heart is a common experience of God’s grace in Jesus Christ; however, unconfessed sin destroys the Christian fellowship with God and then necessarily also destroys fellowship with other believers.

The apostle John speaks of a twofold fellowship, with God and with one another. The two go together. Both can be interrupted. (J.M. Boice) Because we must be “filled with the Spirit” in order to be in fellowship, we actually have fellowship with all three ‘members’ of the Trinity, [LWB] or to put it in another way: “Communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each Person distinctly, in Love, Grace, and Consolation ... The saints have distinct communion with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit - that is, distinctly with the Father, and distinctly with the Son, and distinctly with the Holy Spirit ... Abraham was the *friend* of God, David, a man after His own *heart*, and Enoch *walked* with Him. (J.Owen) Some believers enter into a much richer experience of fellowship than do others of their fellows, and the degree in which he actually participates may vary considerably with the same believer from day to day. (A. Pink)

The word “fellowship” today means usually “companionship, social intercourse.” In this sense of the word, it was impossible for John to have had fellowship with many of his readers, for this is a general letter sent to other churches at large, and John would never have had the opportunity to see them all personally and thus have fellowship with them. The word “fellowship” cannot here be understood in its commonly accepted usage. John wrote his letter so that his readers who were not eyewitnesses of the life of our Lord might enjoy joint-participation with him in his first-hand knowledge of the Lord as gained through the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. When his readers studied the letter under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they would be looking at the Lord Jesus as He appeared on earth through John’s eyes; they would be hearing him speak through John’s ears, and would be touching Him with John’s hands. Thus having a supernatural, Holy Spirit energized, first-hand knowledge of the Lord Jesus, they therefore would be able to have a real, actual and more intimate companionship with Him. Thus, a joint-participation on the part of the Christian in John’s first-hand knowledge of the Lord Jesus, will issue in a real, practical, intelligent fellowship (companionship) with the Lord Jesus. (K. Wuest) They (Trinity) may indeed be contemplated separately, it is quite warrantable to distinguish between the communion which we have with Each, and so shall we treat thereof. (A. Pink)

Oral tradition was set aside in 96 A.D. and was replaced by the written word (Scriptures). Letters were the only “non face-to-face” teaching available back then, but today we have tapes that can really do the job fast. Tapes versus face-to-face teaching is a matter of personal preference ... The New Testament was *formed* by non face-to-face teaching, so the next time some idiot tells you that non face-to-face teaching is not legitimate, he is incorrect. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Note the repeated preposition “meta” (with), distinguishing the two persons, and coordinating the fellowship with the Father, and the fellowship with the Son, thus implying sameness of essence. The fellowship with both contemplates both as united in the Godhead. (M. Vincent) Jesus Christ is the title of our Lord’s humiliation, the time to which John refers. Christ Jesus is the title of His exaltation, which, as viewed in John’s writings, is still future, but which, for us, is His present place. Our fellowship is not with Jesus Christ, but with Christ Jesus. (A. Knoch) It may be asked, Why is no mention made in 1 John 1:3, of the believer’s fellowship with the Holy Spirit? Though He be not expressly referred to, He is necessarily implied, for none can have fellowship with the Father or with the Son save by Him. The Holy Spirit is the sole efficient cause of all spiritual fellowship. He is the author of our fellowship with the Triune God in Christ. He introduces us into the same, and is the only transactor of it, for it is by His enablement that we are lifted out of ourselves and our affections drawn unto things above. (A. Pink)

The reason of the apostle's exhibiting and asserting this summary of sacred faith is ... that the believers of it may be advanced to the same happiness with them. The apostle means not personal fellowship nor consociation in the same church administrations, but such as is consistent with personal distance from each other. It is communion with heaven, and in blessing that come thence and tend thither ... There is a fellowship or communion that runs through the whole church of God. (M. Henry) It is an interpretive mistake of considerable moment to treat the term "fellowship" as though it meant little more than "to be a Christian." (Z. Hodges) There is a gracious constraint on all who know this blessed fellowship to bring others into it. (W. Nicole) Fellowship with both Father and Son implies their unity. (R. Jamieson) How are we ever going to have fellowship? To get over this seemingly impossible hurdle, John is going to present three methods. Two of them are man-made methods and won't work. The other one is God's method, and it is the only one that will work. (J. McGee) Fellowship with God inevitably brings fellowship with other Christians within the body of the church. (J. Boice) The extent of this relationship is limitless since it contains all that enters into the new sphere *in Christ*. It includes all that He is in partnership with the believer in service, in suffering, and in betrothal; and all that He is in the Christian's fellowship. (L. Chafer)

I noticed in a place where the Rotary Club met a large banner over the elevated speaker's table with the words, "Fun, Food, Fellowship." Well, the food was nothing to brag about – embalmed chicken and peas as big as bullets. The fun was corny jokes. The fellowship consisted of one man patting another on the back and saying, "Hi, Bill, how's business?" or "How's the wife?" Then they sang a little song together. That was their idea of fellowship. Well, the Christian idea of fellowship is not much different. When you hear an announcement of a church banquet, it is almost certain you will be urged to come for food and fellowship. What do they mean by fellowship? They mean meeting around the table and talking to each other about everything under the sun except the one thing that would give them true fellowship, the person of Christ. (J. McGee) Not only does "fellowship" presuppose our reconciliation with God, but also the reception of a nature and disposition which fits us to be with Him, for "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" There cannot be friendship unless there is congeniality. Fellowship is not a one-sided thing, but mutual. It is the law of friendship to answer it with friendship. None is warranted in regarding himself as the friend of God unless he has the heart and carriage of one – delighting in Him, seeking to be conformed to His image, endeavoring to promote His interests. (A. Pink)

What then is the purpose of the writer in writing I John? It is found where one would often find a purpose statement in a book or letter, in the opening paragraph: "that you may have fellowship with us." His purpose in writing to these *regenerate* people is so that they may walk in fellowship with God! (J. Dillow) When we read the letters of John, it becomes clear that a number of loosely related churches were operating in fellowship with the author(s) of these letters. 1 John itself appears to be a circular letter sent to a number of churches to warn them of the danger represented by the secessionists ... We may, then, justifiably speak of a Johannine community, by which we mean a group of churches in fellowship with the author(s) of 1, 2, and 3 John ... To have fellowship with him is the alternative to having fellowship with the secessionists. (C. Kruse) Gnostics do not have a canon of Scripture ... But they do employ an

interpretive method of allegory and symbolism ... to give a deeper meaning, or even several, in order to claim other literature – above all the sacred and canonical - as their own doctrine or to display its inner richness. (K. Rudolph) The author of the epistle is stating that he is a part of a circle so intimate with God that if one has fellowship with his circle, one has fellowship with God the Father and with His Son. (R. Lightner)

1 John 1:3 What (Acc. Dir. Obj.; reference to the *kenosis* and *hypostatic union* of Jesus Christ) we have seen (ὁράω, Perf.AI1P, Dramatic; they had observed the humanity of Christ on earth with their own eyes) and (connective conj.) heard (ἀκούω, Perf. AI1P, Dramatic; they heard His teachings from His own lips), we are now (temporal particle) reporting (ἀπαγγέλλω, PAI1P, Epistolary & Historical; announcing, putting the listeners into the frame of mind that they also had been present to witness these things first hand; recording in the Canon of Scripture: verbal plenary inspiration) to you (Dat. Advantage; non-resident Christians), so that (purpose conj.) you (Subj. Nom.) also (adjunctive; points to the fact that those without face-to-face teaching may have fellowship just like those who do have face-to-face) might have (ἔχω, PASubj.2P, Tential & Progressive, Potential; both tense and mood point to man's volition) fellowship (Acc. Association; temporal, non face-to-face fellowship) with us (Gen. Adv. & Assoc.; those who have the privilege of geographical, face-to-face teaching). Furthermore (Inferential conj.), in fact (Emphatic conj.), our (Nom. Rel.; collective, 'true Christian') fellowship (Subj. Nom.; temporal, thru Gate 1) is (ellipsis, verb supplied) with our (Gen. Rel.) Father (Gen. Adv.) and (continuative conj.) with His (Abl. Source) Son (Gen. Rel.), Jesus (Gen. Appos.) Christ (Gen. Descr.),

^{BGT} **1 John 1:3** ὃ ἐώρακαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 1:3** quod vidimus et audivimus adnuntiamus et vobis ut et vos societatem habeatis nobiscum et societas nostra sit cum Patre et cum Filio eius Iesu Christo

LWB 1 John 1:4 As a matter of fact, we [John and his resident congregation] write these things [doctrines of Christ] to you [those in John's non-resident congregation], so that our [both resident and non-resident] inner happiness [from supergrace status] might be completed [communicating Truth to other believers, while in fellowship with Christ, can spur your spiritual growth and inner happiness from supergrace to ultra-supergrace: a completed edification complex of the soul].

^{KW} **1 John 1:4** And these things, as for us, we are writing in order that our joy, having been filled completely full in times past may persist in that state of fullness through present time.

^{KJV} **1 John 1:4** And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John gives another reason for his writing this letter to his non-resident congregations. This time he includes the members of his resident congregation with him as co-authors by using the pronoun “we.” We write these teachings (Perfective Present tense), these doctrines of Christ, so that our inner happiness might be completed (Consummative Perfect tense). The residents are getting great pleasure writing to the non-residents. They are so happy in supergrace that they want to share that supergrace with others. Since they can’t do that in person, they are participating in the Canon or written Word as an ingredient or expression of their happiness. The Potential Subjunctive mood means the readers of this letter have the volition to accept it and become happy, or reject it and remain in their cosmic *status quo*. Communicating the Truth to other believers, while in fellowship with Christ, can spur your spiritual growth and inner happiness from supergrace to ultra-supergrace. Another term for this is a completed *edification complex of the soul*. The word for “completed” (pleroo) means to fill their happiness up to the point of overflowing.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

He is not writing to test their salvation; he is writing so that his “joy may be made complete”. His joy was present; it had “begun” because they had been born again. But he wants to complete this joy by seeing them walk in fellowship. The completion of his joy does not refer to his desire to obtain assurance that they are really saved, but as the apostle himself explains, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the Truth” (3 John 4). He wants to rejoice that his saved children are walking in the Truth! To have one’s joy “made full” is not to become a Christian, but being a Christian already, to act like it! (J. Dillow) The Apostle John identifies Bible doctrine as the source of the believer’s happiness ... Prolonged residence and function inside the divine dynasphere brings about the completed state of happiness. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Separation from Jesus means sadness. Restoration of fellowship means joy. Therefore we learn that no Christian can have fullness of joy without a vital fellowship with Jesus Christ. Knowledge about Him will not do. Work for Him will not do. We must have personal, vital fellowship with Him; otherwise Christianity becomes a joyless burden. (J. Piper) The moment any emotion, thought or deed is revealed to us as sin, we should penitently confess the same. (A. Pink) The author thinks of the establishment of fellowship between believers not as something based on mutual assent to a common purpose, but rather as something created as people walk in the light as God is in the light. (C. Kruse)

Prolonged residence and function inside the divine dynasphere brings about the completed state of happiness. Every gate of the system works at maximum capacity for the mature believer. John makes it clear (elsewhere) that doctrine brings us to this completed state of happiness. Truth precedes happiness. If we seek happiness apart from God’s plan, apart from His Word, we will

always be unhappy. God's game plan calls for us to seek Truth, since happiness comes as a natural consequence of learning and applying the Truth ... The mature believer's "completed state of happiness" is gate 8 of the divine dynasphere, sharing God's happiness, becoming spiritually self-sustaining, completing the edification complex of the soul, receiving supergrace blessings, and being appointed to the highest order of royal family knighthood. Sharing this happiness of God is a result of knowing God and being inculcated with His thinking. God always has perfect happiness; when the believer shares the thinking of God, as revealed in Bible doctrine, he shares God's happiness. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The measure of our fellowship with the Father and the Son determines the measure of our communion with fellow saints, so in proportion to the constancy and depth of this fellowship in its three forms will be the degree of our joy. (A. Pink) The author recognizes that his own joy in Christ cannot be complete if fellow believers for whom he feels some responsibility are in danger of departing from the truth by becoming involved in another "koinonia," one which he will soon prove to be bogus because it does not really involve "koinonia" with the Father and the Son. (C. Kruse)

The *we* throughout, particular in its contrast to *you*, is most simply taken to mean those who were "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word," whose testimony was still active even though most of the group were dead. The fellowship of this group with God and Jesus Christ was so intense that their teaching is normative for all Christians. (B. Easton) The *state* of happiness is the divine dynasphere. There are *degrees* of happiness in the divine dynasphere, from minimum for the immature person who occasionally resides in the system, to maximum for the faithful believer who perseveres in his intake of doctrine to maturity and beyond. Each gate contributes to the happiness of the one functioning in the system. In this regard the divine dynasphere is also the believer's environment for happiness. There is no happiness for anyone outside God's system ... God the Father is the inventor of the divine dynasphere. He took personal and impersonal love and mixed them with humility and doctrine, added the ministry of the power of God the Holy Spirit, and invented a power system to sustain the humanity of Christ during the incarnation. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Where fullness of joy exists there is a separation from the world, a close fellowship with God in Christ, a treading of wisdom's ways, and thus the Lord is honored and His people helped ... Such is the believer's right and privilege, and if it be not actually realized in his experience the fault is all his own. (A. Pink)

When there is rejoicing in Christ, irksome and difficult tasks become pleasant and easy. The joy of the Lord is His cordial to fortify us against the infelicities and calamities of this world, whether they be the common afflictions incident to men or persecutions for righteousness' sake – making bitter things sweet to us ... Yet though the Savior has not only made His redeemed secure for eternity, but would have them happy in time, the fact remains that many of them are frequently oppressed with dullness and despondency. God does not appear to be the light of their countenance, and their spirits seem to have caught little of heaven's luster ... Is fullness of joy attainable by the Christian in this life? Assuredly, it must be, or John had never written our present text. If fullness of joy be not experienced by us, then certainly we are living far below our privileges. The straitness is in ourselves, and not in Him or His revealed will. The Lord knows all about our temperaments, circumstances, trials and corruptions, yet, notwithstanding, bids us "rejoice evermore," having made full provision for us to do so ... Nor can we set aside the force of all these passages by saying they express the ideal rather than the actual, that they set

before us the standard at which we are to aim, and not what is realized by any soul in this time state. Such an evasion is at once ruled out of court by Acts 13:52. (A. Pink)

Everyone thinks they know what happiness is; few of them really do. There is a gate in Satan's cosmic system called the *arrogance of unhappiness*. Thieme highlights this satanic trap in his tape series on 1 John. By knowing what unhappiness is, we might be better able to understand happiness. Here are some excerpts. (LWB) "Those who are locked-into the arrogance of unhappiness have a façade, a fake-out, an hypocrisy of happiness that goes along with their jumpy personality. Their preoccupation with self guarantees unhappiness and misery. They even have erroneous views of what happiness is, so they demand attention from those close to them. When you are preoccupied with self, everyone must give you attention. This is because you think people can make you happy. Marriage is for happy people. If you go into marriage looking for happiness, thinking you will become happy from the love and affection from your husband, you will lose out. Arrogance demands attention, so it concludes that certain things associated with happiness will make you happy. You conclude that being married will make you happy, or success in business will make you happy, or having children will make you happy. But in reality, no matter what objects of intended happiness you possess, arrogance will assure you that you will never be happy. So you stand around and demand attention from everyone thinking you will become happy. *Arrogance of unhappiness* people often have a martyr complex or they end up developing one. And with the martyr complex comes the pall of gloom. In the happiest occasions or not, everyone around you is affected by the pall of gloom. You make people around you miserable through your kingdom of misery. You begin to derive just a little bit of happiness by making everyone around you miserable, because you were able to affect them with a system you created. One such person can destroy any happy occasion. Churches who have people who have rejected doctrine collect a mass of unhappy people. The arrogance of unhappiness seeks to dominate its environment and in effect says: I build my happiness on everyone else's unhappiness." (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 1:4 As a matter of fact (Intensive Conj. emphasizing a well known fact), we (John includes the members of his resident congregation) write (γράφω, PAI1P, Perfective; verbal plenary inspiration; because the need was apparent and the desire insatiable) these things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; teachings, doctrines of Christ) to you (Acc. Adv.; those in John's non-resident congregations), so that (Purpose & Result; the Canon or written Word is an absolutely necessary ingredient for obtaining the happiness of God) our (Poss. Gen.; both resident and non-resident congregations') inner happiness (Subj. Nom.; they want to share their supergrace status) might be (εἰμί, PASubj.3S, Descriptive, Potential) completed (πληρόω, Perf.MPtC.NSF, Consummative & Periphrastic, Attributive & Telic, Articular; full to the point of overflowing).

^{BGT} **1 John 1:4** καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ᾗ πεπληρωμένη.

^{VUL} **1 John 1:4** et haec scribimus vobis ut gaudium nostrum sit plenum

LWB 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we [members of John’s resident congregation who saw Christ firsthand] have heard from Him [Jesus Christ in the flesh] and have communicated [as messengers] to you [non-resident members], that God is [by analogy] light [divine essence] and there is no, not any, darkness [analogy for Satan’s essence] in Him [no compromise between God’s system and Satan’s system].

^{KW} **1 John 1:5** And it is this message which we have heard from Him and at present is ringing in our ears and we are bringing back tidings to you, that God as to His nature is light, and darkness in Him does not exist, not even one particle.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Those believers in John’s resident congregation who saw Christ firsthand have a message for those believers in John’s non-resident congregations. They heard this message (Extensive Perfect tense) from Jesus Himself when He was ministering on earth in hypostatic union. They have communicated this message before, but they are going to do so again (Durative Present tense). Doctrinal messages from one Christian to another are very important. “Mutual fellowship depends on mutual knowledge.” (Wescott) Those who saw Jesus Christ want to share what they heard from Him with their distant friends so their fellowship together in Him will have a firm foundation to build upon. In the same manner, I created the ‘versebyverse’ web site so I could post a continuing series of messages about Christ for you to read. I am sharing my fellowship with the Father and Son with you – as far away (non-resident) as Africa, Nova Scotia, Germany, and Australia.

So what is this important message they want to share? “God is light and there is not the least tiny bit of darkness in Him.” Light is an anthropomorphism, an analogy for His divine essence. Darkness is an analogy for Satan’s essence. They are mutually exclusive essences or spheres of existence. They operate from two completely different systems or dynaspheres (from the Greek ‘dunamis’ in the Locative of Sphere). There is no compromise of God’s system with Satan’s system. This is the key practical message of this statement about God. As we shall see, a believer cannot be in fellowship with God experientially and think or do even one tiny thing in Satan’s system (sin) at the same time. Once you sin in the tiniest matter, you are no longer in fellowship with God in the light; you have entered the system of darkness and are now in fellowship with Satan. Think of it this way:

Draw two circles (spheres) on a piece of paper that do not touch or overlap in any way. One is light (God), the other is darkness (Satan). Each sphere has its own *modus operandi*. There is no darkness in God’s sphere; there is no light in Satan’s sphere. All Christians operate at any point in time in one of these spheres. You can only exist in one sphere at a time; you cannot exist in both simultaneously. If you are “in the light,” you are not “in darkness;” if you are “in darkness,” you are not “in the light.” This happens every day, moment by moment. As believers, our natural

residence and function should be “in the light.” But the least little sin expels us from the light into darkness. As we shall see, we remain “in darkness” until we acknowledge our sin to God in the privacy of our priesthood. Only then do we re-enter the sphere of light where God lives.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Light is used throughout Scripture as a synonym for infinite holiness, purity, perfect righteousness. There is nothing in God but absolute purity, absolute perfection, absolute holiness. You say, “Well, how then can I, a guilty sinner, ever have fellowship with that infinitely holy God? He has provided the way, but He first would have me recognize this, that if I ever have fellowship with Him, it must be *in the light*. (H. Ironside) God *is* light; not *the* light, nor *a* light, but light: that is His nature ... Darkness exists, physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual; there is abundance of obscurity, error, depravity, sin, and its consequence: death. But not a shade of these is “in Him.” The Divine Light is subject to no spots, no eclipse, no twilight, no night; as a Source of light it cannot in any degree fail. (A. Plummer) In one branch of Gnosis – especially in Mandeism and in Manicheism – there are two basic principles existing from the very beginning, mythologically described as the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, which are brought into contact with one another almost by accident and so set the baleful history of the world into motion. (K. Rudolph) Some of these tidbits from Gnosticism help explain why John chose some of the language he did. (LWB)

The essence of light, as well as God, is Trinitarian (R.B. Thieme, Jr.):

actinic: cannot be seen or felt (Father)

luminiferous: seen and felt (Son)

calorific: felt, but not seen (Spirit)

One of the key heresies was that there was a “mixture” in God of good and evil, light and darkness, and therefore the new creation in Christ could similarly have a mixture and still be holy. This justified the Gnostic notion that sin was permissible for the Christian. John reacted in horror to this notion. (J. Dillow) The “us” or “we” is striking. The author begins by speaking for an authoritative group (“we”) to an unidentified Christian congregation (“you”) somewhere in the Mediterranean world. (J. Michaels). “God is light” is a summarized expression of the Divine perfections. More distinctly, light is the emblem of God’s holiness. Light is simple or pure. In it is neither mixture nor pollution, nor can there be. Its very nature and property repels defilement ... The holiness of God shines in and through every doctrine, every part of the Truth. (A. Pink)

1 John 1:5 **And** (Connective conj.) **this** (Subj. Nom.) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **the message** (Pred. Nom.; “mutual fellowship depends on mutual knowledge”: Wescott) **which** (Acc. Gen. Ref.) **we** (those members of John’s resident congregation who saw Christ firsthand) **have heard** (ἀκούω, Perf. AI1P, Extensive Present, i.e. completed act) **from Him** (Abl. Source; Jesus Christ in the flesh) **and** (continuative conj.) **have communicated** (ἀναγγέλλω, PAI1P, Durative; as messengers) **to**

you (Dat. Adv.; non-resident members), that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) God (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) light (Pred. Nom.; anthropomorphism, analogy for His divine essence) and (continuative conj.) there is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) no (Neg. particle) not any (superlative; double negative: "absolutely none", mutually exclusive dynaspheres) darkness (Pred. Nom.; analogy for Satan's essence) in Him (Loc. Sph.; no compromise of God's system with Satan's system).

^{BGT} **1 John 1:5** Καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.

^{VUL} **1 John 1:5** et haec est adnuntiatio quam audivimus ab eo et adnuntiamus vobis quoniam Deus lux est et tenebrae in eo non sunt ullae

LWB 1 John 1:6 If we contend that we have fellowship with Him [living in the sphere of light], but we keep on walking [ordering our behavior] in the sphere of darkness [exiting the sphere of light through sin on a continual basis], we keep on lying to ourselves [divorced from reality] and are not making it a practice to live the Truth [divine standards of virtue, honor, integrity],

^{KW} **1 John 1:6** If we say that things in common we are having with Him, and thus fellowship, and in the sphere of the aforementioned darkness are habitually ordering our behavior, we are lying, and we are not doing the truth.

^{KJV} **1 John 1:6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John and the resident believers of his congregation elaborate on the message of living in darkness as opposed to the light. If we claim (Constative Aorist tense) that we have fellowship (Customary Present tense) with the Lord, but we keep on walking (Iterative Present tense) in the sphere of darkness, we are lying to ourselves (Direct Middle Voice). In this hypothetical, we assert that we are living in light when in reality we are living in darkness. We think everything is fine, but in truth we have sinned and are living in Satan's system (cosmic dynasphere) instead of God's system (divine dynasphere). The Potential Subjunctive moods point to our assertion and our behavior as being hypothetical – maybe yes, maybe no – maybe we are indeed walking in the light, but then again maybe we are not. In this hypothetical case, we have sinned and are therefore no longer in the light. We have exited God's system and are living in Satan's system.

The Iterative Present tense points to continual behavior - a day-by-day lifestyle as opposed to a point of time. Perhaps we have sinned in thought, word or deed a couple of times today. We exited the sphere of light each time we sinned and remained in darkness until we acknowledged our sin. If we confessed our sin on a timely basis, we re-entered the sphere of light and were immediately back in God's system, in fellowship with Him. That is not the hypothetical posed

here. Suppose we sinned a couple of times today and did not acknowledge those sins to God. We went on with our daily life thinking nothing of it, unaware that we are now living in darkness instead of the light. We are not in fellowship with the Lord, we are in fellowship with Satan. If we continue to sin without acknowledging those sins to God, we are living in habitual sin. This is the unfortunate situation John is posing in this passage. If we continue to neglect the confession or acknowledgement of our mental, verbal or overt sins to God, we are operating in the sphere of darkness.

If we think we are in the light, and are living in habitual sin, we are divorced from reality. The longer we live in this illusory state, the more we are lying to ourselves about our spiritual status. Not only are we lying to ourselves about having fellowship with God, we are also not making it a practice to live the Truth (Iterative Present tense). By residing and functioning in sin, we remain in darkness – living a lie. The divine standards of virtue, honor and integrity require us to live in the light. By neglecting to confess sin, we abandon the Truth and embrace a lie. We cease to produce things in our life that meet divine standards and are approved by God. We begin setting up our own standards, or embrace the standards of others who are in darkness. We go about our day doing what we think are nice things, but they are tainted because we are residing and functioning by the rules of Satan’s system rather than God’s system. The illusion that we are “right with God” when we are not is a form of spiritual hallucination.

Just because we are a Christian does not mean we are in the light. We can be indwelt by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – but we can still be living in Satan’s sphere of darkness. The light within has been snuffed-out. We are living a life of self-deception, thinking all is well when in reality we are spiritually sick. The sad thing about Christianity today is that probably 95% of all believers are living this lie. They think they are in the light, but it has been so long since they have acknowledged their sins to God that they are completely ensnared in Satan’s sphere of darkness. They wake up each morning, go to work, come home, go to church, socialize, and think everything is fine – but they are in darkness because of unconfessed sin. They know something is wrong, but rather than confess sin, they try to do things in the energy of the flesh to make them feel better. This is not living in the light; this is sublimation. If you are living in unconfessed sin, you are not in the light. If you are not interested in Bible doctrine, you are not living the Truth.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is therefore possible, according to John, for the Truth to not be “in” a regenerate person. This requires that “Truth” does not refer to the seed of life, but to active application of Truth in daily experience. Truth can either be in us or not in us depending upon whether we are obeying. For the Truth to be not in us simply means that we are not “practicing the Truth ...” Eternal salvation is an either-or affair: you either have it or you do not. Whoever believes in Christ has eternal life. Belief occurs at a point in time; it is not a process. Fellowship with Christ, however, is a process. Knowing Him experientially is not all or nothing. There are degrees. Our fellowship with Christ is not something that happens at a point in time; it is a process which continues over a lifetime and varies in intensity proportional to our obedience. (J. Dillow) Truth is the same thing as metabolized Bible doctrine circulating in the soul. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) John knew, as does every

perceptive pastor, that Christians sometimes feign spirituality while engaging in acts of disobedience. (Z. Hodges)

The first of the three false claims is the claim to have fellowship with God at the same time as one's life is marked by unrighteousness. (F. Bruce) To have fellowship with the Lord Jesus in the sense of companionship, the saint must have common likes and dislikes with the Lord Jesus, he must love what He loves, namely, righteousness, and hate what He hates, namely, sin. He must have a common nature, the divine nature, he must have a common Father, God, our Lord in His deity (Heb.2:11). It is these things held in common on the part of the Lord Jesus and the saint that form the basis of their fellowship and make it possible. (K. Wuest) If God were not truth, lying would not be wrong. (G. Clark) There may be a profession of fellowship with God, while the practice is utterly opposed to his character and will ... To walk in darkness is to live in the practice of sin ... Gnostics professedly devoted their souls to the pursuit of the highest knowledge, and yet were guilty of the vilest sins with their bodies, alleging "that the flesh was so corrupt that no filthiness of life could affect it." (W. Jones)

Having fellowship with Him is the essence of the Christian life. (R. Jamieson) It is not natural darkness that is referred to but a failure to walk according to truth ... Every privileged relationship carries corresponding responsibility. Wherever the Holy Spirit functions, one must deal with the problem of sin. Ignorance of the truth excuses no one ... Christians filled with earthly aspirations experience a diminishing interest in the Word of God. Their concern about spiritual things wanes, and they backslide. A person who talks about truth without walking therein indicates he is walking in darkness. (W. Best) If God is Light to the exclusion of all darkness, then fellowship with darkness excludes fellowship with Him ... By "walking" is meant our daily life, our movement and activity in the world ... To have communion with Him who is Light, and be continually exhibiting a life of darkness, is impossible. (A. Plummer)

To walk in darkness includes living under fundamental error concerning spiritual and eternal things. Every doctrine of men, everything which is contrary to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, derogatory to the honor and dignity of Christ, or which is opposed to the free grace of God in election, effectual calling, final perseverance, and the inculcation of true piety, is sinful in the sight of God and morally evil in us. There can be no fellowship with God but in the belief and practice of the Truth. Every part of the Truth is like its Author: light, pure, holy, perfect. His doctrine is "according to godliness." Truth and error can never agree: there can be no such thing as walking in the Truth and at the same time living in that which is flatly contradictory thereto ... Very different was John from our mealy-mouthed men who gain a reputation for being "gracious" at the expense of fidelity. John did not merely say that this class of Christians erred or were "laboring under a delusion," but spoke plainly and called them what they were. False pretenses need to be dealt with sternly and their dishonesty condemned. (A. Pink)

1 John 1:6 **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe we do, maybe we don't") **we contend** (λέγω, AASubj.1P, Constative, Potential; claim, assert, supposition) **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj. of Verb) **we have** (ἔχω, PAI1P, Customary) **fellowship** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **with Him** (Gen. Adv.; living inside the

operational divine dynasphere), **but** (adversative) **we keep on walking** (περιπατέω, PASubj.1P, Iterative, Potential; ordering our behavior) **in the sphere of darkness** (Loc. Sph.; exiting the divine dynasphere through sin, followed by living in Satan's cosmic system: where our actions and words are ensphered by habitual sinning), **we** (apodosis) **keep on lying to ourselves** (ψεύδομαι, PMI1P, Iterative & Pictorial, Direct Middle; living an illusion, hallucinating, divorced from reality) **and** (continuative) **are not** (neg. particle) **making it a practice to live** (ποιέω, PAI1P, Iterative; act, perform, produce, perform) **the Truth** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; divine standards, virtue, honor, integrity),

^{BGT} **1 John 1:6** Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν·

^{VUL} **1 John 1:6** si dixerimus quoniam societatem habemus cum eo et in tenebris ambulamus mentimur et non facimus veritatem

LWB 1 John 1:7 But if we keep on walking in the sphere of light [inside the operational divine dynasphere] as He [Jesus Christ] was in the sphere of light [inside the prototype divine dynasphere], we keep on having fellowship [being in the sphere of light is the same thing as being in fellowship] with each other [our reciprocal relationship as Christians is based on residence and function inside the divine dynasphere rather than the function of our sin natures], and the blood [representative analogy for the spiritual death of Christ on the cross] of Jesus, His [the Father's] Son, keeps on cleansing [temporary purification] us [those who acknowledge their sins and are walking in the light] from every sin [not the imputed sin from Adam, but every sin we commit that destroys our walk in the light, our fellowship with Christ and therefore each other].

^{KW} **1 John 1:7** But if within the sphere of the light we are habitually ordering our behavior as He Himself is in the light, things in common and thus fellowship we [the believer and God] are having with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son keeps continually cleansing us from every sin.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Verse 6 presented the negative side of this equation, where the believer who is walking in darkness because of sin nevertheless thinks he is walking in the light. This believer is divorced from reality and is living a lie. This verse presents the positive side of the equation, where a believer is truly walking (Iterative Present tense) in the light because he has acknowledged his sins to the Lord and is in fellowship. The sphere of light, also called the divine dynasphere if you like Thieme's teaching aid (and I do), was initially given to Jesus Christ by the Father. During His earthly ministry, Jesus continually resided and functioned inside the sphere of light. As a

matter of fact, He never, ever left the sphere of light (Gnomic Present tense) because He never sinned. After giving this system of “light, power, and love” a 33-year test drive, Jesus gave it His approval and turned it over to every Church Age believer at the point of regeneration. He test-drove the *prototype* divine dynasphere and we now drive the *operational* divine dynasphere.

The protasis of a 3rd class condition means if we keep on walking in the operational divine dynasphere (Potential Subjunctive mood), then (apodosis) we continue to have fellowship (Iterative Present tense) with each other. None of us, of course, are able to walk in the light as Jesus did. None of us are able to live without ever sinning. You are in self-deception if you believe you do not sin; the very fact that you believe such nonsense is a sin! But we have been given a simple procedure for getting back into the light when we have sinned and entered the sphere of darkness. That procedure is the confession of sin to God as we shall see in detail in 1 John 1:9. So if your sins have been confessed, meaning you have kept a short account with God and are current at this very moment, you are in fellowship with the Trinity and with all other Christians who are also in fellowship with Him.

If you are not current in the acknowledgement of your sins, you are not walking in the light and you are not in fellowship with the Trinity or other believers who are in the light. In actuality, you are in darkness and are in fellowship with Satan, as well as other believers who are in a state of unconfessed sin, and the unbelieving world in general. Walking in the light, or residence and function inside the divine dynasphere, is the same thing as being in fellowship. The reciprocal relationship of believers, which is identical with fellowship with the Trinity, is now based on residence and function inside the divine dynasphere rather than the function of our old sin natures. Let’s make sure we understand this with two examples. You have just arrived at church today, or you have punched-in a cassette tape, video, or DVD with good Bible teaching on it. You have made sure that all of your sins have been confessed to God, so you are confident that you are in the light. Everybody else in the resident congregation sitting with you, or every believer on planet earth that is listening to your tape or DVD, is in fellowship with you – because you are all in fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

However, chances are that a lot of believers in the resident or non-resident congregations have not confessed their sins to the Lord and they are therefore not in fellowship with the Trinity or with you. Just because they are sitting in the same building or are listening to the same teaching on tape does not mean you are in fellowship with them. They are in darkness instead of the light; you are in the light instead of darkness. Light and darkness do not have fellowship with each other. The second example is almost a reversal: You have just arrived in church or have turned on a tape or DVD, but you have not been faithful to confess your sins to the Lord. You are in darkness and are out of fellowship with both the Trinity and other believers who have confessed their sins. You can have lunch, socialize, and talk about the Bible all you want with your friends, but you are not having fellowship with them because you are still harboring unconfessed sin. Your refusal to confess your sins has cut you off from those in the light, no matter how pleasant the occasion may seem.

This is key: You must confess your sins to the Lord as often as necessary to make sure you are in the sphere of light. If you are having a rough day and your old sin nature has kicked-into

overdrive, you may have to confess your sins dozens of times in a single day. The longer you wait after each sin, the longer you reside in the sphere of darkness instead of the sphere of light. Here's another practical note: If you attend a church where this spiritual principle (confession of sin) is not taught, understood and practiced by those in the congregation, you are more than likely *never* in fellowship with them. If you have refused to confess your sins on a current basis, you do not have fellowship with those who are walking in the light. If you have confessed your sins, but those around you have not – perhaps because they don't even know that it is crucially important to do so - you do not have fellowship with them. It is important that you keep the confession of your sins current so you are prepared for legitimate fellowship. It is also important that the friends you socialize with have also kept their confession of sins current. If not, the only kind of fellowship that remains is fellowship in the sphere of darkness with Satan, carnal believers and unbelievers. This passage continues with a promise.

If you are current with your confession of sins, and are therefore walking in the light, the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing you (Iterative Present tense) from every sin. The word "blood" does not mean the actual blood of Jesus is poured on your head to cleanse you. It is a representative analogy for the spiritual death of Christ on the cross. Not only was there a positional aspect to the work He did on the cross, there was also an experiential aspect to His work. At the point of regeneration, we were cleansed or purified of all our sins. That was a one-time, positional benefit of His spiritual death for us on the cross. Afterwards, as we live our life on earth as believers, we receive moment-by-moment cleansing and purification from all of our sins IF we are faithful to confess them and walk in the light. There is a temporary, experiential purification process that is also a benefit of the cross. As long as we acknowledge our sins to God, no matter how many there are or how despicable they are, He is faithful to cleanse us from them. Every sin we commit that destroys our fellowship with Christ and our walk in the light is included in "every" sin.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Notice, it does not say if we walk *according* to light, but it says, "If we walk *in* the light." It is *where* you walk, not *how* you walk. It is to walk in the presence of God. (H. Ironside) Legal forgiveness is essential for sonship, to *establish relationship* within the family of God; familial forgiveness is essential *to maintain fellowship*. (A. Custance) The mistake many people make is that they call this "walking in the light" morality. It is not that. Men can be moral and godless. Godliness will produce morality, let there be no doubt about that, but morality will never produce godliness. Living a straight life in order to keep from invalidating our salvation is not godliness and is not walking in the light. (R. Kendall) If we Christians order our behavior within the sphere of the light, John says we have fellowship one with another. (K. Wuest) My goodness. You mean if we are walking in the light as He is in the light, that that is all it takes to be in *fellowship* with each other? No buildings, no tents, no temple? Yes, absolutely correct! The universal priesthood of the believer includes a universal fellowship one with another, if wherever you are at this present time, you are walking in the light. (LWB) When the author speaks of the "blood of Jesus" he is referring to His violent death on the cross, and it is this death which provides purification from sins for those who walk in the light with God. (C. Kruse)

Having fellowship with one another is a sure result of that fellowship with God which is involved in walking in the light ... Another result of walking in the light is that the blood of Jesus, His sacrificial death, cleanses us day by day continually from our frequent sins of frailty ... When once a penitent has by confession avowedly quitted the realm of darkness, he at once begins to move on in light, and towards fuller light. (A. Plummer) The interest of the NT is not in the material blood of Christ, but in His shed blood as the life violently taken from Him. Like the cross, the “blood of Christ” is simply another and even more graphic phrase for the death of Christ in its soteriological significance. (J. Behm, TDNT) The phrase *blood of Jesus* refers to Jesus’ violent, sacrificial death. (A. Stibbs) In general, the blessings that the Scriptures show to be accomplished or achieved by the blood of Jesus are equally said to be accomplished or achieved by the death of Jesus, ie. justification, redemption. (D.A. Carson) The blood of Jesus His Son is not the material blood of Jesus, but His blood in its moral significance and strength. The blood of Jesus denotes the sacrifice of the life of Jesus for us. (W. Jones) There are two other places in the letter where the author refers to the blood of Christ, and these are best understood in terms of His death also. (C. Kruse)

This walking in the light, as He is in the light, is no mere imitation of God, but is God’s eternal Being; not imitation, but coincidence and identity of the very atmosphere of life. (H. Alford) Of far more importance than having fellowship, even with apostles, is having fellowship with the Father. (R. Finlayson) There can only be one sphere of real communion with God – the light itself. Thus John insisted that this is where a Christian will find that communion. It is strange that many commentators have understood the expression “with one another” as a reference to fellowship with other Christians. But this is not what the author is discussing here. The Greek pronoun for “one another” may refer to the two parties (God and the Christian) named in the first part of the statement. John’s point is that if Christians live in the light where God is, then there is mutual fellowship between Himself and them. That is, they have fellowship with them. The light itself is the fundamental reality which they share. Thus true communion with God is living in the sphere where one’s experience is illumined by the truth of what God is. (Z. Hodges) It is clear that the fellowship with God estranges its subjects from the world. The Christian belongs to another sphere and manifests it by his deportment. (A. Pink) The believer who want fellowship with the Lord must maintain an openness to Him and a willingness to be honest in His presence about everything that God shows him. (Z. Hodges)

Does John mean here that we Christians have fellowship with one another, or is it that the Christian and God have fellowship with one another? The theme of the epistle and the immediate context must decide. The theme of First John is “The Saint’s Fellowship with God.” In verse 6, John tells his readers who does not have fellowship with God. In verse 7, he tells them who does have fellowship with God. Those referred to by the pronoun “we” are God and the believer ... A reciprocal pronoun shows reciprocity. Wonder of wonders, not only do we have fellowship with God, but He reciprocates in having fellowship with us! (K. Wuest) Walking in the light we have fellowship, and the blood of Jesus is constantly applied to cleanse us from sin, which is darkness and which interrupts fellowship. (M. Vincent) Walking in the sphere of truth, righteousness, and love, we have fellowship with all those who walk in the same sphere. All who walk in the light are one in their deepest sympathies, in their most steadfast principles, in their most important aims, and in their highest aspirations; they are one in character, in service, and in destiny. (W.

Jones) Walking in the light, the element in which God is, is the test of fellowship with Him. (R. Jamieson) Purification from sin, when unpacked, is virtually equivalent to forgiveness of sins. (C. Kruse)

This cleansing is progressive. He does not write “cleansed,” or “has cleansed,” but is “cleansing us.” The cleansing is not accomplished at once and for ever. It is a continual process. (W. Jones) The blood of Jesus refers to the death of Christ. (R. Finlayson) Unless we realize that we live every moment of every day with an adversary within that is seeking to manifest its basic nature through our flesh, we will not be prepared to turn to God to receive from Him the provision which He has made through the death of Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit for a life of victory and triumph over the flesh, the old man, and sin. (J. Pentecost) It is not legal forgiveness we need now but family forgiveness ... Legal forgiveness is essential for sonship, to *establish relationship* within the family of God; familial forgiveness is essential to *maintain fellowship*. (A. Custance) Our fellowship with God finds expression in fellowship with one another which has already been seen to be essentially the same things as fellowship with God. (R. Orr) In saying, *We have fellowship one with another*, he does not speak simply of men; but he sets God on one side, and us on the other. (J. Calvin) The change of verbs is significant: we *walk*, God *is*, in the light. We move through time; He is in eternity. Our activity involves change; His does not. (A. Plummer)

My friend, across this land today are multitudes of folk who are sitting in churches every Sunday morning but are not hearing the Word of God. As a result, they are sitting there in darkness, hearing some dissertation on economics or politics or the “good life” or an exhortation on doing the best they can. And they are comfortable. Of course, they are comfortable! But if they would get into the light of the Word of God, they would see that they are *sinner*s and that they cannot bring God down to their level ... If you are living in sin, God will not have fellowship with you. If you think otherwise, you are fooling yourself or using a psychological ploy to put up a good front. And many of our psychological hang-ups today center around this very point ... You haven’t lost your salvation, but you have lost your fellowship, and you cannot regain your fellowship with God until you are cleansed ... If you are in the family of God and have sin in your life, God is not going to treat you like the sinner outside of Christ. He is going to treat you like a disobedient child. He will take you to the woodshed for punishment. (J. McGee) It is not a command for the Christian to *become* light, or what God alone is: it is rather that there may be an immediate adjustment to the light which God has shed into the life by the Spirit. He has required of us *confession*. When He convinces us of sin, or is grieved by sin, that sin is to be dealt with *at once*. Divine forgiveness is never an act of leniency. (L. Chafer)

What a wonderful picture (we were told in an article in Christianity Today) of how the blood of Jesus Christ purifies us from every sin. In fact, it is nothing of the kind. Worse, it is irresponsibly mystical and theologically misleading. The phrase *the blood of Jesus* refers to Jesus’ violent, sacrificial death. In general, the blessings that the Scriptures show to be accomplished or achieved by the blood of Jesus are equally said to be accomplished or achieved by the death of Jesus (e.g., justification, redemption). If John tells us that the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ purifies us from every sin, he is informing us that our hope for continued cleansing and forgiveness rests not on protestations of our goodness while our life is a sham, but on continual

walking in the light and on continued reliance on Christ's finished work on the cross. (D. Carson) It is instructive to note how theological doctrine, moral conduct, and fellowship are interlocking rather than divided. (G. Clark) The blood of Christ cleanses, not has cleansed or shall cleanse. This denotes a continued act. There is a perpetual pleading of it for us, a continual flowing of it to us. It is a fountain set open for sin. There is a perpetual stream of virtue from this blood, as there is of corruption from our nature. It was shed but once, but it is applied often, and the virtue of it is as durable as the person whose blood it is. (A. Pink)

No amount of attractive gifts, or of successful public ministry, or of outward religious correctness, or of symmetrical culture, or of giant intellect, or of wealth and generosity, or of social superiority and prestige, can be a make-do for sanctification. It is only when we are sanctified that we "walk in the light as He is in the light." Holiness, in its experiential reality, is not a state of self-control or sin-control which we somehow *achieve* by strenuous struggle of the self with itself, but a supernatural *renewal* of mind and heart, of motive and inclination, inwrought by the Holy Spirit ... The Spirit's deepest work is in the *character*, not in the emotions. (J. Baxter) John's emphasis on sin, confession and forgiveness may be due to the Gnostic denial of sin and its consequences. They believed in a divine spark, not the total depravity of man. (LWB) The entire message of mainstream Christian atonement theology is meaningless to the Gnostic. The world was not created perfect, its present state is not the result of a fall, and the human race did not incur an original sin that is passed on to all men and women. Consequently there is no need for God's son to be sacrificed in order to pacify his wrathful Father and thereby save humanity. (S. Hoeller) The word "koinonia," fellowship, means more than friendly, social relations. Partnership is the primary idea conveyed by the word. It refers to two parties who possess and partake of something in common. (R. Lightner)

1 John 1:7 **but** (contrast conj.) **if** (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe we are, maybe we aren't") **we keep on walking** (περιπατέω, PAsubj.1P, Iterative, Potential) **in the sphere of light** (Loc. Sph.; living inside the operational divine dynasphere), **as** (comparative adv.) **He Himself** (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) **was** (εἶμι, PAI3S, Gnostic; always) **in the sphere of light** (Loc. Sph.; living inside the prototype divine dynasphere), **we** (apodosis) **keep on having** (ἔχω, PAI1P, Iterative) **fellowship** (Acc. Adv.; being in the sphere of light is the same thing as being in fellowship) **with each other** (Gen. Rel.; our reciprocal relationship is now based on residence and function inside the divine dynasphere rather than the function of our old sin natures; basic and advanced impersonal love), **and** (continuative conj.) **the blood** (Subj. Nom.; representative analogy for the spiritual death of Christ on the Cross) **of Jesus** (Poss. Gen.; the basis for rebound) **His** (Gen. Rel.; the Father's) **Son** (Gen. Rel.) **keeps on cleansing** (καθαρίζω, PAI3S, Iterative & Customary; temporary purification) **us** (Acc. Adv.; those who acknowledge their sins and are walking in the light) **from every** (Gen. Spec.) **sin** (Abl. Separation; not "the sin" imputed from Adam,

but “every sin” we commit that destroys our walk in the light, our fellowship with Christ and therefore each other).

^{BGT} **1 John 1:7** ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ’ ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας.

^{VUL} **1 John 1:7** si autem in luce ambulemus sicut et ipse est in luce societatem habemus ad invicem et sanguis Iesu Filii eius mundat nos ab omni peccato

LWB 1 John 1:8 If we contend that we do not have a sin nature [perfectionism and its eradication of sin heresy: the conclusion of self-righteous, arrogant ascetics], we are deceiving [deluding] ourselves and the Truth [hamartiology: the doctrine of sin] is not residing in us [darkness: blackout of the soul].

^{KW} **1 John 1:8** If we say that [indwelling] sin we are not having, ourselves we are leading astray [nobody else], and the truth is not in us.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Years ago I met some people from a church in Waco, TX who thought they had attained *perfection*. Not only did they not understand the imputation of Adam’s sin, they had such an incomplete understanding of sin itself that they believed they no longer sinned in their daily life. Over the course of a weekend, I found them to be completely locked-into moral degeneracy. This was nothing new. There were Gnostic-leaning believers in John’s day who claimed they did not have an old sin nature (Gnostic Present tense) and no longer sinned. These self-righteous, arrogant ascetics believed in a heresy called the *eradication of sin* heresy, also known in our day as *Wesleyan perfectionism*. The labyrinth of sin created and made available to us in Satan’s cosmic system is so elaborate, that one has to redefine sin to a mere handful of vices to believe such nonsense. John says they are deluding themselves (Progressive Present tense) and the Truth of sin (hamartiology) is not in them (Static Present tense).

John phrases this as a hypothetical case (3rd class condition) meaning he knows there are real cases of this in his non-resident congregations, but he also knows it has been rejected as heresy by others (Potential Subjunctive mood). Each believer has the volition to believe in this heresy or to reject it. The *old sin nature* is the genetic home of Adam’s original sin. Unless you came from outer space, you have original sin in your genetic structure. Denying it is there is merely a form of self-deception. If you believe you have eradicated the old sin nature from your genetic structure, and now no longer commit sin of any kind, you are deluding yourself (Latin: seducing). You need a thorough study of hamartiology, especially the section on *total depravity*. Notice two things: first, John says this self-deception is progressive, which means once you enter this slippery slope you will dig yourself in so deep that other cardinal doctrines of the faith will soon be rejected as well. Self-denial becomes self-justification which becomes self-deception.

He also adds the word “ourselves.” We may be so foolish as to believe we no longer sin, but those around us know better. The only person you are fooling is yourself. The true doctrine of sin is not residing in your mind. Your self-deception has now become blackout of the soul. In this state, it is a miracle if any Bible doctrine penetrates the wall of sin you are engulfed in. You think you are walking *in the light*, but in reality you are walking *in darkness*. You think you have conquered or eradicated the old sin nature, but it has a stranglehold on you. You are merely oblivious to how despicable your thoughts, words and deeds are when held to the divine standard of God’s Word. The pastor of the church I mentioned above eventually resigned and announced publicly that he was a homosexual. I’m sure this came as a great surprise to his wife and children. Can you imagine the mental, verbal and overt sins this man must have committed on a continual basis to hide this activity from his family, friends and congregation?

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Wesleyan theology is therefore sin because it is not truth. (G. Clark) Here is the second false claim in the present series. If people claim – perhaps on the ground of their possession of the Spirit – to have got beyond good and evil, to have reached a stage of spiritual development where moral principles are no longer relevant, they are self-deceived. (F. Bruce) We are now told what walking in the light involves: consciousness and confession of sin, accepting propitiation of Jesus Christ the Righteous, and obedience. (A. Plummer) There may be persons whose view of the exalted claims of God’s holy law is so deficient, and whose estimate of their own character and conduct is so exaggerated, that they think and assert that they have no sin. (W. Jones) Man is commonly arrogant, greedy, self-centered, superficial, cowardly, petty, devious, self-righteous, cruel, violent. Only by a concerted effort of the will can he even partly control his sin nature. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) To confess our need of cleansing from *present sin* is essential to walking in the light. (R. Jamieson) Many a smiling face conceals a heavy heart. (A. Pink) He is talking about sanctification, which follows regeneration and is the progressive growth in holiness of one who has become God’s child. (J. Boice)

If Christians understand the truth that God’s Word teaches about the depravity of the human heart, they know that just because they are not *conscious* of failure does not mean that they are free from it. If the truth is “in” them as a controlling, motivating influence, this kind of self-deception will not take place. (Z. Hodges) Here we have the heresy of the eradication of the totally depraved nature during the earthly life of the Christian. The heresy of perfectionism and of the eradication of the evil nature is the present day form of this problem of the indwelling sinful nature. (K. Wuest) Because the spiritual child (indeed, every believer) is prone to leaving his palace, he must quickly learn how to reenter. He exits the divine dynasphere by committing sin; he reenters by naming that sin to God. I call this divine provision the rebound technique, because it causes the believer to bounce back after failure, restoring his fellowship with God, avoiding the trap of a guilt complex. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Those known as “sinless perfectionists” are not the only ones to say they have not sinned, for this preposterous and wicked assertion is made by several other classes. It is the implicit if not the explicit avowal of those Satan-blinded people who call themselves “Christian Scientists,” for they emphatically deny that there is any such thing as sin, declaring it to be a delusion of mortal minds: and thus they are neither Christians nor scientists. (A. Pink)

For any such to say that he has no sin nature means that person is self-deceived and the truth is not in him. This passage is evidently intended for “correction” to those Christians who are claiming to be free from the sin nature and who may have made themselves believe that they are free. A self-satisfied mind is not necessarily the mind of God. (L. Chafer) We do not need to feel remorse, because a guilt complex is itself a mental attitude sin. God does not require that we sin as part of recovering fellowship! Nor does He require that we wait until we experience some kind of emotion; emotion is never a criterion in the spiritual life. Furthermore, we cannot promise God that we will never sin again; a promise is only as good as the person who makes it – in our case, no good! When the particular sin is our area of weakness, promises become ludicrous. We are helpless to do anything but accept grace ... A believer can be carnal as a mature believer or a reversionist, but in reversionism he persists in carnality, produces human good, is influenced by evil, and becomes entangled in Satan’s cosmic system. Every believer sins, but not every believer is a reversionist or under the influence of evil. Only when his failure to rebound becomes a pattern and the intake of doctrine is neglected, does the negative volition of the believer culminate in reversionism and conform to Satan’s policies. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Christians with unconfessed sins flee, seeking shelter from Scriptural light ... When one accustoms himself to sinning, he becomes unaware of it. (W. Best) This some of the Gnostics held, since matter was evil and the soul was not contaminated by the sinful flesh, a thin delusion with which so-called christian scientists delude themselves today. (A.T. Robertson) There is nothing more absurd than to say that, because we are justified before God and hence are “new men in Christ,” we are regarded in our daily walk with the Lord as being without sin. (R.T. Kendall) Our natures are poisoned, the taint is in our blood. Grace is the medicine, but recovery is a protracted process. It is begun the moment we submit ourselves to Christ, but all our lives we continue under treatment. (W. Nicole) The more our thoughts are formed by the Word, the more do we discover how full of corruption we are; the closer we walk with God, the more light we have, and the more are the hidden (unsuspected) things of darkness within discovered to our horrified gaze. (A.W. Pink) We’re all *slime dogs*, doing our best to be continually filled with the Spirit (walking in the light) and growing in grace (relaxed mental attitude) and knowledge (Bible doctrine) in Him. (LWB) Again, John presents a hypothetical situation just as he did in verse 6. And again, as in verse 6, he is talking about believers. We know this because he uses the first person pronouns *we* and *us*. Those outside of Christ are not in view here. (R. Lightner)

We ought to get it clearly in mind, once for all, that sanctification is not sinless perfection; it is not a cliquish spiritual superiority complex; it is not some peculiar slant or hyper-emphasis. It is a voluntary, practical set-apartness to Christ ... There are *two* sides to it – a negative and a positive. We are to be set apart *from* sin, and set apart *to* Christ. These two aspects – the “from” and the “to” must always go together ... Although the human will can never rid the human self of heredity, innate proclivities to sin, there is a whole area over which the will has control – choices, habits, friendships, ways of thinking, speaking, behaving; and throughout this whole region of our self-consciousness there must be a complete ejection of all known wrong, a continuing, adamant refusal of compromise, a daily walking according to the written Word, daily communing with God in prayer, and daily witnessing for Christ as discretion indicates. (J. Baxter) The Scriptures clearly teach that believers sin. Some theologians, however, teach that at

the time of God's second work of grace in a saved person's life, the sin nature is eradicated. After this experience, which is sometimes referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the believer no longer commits sins of commission but is not entirely free of sins of omission. Such teaching is not in harmony with the teaching of Scripture. (R. Lightner)

There is no such thing as a *perfect person*, with the sole exception of our Lord Jesus Christ. But there are arrogant people out there who think some of us should be perfect persons. Nothing makes them happy; everybody fails to live up to their unrealistic expectations. These believers are locked-into *iconoclastic arrogance*, another gate in Satan's cosmic system. (LWB) From Thieme's 1 John tape series, a person with iconoclastic arrogance: "creates an idol of perfection in others, an image of greatness. She demands attention, and once that attention is lacking, it discovers and seeks for flaws in the idol. And there is no such thing as a perfect person, so once you are frustrated from preoccupation with self, you run to this idol but this idol doesn't respond. Idols you create can't respond, and so you scrutinize this person until you find their feet of clay. Sooner or later you will find them if you are really interested. And of course the feet of clay emerge, illusion becomes disillusion, enchantment becomes disenchantment, and the arrogant creator of the idol seeks to destroy the idol and their unhappiness becomes permanent. They will never get out of the arrogance complex except to interlock with the hatred complex in the religious gate of self-righteousness and morality arrogance, resulting in legalism ... The woman with *demand syndrome*, another gate in Satan's cosmic system, almost always has iconoclastic arrogance. She meets a man who showers her with affection, attention and flattery, feeding her arrogance, and she places this man upon a pedestal and worships him because he is so magnificent – meaning someone has come along who agrees with her that she is wonderful and deserves praise and attention.

Then they end up married and the honeymoon is over. She discovers he has faults. He discovers she has faults. His attention to her incessant needs wanes. Her personal love for him begins to turn to personal hatred. She has seen his "feet of clay," she is disillusioned and disenchanted. She has created this idol out of him when her demands were being met and now when his attention is taken up by other duties in life, her idol must be smashed. Her bonified person of love becomes her enemy, a recipient of hatred and cruelty, implacability, bitterness and revenge tactics. Her idol of perfection and image of greatness has flaws and therefore is unable to respond to her every time she runs to him for attention. This frustrated, demand syndrome woman, having destroyed her idol she married while in iconoclastic arrogance, seeks elsewhere for happiness. They often end up having a martyr complex, blaming all their problems on their ex-husband as a patsy, hoping to gain sympathy and affection from others around them. But with the martyr complex comes the pall of gloom previously mentioned. Their sole existence is to be vindictive and to get revenge on the person who is now hated. She becomes a ruthless, pitiless monster who lives unrelenting in the pursuit of vengeance. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 1:8 **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe we do, maybe we don't") **we contend** (λέγω, AASubj.1P, Gnomic, Potential; maintain, assert) **that** (conj.) **we do not** (neg. particle) **have** (ἔχω, PAI1P, Gnomic) **a sin nature** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Perfectionism and its' "eradication of sin" heresy: the

conclusion of self-righteous, arrogant, ascetics; the old sin nature is the "genetic home" of Adam's original sin), we (apodosis) are deceiving (πλανᾶω, PAI1P, Progressive; seducing, deluding) ourselves (Acc. Disadv.) and (continuative) the Truth (Subj. Nom.; the doctrine of sin or hamartiology) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static) not (neg. particle) residing in us (Loc. Sph.; result: darkness, or blackout of the soul).

^{BGT} **1 John 1:8** εἰάν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

^{VUL} **1 John 1:8** si dixerimus quoniam peccatum non habemus ipsi nos seducimus et veritas in nobis non est

LWB 1 John 1:9 If we acknowledge [cite, name] our sins [mental, verbal or overt], He [God the Father through our only intermediary, Jesus Christ] is faithful [trustworthy] and just [integrity] so that He forgives [cancels] our sins and cleanses us [temporary purification] from every category of unrighteousness [unknown sins, human good and evil].

^{KW} **1 John 1:9** If we continue to confess our sins, faithful is He and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from every unrighteousness.

^{KJV} **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

This is the most important passage in Scripture with regard to your Christian walk. It is absolutely impossible to grow spiritually without it. Whether you walk *in the light* or *in darkness* is up to you. If you want to walk in the light, you must use this technique for restoring fellowship between you and God every time you sin. Fellowship demands confession of sin. But John poses this issue as a 3rd class conditional clause with a Potential Subjunctive mood; that means the decision is up to you. Maybe you will acknowledge your sins to God on a regular basis and maybe you won't. As a Christian, the assumption is that you want to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is expressed by the Customary Present tense; this is a habit of all those who want to walk in the light. You need to cite, acknowledge, or name your sins to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ in silent prayer. This should be done whether your sin is mental, verbal or overt. There is no intermediary between you and the Father except for Jesus Christ. The papal system of intermediaries is a damnable heresy.

Immediately after citing our sins, God the Father is faithful and just (Descriptive Present tense) to forgive our sins. The Gnostic Aorist tense means He never, ever fails to forgive us after we have done our part by confession. He cancels the sins we have cited as well as any other sins we are not even aware that we have done, i.e., unknown sins. He also cleanses us from all categories of unrighteousness (Gnostic Aorist tense). This forgiveness and cleansing happens every single time we cite our sins, because His integrity is on the line. Also, within the domain of

“unrighteousness” is all the human good and evil we have done (Latin: iniquity) since the last time we acknowledged our sins to Him. Of course, this is temporal purification, since we were initially purified at the moment of the new birth. And since we haven’t received our resurrection bodies yet, we obviously haven’t been eternally purified. The old sin nature still resides in the cell structure of our human body. It constantly battles with us, but we have a way out of its grip by confession. This confession of sins is sometimes called the *rebound technique*.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

If we have not attained sinless perfection, what is to be done about our daily sins? We must confess. In our prayer we must acknowledge what wrongs we have done, or thought ... This confession must be addressed to God. Verse 9 will make this clearer. It is not addressed to a priest in a cubicle. (G. Clark) Here is the antidote to the second false claim: those who deny their sin will feel no need of recourse to the cleansing power of Christ; those who, conscious of their sins, confess them and have in Christ a Savior from whom forgiveness and cleansing from every sinful act may be freely received – not because He is indulgent and easy-going, but because He is “faithful and righteous.” (F. Bruce) The apostle means more than a vague, general confession of sin. It is to be feared that many join in the “general confession” in church every Sunday without any true realization of their personal guiltiness, and whose confession, consequently, cannot be acceptable to God. Our confession must be personal and particular. (W. Jones) Only when the believer is restored to fellowship, filled with the Spirit, can the Spirit again provide the supernatural dynamics for executing the Christian way of life. Thus the reason the Spirit fills us is to supercede human ability and human good; He supplies the divine power and ability necessary for us to attain every objective in the Christian life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The constant attitude of the saint toward sin should be one of a contrite heart, ever eager to have any sin in the life discovered for him by the Holy Spirit, and ever eager to confess it and put it out of the life by the power of that same Holy Spirit. (K. Wuest) Sin in the life of the believer breaks fellowship with God. This in turn brings unrest, disturbance of soul, and loss of assurance of salvation. At such times the child of God must avail himself of the truth of 1 John 1:9 so that fellowship may be restored ... The word translated “confess” in 1 John 1:9 means to agree with. Confession involves acknowledging to God that He and His law have been violated ... We are to speak specific sins. This is indicated by the plural “sins.” We are to make no excuses when we seek forgiveness for our sin. We are not to beg and plead with God for forgiveness. If we confess, He will forgive ... There is no other cure for backsliding. Feeling sorry for sin is not enough. Trying to do better will not suffice. The simple remedy for the believer’s sin is to acknowledge it immediately before God, to see it as He sees it. This brings the forgiveness and cleansing of God. (R. Lightner) Unless we keep our confession of sins up to date, we leave ourselves vulnerable to the attacks of the adversary - because we are not maintaining the equipment that has been provided for those who have been made righteous in Jesus Christ. (J. Pentecost)

It is easy to say, “I am a sinner;” but if confession is to have value it must state the definite acts of sin ... To forgive refers to freeing us from the penalties of sin, justification; to cleanse is freeing us from its contamination, sanctification. (A. Plummer) As believer-priests we represent

ourselves before God. We do not need to confess our sins to a member of the clergy; we confess them immediately, silently, privately, directly to God. Nor do we need anyone to pray on our behalf. We are commanded to come boldly before the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). And we do not require a special category of priests to perform rituals for us. The rituals of the Levitical priesthood were fulfilled by Christ at the Cross and have been superseded as teaching aids by the completion of the canon of Scripture. The Church Age is the age of thought, not ritual ... Rebound does not depend on you. That is why it works every time, and that is why, under the principle of grace, God receives all the credit. Your emotions, guilt, worry, and remorse are intrusions that stand in the way of your recovery and continued spiritual advance. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) There is a remedy – forgiveness and cleansing in the blood of Jesus; and there is a way of obtaining it – confession ... Woe to that soul which presumes to think that he can approach God in any other way than as a sinner asking mercy. (W. Nicole)

Sin has temporal consequences towards God, toward self, and toward other people. In relation to God, the sin caused by negative volition removes the believer from temporal fellowship with Him in the palace of the divine dynasphere. When we rebound, the sin is always forgiven and we are restored to fellowship with God. Admitting, naming, citing our sins privately to the Father is our responsibility toward God, which is our first obligation after committing a sin. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Each Christian is responsible to acknowledge whatever the light makes him aware of, and when he does so, a complete and perfect cleansing is granted him. There is thus no need to agonize over sins of which one is unaware ... In modern times some have occasionally denied that a Christian needs to confess his sins and ask forgiveness. It is claimed that a believer already has forgiveness in Christ (Eph. 1:7). But this point of view confuses the perfect position which a Christian has in God's Son with his needs as a failing individual on earth ... A Christian who never asks his heavenly Father for forgiveness for his sins can hardly have much sensitivity to the ways in which he grieves his Father ... The teaching that a Christian should not ask God for daily forgiveness is an aberration ... and the effort to turn it into a soteriological affirmation is misguided ... Whenever a believer makes confession – honestly acknowledging what he knows to be wrong – whatever other sin there may be in his life is totally cleansed away. Nothing is left uncleansed. (Z. Hodges)

The mechanics of recovery from sin are fourfold: (1) Name the sin to immediately receive complete divine forgiveness and to reestablish the absolute status of spirituality, the control of your soul by the Holy Spirit; (2) isolate the sin to stop any bitterness (Heb. 12:15); (3) forget the sin so as not to reclaim guilt (Phil. 3:13); (4) keep moving in the spiritual life (Phil. 3:14). Remorse is not a prerequisite for this recovery technique. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) We are not forgiven our sins because we *ask* to be forgiven. It is when we *confess* our sins that we are forgiven. It will not do to substitute prayer for confession, though prayer may be the means of expressing a true sorrow for sin. Multitudes are praying for forgiveness who have made no confession of their sin. There is no Scripture for the child of God under grace which justifies such a substitution. (L. Chafer) Before you begin your Bible study, be sure that, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have named your known sins privately to God. You will then be in fellowship with God, under the control of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and ready to learn doctrine from the Word of God ... The filling of the Holy Spirit empowers spiritual IQ and energizes GAP for the reception,

retention, and recall of Bible doctrine. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Forensic forgiveness is the subject of Col. 2:13, but familial forgiveness is in view in I John 1:9. (J. Dillow)

Personal sins are an issue in our lives after salvation because they get us out of fellowship with God and temporarily cut off the filling of the Spirit. When there is no filling of the Spirit, there can be no GAP. With no GAP, no spiritual momentum. God has graciously designed the rebound technique to neutralize sin as a factor even in our daily lives! The person who denounces rebound as a license to sin does so out of ignorance. When rebound is ignored, or buried under legalism, our status of carnality soon deteriorates into reversionism and evil ... Although sin always accompanies evil, sin by itself does not tear down what doctrine has built up in the soul of the believer. Since sin was judged at the cross, the problem of carnality is quickly solved by the rebound technique. It is persistent carnality that becomes reversionism and generates the influence of evil – the thinking that can totally stifle our effectiveness as believers ... Under the absolute concept of spirituality, a believer in any stage of growth may be filled with the Spirit through the application of 1 John 1:9. The new believer is only intermittently controlled by the Spirit and shows little evidence of growth or production of divine good. As he matures, he eventually achieves stability in his soul – a *balance of residency* in which the filling of the Spirit and divine viewpoint complement each other. A proportionate production of divine good will then be manifested in all areas of his Christian experience. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Experiential sanctification has both absolute and progressive aspects. The filling of the Spirit is an *absolute* status. At any given time, the believer is either 100% filled with the Spirit or he is not filled with the Spirit at all. Either he is in fellowship or he is out of fellowship. If he has confessed his sins to God, the believer is 100% in fellowship, inside the divine dynasphere, but when he sins, and as long as he does not confess to God, he is entirely out of fellowship, outside the divine dynasphere. Outside the divine dynasphere, he “grieves” (Cosmic I) or “quenches” (Cosmic II) the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30, I Thess. 5:19) and lives in Satan’s cosmic system. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The putting away of the believer’s sin upon confession is a forgiveness granted by the Father and a restoration to the fellowship that was broken by that sin. When the saint confesses immediately after the commission of that sin, fellowship is not broken except for that time in which the sin was committed. (K. Wuest) There are two kinds of forgiveness in the New Testament. One pertains to our eternal salvation (justification by faith), the other to our temporal fellowship with the Father. Just as our children may sin within our family, the believer may sin within God’s family. Our child is always our child, but until he confesses, our fellowship is not good. In God’s family the same principle applies. There is a forgiveness for salvation and a forgiveness for restoration ... The forgiveness related to restoration of fellowship is parallel in thought with the cleansing of the feet of the already bathed, regenerate man. (J. Dillow)

By acknowledging our sins privately to God, we restore the filling of the Spirit and once again reside in the sphere of divine power. All Biblical mandates to recover from sin and resume our fellowship with God pertain to gate one of the divine dynasphere. How you feel about your sins is not an issue. There is no reference to your feelings in the rebound promises. Emotion is never a criterion of spiritual status. What counts is God’s attitude toward you sins. Your emotion adds nothing, and a guilt complex is just another sin. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The fact that Christ has paid the penalty for the believer’s sin, forensically, forever, in no way implies that He automatically

grants forgiveness for fellowship within the family irrespective of our behavior. We say “forgiveness for fellowship within the family” because, as discussed elsewhere, the Bible speaks of two kinds of forgiveness: eternal and temporal. The sacrifice of Christ gives sacrificial protection from the former on the basis of faith and the permanent gift of regeneration and justification. But it does not give sacrificial protection to unconfessed temporal sin subsequent to our justification. Our eternal forgiveness depends upon Him, but our temporal forgiveness depends upon us. Unconfessed sin relates not to forensic forgiveness, but to familial forgiveness. Any sin is a barrier to fellowship, but does not endanger our eternal relationship. (J. Dillow)

With regard to sin, Scripture affirms that the child of God under grace shall not come under judgment (John 3:18, 5:24). Our sin, past, present, and future, has been born by a perfect Substitute, and we are therefore forever placed beyond condemnation (Col. 2:10), accepted as perfect in Christ (I Cor. 1:30, Eph. 1:6, Col. 2:10, Heb. 10:14), and loved as Christ is loved (John 17:23). The perplexing thing is that the Scriptures affirm in many other passages that God **does** judge us when we become carnal and **does** remember our sin (John 13:8, I John 1:9). If the Christian does not confess, he is not forgiven. This certainly appears to be a penalty for willful sin. (J. Dillow) One type of forgiveness refers to our *standing* or *position* in Christ, the other to our *state* or *experience* with Christ. (LWB) A bathed, regenerate person sometimes needs washing (John 13:8-10). In fact, if he does not go through this washing, he has no part with Christ. To wash (*nipto*) means “to wash in part”, but to bathe (*louo*) means “to wash all over”. The former refers to cleansing from daily sin by confession (I John 1:9), whereas the latter refers to regeneration. Christ teaches here that, if a person who has been “bathed” refuses “daily washing”, he will have no part with Him. This is what is meant by a carnal Christian. (J. Dillow)

This, of course, does not mean that a person who commits one of these sins will not enter heaven. It does mean that, if he commits such a sin and persists in it without confessing and receiving cleansing, he will lose his right to rule with Christ. Those walking in such a state, without their sin confessed, face eternal consequences if their Lord should suddenly appear and find them unprepared. They will truly be ashamed “before Him at His coming”, I John 2:28. (J. Dillow) “Daily forgiveness of those who are within the family of God is distinguished from the judicial and positional forgiveness which was applied forensically to all of a person’s sins the moment he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.” (S. Hoyt) There is nothing more distressing for one who has walked with God than to have a spiritual relapse ... There is no relief for him, no ease for his conscience, no joy in the Lord, no delight in His Word, no liberty in prayer, until he unburdens his heart unto Him by free and frank confession ... Confession is not optional but obligatory, a necessary thing. Nowhere is there a promise of forgiveness unless acknowledgment of sin is made ... Failure at this point is a bar to our advancement ... Confession of sin is both the consequent and the condition of fellowship with God, as also is walking in the light ... It is to be done daily. Keep short accounts with God and suffer no cloud to remain between your heart and Him. (A. Pink)

The best way to have God deal with our sin is in many cases through confession and the surgery of His Word. It is the mildest form of chastening that there is - just letting His Word do its work! (R.T. Kendall) He portrays authentic Christian living as involving honest and ongoing acknowledgement of one’s sins ... When the metaphor of defilement is unpacked, it also denotes

the removal of the impediment to fellowship with God through forgiveness of sins. (C. Kruse) The past grace of the atonement will have to be appropriated repeatedly by future confession. And that is assured only by future grace. (J. Piper) Gnostics believed in a religion of self-redemption, not of redemption by another ... Christ was made into a strictly mythological being ... He was not born of the virgin, but rather was the son of Joseph and Mary, just like all other men ... which means they were supremely indifferent to this present world ... and because a divine kernel is present in all man, there is no need to deal with sin in the life as a Christian understands it ... Gnosis followed the Church like a shadow; the Church could never overcome it, its influence had gone too deep ... A series of medieval heretical movements saw to it that this challenge did not cease throughout the Middle Ages, but made its appearance in a new historical context ... and this *from within the Church itself*. (K. Rudolph)

Since John makes it clear by the description of his readers as “children,” “little children,” and “beloved,” application of verse 9 to nonbelievers as a means of salvation is totally without basis in fact. Just as people are responsible to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, so are they charged with the responsibility to agree with God concerning daily sin. When this is done, the Father’s provision for daily cleansing through the gift of His Son is appropriated and is effective ... Feeling guilty is not confession; nor is feeling sorry for sin. These emotions may accompany confession, but they do not define it. Children of God are called upon to agree with God’s viewpoint of their sin. This means that however big or small the sin may be, it is to be viewed as a horrible offense against the very character of God ... Positionally and permanently the child of God is forgiven because of Christ’s substitution for him or her. Although all believers, while here on earth, have the forgiven position and are seated in the heavenlies in Christ, they still need daily forgiveness of sins. (R. Lightner)

1 John 1:9 **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe we will, maybe we won’t”) **we acknowledge** (ὁμολογέω, PASubj.1P, Customary, Potential; keep on citing, naming, confessing) **our** (Poss. Gen.) **sins** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; rebound, all categories: mental, verbal, overt), **He** (God the Father through our only intermediary, Jesus Christ; the singular rules out any popes or their minions) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **faithful** (Pred. Nom.; trustworthy) **and** (connective conj.) **just** (Pred. Nom.; honesty, integrity) **so that** (Contemplated Result) **He** (God the Father - no popes) **forgives** (ἀφίημι, AASubj.3S, Culminative & Gnostic, Relative & Result; pardons, cancels) **our** (Poss. Gen.) **sins** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **and** (continuative conj.) **cleanses** (καθαρίζω, AASubj.3S, Culminative & Gnostic, Relative & Result; temporal purification) **us** (Acc. Adv.) **from every category of** (Gen. Spec.; all types) **unrighteousness** (Abl. Separation; unknown sins, human good, & evil).

^{BGT} **1 John 1:9** ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, πιστός ἐστὶν καὶ δίκαιος, ἵνα ἀφῆ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ καθάρσιν ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας.

^{VUL} **1 John 1:9** si confiteamur peccata nostra fidelis est et iustus ut remittat nobis peccata et emundet nos ab omni iniquitate

LWB 1 John 1:10 If we contend [assert] that we have not sinned [claiming sinless perfection], we [deluded believers in the cosmic system] keep on making Him a liar [fighting God in self-righteous arrogance] and His Word [especially hamartiology] is not in us [fighting self with negative volition towards doctrine].

^{KW} **1 John 1:10** If we say that we have not sinned and are now in a state where we do not sin, a liar we are making Him, and His word is not in us.

^{KJV} **1 John 1:10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the Gnostic-leaning believers in John's non-resident congregations were so deluded that they claimed sinless perfection. These deluded believers were completely locked into Satan's cosmic system. John addressed them indirectly with another 3rd class conditional clause, one of the traditional ways of posing a hypothetical situation where he knew there were candidates on both sides of the equation. If they maintained (Potential Subjunctive mood) that they had not sinned (Intensive Perfect tense) in the past and were still living free from sin, their very claim made God a liar. God's Word says we are all dead in trespasses and sins. He didn't leave the door open to any exceptions. Even the believer in ultra-supergrace status still sins on occasion. These self-deceived believers maintained in the face of contrary evidence, that they had not succumbed to temptation, had not exited the divine dynasphere, and therefore had acquired the "goodness" of man. Not only were they deluded, but their assertions against God's declaration of their actual sinful condition were futile.

The use of the Iterative Present tense means every time they claimed to be sinless, they were calling God a liar. They didn't do it once, but over and over again. This fact alone means they were locked in Cosmic 2, one of Satan's two cosmic dynaspheres. Fighting God and the truth of His Word is part of the hatred complex of sins. John also says His Word is not in them. The primary reference is to the doctrine of sin (hamartiology), while the secondary reference is to all other Bible truths. In order to enter Cosmic 2, they first had to enter Cosmic 1. Cosmic 1 is the arrogance complex of sins. In this cosmic dynasphere, believers are fighting against themselves by negative volition towards doctrine. Whenever they come across something in the Bible they don't like, they disregard it or explain it away. Eventually they become totally disinterested in the Word altogether. They have their own way, their own program, and their own "special" interpretation of all those passages they don't like. Because they operated in both cosmic dynaspheres, they lived the greater part of their Christian lives in the sphere of darkness.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Notice the final phrase: "His word is not in us." That emphasis is needed today because so much of so-called Christianity is nondoctrinal or antidoctrinal. Theology is in ill repute. But theo-logy is the *Word of God*. (G. Clark) The third false claim is similar to the second but not identical

with it. To assert that one has never sinned is to contradict the consistent witness of divine revelation and human experience. (F. Bruce) As long as any believer lives in his mortal body, in which the sin nature resides, he will continue to sin. As he matures spiritually, he will sin less frequently and perhaps will commit different categories of sin, but periodically he will succumb to temptation and enter the cosmic system ... If the believer remains in the cosmic system, his thinking loses touch with the reality of God's protocol plan. Under prolonged cosmic influence, his arrogance becomes antagonism toward God; he multiplies his own unhappiness and incurs divine discipline ... Instead of His Word circulating in our stream of consciousness, we circulate categories of anthropocentric academic speculation in our stream of consciousness, i.e. psychology, philosophy, sociology. (R.T. Thieme, Jr.)

When we become Christians, the Scriptures affirm that we enter into two different relationships with Christ. The first, Paul called being "in Christ." This relationship is eternal and unchanging. It depends upon God alone and is received *by grace* through faith on the basis of the justifying righteousness of Christ. We are born into His family and are the eternal objects of unconditional love. The second relationship is often called "Christ in us," and it refers not to our eternal relationship, but to our temporal fellowship. This relationship with Christ is changeable and depends upon our responses in faith to His love and grace. Within this relationship God requires performance in order to secure His approval and His future inheritance. As any father would, He disciplines His children. If our son disobeys us, we still love him, and he will always be our son. But our fellowship is broken until he confesses. Similarly, our fellowship with God is hampered and His blessing is withdrawn from the believer who refuses to respond to His grace displayed in justification. (J. Dillow) God has one perfect system for believers to operate in, the divine dynasphere. Not to be out-done, Satan developed two systems for believers to operate in, the arrogance complex and the hatred complex of sins. (LWB)

Throughout our lives we will continue to use our volition to commit personal sins ... We cannot make wrong decisions with impugnty. The negative volition that yields to temptation and places us under the sin nature cuts off our temporal *fellowship* with God ... Because the Christian retains his old sin nature throughout his mortal life on earth, his contribution to the plan of God would only corrupt the plan. The believer cannot execute God's protocol plan through human ability, human dynamics, human personality, human intelligence, human talent, or human works. God allows no weak links in the chain. He guards the integrity of His plan. This is grace. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Spirituality brings sin into check, closing the gap between sin and repentance. The less spiritual I am, the longer it will take to confess "I was wrong." The more spiritual I am, the less time it will take to admit "I was wrong." When we reach the stage of perceiving our sin in seconds, we are less prone to sin at all. John calls this "abiding in Christ." Spirituality leads people to call sin sin and it seeks to close the gap in time between the occasion of sin and true repentance. (R. Kendall)

1 John 1:10 **if** (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe we do, maybe we don't") **we contend** (λέγω, AASubj.1P, Constative, Potential; assert, maintain) **that** (conj.) **we have not** (neg. particle; claiming sinless perfection) **sinned** (ἁμαρτάνω, Perf.AI1P, Intensive; have not succumbed to temptation, have

not exited the divine dynasphere, have acquired the "goodness" of man), **we** (apodosis; deluded believers in the cosmic system) **keep on making** (ποιέω, PAI1P, Iterative; a futile attempt indeed) **Him** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; God) **a liar** (Noncompl. Acc.; Cosmic II: fighting God in self-righteous arrogance) **and** (continuative conj.) **His** (Poss. Gen.) **Word** (Subj. Nom.; especially the doctrine of *hamartiology*) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static) **not** (neg. particle) **in us** (Loc. Sph.; Cosmic I: fighting self with negative volition towards doctrine).

^{BGT} **1 John 1:10** ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν, ψεύστην ποιούμεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

^{VUL} **1 John 1:10** si dixerimus quoniam non peccavimus mendacem facimus eum et verbum eius non est in nobis

Chapter 2

^{LWB} **1 John 2:1** My students [immature believers in John's non-resident congregation], I am writing [as your non-resident pastor] these things [doctrines] to you so that you might stop living a lifestyle of continual sin [so you won't lose your spiritual momentum]. Nevertheless, if anyone repeatedly sins, we [believers only] always have an Advocate [intercessor] before the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One,

^{KW} **1 John 2:1** My little children [born ones, bairns], these things I am writing to you in order that you may not commit an act of sin. And if anyone commits an act of sin, One who pleads our cause we constantly have facing the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John addresses his non-resident congregations as their apostle and pastor, this time without the addition of the fellow believers in his resident congregation included in the writing. When it comes to encouragement, their fellow believers can join with John in the writing. When it comes to correction and rebuke, John alone has the delegated authority to address the issue. He uses the word "teknon," which has a wide variety of meanings depending on the audience that is being addressed. He could be calling them "little children" with the idea that he is their spiritual father. As their teacher, he could be calling them his students. In an army context, they would be privates; in the navy, they

would be sailors. In the context of experiential sanctification, they could be new or immature believers in the Christian walk. This is not a military context, so I would cross those options off the list. He later addresses three types of Christians in varying states of spiritual growth - including wise and mature members – so “little children” doesn’t fit. They are members of his non-resident congregation, his Bible students; that is my interpretation.

He writes to them (Pictorial Present tense) as their pastor to correct them on some doctrinal errors. If he could be there in person, he would have made the trip; but apostles could not be physically present in every congregation of believers they started. So in the role of non-resident pastor, he writes to encourage them to stop sinning as a way of life. He has heard reports that many of them are losing their spiritual momentum because they are involved in habitual or chain sinning (Constative Aorist tense: summing up an action of considerable duration). In the first chapter, we discovered that various Gnostic-leaning believers were denying they had an old sin nature or that sin even had negative repercussions. He uses the Subjunctive of Prohibition because he knows some of them are living a lifestyle of continual sin. He can’t sort them out from afar. His purpose is not to teach them how to stop sinning altogether, just to stop living in constant sin. That is the heresy he has just refuted in the first chapter; nobody is free from sin. He is trying to get some of the deluded believers to understand that habitual sin is destroying their spiritual lives. If they find themselves in a sin or chain of sins, they are to utilize the confession of sin to the Father as outlined in 1 John 1:9 to get out of the sphere of darkness.

He reminds them that if they are having difficulty with habitual sin (Potential Subjunctive mood), that they still have an Advocate or Intercessor before the Father. Jesus Christ in His combined deity and humanity (hypostatic union) is the only One who lived a completely sinless, righteous life. He is the only One who can represent us before the Father. Even if we are caught in a labyrinth of sin and are frustrated with ourselves and our failure to walk in the light, He is always there (Gnomic & Durative Present tense) to plead our case in the Supreme Court of Heaven. All we have to do is acknowledge our sins to the Father through our Advocate (defense attorney) and the matter is settled. We are forgiven and cleansed, ready to resume our spiritual life where we left off. When you are abiding in Christ, you are not sinning; when you sin, you are not abiding in Christ, but are abiding in the sphere of darkness. It is a matter of being in one sphere or the other at a moment in time (the Locative of Sphere in Greek grammar). The goal for the Christian is to “log” as much time in the sphere of Christ as possible, where he is not sinning - rather than in the sphere of the world, Satan’s *cosmos diabolicos*, where he is sinning.

“This Advocate function is related to Christ’s *session* and our *experiential walk* before the Lord. It is a *temporal* function, not an *eternal* function. It is a work of *daily intercession* and not one of *eternal sacrifice*. The function of an Advocate and a High Priest are not the same. Jesus Christ is retained as our defense attorney at the Supreme Court in heaven, where He continues to answer the accusations brought against us by

Satan, the prosecuting attorney.” (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Jesus Christ is NOT the defense attorney for unbelievers, only His sheep. If we are one of Christ’s elect, He is retained as our defense attorney before God the Father. We confess our sins in prayer to the Father through Jesus Christ our advocate. If we are one of His sheep, we are *acquitted* because of our *standing* (position) in Christ. If we have confessed our sin, we are then *forgiven* and *cleansed* and placed back into a *state* (condition) of fellowship with the Father, i.e. the Supreme Court Justice, as well as society (other believers who are in fellowship).

The basic use of the constative aorist is to view an action in the past at a point in time, without reference to its beginning, ending, or its progress. But there are other uses of the constative aorist, such as summing up an action of either long or short duration. My interpretation is that these believers had been living a *lifestyle of sin* without confession and John wants them to stop before they destroy themselves. They had not just begun sinning (Ingressive), nor were they finished sinning (Culminative), nor is there a universal truth or generally accepted fact in mind (Gnomic) concerning their sinning. Continuing with this line of thought, neither was John being prophetic about their sinning (Futuristic) nor is he pointing to the time gap between his writing and their reading of this letter about sinning (Epistolary). There’s a remote chance that it could be a dramatic aorist, but I’m sticking with the constative aorist with an *unknown duration of sinning* up to the time of his writing. I use the phrase “living a lifestyle of continual sin” with a prohibition, realizing that it approaches the Iterative or Durative Present tense.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Sinless perfection in this life is an unattainable goal. But progress toward that goal is not impossible. The goal defines the direction. (G. Clark) John has no patience with professional perfectionists (1:8-10), but he has still less with loose-livers like some of the Gnostics who went to all sorts of excesses without shame. (A.T. Robertson) John does not proclaim that we never sin, or that we can stop sinning entirely, but at the moment when we are abiding in Christ we are not sinning, at least not then. This is not a reference to positional righteousness, it refers to our state, our actual spiritual condition, at the moment. (R. Kendall) Satan, acting as prosecuting attorney, keeps a file on each of us, which is continually being updated by his assistants: fallen angels and demons. He accuses us in court daily. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) One who has sinned needs an advocate; one who has not sinned can best undertake the office ... One of the first lessons a man has to learn is that of the terrible evil of sin, the next in order is that of its possible removal. To learn how deeply he is sunk in it, without being shown how he may rise above it, would plunge a man either into morbid indifference or into bitter and hopeless despair. The preacher has to dwell on both in turn. (A. Plummer)

In I John 2:1, when it is a question of sin, there is no mention of Christ’s blood or spiritual death at all; for it was once offered, and its virtues and merits in the putting away of sin are eternal in their results. The mention of the blood in I John 1:7 has already accomplished “eternal redemption,” “eternal salvation.” Hence, “if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.” It does not say “a high priest with God,” for that title was in connection with the priestly act of access and approach through the blood, as in I John 1:7, but here, an “Advocate with their

Father.” This is to remind us that eternal relationship has not been broken. He Who is spoken of as “God” in connection with the access of His sinful creatures, is spoken of as “Father” in connection with His sinful “children.” Thus, accuracy in reading shows us that these Scriptures are Divine; for where the Holy Spirit mentions the blood, man (if he had written it) would surely have left it out; while, where the Holy Spirit does not mention it, man would certainly have put it in. (E.W. Bullinger) Experiential sanctification begins with our regeneration at conversion to Christ, and from then onwards there may be *degrees* of inward renewal according to our measure of consecration to Christ. (J. Baxter)

It is one thing to be *accepted* in Christ, for His merits’ sake, as in Eph. 1:6, *charitoo*, which means “to be made an object of favor”, the *standing* which God has given us in Christ, in the heavenlies. And it is another thing for our walk to be *well-pleasing* to God, as in 2 Cor. 5:9, *euarestos*, which refers to our *state*, our daily walk and life on earth. The former is the gift of God’s grace; the latter is the fruit of that grace. It is most important that we should be accurate in noting this distinction, so that we may be preserved from legality on the one hand, and from laxity on the other. (E.W. Bullinger) The constative aorist may sum up an action of long duration or short duration. (Brooks & Winbery) I interpret this “sinning” not as a single point in time but as a period of unknown duration. John is writing to these carnal Christians so that they might stop living the *lifestyle of sin* they have recently fallen into since embracing certain Gnostic philosophies. (LWB) He infuses a holiness which can make us “more than conquerors,” and in a way never experienced before He companions us in all our encounters with temptation; but He never fights our battles instead of us, for that would frustrate their educative process after the pattern of our great Captain who Himself suffered, being tempted. (J. Baxter)

To say that there is no need for Christians to pray for forgiveness because all their sins were atoned for at the cross betrays great confusion of thought, and flatly contradicts Scripture. As well might an Israelite have argued against the offering of the daily lamb because all his iniquities were remitted on the annual day of atonement. The satisfaction of Christ is indeed eternally valid before God and allows of no repetition or addition; but considering forgiveness as the act of God as the moral Governor of the world, it is continuous unto the same persons ... Renewed sins call for renewed repentance. While we do not need another Redeemer, we do need a fresh exercise of mercy unto us and a fresh application of the cleansing blood to our hearts. (A. Pink) We must not sin that grace may abound, but when we have sinned, we must make use of abounding grace. (M. Henry) Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God. No one sins out of duty. We sin because it holds out some promise of happiness. That promise enslaves us until we believe that God is more to be desired than life itself, which means that the power of sin’s promise is broken by the power of God’s. All that God promises to be for us in Jesus stands over against what sin promises to be for us without Him. (J. Piper)

According to the thought that some have, if any man sin, that immediately severs the link that binds the believer to Christ. Oh, no. If that were true, not one of us would have the assurance that he was really a Christian for an hour at a time; but see, there are two links that bind us to Christ. First there is the link of union. That link is so strong that the weight of the world could not break it ... But there is another link that binds the believer to the Lord, and that is the link of communion. That is so delicate, is so easily broken, that one unholy thought will snap it, one

unchristlike action will destroy it, one minute given to levity and foolishness will break it, and that link could never be formed again if it depended entirely upon us. (H. Ironside) Sin disrupts fellowship and destroys joy. Sin and vital Christianity are incompatible. But if the Christian does not live in sin it is also the case that he never in this life becomes completely sinless. (L. Morris) There is no reason to suppose that Christ must ask God to keep a Christian from going to hell as a result of his sin. Eternal life is fully guaranteed to those who have trusted Jesus for it. But the consequences of a believer's failure, his restoration, and future usefulness are all urgent matters which Jesus takes up with God when sin occurs. (Z. Hodges)

A three-dimensional fellowship is apparent in the book. Each believer is exhorted to be in fellowship with God and also with other believers. (R. Lightner) The believer's sin causes activity in heaven that is beyond human comprehension. While any man is in the act of sinning he has an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (J. Pentecost) Sanctification is not now a mere painful process of extirpation and extermination of weeds. It will no doubt be that still; but it is not that merely. It is the gracious implanting of good seed, and the cultivating of it gladly as it grows. (R. Candlish) The present advocacy of Jesus Christ before the throne of God for the faithful when they fall into sin on earth is described by the use of the title Paraclete ... It does not say that it is His task to defend them against the accusations of Christians. The forensic meaning of *paraclete* is here overshadowed by Christ's high-priestly role. (R. Schnackenburg) We have a Friend at court who spreads before the Father the odors of His merits as the all-sufficient answer to every indictment which Satan prefers against us. (A. Pink) In this role Jesus pleads our case as our Advocate, our defense attorney in the heavenly courtroom. (J. Dillow)

1 John 2:1 My (Gen. Rel.) students (Voc. Address; immature believers, little children, John's non-resident congregation, apprentices, novices, pupils), I am writing (γράφω, PA11S, Pictorial; as their non-resident pastor, John reserves the right to correct them, and so leaves his resident congregation 'we' out of this address) these things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the doctrinal contents of this letter) to you (Dat. Adv.; the Apostles set the precedent for non-resident teaching) so that (Purpose) you might stop (neg. particle) living a lifestyle of continual sin (ἀμαρτάνω, AASubj.2P, Constative of Unknown Duration: lifestyle of sin, Prohibition; 'so that you won't lose your momentum through sinning'). Nevertheless (adversative conj.), if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe he is, maybe he isn't") anyone (Subj. Nom.; believers only) repeatedly sins (ἀμαρτάνω, AASubj.3S, Constative of Unknown Duration: lifestyle of sin, Potential & Manner), we (apodosis) always have (ἔχω, PA11P, Durative, Gnostic) an Advocate (Acc. Dir. Obj.; intercessor, defense attorney *paraclete*) before the Father (Acc. Place), Jesus Christ (Acc. Appos.) the righteous One (Compl. Acc.),

^{BGT} **1 John 2:1** Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε. καὶ εἰάν τις ἀμάρτη, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον·

^{VUL} **1 John 2:1** filioli mei haec scribo vobis ut non peccetis sed et si quis peccaverit advocatum habemus apud Patrem Iesum Christum iustum

LWB 1 John 2:2 Since He Himself [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation [*experiential not positional* cleansing, *temporal not eternal* washing] for our [John's resident and non-resident congregations] sins, and not for ours only [not just for the sins of those in my congregations], but also for the entire world [for Christians outside of our fellowship, the church as the Bride of Christ].

^{KW} **1 John 2:2** And He Himself is an expiatory satisfaction for our sins, and not only for ours but for the whole world.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Jesus Christ is our representative before the Father when it comes to experiential sanctification. This passage answers the question: How and why is He qualified to be our representative? The answer is: He didn't just *do* the propitiating; He *is* the propitiation. He is both our High Priest and our atoning sacrifice. But the most important part is that He *continues* to be our offering for sins. Any time we find ourself in sin, we can acknowledge that sin to God the Father through our advocate Jesus Christ, and those sins are immediately forgiven and we are *temporally* cleansed and restored to fellowship. Voluminous treatises have been written on the positional aspects of propitiation; very little has been written on the experiential aspects of propitiation. That's tragic, since everything John has been discussing since the 2nd half of 1:3 is related to temporal, experiential fellowship. Plus, every verse that follows this passage all the way to the end of this chapter is also related to temporal, experiential fellowship. Did John insert this one passage to remind believers in his non-resident congregations that Jesus Christ is their positional propitiation? That's possible, but not probable.

Once again, we come to one of those battleground verses that Calvinists and Arminians have been fighting over for centuries. If you read their treatises, you rarely find an individual who poses the idea that this passage has nothing to do with *positional* propitiation or the extent of the atonement. As soon as both parties come to the Greek word "hilasmos," they immediately force a narrow meaning onto the word which automatically steers the debate towards positional truth. There was indeed a positional propitiation accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross for His sheep. As an Arminian turned Calvinist years ago, I know both sides of the positional argument and the Arminian philosophy falls apart at every turn. If you insist that this verse must be referring to *positional* propitiation, as opposed to *temporal* propitiation, then I have a few relevant opinions below that I hope will dissuade you from embracing such a notion. This is not a verse that supports unlimited atonement. As a matter of fact, there are no verses in the Bible that support that heresy. But I'm not going to argue that point here, because I do not believe John inserted a *positional* propitiation passage (conspicuously alone) in the middle of so many *experiential* sanctification verses.

The Bible also teaches an experiential, temporal form of propitiation. According to the flow of the context here, I see no reason why this passage is not included in that category. His advocacy or intercession in 2:1 is based upon what He did (positional propitiation) and continues to do (experiential propitiation) in 2:2. Propitiation in this passage is a *temporal purification process* identical to the confession of sin and restoration to fellowship John has been covering since the first couple of introductory comments in the epistle. Jesus Christ represents us before the Father every time we acknowledge our sins. The Father recognizes us as one of His elect, looks our Advocate in the eye (so to speak), and then cleanses us from our sin. That is the type of propitiation referred to here. Does Jesus represent unbelievers before the Father? Absolutely not! They have their own representative; his name is Satan. Our representative is Jesus Christ. He is the propitiation for our sins (Durative Present tense), both positionally and experientially, both eternally and temporally, both forensically and filially. The question is: which element of propitiation is John talking about?

Due to the overwhelming experiential context on both sides of this passage, I believe John is talking about temporal, experiential propitiation – that which washes our sins away, sets them aside, each time we acknowledge them to the Father in prayer. This is temporal propitiation, not eternal propitiation. Whose sins is John referring to? Well, who is he writing this epistle to? He is addressing “our” sins to those believers in his non-resident congregations. Then he extends that temporal propitiation beyond those in his non-resident congregations, i.e., believers in the rest of the world. He isn’t the only pastor alive on earth. There were believers scattered all over the known world at that time who did not have John as their pastor (yes, I know he’s also an apostle). He extends this temporal propitiation to believers everywhere - to every known geographical location on planet earth, to every nation, kindred, people and language. His use of the word “entire” is a figure of speech called a *synecdoche of the whole*, in which the world is put for persons in all parts of it. He is referring to *every believer* on planet earth, not every human being on planet earth. Only Christians can be temporally forgiven, cleansed and restored to fellowship with God. Unbelievers are outside the royal family of God.

The battles over the meaning of “hilasmos” in this verse have been going on for centuries. I believe they are due to the restriction of the possible meaning to the positional, soteriological realm. The emphasis on the extent of the atonement has clouded the true use of the word in this passage. The equally valid context of this word in the field of *sanctification* and the *purging of uncleanness from temporal sin*, but this is almost always dropped from consideration at the outset. “Hilasmos” should not be restricted to a singular element of Christ’s spiritual death, but should include the total work accomplished on the cross - which includes provision for the new life we are enabled to live in Him. Once we are positionally propitiated (purged from sin), are we not encouraged to live it in our daily life (continual purgings from sin)? What has been done with forgiveness of sin in everyday life in its relation to the continuing effects of Christ’s propitiation which enables us to live the *new life*? What happened to the “new and living way which He opened for us through the curtain?” Do we not need daily purging from sin in order to live the Christian way of life? Israel has its Day of Atonement when they came together as a nation to take care of sin, but they also had need for continual sin and guilt offerings which individuals participated in by coming to their High Priest and having Him offer personal sacrifices. In like manner, we must provide our personal sacrifice; Jesus Christ *is* that

personal sacrifice. Of course our sins were washed away at the point of regeneration; but we also need a continual washing away of sins?

You cannot take the meaning of “hilasmos” (propitiation) in 1 John 2:2 and disconnect it from “paracletos” (advocacy) in 2:1 and the confession of sin in 1:8-10. It is this connected form of “hilasmos” that enables us to live in the sphere of light and love. Because all believers sin, we must come to Jesus Christ as our “hilasmos” over and over again. There is nothing in this passage that requires a positional aspect of propitiation only. Everything in this passage speaks of Jesus Christ as our present, experiential propitiation. “The *hilasmos* is not one-sidedly linked with the single achievement of death, but with the total person and work of Jesus ... John does not speak of any necessity of expiation. He sees the day of judgment approaching, 4:17, and it is thus unnecessary to establish the necessity of expiation. For John the *hilasmos* is much more than a concept of Christian doctrine; it is the reality by which he lives.” (Buchsel) But that, in my opinion, is exactly what has been done to this passage over centuries of debate on the extent of the atonement. As part of the meaning behind “hilasmos,” the experiential sanctification side was lost in the shuffle – I think, due to two things: (1) The heretical insistence that this passage refers to every individual who has ever lived, regardless of whether they were His sheep (members of the royal family) or not; (2) An overall ignorance of experiential sanctification and what the Christian way of life is.

The word “world” is a reference to all Christians in John’s non-resident congregations as well as members of the larger fellowship, the entire church as the Bride of Christ. The use of the plural “sins” instead of the singular imputed “sin of Adam” lends support to the idea that propitiation here emphasizes the experiential rather than positional. The plural “sins” takes propitiation out of the realm of Christ’s spiritual death on the Cross and eternal salvation and places it in the sphere of Advocacy for temporal salvation, our experiential walk and fellowship with Christ. There is no reason, in the continuing context of temporal fellowship with Christ, to “insert” a verse that talks of eternal propitiation. This is another case of “illegitimate totality transfer,” reducing a word with many facets to a singular meaning that agrees with a theological disposition. Some interpreters cite examples where “world” means Jews as well as Gentiles. That is a legitimate point as well. The question is: “who are the *ours* and who are the *world*?” The “ours” are those people to whom John is writing and the world is those Christians John is not directly writing to. The “ours” are “my students” (children) in verse 1, those whom he writes these things to. World, then, can mean “Gentile nations” as opposed to Jewish believers. In John 11:52, Jesus died not for “that nation only,” but also that He “should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” Also, I Peter 5:9 reads “Resist steadfastly in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accompanied in your brethren that are in the world.” Bottom line: These Christians are being reminded that they are members of a larger fellowship.

There are those, regardless of context, who insist that the word “world” in this passage means every individual in it. It doesn’t matter to them that the context for the word here refers to believers that John was not writing to. It does not matter to them that John was using the word to expand his audience of *believers only* beyond those in his non-resident congregations. It doesn’t matter to them that he is addressing “children” or “students” in verse 2:1 and that this restricts his letter to Christians. It doesn’t matter to them that propitiation has an *experiential* side to it which is exactly what is being emphasized in this passage, and that this *experiential* side automatically restricts the

context to believers only. And it doesn't matter to them that there are a host of meanings for the Greek word "kosmos," including different uses in this same letter. None of this means anything to them because they have an agenda to push and they don't care what the passage means outside their agenda. In their mistaken opinion, the word "kosmos" means every individual who every lived on planet earth. When they see "world" in this passage they automatically insert the name of every person they ever knew. That this doesn't work is obvious to any 1st semester Greek student. Let's compare this illegitimate substitution in this verse with that in 1 John 2:15. The Greek word in both passages is "kosmos" and is translated "world" in most English translations. Here's how their theory works in essence:

1 John 2:2 "And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the whole **world**."

(inserting two names as an example)

"And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for [Adolph Hitler](#)."

"And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for [Billy Graham](#)."

This substitution of an individual's name looks like it works, but only if you believe the heresy that Jesus Christ died for Adolph Hitler. An Arminians would say, "Yes, Jesus Christ died for Adolph Hitler. He died for everyone." The Calvinist would say, "No, Jesus Christ did not die for Adolph Hitler, because Hitler was not one of His sheep, nor one of the elect that the Father gave Him." How does this principal of substitution work when we use it in another verse in 1 John?

1 John 2:15 "Love not the **world**, neither the things in the **world**. If any man love the **world**, the love of the Father is not in him."

(inserting two names as an example)

"Love not [Adolph Hitler](#), neither the things in [Adolph Hitler](#). If any man love [Adolph Hitler](#), the love of the Father is not in him."

Love not [Billy Graham](#), neither the things in [Billy Graham](#). If any man love [Billy Graham](#), the love of the Father is not in him."

All of us would heartily agree with the first substitution, but how many of you would agree with the second substitution? It doesn't work, does it? It's not supposed to work, because the use of the Greek word "kosmos" translated "world" in 2:15 has nothing to do with the individuals in the world. It is about the *world system* that is under Satan's control. The point should be obvious: You can't force a narrow meaning of a Greek word into English without looking at the context. The use of the word "world" in 2:2 is a reference to believers John is not addressing this letter to. There were *believers* living all over Europe, Asia and Africa that were also covered by the positional and experiential propitiatory work of Jesus Christ. That does not mean His propitiatory work extended to every Hitler, Stalin and Hirohito on planet earth.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Propitiation or expiation also means “to make one friends again” or “to restore two opposing parties back to fellowship.” Even in the Old Testament, the sin-offering and trespass-offering bring *propitiation*, but are *temporal* in nature and not *eternal*. It is a *purification* ritual, in order that they (the persons for whom the ritual is performed) may fulfill their ministry. (Herrman) As a rule, cleansing is essential to the restoration of relationship with the deity ... the art of purifying those who are stained. We have early evidence of the conviction that what matters is moral conduct or disposition. The restoration of peace between sinner and God is rather a different thing from the removal of sin, both in terms and concept. It is also used with man as the subject and God as the object in “to placate by prayer” or “to receive cleansing or purging from the stain of sin or guilt” (Buchsel), also “friendship is restored” or “to cause one to be gracious towards you again” or “victory over the consciousness of sin” (Deissman). It is worth noting that in neither I John 2:2 nor I John 4:10 does he refer to the death of Christ. The *propitiation* is not one-sidedly linked with the single achievement of the death, but with the total person and work of Jesus. For John, the *propitiation* is the reality by which he lives. (Buchsel)

The spiritual conception of the verb is not that of appeasing one who is angry with a personal feeling against the offender, but of altering the character of that which, from without, occasions a necessary alienation, and interposes an inevitable obstacle to fellowship. (B. Wescott) It is worthy of note that the apostle does not say that Christ is the propitiation for every human being in the world (Arminian interpretation). He says nothing even remotely resembling that. He is not speaking of the world of men distributively. Rather, he speaks of the world in a comprehensive, a collective, a global way (Calvinist interpretation). (Meyer) Also, the supposition that “for the whole world” is an elliptical expression for “the sins of the whole world” is not justified by usage, and weakens the force of the whole passage (B. Wescott). John was a Jew. It is incontestable that Jewish writers referred to Gentiles as “the world.” The rabbis argued as to whether the blessings of the Messiah, when he should come, would extend beyond the Jews to the world. When John speaks of the world he means the Gentiles as opposed to the Jews. (G. Clark) Note carefully He “is our propitiation,” for the apostle is not referring to what Christ was in His death, but what He is in consequence thereof, to meet our present needs. He entered heaven as the propitiation of the Church and on that basis is now serving as the Medium of forgiveness and the Maintainer of communion. (A. Pink)

If a father and son live apart, they will not know each other as well as if they lived together, even though their parent-child relationship continues to exist. It would be wrong, therefore, to read 1 John 2:3-11 as if John had left the subject of fellowship with God behind. On the contrary, the subject of knowing God is its logical continuation. (Z. Hodges) I would add verse 2 to that comment, as I believe it is also speaking about fellowship with God. (LWB) Although God has made ample and adequate provision for us not to sin, our entrance into His provision is imperfect – because of our imperfection. Notice that this verse does not say that we *cannot* sin, but John is writing to us that we *may not* sin. God wants us to walk in a manner that is well pleasing to Him;

that is, He wants us to walk in obedience to His Word ... Many Christians are living lives in which they are constantly disobeying God, yet they wonder why they aren't having fellowship with Him. They need to recognize that sin causes a break in fellowship ... Because of the faithful advocacy of Christ, the Holy Spirit brings conviction to us, and we confess our sin to the Father ... My friend, if you are a child of God, you are in the family of God, and He wants to have fellowship with you. I don't care about these little rules you are following. You think that some way you are going to be able to live the Christian way of life by following rules. My friend, God doesn't want you to be a programmed computer. (J. McGee)

Our sins are the subject-matter of his propitiatory work. The propitiation is for all, not for the first band of believers only. (A. Plummer) Sin does not touch the question of relationship, but it does touch communion, or fellowship; but our blessed Lord is in the presence of God the Father to plead for His people, and as a result of His advocacy we are brought to repent and confess, and He graciously restores our souls. (H. Ironside) A provision is made for miserable sinners, that they have God always propitious to them, and that the sins by which they are entangled, do not prevent them from becoming just, because they have a Mediator to reconcile them to God ... The intercession of Christ is a continual application of His death for our salvation ... He continually intercedes for us, so that an access in His Name is open to us, that our prayers may be heard. (J. Calvin) Our Advocate does not plead that we are innocent or adduce extenuating circumstances. He acknowledges our guilt and presents His vicarious work as the grounds of our acquittal. (W. Nicole) Advocate is not a forensic question ... it includes intercession and restoration. (C. Scofield) He is accomplishing a work in heaven for those who are united with Him ... The ideas of advocacy and propitiation are distinct, and yet in close connection ... The efficacy of His work for the individual depends upon fellowship with Him. (B. Wescott)

Christ is the altogether righteous One who can and does plead for the acquittal of the believer who sins. Our Lord's work as the believer's advocate relates to His work of intercession. His work of intercession is designed to keep the believer from sinning. His work as advocate becomes effective when the believer sins in rebellion against God's desire that he not sin. Christ then, in 2:1, is the believer's divine defense attorney. The remedy for the believer's sins rests solidly on the faithfulness and righteousness of Christ and His ministry as the believer's advocate. (R. Lightner) The intercessory work of Jesus as our Advocate in 2:1 connects or flows logically into His continuing propitiatory work for us in 2:2. (LWB) We cannot exhaust the value of the blood of Christ by putting ourselves under its protecting covering again and again ... Every time we sin, Christ must appear before God as our defense attorney to plead our cause. (J. Pentecost) It is noteworthy that *hilasmos* is here followed by *concerning our sins*, rather than by the objective genitive case as would be expected if the passage were speaking of the expiation of sins. (D. Burdick) The difficulty of the language borrowed from the cultic and forensic spheres (propitiation, ransom, substitution) is that it expresses only deliverance from the burden of guilt in the past, and from future death as a punishment for the sins which brought forth that guilt. *It does not give full expression to the idea of the present as the sphere of sin or of righteousness.* (DNTT, W. Schmithals)

In every instance in which it is exercised, it is simply a new and fresh application to our case of the virtue of His being the propitiation for our sins ... I can build no hope on any propitiation presented to me as peculiar to a class, and not open to the race at large. (R. Candlish) The Gnostic believers may have taught that they had a special propitious arrangement with God because of the elite nature of their gnosis. (LWB) The preservation of a continuing relationship of peace and fellowship depends, at least in part, upon the present heavenly advocacy of Christ. Forgiveness, both forensic and filial, rests upon the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (D. Burdick) His intercession in 2:1 and His propitiation in 2:2 are for believers only. They are interconnected verses. He does not intercede for believers only, and then propitiate everyone - both believers and unbelievers. (LWB) A very important provision is herein presented (by propitiation) to enable the child of God to maintain fellowship with Him ... Upon the basis of His propitiatory work, Christ fulfills His advocacy in our behalf ... The first two verses of this chapter present the means that have been provided for the maintenance of fellowship. (R. Gingrich) This work possesses a continuing quality. Jesus is, now and always, the offering for our sins. (S. Smalley) Two things are important for us to see here. He bore the *penalty* of sin. Now here in John's epistle he shows that Christ takes away the *practice* of sin in the life of the believer. Christ is the propitiation for our sins. What is the difference? Well, He died a redemptive death to pay the *penalty* of our sin, but He also died that He might deliver us from the *power* of sin right here and now. (J. McGee)

[Here are some Calvinistic comments on positional propitiation, but none of them hit the target here; this is a *temporal* passage related to *fellowship*, not an *eternal* passage related to our *justification*. I used to hold to this interpretation, but no longer. Just think of these remarks as "extra credit" if you still do. \(LWB\)](#)

There is no contradiction in saying that Christ died for His people and that He died for the world. However few or many His people may be today or tomorrow, in the end His people will be the world. (Kuiper) I pass over the dreams of the fanatics, who make this a reason to extend salvation to all the reprobate and even to satan himself. Such a monstrous idea is not worth refuting. Those who want to avoid this absurdity have said that Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but effective only for the elect ... Although I allow the truth of this, I deny that it fits this passage. (J. Calvin) The scope of Jesus' propitiation was not limited in its virtue and efficacy to the immediate circle of disciples who had actually seen and heard and handled the Lord in the days of His sojourn on earth, nor to the circle of believers who came directly under the influence of the apostolic witness. It extended to every nation and kindred and people and tongue - the whole world." (J. Murray) Now if Christ propitiated God in the sense of having expiated the sins of every human being, past, present, and future, it would follow that God is no longer at enmity with anyone. Everyone is at peace with God. No one is lost; there is no hell; all sins have been pardoned; and Hitler and Stalin will sit down together at the marriage supper of the Lamb. This not only contradicts Matthew and Revelation - it ill accords with the present epistle. (G. Clark)

Christ's atoning sacrifice is a propitiation. Its aim was to appease the wrath of an angry God; and it succeeded in doing so ... The Bible reveals a God of wrath and justice. Any person may honestly hold a contrary opinion; but no one can honestly deny that such is what the Bible

teaches ... There are nearly three dozen references to the wrath of God in the NT. Hence the method of atonement must be satisfaction and propitiation. To talk about an animal instead of a grizzly is to obscure the gospel in its entirety ... Jesus was the propitiation. That is, he was not only the sacrificer; he was the sacrifice. The earlier priests sacrificed lambs. Jesus sacrificed himself. Jesus was not only the priest; he himself was also the lamb. This is called the vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice ... This cannot possibly mean that Christ takes away the sins of every individual man, for the clear reason that Scripture refers to some who die in their sins, whose sins go beforehand to judgment, for which they will be righteously and everlastingly condemned. Yet they would not suffer everlastingly if Christ had taken away their sins ... Gill cites five instances in which *the whole world* designates not merely a fraction of the earth's population but a fraction of the Jewish nation ... Arminians who want a universal propitiation are obliged to show that the "world" means every individual that has been, is, or will be. This they cannot do. The Scripture is uniformly opposed to their way of thinking. (G. Clark)

The extent and intent of the Mediator's death reach to all tribes, nations, and countries. (M. Henry) Scripture teaches the total inability of man to move toward God. The Arminian rejection of this concept is unscriptural and totally unacceptable. (R. Lightner) We need to point out that the words assumed to include all people – "all" and "world" – do not necessarily have that scope, either in our own speech or in the Bible. They often refer to all of a particular class, but not to all people universally. If someone at a meeting says, "Everyone is now free to go to lunch," "everyone" would obviously refer only to those who were at the meeting and not to everyone in the world. (J. Piper) A generic term "people" is more closely identified as "the children of God who are scattered abroad" (John 11:49-52). Clearly the point of the passage is that Christ dies with a specific purpose in mind, so that He might gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. Nothing is said about making them "savable." His death enables Him to gather them together in one. And we likewise see the direct relevance to 1 John 2:2 and the meaning of "the whole world." (J. White) The text does not say that Christ is *potentially* the propitiation for "our sins" and "the sins of the whole world." (G. Long)

Nowhere in 1 John chapter 2 do we have John teaching that "Christ's death is a satisfaction for the whole world." This passage (2:15-16) tells us not to love the world! If this use of "world" is to be taken in the extensive, universal sense of every single individual, this passage now tells us not to love all men! Is this what he seriously wishes to suggest? We should hope not. When the passage says that these evil impulses come not from the Father, but from the world - the antithesis points to the world as the *present evil system*, not the universal population of mankind. We have here a classic example of eisegesis, reading into the passage a meaning that it could never have borne when first written ... The Arminian limits the *effect* of the atonement by saying it is made on behalf of millions who will be lost for eternity. We have already discussed this unbiblical limitation and how it is utterly contrary to the meaning of "propitiation" and "atonement." "Unlimited atonement" is unlimited only in relation to scope, *but not in relation to accomplishment*. On the other hand, "limited atonement" is limited in scope, but is unlimited in its results. (J. White)

The phrase in question is "the whole world." John uses the same words in 5:19, referring to those who are under the control of the wicked one. There it is clear that the phrase does not refer to

each and every individual, for the evil one does not touch those who are born of God. In light of this, we conclude that here “the whole world” refers only to all of a certain description, which description must be understood as many people from all nations, a concept clearly conveyed in Revelation 5:9 and John 11:51-52, Johannine in content also. (T. Nettles) 1 John 2:2 comes in a context focusing on “us” and on “our sins,” that is, on the sins of Christian believers. “My dear children,” the author writes ... The common factor is the phrase “for *our* sins,” the sins of Christians ... The point is not that Jesus died for everyone indiscriminately so that everyone in the world is in principle forgiven, but that all those forgiven are forgiven on the basis of Christ’s sacrifice and in no other way. (J. Michaels)

1 John 2:2 Since (inferential conj.), He Himself (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative) the propitiation (Pred. Nom.; washing away, setting aside, sin offering, be gracious, show mercy, to placate by prayer, *temporal* not *eternal*) for our (Poss. Gen.; John’s resident and non-resident congregations) sins (Abl. Separation & Gen. Adv.), and (postpositive connective conj. in the 5th place) not (neg. particle) for ours (Abl. Separation; not just for the sins of those in my congregations to whom I am writing) only (Acc. Spec.), but (adversative conj.) also (adjunctive) for the entire (Gen. Spec.; *synecdoche of the whole*: in which the world is put for *persons in all parts of it*) world (Abl. Separation & Gen. Adv.; for all Christians in his non-resident congregations as well as members of the larger fellowship, the entire church as the Bride of Christ).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:2** καὶ αὐτὸς ἰλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:2** et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris non pro nostris autem tantum sed etiam pro totius mundi

LWB 1 John 2:3 Furthermore, by this [requirement] we may know [through grace perception] that we have come to know and are continuing to know [intimately] Him [Jesus Christ]: if we continue to execute [obey] His mandates [grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit, etc.].

^{KW} **1 John 2:3** And in this we know experientially that we have come to know Him experientially and are in that state at present, if we are continually having a solicitous, watchful care in safeguarding His precepts by obeying them.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:3** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Gnostic-leaning believers claimed to know Jesus Christ. But did they really? John gives those in his non-resident congregation one way of finding out. By this qualifier, they may know

(Potential Indicative mood) whether a person has truly come to know (Consummative Perfect tense) Him. This form of knowledge is from the root word “gnosis,” ironically where the Gnostics got their name. In biblical terminology, however, gnosis is knowledge learned through the *grace apparatus for perception*. It is knowledge gained from the Bible by faith perception, not by rationalism or empiricism. In reality there should be three cylinders running, not just two. As a child, you were taught a lot of things that you believed without objective proof and often without emotion; that was faith perception. There is a type of faith perception required to learn the Word of God; it is part of the *grace apparatus for perception*. The filling of the Holy Spirit is required as part of GAP, so without it, you aren’t taking raw data (Bible verses) and converting it into useful material (systematic theology) that can be applied to daily life.

“Coming to know Him” (Latin: cognizant) is a stage in the positive believer’s growth toward spiritual maturity. It is dependent on many consistent, daily decisions (Potential Indicative mood with a condition) to study the Word of God. Doctrine doesn’t drop down from heaven into your soul automatically. It takes years of dedicated study under qualified teachers. The Gnostic-learning believers claimed they knew doctrine, so they knew Him. How does John suggest that they test those claims? How does one know whether he is embracing heretical Gnosticism or Christian gnosis? The key he imparts to them here is a 3rd class conditional clause addressed to all believers: maybe we do this on a regular basis and maybe we don’t. What is the requirement? Do we continually execute (Iterative Present tense) His mandates? That is the question, the way we assess whether we actually “know” Him or not. This “execution” is keeping, guarding, and obeying His mandates. In theological terms, an affirmative answer means you persistently reside and function in the sphere of divine power – the filling of the Spirit. What are His mandates?

The mandates for the Church Age believer are not the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were given to the nation Israel, not to the church. We have a new set of mandates from the Lord, a set of mandates uniquely designed for our dispensation. There are four primary mandates, two prohibitions and two commands: grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and be filled with the Spirit. If you fulfill these mandates on a consistent basis (Latin: observe), in conjunction with learning Bible doctrine, you are coming to know Him. “Wait a minute,” you say, “where does it say anything about doctrine?” Bible doctrine is the mind of Christ. Without it, you cannot know His thoughts. If you don’t know His thoughts, you don’t know Him. Why do you think He gave us the Bible? The first half of this passage brings forth the “knowing” and the 2nd half of the passage is the power given to us to understand that knowledge. They work in tandem.

This pericope is contextually centered around the doctrine of hamartiology and how to maintain fellowship with Christ (and other believers) by following a specific procedure (acknowledging sins: rebound) and adhering to specific mandates related to the continuance of this procedure - which are contained under two categories: **residence** (grieve not, quench not, be filled with the Spirit) and **function** (walk in the Spirit). This specific procedure (mechanics) and its related mandates are sub-points under the doctrine of hamartiology. The sphere of light is a manner of life to be lived; it can only be lived in the filling of the Spirit. If you are grieving or quenching the Spirit by sinning, you are not

filled with the Spirit and you are not living in (residence) the sphere of light. If you are consistently living or residing in the light, you are walking (function) in the Spirit. Residence is static; function is active. The idea is not to enter the light and then exit quickly into darkness, but to continue to live in the light as long as possible.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

A *disjunctive exegetical fallacy* that is held (disastrously) by most Christians today comes from a selective use of Biblical evidence. For example, Thomas Groome turns to John's writings and cites those passages which in his way of understanding somehow relate "knowing God" to keeping His commandments and loving others. But he fails to cite those many passages, both in John's writings and elsewhere, that show there is *also* propositional content to Christian belief. Certainly Christian belief and doctrine are not exclusively intellectual; but by being selective with the evidence, Groome has managed to conclude that Christian belief and knowledge are exclusively experiential and nonintellectual. The result is a theory of education that consistently deprecates content. The fallacy lies in Groome's implicit supposition that the presentation of selective evidence constitutes proof. It is doubtful if Groome really understands the passages he cites, for he betrays no awareness of the manner in which these texts relate to the situation in which they were first penned. (D.A. Carson)

The Gnostics claimed to "know God," and yet their indifference to sin in the body led them to disobey God's mandates ... But for John in this passage, knowing God is to walk in fellowship with Him. It does not refer to the entrance into eternal life at justification, but to the continuing experience with Christ called fellowship. What is in focus here is not whether or not they are regenerate, but whether or not God's love has been "perfected in them." God's love cannot be brought to completion in one who does not have it all! In fact, in 2:4 and 2:6 John

equates "knowing God" with "abiding in Him." He is not discussing their justification; he is discussing their "walk." (J. Dillow) How sanctified must we become before we pass from timid hope to bold assurance? (G. Clark) This all goes to show that fellowship with God and knowledge of Him are one and the same thing. (R. Schnackenburg) "If we keep His commandments" does not refer to the Ten Commandments. John is not dealing with any legal aspects; he is dealing with family matters. The Ten Commandments were given to a nation. (J. McGee)

1 John 2:3 **Furthermore** (continuative conj.; apodosis), **by this** (Instr. Means; qualifier, requirement) **we may know** (γινώσκω, PAI1P, Customary, Potential; *gnosis* through GAP: learning Bible doctrine by *faith perception*, not by *rationalism* or *empiricism*) **that** (Appositional Conj. as Dir. Obj.) **we have come to know and are continuing to know** (γινώσκω, Perf.AI1P, Consummative, Potential Ind. Expressing a Condition; arriving at Gate 5, occupation with Jesus Christ, advanced impersonal love) **Him** (Acc. Dir. Obj.): **if** (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe we will, maybe we won't") **we continue to execute** (τηρέω, PASubj.1P, Iterative, Potential: keep, obey, guard, persistent residence and function inside

the divine dynasphere is based on your positive volition) **His** (Poss. Gen.) **mandates** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Church Age mandates: grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:3** Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:3** et in hoc scimus quoniam cognovimus eum si mandata eius observemus

LWB 1 John 2:4 When anyone claims: “I have come to know Him [Jesus Christ],” but does not continually execute His mandates [for residence and function in the sphere of light], he is [living the lifestyle of] a liar [under the illusion of the cosmic system] and the Truth [Bible doctrine] is not in him [he is ignorant of doctrine, and therefore ignorant of God].

^{KW} **1 John 2:4** He who keeps on saying, I have come to know Him experientially and as a present result am in that state, and His precepts is not habitually safeguarding with solicitous care, is a liar, and in this one the truth does not exist.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:4** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John elaborates on those who claim (Static Present tense) they have come to know Jesus Christ (Consummative Perfect tense), when in fact they do not continually execute (Iterative Present tense) His mandates. In other words, what they say and what they do are not in sync. They are not obeying His mandates for the Church Age believer. They are not filled with the Spirit and they are not walking in the Spirit. Because of habitual, unconfessed sin, they are either grieving or quenching the Spirit. Some of them are are violating all four basic mandates! If they have rejected doctrine, the confession of sin, and are consumed with themselves – they are grieving the Spirit in Cosmic 1. If they hate doctrine, reject the confession of sin, and hate other believers – they are quenching the Spirit and are in Cosmic 2. John will elaborate on this in great detail later. In this passage, he does not cut the Gnostic-leaning believers any slack. He calls them liars. He says the Truth of the Word of God is not in them. They are ignorant of doctrine, out of fellowship, and therefore ignorant of God. John certainly tells it like it is.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Some commentators fail to note that God commands certain intellectual activities. Obedience is not always overt. We must also think or believe the truth. It must be insisted that overt moral action can be the result only of correct doctrine. But the 20th century is more enamoured with existential titillation than with objective truth. (G. Clark) We are not enjoined to keep His commandments (legalism), but to keep His mandates - residence & function inside the divine dynasphere. The purpose of the Mosaic Law was to teach integrity, not legalism. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Christian assurance has more than one side to it, though many are unaware of the fact. Broadly speaking they may be reduced to two: and objective and a subjective. The one is a firm

persuasion resting on something without us, namely the Word of God; the other upon something within us – the work of God’s Spirit. The former is foundational, the other evidential. (A. Pink) Let me repeat that John is not talking about the Ten Commandments that were given to the nation Israel in the OT. John is talking about the commandments that Jesus gave to the church. (J. McGee)

Scarcely is there any distinctive doctrine of Christianity, but it has been strained, wrenched, distorted, travestied, not by critics *outside* the Christian pale, but by champions *inside*. Ever since Peter impulsively lopped off Malchus’ ear in Gethsemane, mistakenly thinking he did Christ service, our Lord has been correcting the well-meant errors of disciples whose zeal has outrun sound exegesis of His Word. Nor has such zeal always been erratic or unscholarly. It has been truly said: Scarcely an error can be named that some learned doctor has not advocated and supported by his texts. (J. Baxter) “Knowing Him” is having fellowship with Him, just as not keeping His commandments is the same as walking in darkness. He must have lost the very power of recognizing truth to maintain that he knows Christ, when he habitually transgresses His commands. (A. Plummer) Some folk do not appreciate strong language like this. But we need to realize that the apostle is dealing with certain great abstract truths; men either love God or do not, they either walk in darkness or they walk in light. There are no gradations in between. (H. Ironside)

1 John 2:4 When anyone (Subj. Nom.; indefinite pronoun) claims (λέγω, PAPtc.NSM, Static, Temporal, Articular; says, alleges, contends): “I have come to know (γινώσκω, Perf.A11S, Consummative: Intensive Past; experiential knowledge) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ),” but (adversative) does not (neg. particle) continually execute (τηρέω, PAPtc.NSM, Iterative, Circumstantial; keep, obey, observe) His (Abl. Source) mandates (Acc. Dir. Obj.; for residence and function in the divine dynasphere), he is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive; lives the lifestyle of) a liar (Pred. Nom.; lives under the illusion of the cosmic system) and (connective) the Truth (Subj. Nom.; Bible doctrine) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive; does not reside) not (neg. particle) in him (Loc. Sph., demonstrative: *this one*; he is ignorant of doctrine, and therefore God).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:4** ὁ λέγων ὅτι ἔγνωκα αὐτόν καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν, ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν·

^{VUL} **1 John 2:4** qui dicit se nosse eum et mandata eius non custodit mendax est in hoc veritas non est

LWB 1 John 2:5 **But if someone keeps on maintaining [studying and applying] His Word [daily intake of Bible doctrine], the virtue love from God is truly being accomplished in him [completion of the edification complex of the soul]. By this [momentum in the spiritual life by means of doctrine and the ministry of the Spirit] we have come to realize that we are [residing] in it [virtue love].**

^{KW} **1 John 2:5** But whoever habitually with a solicitous care is keeping His Word, truly, in this one the love of God has been brought to its completion with the present result that it is in that state of completion. In this we have an experiential knowledge that in Him we are.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:5** But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John switches from the negative to the positive, but still uses a 3rd class condition to point to the yes/no decisions a believer makes every day. If someone is consistent in the daily intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine (Iterative Present tense), the virtue love from God is being developed in his soul (Gnomic Perfect tense). “Maintaining” or keeping His Word is equivalent to the consistent, daily intake of Bible doctrine. Please notice this important fact: *virtue love from God is brought to completion in a believer who is studying and applying Bible doctrine to daily life.* By faithfully following God’s protocol plan for the Christian during the Church Age dispensation, this believer is engaging in a special fellowship with God as one of His *elect out of the elect*. This is a special privilege available to every believer, as opposed to any Gnostic special interest group. It is the only way we can truly express His virtue (agape) love. This person isn’t pretending to love all the brethren; this person isn’t gushing out emotions left and right; this person isn’t hugging everybody around him, telling them how much he loves them. This person may not even have a personality that agrees with yours. All of these assumed important items are irrelevant in the spiritual life.

“The Agape that is required here has its prototype in the Agape manifested by God, and therefore it must be spontaneous and unmotivated, uncalculating, unlimited, and unconditional.” (A. Nygren) The highest form of love God has in His divine character, virtue (agape) love, is engendered in the believer who maintains daily contact with His Word. He is in effect bringing his *edification complex of the soul* to completion on the way to spiritual maturity - entirely on the basis of Bible doctrine and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I suspect many of you are going to have to start from scratch in order to understand what God means by “virtue love.” You won’t find it anywhere but in the Bible, and its description is unfortunately not what most Christians have been led to believe by well-meaning, but misguided pastors. In order to have fellowship with God, and the resultant fellowship with other positive believers, you must think His thoughts and reside in the sphere of virtue love. John continues by pointing to spiritual momentum by means of Bible doctrine and the ministry of the Spirit. This is the standard by which we comprehend (Gnomic Present tense) that we are residing *in it* (agape love).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The assets God provided for the humanity of Christ functioned together as a system of power and love ... Before He departed, Christ gave the divine support system (John 15:9-10) to us. *The same system that sustained Jesus Christ now belongs to each believer.* Christian integrity comes from loyalty to the divine system ... In learning to thrive under the provisions of God’s grace, we are also learning about Christ, for He lived inside the

same system that the Bible mandates for us. As demonstrated by the humanity of Christ, spiritual growth from this divine source of strength enables each believer to fulfill his personal destiny ... God has issued hundreds of commands throughout the NT. We are instructed to be filled with the Spirit, to confess our sins, to love the brethren, to rest in the Lord, to maintain humility, to learn and apply the Word of God, to love God and be occupied with Christ, to acquire virtue, to resist evil, to achieve spiritual maturity. These imperatives are not isolated mandates unrelated to one another; all these diverse commandments for the believer combine to form the perfect divine system. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

No apology is needed for translating *logos* as *doctrine*. Most of the time it makes much better sense than the word *word*. John, therefore, teaches that if anyone holds to the divine doctrine, in him is the love of God truly perfected. Almost all commentators ask whether “the love of God” is a subjective or objective genitive. Is our love of God perfected by our advance in theological truth; or is God’s love for us so perfected? In the Christian who maintains God’s truth, God’s love has truly come to fruition. We know we are in Christ because we maintain his doctrine. (G. Clark) “Perfected” means having accomplished its design or reached its end ... God’s Word becomes everything to such a soul: his delight, his food, his rule, his chart. His supreme delight is to commune with and enjoy Him. (A. Pink) Inward sanctification is not to be confused with any self-generated improvement of character. Nor is it only our self-yieldedness to Christ. (J. Baxter) Knowing God implies keeping His Word; and keeping His Word involves loving Him; and all this implies being in Him, having that fellowship with Him and His Son in which the Christian’s life consists. (A. Plummer)

The only ground for Agape is to be found in God Himself. God’s love is altogether *spontaneous*. Divine love is unmotivated. According to Christianity, “motivated” love is human; spontaneous and unmotivated love is divine. Agape is indifferent to value. It is only when all thought of the worthiness of the object is abandoned that we can understand what Agape is. Agape does not recognize value, but creates it. Agape is a value-creating principle. Agape is the initiator of fellowship with God. There is from man’s side no way at all that leads to God. If such a thing as fellowship between God and man nevertheless exists, this can only be due to God’s own action ... It is the idea of Agape that hallmarks the new way of fellowship with God which Christianity brings, and the idea of Agape that characterizes its new ethic and turns the old commandment of love into a “new commandment” with a specifically Christian content. (A. Nygren) God is love. That is His nature, and He imparts this nature to be the sphere in which His children dwell ... This is the same idea of divine love as the *sphere* or *element* of renewed being ... The idea of divine love is thus complex. Love, in its very essence, is reciprocal. (K. Wuest)

God’s love, Agape in the fullest sense of the term, has neither the appetitive nature of Eros nor the responsive character of Faith; it is entirely independent of external stimulus and motivation. Agape is further distinguished from Eros in that it is “indifferent to value.” That is to say, it is neither kindled by the attractiveness nor quenched by the

unattractiveness of its object. This is seen most clearly in God's love for sinners, who are loved in spite of their sin. His loving is not determined by the worthiness or unworthiness of those whom He loves, but by His own nature of love. God always retains the initiative in loving. Such a love as this cannot be shown by man towards God, since man's love for God at its best is never more than a response to God's prior love for man. But man can show such a love towards his fellow men ... This freedom of Agape love in relation to its object is the main point when it is said to be "indifferent to value." (P. Watson) Agape, attributed in the first place to God, is the very love with which He both loves Himself and loves men, His gift of love infused into the faithful necessarily embraces both objects; it could not do otherwise. (C. Spicq)

In the case of Eros we may think first and foremost of Plato, and in the case of Agape we may think, say, of Paul ... Platonic Eros and Pauline Agape have, so to speak, no common denominator ... Nevertheless, an admixture of the Eros motif has weakened the Agape motif and rendered it more or less ineffective ... Between vulgar Eros and Christian Agape there is no relation at all, and if we had only this form of Eros to consider the problem of Eros and Agape would easily be solved. The heavenly Eros, however, in its most sublimated and spiritualized form, is the born rival of the idea of Agape ... Agape has always had to be asserting itself afresh lest it should be quite overwhelmed by Eros; and how it sometimes breaks out, if only at isolated points in Christian history, with all its original force ... The supreme formal statement is reached in the Johannine "God is Agape." It is the Christian conception of fellowship with God that gives the idea of Agape its meaning. (A. Nygren) Grace is both the love in which God permanently envelops the Christian and the gift that infuses the love. (C. Spicq) *Word* signifies God's commandments in general. John is not reducing Christianity to a form of legalism ... If we are *in Him* we enjoy fellowship with Him, we know Him, and we walk in the light. (L. Morris)

This fellowship with the Son as well as with the Father ... is like the river in Ezekiel – at the first it is up to the ankles – afterwards it is up to the knees. And then up to the loins and then it becomes a river to swim in. There are, I fear, few of us who have waded where there is a river to swim in. But, blessed be God, though it is only up to the ankles, yet we have fellowship and if we have a little of it, that little is the seed of more and the certain pledge of greater joys to come. (C. Spurgeon) Agape is neither a feeling nor an emotion, but a way of acting: it presupposes nothing lovely or desirable in its object, it is concerned in no way with its own needs and their satisfaction; the love of God is shown in obedience. (J. Burnaby) Motivation for Agape comes from the nature of God, it is not motivated by anything in the thing loved. Agape is indifferent to value. The Love of God, not motivated by the worth of the thing loved, actually *creates value* in the object. (D. Schwartz) The obedient child of God is characterized, not by any representative trait or quality of his own personality, but merely as the subject of the work of divine love: as the sphere in which that love accomplishes its perfect work. (M. Vincent)

Love such as God Himself feels – divine love – becomes therefore an endowment of the Christian ... This love communicated to man is effective in him towards the brethren and

towards God Himself ... The perfection of love is conditioned by the completeness of obedience ... a continuous growth, a vital development, an advance to maturity ... Thus there is a progressive closeness of relation in the three phrases used in this section: cognition, communion, constancy. (B. Wescott) The love of God has been perfected in him who keeps His Word. This cannot mean that the love to God of that man who keeps His Word is so perfected as not to admit of further growth or progress. (W. Jones) If we take "perfected" as meaning that which is appropriately developed, that which has attained its end, then we see how love is perfected in keeping His Word. (W. Jones) Nothing in human effort or will, nothing in our human loves, distorted as they are by sin, can be relied upon as indications of the love of God. (D. Williams) It is easy for a man to claim that he is "in God" – that his life is bound up in the life of God, that he has fellowship with God. But such a claim is to be verified by a searching practical test. (F. Bruce)

1 John 2:5 But (adversative) if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe he will, maybe he won't") someone (Subj. Nom.; indefinite) keeps on maintaining (τηρέω, PASubj.3S, Iterative, Potential; residing and functioning in, observing, executing) His (Abl. Source) Word (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Gate 4: consistent, daily intake of Bible doctrine), the virtue love (Subj. Nom.; spontaneous, unmotivated, indifferent to value, creative, impersonal love is based entirely on doctrine) from God (Abl. Source) is truly (adv.) being accomplished (τελείω, Perf.PI3S, Gnostic; bring to the goal, attain the objective, Gate 8: completion of an edification complex of the soul) in him (Loc. Sph., demonstrative: *this one*). By this (Instr. Means; momentum inside the D.D.) we have come to realize (γινώσκω, PAI1P, Gnostic; comprehend, understand) that (conj. As Dir. Obj.) we are (εἰμί, PAI1P, Gnostic; residing) in it (Loc. Sph.; agape virtue love, the love complex).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:5** ὃς δ' ἂν τηρῇ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον, ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ τετελείωται, ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἔσμεν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:5** qui autem servat verbum eius vere in hoc caritas Dei perfecta est in hoc scimus quoniam in ipso sumus

LWB 1 John 2:6 **Anyone [member of the royal family of God] who claims to reside in it [virtue love] ought to keep walking [continued function in the operational sphere of virtue love] in exactly the same manner as [precisely correct protocol] He Himself [Jesus Christ] also walked [in the prototype sphere of virtue love].**

^{KW} **1 John 2:6** He who is constantly saying that he as a habit of life is living in close fellowship with and dependence upon Him is morally obligated just as that One conducted himself, also himself in the manner spoken of to be conducting himself.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:6** He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Any member of the royal family of God who alleges (Customary Present tense) that he resides in the sphere of virtue (agape) love is obligated (Gnomic Present tense) to keep walking (Iterative Present tense) in exactly the same manner as Jesus Christ walked (Constative Aorist tense) during His 33-year ministry in the sphere of virtue love. Is “residing” (residence) positional truth or experiential truth? Our residence in the sphere of virtue (agape) love is experiential truth. Residence is the sphere you live in; function is living in that sphere. This is a passage which refers to residence in virtue (agape) love and functioning in it like He functioned in it. Some commentators believe this residence is positional and refers to Christ, but I disagree with that assessment. The pronoun can be masculine (Jesus) or neuter (love). I chose neuter in the prior verse as well as in this verse because the topic is virtue (agape) love. The Gnostic believers alleged they were residing in virtue (agape) love, but their experiential walk contradicted their claims. They were walking in sin instead of in the sphere of virtue love.

Jesus Christ walked in the operational sphere of virtue (agape) love (dynasphere, love complex) and then bequeathed it to us in fully operational order, i.e., the operational sphere of virtue love. This sphere of love or love complex is identical to the sphere of divine power (dynasphere) and is provided by the filling of the Spirit. “Walking” means living one’s life in a certain manner, in this case, by the same protocol that Jesus lived by when He walked in the Spirit. Residence and function in this sphere of virtue (agape) love requires adherence to precisely correct protocol. There is no “winging it” in God’s system. Two comparative adverbs are translated together as “in exactly the same manner as” - an intensive absolute. This means we must follow in His footsteps, without veering from the true path like the Gnostics were recommending. The Greek word for “claiming” means our life should coincide with our words. We must walk the talk. We must function in the filling of the Spirit, i.e., in the sphere of divine power or in the sphere of virtue (agape) love. Then, and only then, will we walk as He walked.

Let me elaborate on the use of the Locative of Sphere. The pronoun “auto” in this passage and in the prior verse (2:5) is identical for both masculine and neuter genders. It can be legitimately translated as “in it” or “in Him.” The question is whether John is referring to “love” or “Christ.” Both passages speak about love and Christ. Either option can be weaved into John’s statements. In a manner of speaking, if a believer resides “in the sphere of it” (virtue love, the love complex) he is also residing “in the sphere of Christ,” and vice versa. The choice is not that simple, but fortunately either selection works well. I found scholars on both sides of the issue in my research. These ambiguities abound in 1 John, so get used to them! What made me chose “in love” over “in Christ” is the isagogics behind the Gnostic believers John is concerned with. It seems more likely that these Gnostics would claim to be residing “in love” as opposed to “in Christ” since the philosophical debates about love were so prominent at that time.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Jesus Christ has given us access to the very system that sustained Him throughout His first advent. His life on earth is proof that the system works. There is no fainting in the soul when residing inside the divine sphere of power and love ... Christ is our “most important love” (Rev. 2:4). We come to know Him by living within the system in which He lived. We think His thoughts, for the “mind of Christ” is Bible doctrine. We have the same attitude that governed His life. His inner dynamics are generated within us. Eventually, His virtues become our virtues. His great capacity for life and happiness becomes our capacity, His integrity becomes our integrity. If we continue to learn, think about, and apply Bible doctrine, the divine system will produce this spiritual growth in us. This is the very purpose for which God keeps us alive ... United with Christ and granted the same power system in which His humanity constantly lived, we are equipped to be “imitators of God and to walk just as Christ walked.” The divine system, with all its parts functioning in proper balance, gives the Christian a life of grace and truth. By understanding God’s plan as a system, we can adhere to all God’s mandates for us. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

These people understand positional truth, but are completely clueless when it comes to experiential truth. Just because they are Christians does NOT mean they are residing in the divine dynasphere, nor does it follow that they are living the Christian way of life. Morality and works outside the D.D. won’t cut it - these will be heaped on a bonfire and burned before the Judgment Seat of Christ. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The virtue of agape is given or infused by the Holy Spirit. The virtue passes, flows from God to us ... God is the only being to whom agape properly belongs. He alone possesses love of this kind. John declares later that love is His very nature. Nevertheless, transcendent agape can be communicated, thanks to Christ. All the power of the infused pneuma and all the virtualities of the gift which believers have received are to be put into action. (C. Spicq) The spiritual dynamics of agape is not works of the flesh or human good, but residence and function in the sphere of power and love by the filling of the Spirit. (LWB) Walking implies advancement. The Divine life in man is a progressive thing. (W. Jones)

A mere outward compliance with the Divine precepts, no matter how punctilious and comprehensive it be, is not sufficient: we are required to walk even as Christ walked – to be regulated by the same principles, actuated by the same motives, directed unto the same ends as His were. (A. Pink) To be or abide in God or in Christ implies an *habitual condition*, not isolated apprehensions of His presence. Obedience, not feeling, is the test of union. (A. Plummer) It has been remarked that to have fellowship with God, to know Him, to love Him, to be in Him, and to abide in Him are expressions which, in John’s epistle, all mean substantially the same thing. No doubt this is so, nevertheless there are shades of distinction between them, and it is to our loss if we fail to perceive the same. In our judgment there is a designed gradation and intensification in the several expressions used in the passage we are now studying ... Abiding in Christ connotes a lasting experience, in contrast with those evanescent effects which a hearing of the Gospel produces in so many, which are likened to the early dew which soon evaporates. (A. Pink) “I dwell” speaks of a permanent and intimate relationship rather than a temporary, superficial association. (D. Burdick)

The Christian is in God by spiritual fellowship. Through Christ the Christian is brought into intimate and hallowed communion with God – he believes His revelation of Himself, he endeavors to apprehend His thoughts, he accepts His gracious will, he receives his best inspirations from Him. Thus he has his spiritual being in God. He derives his inner life of thoughts, affection, purpose, and power from Him. (W. Jones) To abide, to remain, is used very often of persons abiding in a home, which implies more than mere position, but rather fellowship, communion, dependence, harmony, friendship. To abide in the Lord Jesus therefore implies not only position, but relationship. It implies fellowship, friendship, dependence, harmony, communion ... The Christ-like life here admonished must be the continuous, habitual, moment by moment experience of the believer, no spasmodic, infrequent sort of thing. (K. Wuest) When the author speaks about living in God, it is something more than keeping God's commands that he has in mind. It is the new and very real spiritual existence that believers enjoy, and which is effected through the agency of the Spirit, who bears witness to the truth. (C. Kruse)

The term "walk" imports progress, for to stand still is not to walk. Walking denotes growth from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from glory to glory. There is no such thing as remaining stationary in the Christian life: if we do not go forward by the strength of grace, we shall go backward by the power of corruption. There are indeed those who maintain the routine of outward religious duties, yet who make no advance. Spiritual walking is in contrast both with lazy listlessness and useless running around in circles. It signifies an increase in the experiential knowledge of Christ, a closer conformity to His death and a better acquaintance with the power of His resurrection, a deeper insight into the mysteries of the Gospel ... A single step is not a walk: the figure expresses steady motion. The believer is to be active yet rooted, to walk and yet be stable. (A. Pink) Knowing God is to walk in fellowship with Him. It does not refer to the entrance into eternal life at justification but to the continuing experience with Christ called fellowship. What is in focus here is not whether or not they are regenerate, but whether or not God's love has been "perfected in them." God's love cannot be brought to completion in one who does not have it at all. (J. Dillow)

Jesus then walked. His life was a walk. The idea of earnestness, of definiteness of purpose, of decision and progress, is thus suggested. Many men live as if they were not really walking, but lounging and sauntering; or running fitfully and by starts, with intervals of aimless, listless sloth, or musing, or dreaming, or sleep-walking. Some are said to be fast-livers, their life not being a walk, but a brief tumultuous rush of excitement, ending soon in vacancy, or something worse. Others again live as if life were to be a gay and giddy dance; alas, they may find it in a dance of death. It is something to apprehend and feel that life is a walk, not a game, or pastime, or outburst of passion; not a random flight, or a groping, creeping, groveling crawl, or a mazy labyrinthine puzzle; but a walk, a steady walk, on onward march and movement, a business-like, purpose-like, step-by-step advance in front ... Such a walk is real life, life in earnest. Such a walk pre-eminently was the life of Jesus ... It was not a walk through pleasant places. It was no holiday excursion, no easy ramble. And yet the sense of a high and intimate community

of motive, means, and end between Him and the Father, which His abiding ever in God must have inspired, could scarcely fail to invest the scenery through which He passed, at its very wildest and darkest points, with a certain charm of divine majesty and awe, as well as also to impart to His soul, in passing through it, I say not equanimity only, but a measure also of deep and chastened joy. (R. Candlish)

Continual spiritual growth is the believer's objective in every dispensation, but in the Church Age the means to this end are more powerful than in any other age. Mystery doctrine teaches that God gives each member of the royal family access to divine power in his inner life (Phil. 3:10) while providing the problem-solving devices designed originally for the humanity of Christ. Spiritual victory lies in using these assets. The result is the progressive attainment of spiritual maturity, with all the mental and emotional richness that maturity brings ... United with Christ and granted the same power system in which His humanity constantly lived, we are equipped to be imitators of God and to walk just as Christ walked. He functioned in the prototype divine dynasphere; we can function in the operational divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) If we abide in God, we abide in the great source and fountain of love: in the infinite ocean of pure and perfect benevolence. (R. Candlish)

1 John 2:6 Anyone (Subj. Nom.; indefinite, any member of the royal family of God) who claims (λέγω, PAPtc.NSM, Customary, Substantival; maintains, alleges) to reside (μένω, PAInf., Static, Inf. as Dir. Obj. of Verb; residence) in it (Loc. Sph.; virtue love) ought to (ὀφείλω, PAI3S, Gnostic; should, is obligated) keep walking (περιπατέω, PAInf., Iterative, Inf. as Dir. Obj. of Verb; continual function in the operational D.D.) in exactly (reference to the "precise, correct protocol" required) the same manner as (two correlative, comparative adverbs, "just as" and "in the same manner as", create an *intensive absolute*) He (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) Himself (Nom. Appos.) also (adjunctive) walked (περιπατέω, AAI3S, Constative; in the *prototype D.D.*).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:6** ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν καὶ αὐτὸς [οὕτως] περιπατεῖν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:6** qui dicit se in ipso manere debet sicut ille ambulavit et ipse ambulare

LWB 1 John 2:7 Beloved [members of John's unseen congregation], I am not writing a new mandate to you, but an old mandate which you have possessed from the beginning [of the Church Age]; the old mandate is the Word [doctrinal message on residing in the sphere of light and love in order to have fellowship with the Trinity] which you have heard [from Jesus in John 15:9-17].

^{KW} **1 John 2:7** Divinely loved ones, no commandment new in quality as I writing to you, but a commandment, an old one, which you have had constantly from the beginning. The commandment, the old one, is the Word which you heard.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:7** Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John addresses his unseen congregation as “beloved,” a variation on agape love. He is writing to them (Aoristic Present tense) to remind them of an old mandate they have heard many times before, one that they have possessed (Durative Imperfect tense) since the beginning of the Church Age dispensation. Writing, as we have mentioned before, is how John communicates with his non face-to-face congregations. The mandate he is referring to is from his gospel, John 15:9-19, so it isn’t a new one that they haven’t heard before – in contrast to the “new” doctrines the Gnostic believers are spreading. It is a command to reside and function in the sphere of agape or virtue love, which is a requirement for fellowship with God. It is a command to extend agape love, in the form of impersonal love, to all believers. It also includes an understanding of God’s particular, selecting love towards His elect. John is going to elaborate on this doctrine, repeating the basics they have already embraced from his gospel and adding some additional details.

John’s emphasis on loving God during the Church Age is focused on the indwelling of each Person of the Trinity in the believer and the filling of the Spirit. The difference in the commandment to Israel to “love God” and the mandate to the Christian to “love God” is the sphere of power, the love complex, which has been given to us to reside and function in. The nation Israel did not have this sphere of power and agape love to operate from. John is going to emphasize the difference between living in the light and living in darkness, with an allusion that the world is slowly coming to an end in God’s overall plan. John’s phrase “which you have possessed from the beginning” could also be understood as a progressive imperfect tense; positive believers in his unseen congregations have been making progress in the spiritual life by adhering to this mandate, but they have not arrived at spiritual maturity (supergrace status) yet.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

We are not discovering Christianity. Christianity was a revelation committed to men by the Holy Spirit in the very beginning of the dispensation. (H. Ironside) He assures his friends that he is not urging them to keep some new command of which they have never heard before. Rather, it is an old one which they know well. The beginning is the time when the readers first heard the gospel ... Within the author’s community it appears that the love command was handed on alongside the gospel message itself. (C. Kruse) By correctly defining “the beginning” of 2:7 as the commencement of Christian experience, we learn that the precepts of brotherly love is the law of the new life – the spiritual element which in all generations has bound together the whole company and community of the saints. That these words have an experiential force, as well as dispensational application, is clear. The members must be conformed to their Head, believers must walk suitably to the Christian order. But that is possible only as a miracle of grace is wrought in them. (A. Pink)

1 John 2:7 Beloved (Voc. Address; members of John's unseen congregation), I am not (neg. particle) writing (γράφω, PAI1S, Aoristic; non face-to-face teaching) a new (Acc. Gen. Ref.; never heard before) mandate (Acc. Dir. Obj.) to you (Dat. Ind. Obj.), but (adversative) an old (Acc. Gen. Ref.; heard before, repetition) mandate (Acc. Dir. Obj.) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) you have possessed (ἔχω, Imperf.AI2P, Durative: Progressive) from the beginning (Adv. Gen. Time; of the Church Age); the old (Nom. Spec.) mandate (Subj. Nom.; reside in the sphere of love and have fellowship with God) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static) the Word (Pred. Nom.; doctrinal message) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) you have heard (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Constativ; from Jesus in John 15:9-19).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:7** Ἀγαπητοί, οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἐντολὴν παλαιὰν ἣν εἴχετε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ παλαιὰ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:7** carissimi non mandatum novum scribo vobis sed mandatum vetus quod habuistis ab initio mandatum vetus est verbum quod audistis

LWB 1 John 2:8 **On the other hand, I am writing [repetition] a new mandate to you [to reside in the love complex], which is true [reliable doctrine] in Him [Jesus Christ inside the prototype love complex] and in you [the believer in the operational love complex], because the darkness [cosmic system] is passing away [the divine system will defeat the cosmic system if you follow this mandate] and the true light [doctrinal thinking] is already shining [momentum in the love complex reflected in your soul].**

^{KW} **1 John 2:8** Again, a commandment, one new in quality, I am writing to you, which fact is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is being caused to pass away, and the light, the genuine light, already is shining.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:8** Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The old mandate in John 15:9-19 was originally given to Jesus Christ to live in the *prototype* love complex. The new mandate was given to Church Age believers to live in the *operational* love complex. It's the same mandate, but addressed to Him first, and to us later in time. Jesus spoke about agape love during His earthly ministry, but the ability to live in the "sphere of love" in the filling of the Spirit was not possible for believers at that time. That didn't happen until Pentecost. So when John says "I am writing a new mandate to you," he is reminding his unseen congregation about the love complex by way of repetition. This doctrine of agape love is in Him and in you, if you are residing in it. In this case, John is assuming the best. He knows the darkness of the cosmic system is passing away (Pictorial Present tense) and the light of the love

complex is already shining. This could be a futuristic look at the cosmic system being defeated by the divine system. This is rather evident, since as Christians, we know light will eventually be victorious over darkness. But John is painting a picture, once again, of experiential sanctification.

The following verse puts this darkness and light in proper perspective. Darkness is anthropocentric and satanic thinking in the cosmic system. Light is divine thinking in the love complex. The believer who resides and functions in the love complex has divine viewpoint. The believer who resides and functions in the cosmic system has human or satanic viewpoint. The believer who is residing and functioning in the love complex has divine thinking reflected in his soul; this is the true, dependable, sensible light of Bible doctrine shining forth (Iterative Present tense) towards God and others. Residing in darkness will not produce light. John is reminding us of the mandate to reside in the light. In subsequent verses he is going to point out the inconsistencies of claiming you are in the love complex though you don't act like it. He has heard that some of them (Gnostic-leaning believers) are not "walking the talk." But others are making progress in the spiritual life, and if they continue, there will come a point in their life where they will spend more time in the love complex than in darkness. When that happens, experientially, darkness will be "passing away" as a means of stumbling in their lives.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The picture is that of the darkness of sin and unbelief as passing by as a parade goes by on the street. All parades have an end. So will end some day the parade of Satan's hosts ... The false light is Satan who in imitation of God covers himself over with light assumed from the outside, which light does not proceed from nor is it representative of what he is in his inner being, an angel of darkness. Satan, as an angel of darkness, attempts to deceive and attract the human race by disguising himself as an angel of light. (K. Wuest) Thanks to the victory of Christ, the outcome of the conflict between light and darkness is a foregone conclusion, but the conflict is still going on. Hence the tension of Christian life in the present world, a tension reflected throughout this epistle, not to say throughout the whole New Testament. For ever since Christianity was first preached the Christian citizen has been a puzzle both to himself and to his rulers. By the elementary necessities of his creed he has been a man living in two worlds. (F. Bruce, Percy)

Daily progress is necessary and the faith of every one has its dawn before it reaches the noon-day. But as God continues the inculcation of the same doctrine, in which He bids us to make advances, the knowledge of the Gospel is justly said to be the true light. (A. Pink) The new command of Jesus was the old command for the author and his readers. He is not imposing some novel obligation upon his readers, but only recalling them to what they have known from the very beginning of their Christian walk ... The sense of the whole clause is that the author writes a new command which finds true expression in Jesus Christ and in his readers ... *The darkness which the author here says is passing away is the realm in which sinful behavior predominates.* (C. Kruse) Love for the brethren is now urged on grounds on which it was not under the Mosaic economy ... The Lord Jesus displayed a love which was superior to all the faults and failings of

its objects, a love which never varied or cooled, which deemed no service too menial and no sacrifice too great. (A. Pink)

Every day we should be growing, and it is impossible to grow apart from a study of the Word of God. The written Word reveals the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the Bread of Life and the Water of Life. We will famish if we don't feed upon Him. Let me repeat that the great problem in the world today is that the majority of believers are trying to follow a few little rules and regulations; they are programmed like a computer. They feel that they are living the Christian life if they do all those little things. Oh, my friend, you are not a computer; you are a human being ... As you look around you today, you will see that the darkness has not passed yet. Ignorance of the Word of God is still much in evidence. (R. McGee) Darkness is represented not only as the cosmic sphere in which carnal believers operate in, but also the false concepts and activities within that system. Light is represented not only as the divine sphere in which positive believers operate in, but also the Bible doctrine within that system. Our goal is to live in the divine system and use Bible doctrine every minute of every day – then the temptation and power of the cosmic system will be *passing away* in our life. (LWB)

1 John 2:8 On the other hand (correlative adv., repetition), I am writing (γράφω, PAI1S, Iterative) a new (Acc. Spec.) mandate (Acc. Dir. Obj.; to reside in the love complex) to you (Dat. Adv.; positive believers), which (Nom. Appos.; mandate) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) true (Pred. Nom.; reliable doctrine) in Him (Loc. Sph.; Jesus Christ inside the prototype divine dynasphere) and (connective) in you (Loc. Sph.; the believer inside the operational divine dynasphere), because (causal) the darkness (Subj. Nom.; the cosmic system) is passing away (παράγω, PPI3S, Pictorial; the divine dynasphere will be victorious over the cosmic system if the believer follows this new mandate) and (connective) the true (Descr. Nom.; dependable, sensible) light (Subj. Nom.; Bible doctrine as opposed to cosmic thinking) is already (Temporal Adv.; now) shining (φαίνω, PAI3S, Iterative; momentum inside the divine dynasphere is being reflected in your soul).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:8** πάλιν ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία παράγεται καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:8** iterum mandatum novum scribo vobis quod est verum et in ipso et in vobis quoniam tenebrae transeunt et lumen verum iam lucet

LWB 1 John 2:9 When anyone [arrogant believer] claims he is in the sphere of light [divine system], but hates his brother [fellow believer], he is in the sphere of darkness [cosmic system] up to [and including] the present.

^{KW} **1 John 2:9** He who is saying that in the light he is, and is habitually hating his brother [Christian] is in the darkness up to this moment.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:9** He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John paints a very real scenario in which an arrogant believer who is completely divorced from reality claims he is residing in the sphere of light (Static Present tense), living the Christian Way of Life, when he really isn't. In reality, he is residing in the sphere of darkness (Durative Present tense). He has been living in this sphere of darkness (the cosmic system) for so long, that he is actually digging himself into deeper and deeper *levels* of darkness (Progressive Present tense). The proof of this residence in darkness while claiming to reside in the light is that he hates fellow believers. He is so locked into Cosmic 2, the hatred complex, that he cannot exercise the least bit of impersonal love; he has no relaxed mental attitude. You might be wondering: Can a Christian really hate another Christian? Yes, indeed! Some of the most evil people I've encountered in life were born-again believers. A Christian can live in every single gate in Cosmic 1 and Cosmic 2 and still go to heaven. I have personally known an individual like this (at least one) – *a believer who at one time lived in every single gate of both cosmic dynaspheres* – See Thieme's teaching aid on hamartiology in the introduction. This type of believer is out there. They are indeed Christians, functioning as Satan's evangelists for the cosmic system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Now, this hatred comes from the old capacity. Hatred will never, under any circumstances, come from the new capacity given by new creation. The apostle says he that hates his brother is in darkness. Such a man is manifesting the fruits of the old capacity. But he that loves his brother abides in the light. This loving does not come from the old capacity; it comes from the new capacity. So, the apostle says we have within us two potentialities: love and hate. Both come from within the same realm of the heart. The old heart manifests itself in hatred, rancor, bitterness, and maliciousness; the new heart manifests itself as the love of God is manifested through the individual. Constant warfare therefore exists between the old heart and the new heart within the child of God. If this manifestation springs from the old heart, then we know immediately that it is wrong. If it can be traced to the new capacity, then the Holy Spirit of God is manifesting His fruit through us. (J. Pentecost) "Heart" or "kardia" is actually the mind, not the physical organ that pumps blood throughout your body. (LWB) "Hates" is in the present tense and therefore has to do with habitual, continuous animosity harbored in the heart. (R. Lightner)

The brother is a real child of God, for there is not a single instance in the NT where a fellow man is designated a brother. The only brotherhood mentioned therein is the Household of Faith. (A. Pink) What a man says is not always true. So here in John, the man says he is in the light, but he is not. (G. Clark) This word (*lego*) can be translated by various degrees, depending on the extent of the person's illusion or unreality, each level getting more intense: (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

- 1) Claims
- 2) Maintains

- 3) Asserts
- 4) Contends

Men fall into two classes, those who are in fellowship with God, and therefore walk in light and love, and those who are not in fellowship with God, and therefore walk in darkness and hatred. (K. Wuest) It is their hatred of fellow believers which shows they are still in the darkness. Does the author imply here that his opponents actually hated all the brothers, that is, all believers? It would be highly unlikely that they did so, for surely they did not hate one another. It is more likely that the brothers they hated were the author himself and those who belonged to his group. If this is the case, we are confronted in this verse with evidence of a very sad split within early Christianity, one which manifested itself, at least on one side, in an active hatred of other believers. (C. Kruse)

1 John 2:9 When anyone (Subj. Nom.; the arrogant believer who is divorced from reality) claims (λέγω, PAPtc.NMS, Static, Temporal, Articular; they think they are living the Christian Way of Life, but they are locked into Satan's cosmic system) he is (εἰμί, PAInf., Descriptive, Inf. as Dir. Obj. of Verb) in the sphere of light (Loc. Sph.; residing in the divine dynasphere), but (adversative) hates (μισέω, PAPtc.NMS, Static, Temporal; detests, loathes, function of cosmic II, complete collapse of impersonal love) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer: known or unknown), he is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Durative: Progressive) in the sphere of darkness (Loc. Sph.; cosmic system) up to (Adv. Time; and including) the present (Adv. Immediate Present; immediately, at once, now).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:9** Ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:9** qui dicit se in luce esse et fratrem suum odit in tenebris est usque adhuc

LWB 1 John 2:10 He who continues to love [impersonal, virtue love] his brother [fellow believer] resides in the sphere of light [divine system]; moreover, there is no cause for ruin [enticement or temptation to sin] in it [the sphere of light].

^{KW} **1 John 2:10** He who is habitually loving his brother [Christian] in the light is abiding, and a stumbling block in him there is not.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:10** He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The believer who continues to exercise impersonal love as a problem-solving device towards obnoxious believers (Iterative Present tense) is residing in the sphere of light (Customary Present

tense). The sphere of light is also called the love complex, the sphere of divine power, the divine dynasphere. The filling of the Spirit produces the ability to maintain a *relaxed mental attitude* toward other Christians. Agape love is infused into the believer when he is filled with the Spirit. One of the outward expressions or functions is impersonal love, as well as common courtesy and respect - even if you don't like these believers much. Agape love comes from the subject and does not rely on any characteristics of the object. Moreover, the love complex does not produce (Gnomic Present tense) any kind of enticement or temptation to sin. So any enticement to sin comes from the flesh or the cosmic system. It beckons the believer to leave the divine system with a promise of greater happiness, but it can only deliver misery and unhappiness in the long-term. The believer chooses to remain in the divine system in love and power, or he chooses to sin and enter the cosmic system. So what do you do if you find yourself loathing some Christian in your periphery? Confess it as sin and get back into the love complex as soon as possible!

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In the life that is governed by Agape, the acting subject is not man himself ; it is – as Paul expresses it – God, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Agape of Christ. Between Christ and the Christian there is a deep, intimate fellowship. In virtue of this intimate fellowship, it is Christ who is the real subject of the Christian life. God's Agape can be described by Paul quite realistically as a kind of "pneumatic fluid," which is "shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." (Rom. 5:5) This Divine Agape infused by the Holy Spirit forms the real substance of the Christian life, and in the life that Christians lead among their fellow men it is meant to be passed on to others. The Christian has nothing of his own to give; the love which he shows to his neighbor is the love which God has infused into him ... Agape has for Paul a value and significance of its own, entirely independent of its object. (A. Nygren) Agape is a regard for the neighbor which in crucial respects is independent and unalterable. To these features there is a corollary: the regard is for every person qua human existent, to be distinguished from those special traits, actions, etc., which distinguish particular personalities from each other ... One ought to be committed to the other's well-being independently and unalterably; and to view the other as irreducibly valuable *prior to his doing anything in particular*. (G. Outka)

The Christian lives "in Christ," and Christ lives and works in him; he is "constrained by the Agape of Christ," or "led by the Spirit," and the stream of love that has been poured out in his heart flows forth to his neighbor. In all its various manifestations it is one and the same Agape, not merely human love, but an outflow from God's own life ... Here the question no longer arises whether Agape is love to God or love to one's neighbor. It is just simply Agape, the life of Agape shining its own light, regardless of any significance it might acquire from its object ... Agape and fellowship with God belong inseparably together, so that each implies the other. We cannot speak of love without speaking of fellowship with God, nor of fellowship with God without speaking of love. It is Agape that distinguishes the new fellowship with God which Christianity brings, a fellowship not governed by law but by love. And conversely, when we wish to say what love is, in the Christian sense of the word, we cannot avoid referring to Christian fellowship with God. This is so even in the case of love for one's neighbor and love for enemies, for the meaning of that also is determined by its connection with God. (A. Nygren)

Agape means identification with his interests in utter independence of the question of his attractiveness. (K. Barth) Independence connotes that the love in question does not arise from and is not proportioned to anything a given neighbor individually possesses or has acquired. It is based neither on favoritism nor instinctive aversion ... The evaluation of the other as of irreducible worth and dignity extends to everyone alike. Comparisons at the most basic level are also ruled out. I shall use “equal regard” to refer to the agent-commitment and neighbor-evaluation already noted ... The character of agape originates from grace as the pattern and prototype. (G. Outka) God’s love is creative, value-creative and virtue creative. Agape does not recognize value, but creates it ... God’s love is also the initiator of fellowship. Man, by his own resources, cannot know God. If fellowship is then a reality it can only be due to God’s own action. (A. Nygren) Paul, indeed, insists that knowledge divorced from love is not true knowledge; “but if one loves God, one is known by Him” (1 Cor. 8:3) and his knowledge of God will manifest itself in his love toward others. (F. Bruce)

Agape enjoins an equal consideration that is independent of changes in the particular states of the other. (G. Outka) Light is essential to love, and love is inseparable from this light. Light is love’s home, and love is light’s offspring. Love is born in the light ... Where ill will is cherished against a fellow saint the Holy Spirit is grieved and communion with God is hindered. (A. Pink) Abiding in love is abiding in the light. (R. Jamieson) Another interpretation takes “auto” as neuter: “There is no occasion of stumbling in it,” in the light. (W. Nicole) This is my interpretation. (LWB) Agape behavior is not native to human nature; it can be manifested only by believers who are controlled by the Spirit of God. (R. Lightner) John selected love as a major evidence of life lived in the light. (D. Burdick) Love comes from living in the sphere of light; hatred comes from living in the sphere of darkness. (LWB) Agape is frictionless harmony and unimpeded communion enabled by the power of grace. (G. Outka)

1 John 2:10 He who (Subj. Nom.) continues to love (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.AMS, Iterative, Circumstantial, Articular; impersonal, virtue love: Basic in gate 2, Advanced in gate 7) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer) resides (μένω, PAI3S, Customary) in the sphere of light (Loc. Sph.; the divine dynasphere); moreover (continuative), there is (εἶμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) no (neg. particle) cause for ruin (Pred. Nom.; enticement, temptation to sin, stumblingblock, caught in a trap) in it (Loc. Sph.; the divine dynasphere).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:10** ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει καὶ σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:10** qui diligit fratrem suum in lumine manet et scandalum in eo non est

LWB 1 John 2:11 **But when anyone makes it a habit to hate [mental attitude sin] his brother [fellow believer], he is in the sphere of darkness [hatred complex] and is continually walking [advancing into blackout of the soul] in the sphere of darkness [cosmic system], and has not understood in the past and continues not to understand in the present where he**

is going [disoriented to the plan of God], because the darkness [cosmic system] has blinded his eyes [spiritual perception is blacked-out].

^{KW} **1 John 2:11** But he who as a habit of life hates his brother [Christian] is in the darkness, and in the sphere of the darkness is habitually ordering his behavior, and he does not know where he is going, because the darkness blinded his eyes.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

When anyone makes it a habit to hate (Iterative Present tense) his Christian brother, he is in the sphere of darkness. Hatred is a mental attitude sin; it is a function of Satan's cosmic system – beginning with the emotional sins in Cosmic 1 and increasing by measure into Cosmic 2 or the hatred complex of sins. These mental attitude sins destroy the integrity of the soul. They cause believers to fight against God's Word every step of the way. The iterative present tense here means continuous action. Now and then we all meet somebody we don't like; we might even grow to hate them. This is a mental attitude sin, no matter how you look at it. But if we recognize this sin within and confess it to the Lord, we are immediately restored to fellowship. This is an occasional sin, not a lifestyle of sin. It is the believer who hates his Christian brother on a continuous basis (Iterative Present tense) that is walking in the sphere of darkness. Not only does this believer reside in the cosmic system, he also functions there on a regular basis.

This continuous function in the cosmic system causes him to advance into blackout of the soul. If the believer continues to live in the sphere of darkness, he will lose every Biblical precept and principle he has ever learned. The darkness he has embraced affects all his decisions in life. The cosmic system will blind the eyes of his spiritual perception until he becomes so confused that he has no idea where he is going in life (Customary Present tense). He won't understand or appreciate what happened to him at the moment of salvation, nor will he have any idea how to get back into God's program. He won't even realize he has a problem (Intensive Perfect tense); he will have spiritual Alzheimers. Moreover, the person who resides in the cosmic system will seek friends who also reside in the cosmic system. So you can often tell where a person resides by the quality of friends he keeps.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Hatred is more than an isolated mental attitude sin; hatred is a satanic system, a dynasphere of interlocking gates whose power can be resisted only in the greater power of the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Long ago the continual darkness deprived him of the very power of sight, so that he is in ignorance as to the course he is taking. (A. Plummer) The penalty of living in the darkness is not merely that one does not see, but that one goes blind. The neglected faculty is atrophied. (K. Wuest) When the darkness overtook, it blinded. The blindness is no new state into which he has come. (M. Vincent) The extent to which the Christian is practically in the light will determine the measure in which his old nature is held in check and the new one dominates his soul and regulates

his conduct ... Love must be joined with the light if we are to escape those snares which occasion the fall of many. (A Pink) Now, of course, there are other believers whose habits you dislike. You may have a dis-taste for some of their expressions. You may even have a personality that clashes with that of another brother. But that doesn't mean you hate him. (J. McGee)

It is not long before each Christian learns by painful experience that the calls of nature are unfavorable to the pursuits of grace, that the longing to please those who are near and dear to us by blood often leads us to the confines of sin, if not to the actual commission of it. Therefore to hate whatever opposes the rights of God or our own spiritual interests is among the clearest evidences of regeneration ... One of the most grievous trials which a believer has to endure is when one whom he had good reason to regard as a fellow saint turns against him and treats him maliciously. He expects the profane world to oppose and persecute him, but when those in the professing world do so it is much harder to bear. It is indeed a bitter cup which the child of God is called upon to drink when one wearing the name of Christ acts spitefully unto him; yet it is no unprecedented experience, and with the Word of God in his hands should come as no surprise. (A. Pink) Living in a state of spiritual darkness in hatred hardens the heart and distorts one's perspective. In short, it creates more blindness, hardness, and hatred. (R. Lightner)

Because of the presence of both the old and a new capacity within the believer, there is a constant conflict going on within the child of God. This conflict is absent in the unbeliever because the unbeliever does not have a second, or new, capacity to war against the first. The unbeliever may have conflicts *within* this one area, but he cannot have conflicts *between* the old capacity and the new. Because you and I, as new creatures in Christ Jesus have been given this new capacity, we are engaged in a constant warfare within this emotional realm to determine whether the old heart will manifest its fruit or the new heart will manifest its fruit. In 1 John 2:9-11 we see this conflict spelled out for us. (J. Pentecost) When we harbor anger in our heart, John says, we are, in effect, murderers, and we abide in death, the very sphere from which we were delivered when we became Christians. We walk as "mere men," as if we were still in an unregenerate state. We are "carnal Christians" who are "walking in darkness" and are in danger of losing our reward (2 John 8) and shrinking back in shame at the judgment seat (1 John 2:28). Jesus Christ is not at home in such a heart. He does not abide there. (J. Dillow)

The Lord will test your integrity by putting serious cosmic, born-again believers in your immediate periphery who will hate you, be dishonest to you, and will abuse you on every possible occasion - grinning at you when they do it. But remember that you do not function on your discernment of these people, but on your integrity. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) It is characteristic of John to disregard the blurred colour of a human situation, and to insist upon the stark black and white of the underlying spiritual principle. His function is not that of a judge, weighing all the factors (Prov. 21:2), but that of a teacher elucidating the essential spirit of a matter, indeed showing things clearer than they are in actual fact. (R. Orr) It is to be carefully noted that it is not light alone which keeps us from stumbling. The knowledge of God's Word is indeed of great value and importance, for it provides us

with a sure rule to walk by, and also makes known those great and precious promises of God which we are to appropriate and build upon. (A. Pink)

The gates of the arrogance complex interlock with the gates of the hatred complex. Your pride intensifies into stubborn antagonism. When illusions of self-importance are exposed and challenged, you react with resentment. When divine establishment, the Gospel, or Bible doctrine contradicts your self-righteous delusions, you take offense at the truth. You rationalize your sins and defend your conceit by denying and attacking divine viewpoint thinking. To justify your evil, you despise the good. You become the ally of Satan in his unrelenting hatred of God and the plan of God. Hatred is more than an isolated mental attitude sin; hatred is a satanic system, a dynasphere of interlocking gates whose power can be resisted only in the greater power of the divine dynasphere. Your antagonism toward the plan of God increases as the gates of the hatred complex interlock with each other. Negativism spreads to every area of life. Work, politics, entertainment, and friends all become targets of your unconstructive criticism. Having destroyed your own relaxed mental attitude and capacity for divine blessings, you become a chronic complainer. Circumstances and people are never right; you are never satisfied. Enslaved in demon influence, you make yourself and those around you miserable. You can never afford to succumb to any of the gates of the hatred complex. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Believers in emotional arrogance, another gate in Satan's cosmic system, react emotionally to everything and often in irrationality. This results in locked-in, total preoccupation with self, which also blends in with psychosis in the arrogance complex and degeneration in the hatred complex of sins. Once a person reaches this stage of reversionism, there is virtually no recovery ... As a believer you should be able to handle your own emotional and other problems under the function of your royal priesthood by Bible doctrine in your soul, so seeking counseling is an admission of your inability to handle your own problems and is evidence of no Bible doctrine in your soul. You should be able to handle the problems of personal love, which has no virtue, with impersonal love, which has virtue, morality, and courage. When you hear someone say, "You bring out the worst in me," it is a statement that they cannot handle you or love of any kind. It is immaturity and a complete lack of integrity. So they switch from love to hate, which is where you get the statement, "Hell has no fury like a woman's scorn." She couldn't handle love, but she can sure handle hate. She hates the hell out of you, which is a sign of weakness and cosmic involvement, the tragic-flaw syndrome, which means she is in for a miserable life, whatever there is left of it. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 2:11 **But** (adversative) **when anyone** (Subj. Nom.) **makes it a habit to hate** (μισέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Temporal, Articular; function of cosmic 2: mental attitude sins destroy the integrity in your soul) **his** (Gen. Rel.) **brother** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer), **he is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static) **in the sphere of darkness** (Loc. Sph.; cosmic 2, hatred complex) **and** (connective) **is continually walking** (περιπατέω, PAI3S, Iterative; advancing into blackout of the soul) **in the sphere**

of darkness (Loc. Sph.; the cosmic system), and (connective) has not (neg. particle) understood in the past and continues not to understand in the present (οἶδα, Perf.AI3S, Intensive) where (Interrog. Place, Direction) he is going (ὑπάγω, PAI3S, Customary; disoriented to the plan of God), because (causal) the darkness (Subj. Nom.; the cosmic system) has blinded (τυφλώω, AAI3S, Culminative; blackout of the soul) his (Poss. Gen.) eyes (Acc. Dir. Obj.; perception).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:11** ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖ καὶ οὐκ οἶδεν ποῦ ὑπάγει, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:11** qui autem odit fratrem suum in tenebris est et in tenebris ambulat et nescit quo eat quoniam tenebrae obcaecaverunt oculos eius

LWB 1 John 2:12 I am writing to you [non-resident], children [young believers who need training, motivation and authority orientation], because your sins have been forgiven in the past [clean slate at the moment of regeneration] with the result that they keep on being forgiven [experiential forgiveness after confession] because of His Person [Jesus Christ].

^{KW} **1 John 2:12** I am writing to you, little children [born-ones, bairns], because your sins have been put away for you permanently because of His Name.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:12** I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Once again John uses written communication to address his non-resident congregations. He can't be there in person, so writing will have to do. He addresses three groups of believers, each in a different stage of spiritual growth. First, he addresses children – a reference to young believers who are in need of training, motivation and authority orientation. They didn't just become believers, or he would call them “paideia” or babies. They have already passed that stage of spiritual growth. But they haven't been Christians for long, meaning they are in pre-adolescence, spiritually speaking. When used by itself, “teknon” can mean a variety of things, including “students.” But when used with “pateres” and “neaniskoi” (fathers and young men) children is probably the best translation. These believers are neophytes and have just started over with a new life, i.e., are born again. Their sins have been forgiven in the past (Intensive Perfect tense; Latin: remitted) because of the Person of Jesus Christ. They are also being forgiven experientially every time they acknowledge them to the Father in prayer. This is the kind of teaching young believers need to hear until they get some “spiritual meat” on their bones.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The author is addressing three different groups among his readers and portraying three different levels of maturity attained by them. (C. Kruse) Now we are introduced, as it were, to the different members of God's family, notice being taken of their several ages or stages of growth,

with their corresponding spiritual attainments ... All of God's regenerated people are not of the same spiritual stature. There are distinct stages in their growth in grace, their actual attainments differing considerably ... The forgiveness of sins of those who believe is one of the first blessings announced by the Gospel: in fact there is no true proclamation of God's good news where that is not plainly set forth. (A. Pink) Must "teknia" and "paidia" apply to babies? (G. Clark) There are novices in religion, babes in Christ, those who are learning the rudiments of Christian godliness. The apostle may seem to encourage them by applying to them first. (M. Henry) He does not address those only of a tender age, but by little children he means men of all ages. I say this, because interpreters have incorrectly applied the term to children. (J. Calvin)

1 John 2:12 I am writing (γράφω, PA1LS, Pictorial; written communication) to you (Dat. Adv.; non-resident congregation), children (Voc. Address; believers who need training, motivation & authority), because (causal) your (Poss. Gen.) sins (Subj. Nom.) have been forgiven in the past with the result that they keep on being forgiven (ἀφίημι, Perf.PI3P, Intensive; clean slate at the point of regeneration and experiential forgiveness after confession) because of (causal; for the sake of) His (Poss. Gen.; Jesus Christ) Person (Causal Acc.; Name).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:12** Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:12** scribo vobis filii quoniam remittuntur vobis peccata propter nomen eius

LWB **1 John 2:13** I am writing to you [non-resident], fathers [those who have cracked the maturity barrier], because you know Him [occupation with Jesus Christ] Who was from the beginning [since the virgin birth]. I am writing to you [non-resident] young men [spiritual adolescents], because you have overcome [winners in the devil's world] the evil one [Satan as the genius of the cosmic system].

^{KW} **1 John 2:13** I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know experientially the One who is from the beginning, and as a present result you are possessors of that knowledge. I am writing to you, young men, because you have gained the victory over the pernicious one and as a present result are victorious over him.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:13** I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John continues writing to his non-resident congregations by addressing those in different stages of spiritual growth. The second group is called fathers, which is a reference to those who have cracked the maturity barrier. They know (Consummative Perfect tense) Jesus Christ, who was on earth from His virgin birth to His death on the cross, because they have had a continuous relationship with Him for a long time. The beginning refers to His virgin birth, not His pre-

existence in eternity past. These believers have had a long-term relationship with the Lord. Last, he addresses the young men, which is a reference to those believers in spiritual adolescence. They have some maturity due to their successful battles with the cosmic system. They have overcome (Consummative Perfect tense) the evil one, Satan (Latin: malignant). This means they are winner believers. They have been tempted by the genius of Satan to enter his cosmic system, but they immediately realized their sinful predicament and returned to the love complex by citing their sins. Satan is the ruler of this current world, but these believers were able to stand on his neck (spiritually speaking) and claim many tactical victories.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The “young men” have passed the people tests (through impersonal love) and the pressure tests (through the faith-rest technique). They continued to be positive towards doctrine through all tests, pressures and sufferings. The study of doctrine, synonymous with having the “mind of Christ,” propels the “young men” into spiritual maturity (Gate 8 of the D.D.) where they become the “friend of God” (from SGA to SGB). This form of progress can only be attained by intense concentration on all doctrine, even doctrine that will be stored (epignosis) and not applied for years. Without this intensive study, the believer will “crash and burn” and spend a lifetime in the cosmic system as an “enemy of Christ” and an “enemy of the cross,” living in the arrogance and hatred complexes of Satan’s system - *cosmos diabolicos*. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) “Paideia” or little children is the appropriate word when spoken from the stand-point of authority rather than of affection. (M. Vincent) Fathers have lived in fellowship with Him, they have walked with Him and talked with Him, and He has become dearer and nearer and more real to them than any earthly friend. (H. Ironside)

Him who was or is from the beginning is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. The epistle began with this concept. (G. Clark) To fight is the lot of the young soldier; and a victorious warfare against Satan is the distinction of youthful Christians. They have got the better of that evil one in whose power the whole world lies. (A. Plummer) These fathers were the older men, mature in the Christian life, having lived in fellowship with the Lord Jesus for many years, and thus having gained much personal knowledge of Him by experience. The perfect tense shows that this knowledge was a well-rounded matured knowledge, the results of which were a permanent possession of these men grown old in the Christian life ... The young men fought their fight to a finish and were enjoying the fruits of victory, a life lived in the power of the Spirit where their victory over Satan was a consistent one. (K. Wuest) Young men are the fine stalwart Christians who, although they may not have walked with God through all the years that the fathers have, yet, having accepted Christ, have gone on with Him into spiritual maturity and have learned the secret of overcoming. (H. Ironside)

Although all believers stand on one level as the redeemed of the Lord, although all who have trusted Christ are in one family as the children of God, yet there are necessarily degrees of spirituality, degrees of progress in the Christian life, and so in verse 13, the apostle divides the children of God into three classes according to the measure of their

growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus ... Who are fathers? They are those who for years have known the Lord and walked with God, those who have grown old in the things of Christ. There are many who have been saved a great many years but are spiritually dwarfed because they give so little attention to spiritual things, because they give so little time to the Word of God; they are so little exercised in holy things, and know so little of the blessedness of prayer and communion with the Lord, and therefore they do not grow. But when the apostle speaks to the fathers, he is speaking to those who through the long years have availed themselves of their Christian privileges, they have learned to love the Word of God, they have sought to walk with Christ, they have labored for the blessing of others, and have learned experimentally to know the blessed Lord in all His fullness. (H. Ironside)

In this world nothing is brought to maturity immediately: instead, everything develops by orderly progress and gradual growth. The child of God is no exception, for at regeneration he is not fully developed spiritually, as the first Adam was naturally ... It requires to be pointed out that all babes in Christ do not grow up into spiritual young men, nor do all Christian young men attain the status of fathers. In some instances they are taken home soon after their conversion, but in the majority of cases their development is checked through failing to make a proper use of the means of grace, and hindered by a number of other things. There are many who make a promising start, but later their zeal abates, they backslide, and become a grief to their brethren ... On the other hand, there are those who progress steadily and make much proficiency in the school of Christ ... In many instances growth in grace is far from corresponding with the increase of age. Gracious abilities come not from age, but from the Spirit. Those whose thoughts are formed and whose ways are regulated by the Word of Truth are wiser than they who confer much with flesh and blood. (A. Pink) The apostle immediately passes from the bottom to the top of the school, from the lowest form to the highest, that those in the middle may hear both lessons, may remember what they have learned, and perceive what they must come to. (M. Henry)

Fathers are the saints who have known the Lord Jesus for many years and have grown and matured ... “Paideia” are immature little folk. They are the ones who know they are the children of God, but that is about all they know – and some of them feel that is all they want to know. Oh, how many children of God fall into this classification! In some churches you feel as if you are in a spiritual nursery! Although the folk are physically full-grown, some of them with grey hair, they are still spiritually immature. They never did grow up. (J. McGee) John has in view a victorious perseverance in the midst of trials by which a Christian merits special rewards in eternity, not the initial act of becoming a Christian in which sense all Christians have “overcome the world” by believing. (J. Dillow) Widespread historical suffering always involves three sources: Satan, man, and God. Satan rules the world. Even in his fallen state, Satan is still the most powerful creature (apart from the resurrected humanity of Christ) ever to come from the hand of God. The devil is an extraordinary genius of unparalleled executive ability. The cosmic system is his brilliant strategy and policy for ruling his kingdom. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 2:13 I am writing (γράφω, PAI1S, Pictorial) to you (Dat. Adv.; non-resident congregations), fathers (Voc. Address; those who have cracked the maturity barrier), because (causal) you know (γινώσκω, Perf.AI2P, Consummative) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; occupation with Jesus Christ in gate 8) Who was (ellipsis) from the beginning (Adv. Gen. Time.; since the virgin birth: long-term relationship). I am writing (γράφω, PAI1S, Pictorial) to you (Dat. Adv.; non-resident congregation), young men (Voc. Address; maturing believers, spiritual adolescence, neophytes in gate 4), because (causal) you have overcome (νικάω, Perf.AI2P, Consummative; standing on his neck: tactical victories, winners in the devil's world) the evil one (Acc. Dir. Obj.; satan as the genius of the cosmic system, the ruler of this current world).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:13** γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρὸν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:13** scribo vobis patres quoniam cognovistis eum qui ab initio est scribo vobis adulescentes quoniam vicistis malignum

LWB 1 John 2:14 I wrote to you in the past, infants [believers learning the basics], because you were beginning to learn about the Father [the essence of theology]. I wrote to you in the past, fathers [believers pressing towards supergrace], because you were beginning to know Him [occupation with Jesus Christ] Who was from the beginning [since the virgin birth]. I wrote to you in the past, young men [spiritual adolescent believers], because you were strong [spiritually self-sustaining], and the Word from God was residing in you [spiritual momentum], and you were beginning to overcome the evil one [passing momentum tests and staying out of the cosmic system].

^{KW} **1 John 2:14** I write to you, little children under instruction, because you have come to know the Father experientially, with the present result that you are possessors of that knowledge. I write to you, fathers, because you have come to know experientially the One who is from the beginning, and are as a present result possessors of that knowledge. I write to you, young men, because you are strong with endowed strength and the Word of God in you is abiding, and you have gained the victory over the Pernicious One, and as a present result are victorious over him.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:14** I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

There's a lot of debate over the apparent duplication of sentences addressed to children, fathers, and young men. I think the verb tenses offer a clue to what John is covering. The first time John addressed "children, fathers and young men," it was in the present tense – and reflected their spiritual status at the time he was writing this letter. In this passage, he is *reflecting back* on a

former letter he had written to them when they were in a different state of spiritual growth. He addresses the spiritual “children” again, but this time he calls them “infants” or toddlers as opposed to pre-adolescent children as in the prior verse. The Greek words are different: “teknon” in the present since they have learned a few basic doctrines, “paideia” in the past because they were baby Christians starting from scratch. The first time he addressed the young believers they were “mere babes” (paideia) and now they have learned a few things and are children (teknon). In other words, this is not his first letter to his non-resident congregations. The Constatative Aorist tense means he could have written them on a previous occasion about some of the same things. [Some commentators do not agree with this assessment]. John is not afraid to use repetition in order to encourage and teach his congregations.

John wrote to the new infant believers in his non-resident congregations on a previous occasion. I agree with Nauck on this matter. At that time, they were *just beginning* to learn about (Ingressive Aorist tense) the Father. Their positive momentum was small, but growing. The first thing a Christian needs to learn after salvation is the essence of God; the attributes of God are the essence of theology proper. John also wrote to the fathers in his non-resident congregations on a previous occasion. At that time, they were *just beginning* to be occupied with Jesus Christ (Ingressive Aorist tense) and were pressing forward towards supergrace status. They were in the process of developing a long-term relationship with the Lord. John also wrote to the young men in his non-resident congregations on a previous occasion. At that time, they were (Historical Present tense) strong, which means they were spiritually self-sustaining. The Word from God was residing in them (Historical Present tense), which means they were making forward momentum in the divine system. They were also *just beginning* to overcome the evil one, which means they were passing some of their first momentum tests (Ingressive Aorist tense).

The difference between the Historical Present tense and the Ingressive Aorist tense is subtle, but important because it describes different stages of spiritual growth. Two of the ‘measurements’ of growth in the spiritual life these young men were already experiencing. They were well on their way, moving forward in: being spiritually self-sustaining and allowing the Word from God to reside in them. They had been doing these things for quite some time. The last item, however, was just beginning to occur: they were passing early momentum tests. They were not as grounded in passing momentum tests as they were in being strong (passing providential preventative suffering) and having the Word from God residing in them. No matter where you are in the spiritual life, there is always more doctrine to learn, more to metabolize, and more to apply towards daily life. There is no stage where you have exhausted the treasures in God’s Word. There is no stage where you reach sinless perfection and no longer need Him. There is no stage where you are no longer tempted by something Satan has prepared for you as a snare in the cosmic system. You may lose some skirmishes, but as young men you win the tactical battles and as a father you can win the overall war through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is where rewards, crowns and decorations come into play.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The appropriate occupation of age is not conflict, but contemplation; not stormy strife, but serene meditation; to penetrate more deeply into the heart of truth, to get clearer and deeper visions of

the Eternal and the Divine, to know more and more of Jesus Christ, and of God in Christ. Maturity in the knowledge of Christ is becoming in Christian fathers. (W. Jones) This sounds good, but “fathers” does not refer to age, but to spiritual status. (LWB) That which distinguished fathers from the young men and babes was that they had acquired a deeper, fuller, and richer acquaintance with Him. But despite their maturity of knowledge and experience, they require to be written to, needing the same counsels, admonitions and encouragements as did their juniors. (A. Pink) The babes are those who have not been long saved. A little while ago they were walking with the world in worldly ways and going on to the world’s judgment ... There is a great deal for the babes to learn. Many varied experiences are still ahead of them, there are wonderful truths yet to be opened up, but they are truly accepted in the Beloved as the fathers are, they are as truly cleansed from every sin as the young men who have overcome the wicked one. (H. Ironside)

There are not many fathers. People may be very old in Christ and yet not be properly designated fathers in this sense, for many very old in years are still very carnal in their experience and know very little of true fellowship with Him. (H. Ironside) They are divided into fathers, the more mature who are rich in meditation and wisdom, and young men, the comparative neophytes who have still to progress in the spiritual life and are appropriately pictured as strong warriors, engaged in victorious warfare with Satan. (B. Easton) What are we to understand by “you are strong”? Through using the means of grace, by increased spiritual knowledge, by appropriating the strength which is in Christ Jesus, through exercising the graces of the new man, by improving (profiting from) the varied experiences through which they had passed, and by the assisting operations of the Spirit, they had developed from babes into a higher spiritual stature and were better able to use their spiritual muscles ... It was by Christ living in them, putting forth His life and light in their souls, that they were strengthened. Nevertheless, it is by means of the written Word, by faith and meditation thereon as it abides in our renewed minds and hearts, that Christ lives and dwells in us. (A. Pink)

How do you get to know a person? By living with him day by day. How do you get to know Christ? By living in intimate fellowship with Him throughout the days and years ... It is the Word of God first thing in the morning, the Word of God all day long, and the Word of God the last thing at night. You go to bed with the Word of God in your mind and you will wake up with the Word of God in your mind. It is the Word of God that keeps from the power of the enemy all the hours of the day. Some say, “I do not think this is possible.” But it is possible, and many have proven it. Somebody said to me once concerning a fellow-laborer, “I like your friend; he seems to be just a walking Bible.” That was because that man was constantly feeding on it ... You know there are many Christians who think of the Word of God as something to take up an extra hour or so when they have nothing else to do; but one will never grow that way. What little strength you get from that hour is all used up when you are occupied with other things. You do not get anywhere that way. But when the Word of God is the supreme thing in your life, and everything else is made to fit into that, you will grow, and become a strong Christian. (H. Ironside)

1 John 2:14 **I wrote in the past** (γράφω, AAI1S, Constative or Epistolary) **to you** (Dat. Adv.; non-resident congregations),

infants (Voc. Address; believers learning the basics), because (causal) you were beginning to learning about (γινώσκω, Perf.AI2P, Ingressive; coming to know, positive momentum) the Father (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the essence of theology proper). I wrote in the past (γράφω, AAI1S, Constative or Epistolary) to you (Dat. Adv.), fathers (Voc. Address; pressing forward towards supergrace believers), because (causal) you were beginning to know (γινώσκω, Perf.AI2P, Ingressive) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; occupation with Jesus Christ) Who was (ellipsis) from the beginning (Adv. Gen. Time; continuous, long-term relationship since the virgin birth). I wrote in the past (γράφω, AAI1S, Constative or Epistolary) to you (Dat. Adv.), young men (Voc. Address; maturing, adolescent believers), because (causal) you were (εἰμί, PAI2P, Historical) strong (Pred. Nom.; powerful, spiritually self-sustaining), and (connective) the Word (Subj. Nom.; Bible doctrine) from God (Abl. Source) was residing (μένω, PAI3S, Historical; momentum inside the divine dynasphere) in you (Loc. Sph.), and (connective) you were beginning to overcome (νικάω, Perf.AI2P, Ingressive; tactical victories, passing early momentum tests) the evil one (Acc. Dir. Obj.; satan).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:14** ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδία, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροὶ ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρὸν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:14** scripsi vobis infantes quoniam cognovistis Patrem scripsi vobis patres quia cognovistis eum qui ab initio scripsi vobis adulescentes quia fortes estis et verbum Dei in vobis manet et vicistis malignum

LWB 1 John 2:15 Stop loving [being distracted by, enslaved in] the cosmic system, or anything in the cosmic system [multitude of gates or traps to choose from]. If anyone keeps loving [prolonged residence in] the cosmic system [building scar tissue in the soul], the virtue love from the Father is not in him,

^{KW} **1 John 2:15** Stop considering the world precious with the result that you love it, and the things in the world. If anyone as a habit of life is considering the world precious and is therefore loving it, there does not exist the Father's love [i.e., the love possessed by the Father] in him.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:15** Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The entire nature of John's paper changes with this verse. So far, he has been discussing fellowship with God, confession of sin, and agape love. Now comes a series on avoiding evil and

people (including believers) who are involved in evil. We've mentioned Satan's system in passing and in some detail in the introduction. Now John warns and prohibits (Imperative mood) the believer from being involved in Satan's cosmic system. The iterative present tense means continual enslavement in the cosmic system, not entering it occasionally. All of us sin. Every time we sin, we exit the divine system and enter the cosmic system. Until we confess that sin, we stay in the cosmic system. A positive believer who is interested in (conscious of) forward momentum in the spiritual life will eventually notice *something is wrong*. He will want to remedy the condition he finds himself in because residing in the divine system by the filling of the Spirit is an infinitely better way to live!

In this case, John knows some of the believers in his non-resident congregations have followed Gnostic-leaning believers into the cosmic system. They have found some some things in Satan's system that appeal to their old sin nature. They like that sin. They love that sin. They may even deny they are involved in sin. It may have initially trapped them unawares, but now their *old sin nature* is enjoying it too much to confess it as sin and return the the divine system. Since they were being enticed by Gnostic friends to follow them, their favorite sin may have been anthropocentric academic speculation. Gnostics were known to engage in syncretism, combining tenets from other religions into their own philosophical and psychological hodgepodge. Christianity and Gnosticism used many identical Greek words to define their system (cosmos, pneuma, sarx, psyche), which only added to the confusion. This overlap in terminology confused many younger believers, but John knew the confusion was satanic in nature. So he poses a likely true but hypothetical situation using a 3rd class conditional clause.

“If any believer keeps on loving this kind of activity in the cosmic system, the virtue love from the Father is not residing in him” (Aoristic Present tense). It is not possible to spend prolonged time in the cosmic system and have fellowship with God. They are mutually exclusive spheres of operation. And without fellowship with God, there is no agape love being infused into the believer's soul. *The cosmic system destroys virtue love and Bible doctrine in the soul*. In this second statement, John uses the iterative present tense again, reminding us that it is habitual, continuous love and admiration for things in the cosmic system that destroy virtue love from the Father. Occasional falling out of fellowship into sin is not the issue. It is *continual residence* in the cosmic system that creates *scar tissue in the soul* and leads to *blackout of the soul*. If a believer doesn't exit the cosmic system soon enough, it could destroy his spiritual life forever. There is a point of no return, in which a believer remains under divine discipline until he dies (sin unto death).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When we are warned against love of the world, it obviously cannot be the generous, self-giving Agape love that is meant, but only “the love of desire,” or *acquisitive* love. When this happens the difference between the two kinds of love is determined simply by reference to their objects, in the one case to the world, in the other to God. Then Agape, which otherwise is a love that gives and sacrifices, and the very opposite of acquisitive love, becomes itself a species of acquisitive love – namely, the desire that is directed to God and heavenly things ... It is now clear why the quality of the love must in this case be defined in terms of its object ... The

position is different with regard to acquisitive love; its quality is determined by the value of its object. (A. Nygren) *Kosmos* refers to an ordered system, of which Satan is the head, his fallen angels and demons are his emissaries ... together with those purposes, pursuits, pleasures, practices and places where God is not wanted. Much in this world-system is religious, cultured, refined, and intellectual. But it is anti-God and anti-Christ. (K. Wuest) It is not sufficiently recognized that the world is the domain where darkness works and holds sway ... All that is outside of God in Christ is under the dominion of sin and Satan, which is but another way of saying that it is the realm of darkness ... The world is synonymous with the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:26) or the unregenerate part of mankind, together with the things on which they set their hearts. (A. Pink)

Actions in themselves should not be classified as worldliness ... Worldliness has more to do with a way of thinking, a mindset, or a worldview than with particular actions ... Worldliness is best understood as an overall philosophy of life or way of thinking which stirs up the flesh to indulge in specific sins such as sexual immorality, drunkenness, or gossip ... Worldliness is an organized and attractive system of ideas, concepts, attitudes, and methods which Satan uses to compete with God's concept of how people should live on planet Earth. Satan is the head and controller of this system of thinking. Whenever we think like the world we are thinking exactly like Satan wants us to ... Worldliness is often presented as something beautiful, desirable, and enlightening ... Worldliness is Satan's window dressing, presenting evil in a way which seems like the good, right, and proper thing to do. When a person is not trusting God's Word to direct him, it is very easy for him to be deceived into adopting worldly thinking. Because Satan is a beautiful creature of God, he is able to present evil as a beautiful thing. (Ice, Dean Jr.) As a system, it is under the dominion of Satan: he is its *prince*, regulating its policy and politics; its *god* (2 Cor. 4:4), directing its religions. It is therefore the embodiment of his spirit, bearing his image and wearing his livery ... The maxims which govern it, the springs which operate it, the ends which it seeks, are earthly, sensual, devilish. Its politics are corrupt, its honors empty baubles, its smiles fickle. Even to its own votaries it is a thing of bitter disappointments, for it is full of illusions and fierce rivalries. (A. Pink)

Scar tissue of the soul erases any previously understood doctrine and causes the believer to love the cosmic system. Scar tissue (hardness of the heart) comes from prolonged living in the cosmic system and follows blackout of the soul. Blackout of the soul affects the left lobe (negative to doctrine) in the same manner as scar tissue of the soul affects the right lobe. Scar tissue destroys the norms & standards, frame of reference, etc. and replaces them with false doctrine from the left lobe. This is done by the vacuum in the left lobe called *matioties*. Reverse process reversionism is the last stage of scar tissue of the soul - application to life is totally warped. A person with scar tissue of the soul can sit in a church night-after-night for years, listening to doctrine, but nothing turns into *epignosis*. They end up saying: "Doctrine doesn't work" and for them, they are right. They end up forgetting what doctrine they ever knew because memory center is destroyed, resulting in reversionism. Establishment (authority) and doctrine was wiped out and replaced by some other distortions. All Christian modus operandi is destroyed and there is no longer any chance for this person to function in impersonal love ... This person cannot even maintain friends. The most awful discipline from God will come; this person will be left alive as (1) an emissary for the devil, and (2) a distraction for advancing

believers. They are wallowing in their vomit, i.e., part of Satan's "vomit battalion." (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Since the world is the sphere of rebellion against God, His people are commanded not to love it ... To love the world is to make its vanities the chief objects of our pursuit, to share its friendships, to court its smiles, to conform to its ways, and to find our happiness in what it yields ... It was never intended to be so; it was designed for our passage, but not for our portion; our inn, but not our home ... let us therefore sit loose to it, live above it, and think of leaving it ... Love not the world, either its policies or its pleasures, its maxims or its methods, its trends or its ends. (A. Pink) The world system is the whole sphere of human life with its institutions, ideals, and projects. (L. Chafer) According to retroactive positional truth, Christ rejected human good and evil at the cross and was separated from them in His burial. Human good and evil remain issues in the Christian life. Under the present rulership of Satan the world is filled with satanic propaganda espousing human good. Christians, therefore, are forbidden either to love the world or to conform to the world. In fact, since Christ has overcome the satanic cosmos, by His strategic victory on the cross, believers can also defeat the world and "overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us." Retroactive positional truth separates the believer positionally from good and evil so that the rulership of Satan and the sin nature is broken. *The Word of God is designed to vanquish the evil human viewpoint of the world along with its instigator, the devil.* (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

God's purpose for our lives on earth requires that we mentally separate ourselves unto Him. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, we renew our minds with the Mind of Christ. Simultaneously we separate ourselves from satanic distractions that would swerve us away from God's plan. Impersonal love, which depends on the subject, never the object, is the requisite attitude toward anyone or anything that would prevent us from fulfilling our spiritual destiny. Impersonal love obeys the divine commands to avoid reversionism, perversion, emotionalism, negative volition, marriage to an unbeliever, distracting social life, and crime. We must separate ourselves from Satan's nefarious, multifaceted systems, but always our emphasis must be separation *unto* God, not separation *from* the world. Each believer must stress the function of Bible doctrine in his own soul and his own Christian integrity, not the object he wishes to avoid. We must focus on doctrine, not on the evils we purport to leave behind. In this manner we avoid the arrogance of self-righteous crusading, which itself is a subtle satanic trap. The proper spiritual priority places doctrine before the influence of any personal relationship, even beneficial relationships built on doctrine. As a result of spiritual growth, we leave behind entanglements that would impede our continued advance. Loyalty to the truth supercedes but does not eliminate loyalty to people and organizations. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The cosmos is Satan's organized system, which is in direct opposition to God. It is expressed in the godless philosophy of humanism, the moral and spiritual system organized by Satan himself to draw humankind away from God ... With *the world* are joined the things in the world, all, that is, which finds its proper sphere and fulfillment in a finite order and without God ... God and Satan's systems are opposites and mutually exclusive. (R. Lightner) This means more than that he does not love God: rather that the love of God does not dwell in him as the ruling

principle of his life. (M. Vincent) John speaks of the world oftener than all other writers of the Greek Scriptures put together. It means to him the prevailing system lying in the wicked one which knows not God, hates His children, and is filled with lust and vanity. Fellowship with God is forfeited by attachment to it. (A. Knoch) All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, speculations, maxims, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale. This is the world-system to which John refers. (Trench) He is forbidding those things the love of which rivals and excludes the love of God – all those immoral tendencies and pursuits which give the world its evil character. (A. Plummer)

Believe me, there is a world system in operation today, and it is satanic. This is a world that is filled with greed, with selfish ambition, with fleshly pleasures, with deceit, and lying and danger. That is the world we live in, and John says that we are not to love the world ... Many of us must move in the business world, many of us must move even in the social realm, but we do not have to be a part of it. We need to recognize that we are going to be obedient to one world or the other. You are either going to obey the world system and live in it and enjoy it, or you are going to obey God ... You may run with the devil's crowd all week long and then run with the Lord's crowd on Sunday, but it is obvious that the love of the Father is not in you. (J. McGee) He is dealing with believers who have a large experience of the grace of Christ, and on this fact he proceeds to base an appeal, a call to further advancement and higher attainment: Love not the world. (W. Nicole) Close scrutiny reveals a unity of plan and a concentration of purpose in all of the evil that characterizes this world. As in guerilla warfare, there are no orderly companies of combatants marching into the fight, no clearly drawn lines of battle, no orthodox methods of military procedure. Yet no one denies that even in guerilla warfare there is organization, pattern, and unity of purpose. This evil world is a carefully masterminded structure of opposition to God and righteousness with an overall program and pattern. The apparent chaos is in reality cosmos. (D. Burdick)

The world - a moral and spiritual system designed to draw humanity away from the living God – is profoundly seductive, and no Christian, however advanced, is fully immune to its allurements. (Z. Hodges)

1 John 2:15 **Stop** (neg. particle) **loving** (ἀγαπάω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition; being distracted by, enslaved to) **the cosmic system** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; building scar tissue of the soul), **or** (neg. adv.) **anything** (Acc. Gen. Ref.; there is a multitude of gates or traps to choose from) **in the cosmic system** (Loc. Sph.). **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe they will, maybe they won't") **anyone** (Subj. Nom.) **keeps loving** (ἀγαπάω, PASubj.3S, Iterative, Potential; building scar tissue upon scar tissue leading to blackout of the soul) **the cosmic system** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; prolonged residence outside the divine dynasphere), **the virtue love** (Subj. Nom.; personal

& impersonal) **from the Father** (Abl. Source) **is** (εἰμί, ΠΑΙ3S, Aoristic) **not** (neg. particle) **in him** (Loc. Sph.),

^{BGT} **1 John 2:15** Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἔάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:15** nolite diligere mundum neque ea quae in mundo sunt si quis diligit mundum non est caritas Patris in eo

LWB 1 John 2:16 Because each category of thing that is in the cosmic system: the lust from the flesh [old sin nature] and the lust from the eyes [mentality of the soul] and the pride of life [arrogant self-sufficiency], is not from the Father, but is from the cosmic system [under Satan's dominion].

^{KW} **1 John 2:16** Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh [the totally depraved nature], and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the insolent and empty assurance which trusts in the things that serve the creature life, is not from the Father as a source but is from the world as a source.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:16** For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Those who decide to live in the cosmic system instead of the divine system end up loving something; that something is just not God. We all constantly reaffirm our devotion to something, either divine or cosmic. Love the world, or love the Father; you can't love both. John summarizes the world (cosmic system) into three high-level categories of sin. The first category is lust from the flesh, which is a reference to the activity of the old sin nature. The second category is the lust from the eyes, which is a reference to the mentality of the soul. The third category is the pride of life, which is a reference to arrogant self-sufficiency. This 3-point summary covers the body, soul and spirit. Satan leaves no part of man untempted; his system has something for everyone. None of these sinful patterns come from the Father as a source; they all have their source from Satan's cosmic system. The believer who is ensnared by anything under one of these categories of sin, is living under the dominion of Satan.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Satan isn't chasing you. He's a genius. He created a system so that you are enticed and you chase him! (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) While he is bidden to be temperate in all things, yet it is not virtue for a saint to adopt the austerities of the Spartans or to practice the bodily mortifications of the Brahmins. There is a *strictness* which arises from ignorance rather than knowledge, and a self-denial which is the fruit of fanaticism rather than spirituality. (A. Pink) In other words, some believers read this passage and run from antinomianism right into the sphere of asceticism which is also sinful. (LWB) The world is simply the aggregate of all the hearts of unregenerate men that now dwell upon the earth. The

external world only carries into practice the principles acting in its subjects, putting into operation the sin which is ever working in them ... the works of our corrupt nature ... The pride of life consists of vying with and outvying one another, in every possible way. (A Pink) The desire of the eyes is not so much looking at a woman to lust after her as it is the covetousness and malice engendered by seeing the success and fortune of another person. (G. Clark) The Satanic world system is characterized by pride, lust, and war. Its temptations, which are directed to selfish cravings of the fallen nature without thought of God, are those to which Eve succumbed in the garden, and which Satan perennially employs to hold those who are slaves of his system or to win back those who have, through faith in Christ, broken with his program ... The Satanic world system presents a perpetual peril to the child of God. (M. Unger)

The first component is “the lust of the flesh.” This refers to our evil desire to satisfy the impulses which stem from our fallen nature, called the *flesh*. “If it feels good, do it” is a popular slogan generated by the world a number of years ago which accurately captures the idea behind the lust of the flesh. The idea often used in commercial advertising that we deserve all the fine things in life is a worldly idea that appeals to the lust of the flesh. Then we come to a somewhat similar phrase, “the lust of the eyes.” This has to do with the desire for things that we see, things which catch our eye. The emphasis is on external attractiveness without examining the underlying values. “The lust of the eyes” is associated with greed, envy, and covetousness. This type of greed is one of the major controlling principles in the world-system. “The boastful pride of life” is cited as the third controlling principle of this world-system. It is the arrogant attitude by which people think more highly of themselves than they ought. It is the ambition to center one’s life around self rather than God. All three of these characteristics originating with Satan in his fall, were passed down to Adam and Eve, and are daily the most imitated philosophy of life on the globe today. The central idea of the world’s approach to life is selfishness, summarized in three words: passion, greed, and pride. The world-system favors men who are alienated from God who have as their ambition in life the desire to please the longings of a nature corrupted by sin; to possess the things they see and can enjoy; to prevail over their fellow-men in power and prestige. These are Satan’s rules for the game of life in this present world-system. (Ice, Dean Jr.)

A magnetic leader, Satan commands vast forces of fallen angels or demons; Earth and fallen mankind belong to his realm. In the Bible Satan’s kingdom is called the *kosmos*, usually translated “world.” *Kosmos* refers to a system, an orderly, cohesive organization with a purpose, policy, and structure of authority. When the Bible declares that someone loves the world or lives according to the standards of the world, that individual resides in the satanic system of power. He enslaves himself to Satan’s authority, executes Satan’s policy, and fulfills Satan’s purpose. The cosmic system employs two dynaspheres, which pose the 5th and 6th momentum tests. The *arrogance complex* leads the believer into *apathy* toward Bible doctrine, while the *hatred complex* parlays that indifference into *antagonism* toward doctrine. Worldliness is individual involvement in the cosmic system. Satan encourages superficial definitions of worldliness to camouflage his evil strategy. Legalistic believers mistakenly assume that worldliness consists of gambling, carousing,

dancing, drinking, or any behavior that shocks them personally. But while such activities may reflect poor judgment and may indeed involve sin in one category or another, they are not the essence of what the Bible describes as worldly. Worldliness is what you *think* inside the cosmic system, not just what you *do*. Satan's ultimate weapon is evil thought – the subtle distortions, half truths, and lies he uses to control man's thinking. This ultimate weapon is call *demon influence*. When you embrace satanic ideas, you are the dupe of Satan. Your sincerity does not protect you; ignorance is no excuse. You become your own worst enemy. When you believe “the father of lies,” the content of your own soul prevents spiritual growth and prohibits divine blessings. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Pride of life is arrogancy of living, is ostentation exhibited in the manner of living. (A. Plummer) Lust describes a craving desire. Flesh refers to the Adamic sin nature inherited from parents and still possessed by believers. Pride means vainglory along with self-sufficiency and a false assurance. (R. Lightner) The *lust of the eyes* represents a higher type of desire than the *desire of the flesh*, in that it seeks *mental* pleasure where the other seeks *physical* gratification. There is thus a significant hint in this passage that even high artistic gratification may have no fellowship with God. (M. Vincent) The word “flesh” here has no reference to the physical body except as that body is controlled or energized by the evil nature. The physical body and its members in themselves have no evil desires except as controlled by the totally depraved nature. (K. Wuest) God did not create the evil dispositions and aims of men; these have their source in the sinful wills of His creatures, and ultimately in the “ruler of this world.” (A. Plummer) Worldliness does not reside in “things,” but it does certainly reside in our concentration on “things.” If our affections, instead of being set on what is of permanent importance, are set on passing things that the heart desires and the eye delights in, or things that encourage us to have a good conceit of ourselves, we are fearfully impoverished. If my reputation, my public image, matters more to me than the glory of God or the well-being of my fellows, the pretentiousness of life has become the object of my idol-worship. (F. Bruce)

The world thus conceived is a system of values and goals from which God is excluded. (Z. Hodges) The old nature is geared to this world in which we live; it's meshed into the program of the world. (J. McGee) He includes, as I think, libidinous looks as well as the vanity which delights in pomps and empty splendour. In the last place follows pride or haughtiness, with which is connected ambition, boasting, contempt of others, blind love of self, headstrong self-confidence. (J. Calvin) By its very nature Gnosticism was syncretistic and inclusivist, seeking to make Christianity acceptable to the world of the day by adjusting it to fit current dualism (the matter-is-evil, spirit-is-good philosophy). With regard to morality, it tried to make a place within the Christian system for unbridled libertinism. In our day Christians still need to beware of the temptation to accommodate their faith to current viewpoints and practices. (D. Burdick) When the devil has properly trained the eye, what will it not see to keep the furnace of ungodly emotions and imaginations aglow? The world shouts “artistic,” “beautifully realistic,” freighted with “beautiful moral lessons,” etc., and thus gilds vileness ... John also has in mind that hollow arrogance which presumes that it can decide and direct the course of life without God, determine what it will do, gain, achieve, enjoy. (R. Lenski)

1 John 2:16 because (causal) each category of thing (Nom. Spec.; particular class) that (Subj. Nom.) is (ellipsis, verb supplied) in the cosmic system (Loc. Sph.): the lust (Subj. Nom.) from the flesh (Abl. Source; the old sin nature) and (connective) the lust (Subj. Nom.) from the eyes (Abl. Source; mentality of the soul) and (connective) the pride (Subj. Nom.; arrogant pattern) of life (Adv. Gen. Ref.; arrogant self-sufficiency), is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) not (neg. particle) from the Father (Abl. Source), but (adversative) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) from the cosmic system (Abl. Source; under satan's dominion).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:16** ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:16** quoniam omne quod est in mundo concupiscentia carnis et concupiscentia oculorum est et superbia vitae quae non est ex Patre sed ex mundo est

LWB 1 John 2:17 Moreover, the cosmic system and its lusts [from the old sin nature] will pass away [emphasis on its transitory nature], but anyone who executes the will of God [advancing in the spiritual life] will continue to abide forever [live in their specialized, superior resurrection bodies].

^{KW} **1 John 2:17** And the world is being caused to pass away, and its passionate desire. But the one who keeps on habitually doing the will of God abides forever.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:17** And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The future of Satan's cosmic system has already determined by the sovereignty and omnipotence of God. It will be abolished during the Millennial Reign of Christ. Therefore, John can safely say that its lusts from the old sin nature will pass away (Futuristic Present tense), an emphasis on its transitory nature. But there is a long-term future for believers who live in the divine system instead of the satanic system. Anyone who executes the will of God (Intensive Perfect tense) by advancing in the spiritual life will continue to abide (Iterative & Futuristic Present tense) throughout all future dispensations, i.e., forever. All believers will receive a resurrection body for continued residence in eternity, but not all resurrection bodies will be equal. Those who achieve supergrace status on earth will receive a specially clothed, translucent body with rewards and decorations. Those who do not progress spiritually while on earth will have a naked resurrection body without any awards or decorations. Advancing inside the sphere of light and love has eternal as well as temporal rewards. You might as well get started in the divine system now, because it will be the *only* system in eternity! In the end, God alone abides. And the only "dude" that abides, is the dude that abides in Christ ... Jeff Bridges notwithstanding. ☺

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The *cosmos* is a vast order or system that Satan has promoted which conforms to his ideals, aims, and methods. It is civilization now functioning apart from God – a civilization in which none of its promoters really expect God to share, who assign to God no consideration in respect to their projects. This system embraces its godless governments, conflicts, armaments, and jealousies, as well as its education, culture, religions of morality, and pride. It is that sphere in which man lives. It is what he sees, what he employs. To the uncounted multitude it is all they ever know so long as they live upon this earth. It is properly styled *the satanic system*, which phrase is in many instances a justified interpretation of the so-meaningful word *cosmos*. It is literally a *cosmos diabolicus*. (L. Chafer) We may listen respectfully to a well-reasoned case for the acceptance or repudiation of some belief or the other, but if the argument amounts to no more than that the belief is in conformity (or out of conformity) with the contemporary climate of opinion, it is wise to bear in mind the possibility that the contemporary climate of opinion may be wrong. The prevalent secularism of western man has so influenced some Christian thinkers of our own day that they endeavor to re-state Christian doctrine or Christian ethics in terms which would be equally relevant whether one believed in the living God or not – sometimes, indeed, in terms which would make better sense if the living God were dismissed from our thinking. (F. Bruce)

The world supplies an elaborate menu for its subjects. There are stalls and shows in Vanity Fair designed by its prince to appeal unto all tastes and temperaments ... Its customs and habits, its styles and modes, its pleasures and amusements, are every varying. Yet it is by this very means that the multitudes are more and more deceived. The objects they sought so eagerly yesterday fulfilled not their expectations, so with equal earnestness they pursue the same or other objects today, assured that the attaining of them will rejoice them; only to find them broken cisterns which hold no water. (A. Pink) In this sphere Satan rules over unregenerate mankind. He secured the scepter of government in the earth from Adam, by right of conquest, and has organized the present world system upon his own cosmic principles of pride, ambition, selfishness, force, greed, and pleasure. Imposing, outwardly religious, scientific, cultured, elegant, this world system, nevertheless, is dominated by satanic principles, and is beneath its deceptive veneer a seething cauldron of national and international ambitions, and commercial rivalries. Satan and his elaborately organized hierarchy of evil are often the invisible agents, and the real motivating power and intelligence behind the dictators, kings, presidents, and governors, who are the visible rulers. Armed force and periodic wars, with wholesale murder and violence, are its indispensable concomitants. (M. Unger)

Do not imagine that if your world is a cultured world consisting of devotees of the arts and sciences, that you are safe and free from worldliness. Even the business world may become just as great a snare as any ... I remember when I was a young Christian, my world against which I had to guard most was the world of polite literature. I used to love it, its poetry, its essays, its wonderful books, and I appreciate them yet in a certain sense, but I had to remember this, that if ever these things came in between my soul and my love for this blessed Book, I had to turn away from them and give my time and attention to this Book, and so it is with many things. (H. Ironside) There is consolation in this view of the transitoriness of the conflict with the world.

Even the lust which belongs to the world passes also. The one who keeps on doing the will of God “abides forever” amid the flux of transitory things. (A. Robertson) The era of simple and unquestioning faith in the apostolic testimony was past, and men were beginning to enquire and reason. A heresy has the same use in theology as a mistaken hypothesis in science: it provokes thought and leads to a deeper understanding. What seemed to the Apostle the pangs of dissolution were in reality growing pains. (W. Nicole)

A thousand wrecks lie strewn along its path, and soon it shall be altogether wreck and ruin. What this implies for the lovers of the world John lets us conclude for ourselves. They will be left naked, wretched, shattered, doomed. All their treasures and pleasures will, like water, have slipped through their fingers, their castles will be in ashes, their crowns a curse. Their souls, burnt and blasted by lusts for the world, will have nothing left but endless remorse and penalty. Hear the world of truth: “The world is passing away!” The bank is breaking, it was never solvent – will you deposit in it? The foundation is tottering, it was never solid but only sham – will you build on it? The mountain is rumbling, quaking, it was never anything but volcanic, ready to blow off its head at any time – will you build your city there? (R. Lenski) Why hook up with something that has no future? (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Satan’s anti-God system is under God’s judgment. (R. Lightner) John looks beyond the present to the day of Christ’s coming, to the destruction of the evil system, to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of righteousness, and to the banishment of Satan to the eternal lake of fire. (D. Burdick) They may recognize the time in which they are living as the last hour by the many antichrists that have arisen. (A. Plummer)

1 John 2:17 Moreover (continuative), the cosmic system (Subj. Nom.) and (connective) its (Poss. Gen.) lusts (Subj. Nom.; from the old sin nature) will pass away (παράγω, PPI3S, Futuristic; emphasis on its’ transitory nature, it will be abolished during the Millennial Reign), but (adversative) anyone (Subj. Nom.) who executes (ποιέω, Perf.PPtc.AMS, Intensive, Substantival; performs) the will (Acc. Dir. Obj.; sovereign pleasure) of God (Poss. Gen.; advancing inside the divine dynasphere to Gate 8) will continue to abide (μένω, PAI3S, Futuristic & Iterative) forever (Acc. Extent of Time; will live in their specialized, superior resurrection bodies for all future dispensations).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:17** καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:17** et mundus transit et concupiscentia eius qui autem facit voluntatem Dei manet in aeternum

LWB 1 John 2:18 Students, it is the last hour [to make progress in the spiritual life], and just as you have heard [previously taught eschatological doctrine] that the Antichrist [Satan’s political dictator during the Tribulation] will come, even now [during the Church Age] many antichrists [believers in the cosmic system] exist, from which [high frequency of

antichrists] we may understand that it is the last hour [to make progress in the spiritual life].

^{KW} **1 John 2:18** Little children under instruction, it is a last hour in character. And even as you heard that Antichrist comes, even now, antichrists, many of them, have arisen and are here; from which fact we know by experience that it is a last hour in character.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

I translated “teknon” as “students” earlier in this letter for the reason contained in this verse and others. John has previously classified believers as toddlers, children, adolescents and fathers. When he uses “teknon” as a single category, he is not lumping believers from all levels of spiritual maturity into one category called “children.” The Apostle is not using baby talk. He also reminds them that they have *previously heard* certain eschatological doctrines about the Antichrist (Constative Aorist tense). This means they have been *instructed* in certain biblical doctrines and are therefore *students* of the Word. They were taught that the Antichrist, Satan’s political dictator who will run the earth during the Tribulation, would indeed come (Futuristic Present tense) at a predetermined time in the future. The dispensation of the Church Age is the last dispensation before the Antichrist arrives on the world scene. Since we are living in this “last hour,” we should be highly motivated to utilize our divine assets to grow in the spiritual life. That is our only reason for existence on earth!

Unfortunately, there will not be an increase in the number of mature believers toward the end of the Church Age; there will be a drastic decrease ... such as exists now. Even during the time John was alive, there was a dramatic increase in the number of believers who chose to live in the cosmic system instead of the love complex. These cosmic believers - evangelists for Satan - John calls antichrists. The Greek word means “against Christ.” Any believer who continues to reside in the cosmic system is *against Christ*. They enjoy wallowing in this satanic cesspool and they spend most of their waking hours trying to get positive believers to join them in the cosmic cesspool. The closer we get to the end of the Church Age, the greater is the frequency of believers living in the cosmic system. We can understand by this negative phenomenon, that it is close to the last hour (Static Present tense) and that we should embrace the spiritual life *all the more*. The verse that follows will elaborate on why these antichrists are reversionistic believers instead of unbelievers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Can a believer immerse himself in sin and evil and still be a Christian? Throughout the Church Age pastors and theologians have struggled to explain this paradox ... Although the believer can never lose his eternal life, he can be in danger of destroying his spiritual life and losing all the blessings that “God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). Without his spiritual life the believer returns to the lifestyle of the unbeliever. He

thinks like an unbeliever, acts like an unbeliever, sins like an unbeliever. I call this lifestyle of emptiness *reversionism*. Reversionism is the way of life the believer chooses when he turns away from God's plan, will, and purpose for his life and returns to a former belief, a former viewpoint, a former modus operandi. The reversionist has not lost his salvation, but he is under the influence of Satan's cosmic system (1 Tim. 4:1). By his own volition he involves himself in sin and evil, and suffers the consequences of self-induced misery and divine punishment (Heb. 12:4-5) ... Reversionism is the condition of the believer who is negative toward doctrine and refuses to function under the *grace apparatus for perception* ... Reversionism and evil are actually two sides of the same coin. Evil is what the reversionistic soul thinks. Reversionism is the condition of that soul. Reversionism is always a revolt against God's plan. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Reverse-process reversionism is the status quo of unrestrained and perpetual sinfulness, fragmentation, and extensive cosmic involvement. The believer is brainwashed by satanic propaganda. In this stage he is described as (1) a hater of God in John 15:23, (2) an enemy of God in James 4:4, (3) double-minded, or in a state of spiritual schizophrenia in James 4:8, (4) anti or against Christ in 1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3 and 2 John 7, and (5) a disciple of the devil in 1 John 3:8, 10. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Just as governments have their traitors and spies within the camp, so Christians have theirs - the flesh. (Ice, Dean Jr.) Reversionistic believers (antichrists) are also traitors in our midst. (LWB) "Antichrists" in the plural is a term that indicates all heretics and vicious opponents of the doctrine of Christ. (R. Muller) Antichrists can be in the church or outside the church. They can be believers or unbelievers. (LWB) The centralization of power is no substitute for the spiritual unity accomplished by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Because the majority of the organized church is committed to theological and spiritual doctrines which differ from historic Christianity, progress in the ecumenical movement can only result in the throttling of evangelical activity true to the Gospel. (J. Walvoord)

What a difference between Noah and Lot. Both were believers, but there all similarly seems to end. Noah is a type of the spiritual believer while Lot represents the carnal believer. Noah was ready to go into the Ark and went voluntarily, while Lot was unprepared and had to be dragged out of the city. One would never suspect that Lot was a believer at all if it were not for the testimony of Peter, who tells us in 2 Peter 2:7 that God delivered just Lot ... that righteous man dwelling among them." As it was then, so shall it be when Jesus comes. Before the judgment of God in the Tribulation comes (of which both the flood and the destruction of Sodom are types), He will call out His own to a place of safety from the Tribulation. Both the spiritual and the carnal are taken out. (M. DeHaan) In the Church Age, *antichrist* refers to any believer who resides and functions in the cosmic dynaspheres of Satan. The Church Age is the only time to use the divine dynasphere to avoid being an antichrist. Antichrist is synonymous with the "enemy of the cross" in Phil 3:18, "the enemy of God" in James 4:4, and "the hater of God" in Jn 15:23. These believers are called antichrist in 1 Jn 2:22, 4:3; 2 Jn 7; 1 Jn 2:18. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) In 2:28, the general designation "teknion" is again found, to denote a resumption of address to the whole company. (A. Pink)

The first thing the inspired Apostle shows that must precede that day is the apostasy. What is the apostasy and what is an apostate? Apostasy is the departure from professed principles. An apostate is a person who has forsaken his faith or his party. To illustrate: Here is a certain well-known teacher. He was active in YMCA work; he preached the great message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He is the only way to God. He has abandoned it, given it up, and is now a socialist, a friend of the Soviets. That is an apostate. It is a fact verified by history that an apostasy has been going on throughout this present age ... The beloved disciple wrote of his own times, in his high old age, "There are many antichrists." We have followed the increasing corruption of sound doctrine through ritualism and the worst corruption through rationalism. As the age advances and draws to its close there is an increase of apostasy. Our days witness this. (A. Gaebelien) These antichrists are identified as people who were once members of the author's own Christian community but have seceded from it ... In practice there is little difference between a false Christ and an antichrist, for both are opposed to the true Christ ... The author believes that he and his readers live in the last hour because what he sees happening around him corresponds with predictions concerning the last hour. (C. Kruse)

Beyond any question, apostasy is both present and future in the church. It was present when Paul wrote to Timothy, and Paul looked forward to a future great apostasy distinctive enough to be labeled *the* apostasy. This present-future concept is similar to that of the present-future antichrist. There were antichrists present in the church in John's day and still he looked forward to *the* coming great Antichrist. Apostasy is something that plagues the church in every generation, though at the end of the Church Age *the* great apostasy will come on the scene before the day of the Lord. (C. Ryrie) Besides "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18), other biblical terms for cosmic believers include "enemies of God" (James 4:4), "haters of God" (John 15:23), "antichrists" (1 John 2:18), "men of flesh" (1 Cor. 3:1-3), "double-minded" (James 4:8), "agents of the devil" (1 John 3:8), and "disciples of the devil" (1 John 3:10). All these phrases refer to eternally saved believers, not to unbelievers ... These cosmic Christians on the verge of maximum discipline may be sincere, sweet, and highly legalistic individuals who have distorted Christianity into a religion of human good works. They may be moral degenerates rather than immoral degenerates. The growing believer who can see through their façade, discerning the evil of self-righteousness, yet avoiding condescension himself, accelerates his growth in the divine dynasphere. God's genius is wonderfully displayed as He permits a negative Christian in Satan's system to ambush a positive Christian in the divine dynasphere. The believer who is going in the wrong direction inadvertently contributes to the maturity of the believer advancing in the right direction – Psalm 76:10. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

"Antichristos" is against Christ, not pretending to be Christ, but proposing to do the work of Christ ... The verb is in the perfect tense, indicating that they have arisen and are on the scene. They have established themselves in the midst of the Church. What will be true of the personal Antichrist when he comes is true of these men in a lesser sense, or in a lesser degree. They are imbued with the spirit that will animate Antichrist. (K. Wuest)

The predominant idea is that of *opposition* to Christ, and *rivalry* of Christ, rather than merely of *counterfeiting* Christ. (A. Plummer) The spirit of antichrist is the putting of man in the place of God and His Christ (self-worship, humanism) and the babes need to be warned against this. The worst of it is that many of the advocates of these unholy systems were once numbered among the Christian company. (H. Ironside) A schism had occurred within the Johannine community, splitting it in two. (R. Lightner) The last days of the Church Age will witness a great apostasy from the ranks of the Church, an antidote to the false teachings of postmillennialism (C. Feinberg)

1 John 2:18 Students (Voc. Address; little children, positive believers), it is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Dramatic) the last (Nom. Spec.; Church Age) hour (Pred. Nom.; to utilize the divine dynasphere), and (connective) just as (comparative) you have heard (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Constativ; previously taught eschatological doctrine) that (conj. As Dir. Obj.) the Antichrist (Subj. Nom.; satan's political dictator during the tribulation) will come (ἔρχομαι, PMI3S, Futuristic, Deponent), even (ascensive) now (temporal; during the Church Age) many (Nom. Measure) antichrists (Subj. Nom.; believers living in the cosmic system) exist (γίνομαι, Perf.AI3P, Intensive, Deponent), from which (Adv. Source; high frequency of antichrists) we may understand (γινώσκω, PAI1P, Customary, Potential; know) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) it is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static) the last (Nom. Spec.; final days of the Church Age) hour (Pred. Nom.; to utilize the divine dynasphere).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:18** Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν, ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:18** filioli novissima hora est et sicut audistis quia antichristus venit nunc antichristi multi facti sunt unde scimus quoniam novissima hora est

LWB 1 John 2:19 They [negative believers: apostates & reversionists] went out [left the divine system for the cosmic system] from us [reaction vs. response separation], however they [negative believers] were never part of us [they never lived in the divine system], for if they [negative believers] had been part of us [lived in the divine system], they would have surely remained with us [living in the divine system], but rather *they separated from us* so that they [believers in the cosmic system] might be exposed that they [negative believers] are not all part of us [they broke the *inner fellowship*].

^{KW} **1 John 2:19** Out from us they departed [doctrinally], but they did not belong to us as a source. For it they had belonged to us, they would in that case have remained with us. But they departed in order that they might be plainly recognized, that all do not belong to us as a source.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

They went out from us (Constative Aorist tense) does not mean unbelievers in a church departed from the believers. “They” are apostate or reversionistic believers who left the divine system for the cosmic system. They went negative towards the filling of the Spirit and Bible doctrine. Instead of “responding” to the situation and remedying it in fellowship, they “reacted” to their doctrinal differences and exited ... stage left. However, they were never really one of us (Descriptive Imperfect tense), because they never really resided or functioned in the divine system for very long. The Christian way of life never sank in; it never made sense. They either had more fun in the cosmic system pursuing antinomian behavior, or they locked-into some form of legalistic, self-righteous activity. Positionally, both sides of this equation are believers. But experientially, the believers who exited the divine system and remained in the cosmic system broke the *true inner fellowship*. Only those believers who continued in the divine system had ongoing fellowship with the Father, Son and Spirit. If the reversionists would have been part of the inner fellowship (Descriptive Imperfect tense) based on residence and function in the divine system, they would have remained in the sphere of light and love (Intensive Pluperfect tense) and would not have chosen the cosmic system instead.

The 2nd class condition means they did this very erroneous thing. Unfortunately, the believers in the cosmic system eventually separated from the believers in the divine system. There was too much antagonism between them because fellowship in the light truly has no fellowship with darkness. These mutually exclusive spheres of operation just aren't compatible in the long run. This separation, however, did serve a useful purpose. The believers who remained in the cosmic system were exposed (Constative Aorist tense) so that everyone would know that they were not operating in the divine system and therefore were not members of the inner fellowship. Being a Christian is all you need to go to heaven, but it is not all that is required for fellowship. This “revealing” of who they are as reversionistic believers was important because those in the divine system could now be alert to the trials and tribulations of *people testing* that were likely to come their way. Reversionistic believers generally irritate those in the divine system; their old sin natures can't take the public scrutiny of how they truly operate. The partitive ablatives and the ablatives of separation do not refer to unbelievers leaving believers, but apostate and reversionistic believers in the cosmic system leaving believers in the divine system.

Not everyone who becomes a Christian continues to walk in the light and grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of them crash and burn. As a matter of fact, a lot of them crash and burn. They start out going to church and attending Bible studies, but something from their former life in sin (trend of their old sin nature) calls them back and they succumb to the siren song. Perhaps they thought they would be instantaneously enlightened; the patience and rigor of the spiritual life discouraged them. Maybe they disagreed with some of the doctrines their pastor taught. They left the church where they had learned basic doctrine and were now flailing around in various gates of the cosmic system - looking for answers that only Christ can provide. Months or years later, with no idea how to live the Christian life, they became antichrists. They walked in darkness. They no longer socialized with their former Christian friends. The teachings of the Bible annoyed them. They were no longer interested in Christ. They

may have even denied Him like Peter did in stressful situations. What made them antichrists? Did they grow horns? Did they become murderers or drug addicts? Maybe, but all that was necessary to make them antichrists was their *continuous lifestyle of sin*.

Some believers who become antichrists keep to themselves and never bother anyone. Some with a philosophical or psychological bent begin creating their own following. Like ancient Gnostics, they take a few basic doctrinal precepts and combined them with some theoretical, political, or mystical practice. Then they share this new concoction with some of their Christian friends who are still residing in the divine system. They smile a lot, put on self-sufficient airs, and seem to be prosperous. Some of their Christian friends start thinking they must be okay after all, even though their pastor has warned them about hanging around apostates. Now they have become cosmic evangelists. They may be just smart enough to build a small congregation because of their esoteric beliefs. If their success continues, other naïve believers defect from their local church. There are usually disagreements, disputes, sometimes even a church split. Most denominations were formed by a similar process, although their leaders would (no doubt) beg to differ. So not all antichrists become cultists; some become legalists, holyrollers, or ritualists. This Gnostic potion was a great irritant in John's day. Their influence was so insidious to believers with positive momentum, that John had to warn his students vociferously.

Some theologians don't understand the nature of believers who become apostates or reversionists. They relegate all such divisions or differences in opinion to the realm of professing but unbelieving humanity. In other words, the believers who entered and remained in the cosmic system were not really believers in the first place. The Gnostic-leaning believers John warned about, in their opinion, did not just reject some basic doctrines of Christianity; they had never become true believers or they had become believers and have now lost their salvation. The first conclusion is erroneous; the second conclusion is blasphemous. Is it possible for a Christian to become so involved in Satan's cosmic system that he rejects the Father and the Son? Can a true believer make an about-face and reject the deity of Christ? Is it possible for a Christian to live perpetually in sin like an unbeliever? Is it possible for a Christian to align himself with satanic concepts to the extent that he becomes an evangelist for the enemy? Some theologians say this is impossible; others say it is evident everywhere, and in great numbers. Since I believe in the doctrines of apostasy and reversionism (brief outline below), I obviously side with the latter category. The antichrists John is referring to are believers.

Seven Stages of Reversionism:

1. Distraction from Bible doctrine, apathy, pressures from thinking or problems with people
2. Frantic search for happiness, reaction stage
3. Operation boomerang, the old sin nature intensifies frustration and you get further involved in the cosmic system while looking for happiness
4. Emotional revolt of the soul
5. Negative volition towards doctrine (from apathy to antagonism)
6. Blackout of the soul, evangelist for unhappiness, demon influence
7. Scar tissue of the soul

8. Reverse-process reversionism, total unhappiness, wrong priorities about everything, values are totally reversed, “apostles for unhappiness”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In the Johannine epistles teachers of false doctrines are called antichrists. No clear details are given of the doctrine. It is clear that they were claiming special fellowship with and love for God. But they denied that Jesus is the Christ and that He had become man. The impression is also given that, convinced that they enjoyed special fellowship with God, they did not take sin very seriously. Here the deception does not come from the outside but from inside the church. Members of the church had become servants of the Antichrist. (E. Kauder, DNTT) There are those who will come under the guise of Christ’s Name but who falsely represent Him. They are actually the antichrists of the age as described in 1 John 2:18-19. They were already present in the apostolic age ... A false Christ in a practical sense is any man or woman who gets a following by humanizing Christ and thereby lowering Him to his or her level, or by deifying man and thereby lifting himself to an equality with Christ. (J. Gerig) The church knows not well who are its vital members and who are not; and therefore the church, considered as internally sanctified, may well be considered invisible. Some of the hypocritical must be manifested here, and that for their own shame and benefit, too, in their reduction to the truth, if they have not sinned unto death, and for the terror and caution of others. (M. Henry)

The negative believer will always initiate the separation from the positive believer, when the positive believer refuses to live like the negative believer does. If the negative believer tries to stick with the positive believer based on stubbornness, his hypersensitivity will eventually become offended by Bible doctrine and by those who continue in it ... The only way to maintain friends in the cosmic system is to join them there. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) These antichrists originated in the church; they were members of the congregation. The church of God has many external enemies ... but the worst enemies are to be found in the church organization. (G. Clark) It is always a very disturbing and distressing thing for any of God’s people to see some of those whom they regarded as their fellow Christians apostatizing, the more so when such were members of their own local assemblies ... Apparently the Church had produced these vipers and nurtured them in her bosom ... Almost all the heresies which have plagued the churches throughout the centuries originated from persons who were once in good standing in the assemblies. (A. Pink)

Emphasis on the apostasy of the church came to the fore at the rise of the prophetic conferences as an antidote to the false optimism of postmillennialism. Clarification is needful at this point: dispensationalism *does not teach* that the entire church in any century is apostate. It does teach that the last days of the Church Age will witness a great apostasy from the ranks of the church, and that is abundantly attested by Scripture: 2 Cor. 11:14-15; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9, 13, 4:3-4; James 5:1-5; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18-29, 4:1-6; Jude 3-4; Rev. 2-3. (J. Pentecost) External church membership and vital fellowship with Christ and His people are by no means the same in substance or uniform in extent. No church on earth can minister spiritual life to any soul, by any ordinances whatever ... If churches are on the whole loyal and sound, false men will “go out” from them. This is an effective yet potent kind of church discipline,

when church ministrations and testimony are so faithful and effective that false adherents spontaneously quit its ranks. Happy is the church whose constitution is so sound that foreign substances expel themselves from its body ... Let us not be discouraged at the fact that we cannot prevent the intrusion of false members into the church. (A. Plummer)

It does not make sense that the false teachers had left the churches to which the readers belonged. If they had, how were they still a problem? On the other hand if, like the legalists of Acts 15, they had seceded from the apostolic churches of Jerusalem and Judea, then they were a particular threat to the readers because they came to them claiming roots in the soil out of which Christianity arose. Thus John was eager to deny any connection with them. (Z. Hodges) I am afraid that there are many church members who are just taking it for granted that they are children of God because they are as active as termites in the church – and they have just about the same effect as termites ... My friend, I believe in the security of believers, but I also believe in the insecurity of make-believers. We need to examine ourselves to see what kind of believer we really are. (J. McGee) Bultmann's claim that the heretically inclined secessionists regarded themselves as legitimate members of John's church should not be lightly dismissed. The progress of the theological disputes which gave rise to the Johannine correspondence indicates that in the end (and perhaps along the way) the heterodox adherents of John saw themselves as guardians of the truth, and attempted to excommunicate the Johannine Christians themselves ... It is possible, in this instance, that those who later allowed their heretical thought and actions to run away from them were in the first place *believers* with a genuine, if uninformed, faith in Jesus. (S. Smalley)

Why do Christians "go out?" Because of petty jealousies in church life; because of bitter doctrinal differences; because of weariness or boredom in living the Christian life. More often Christians "go out" because they have never really grasped the truth and power of the life Christ can bring men to live ... But schism is not always evil. Secession can be part of the divine purpose of making plain who genuinely constitutes the church. So-called religious tolerance ceases to be a virtue when it sacrifices solidarity in the truth for nominal fellowship. (A. Wilder) These false teachers (antichrists) went out from the true believers in the sense that they departed doctrinally from the position of the Church as to the Person of the Lord Jesus. (K. Wuest) You cannot stay in a consistent Bible teaching ministry AND live in the cosmic system. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) He shows that trial is useful and necessary for the Church. (J. Calvin)

1 John 2:19 **They** (negative believers: apostates & reversionists) **went out** (ἐξέρχομαι, AAI3P, Constativ, Deponent; departed, left the divine dynasphere for the cosmic system) **from us** (Abl. Separation: Reaction vs. Response Separation; we stayed in the divine dynasphere), **however** (adversative; but) **they** (negative believers) **were** (εἰμί, Imperf.AI3P, Descriptive) **never** (neg. particle; not really) **part of us** (Partitive Abl.; they never lived in the divine dynasphere, they broke the *inner fellowship*), **for** (explanatory) **if** (protasis, 2nd class condition, "but they weren't") **they** (negative believers) **had been** (εἰμί,

Imperf.AI3P, Past: Descriptive) part of us (Partitive Abl.; continually residing in the divine dynasphere), they would have surely (emphatic verbal particle) remained (μεμεινήκεισαν, Pluperf.AI3P, Intensive; resided continually in the divine dynasphere) with us (Gen. Rel.), but rather (adversative; on the contrary, instead), they separated from us (ellipsis, phrase understood from previous context and the adversative conjunction) so that (purpose conj.) they (believers residing in the cosmic system) might be exposed (φανερῶω, APSubj.3P, Constativ, Potential; revealed, manifest) that (Conj. as Dir. Obj.) they (negative believers) are (εἰμί, PAI3P, Descriptive) not (neg. particle) all (Pred. Nom.; being a Christian positionally isn't the only requirement for "fellowship") part of us (Partitive Abl.; be alert for people testing).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:19** ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξηλθαν ἄλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν, μεμεινήκεισαν ἂν μεθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:19** ex nobis prodierunt sed non erant ex nobis nam si fuissent ex nobis permansissent utique nobiscum sed ut manifesti sint quoniam non sunt omnes ex nobis

LWB 1 John 2:20 However, you [believers in the divine system] have the anointing [filling of the Spirit] from the holy One [Spirit] and have come to understand [spiritual perception] all manner of things [a complete systematic theology in the soul].

^{KW} **1 John 2:20** But as for you [in contradistinction to the antichrists], an anointing you have from the holy One, and all of you have the capacity to know [spiritual truth].

^{KJV} **1 John 2:20** But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

In spite of the reversionistic believer's defection from the divine system, those believers who continually reside in the divine system have (Static Present tense) the anointing or filling of the Spirit. This anointing comes from the source of Holy Spirit. Those believers who have continued to reside and function in the divine system have also come to understand all manner of doctrines (Consummative Perfect tense). Through spiritual perception given by the Holy Spirit and positive volition towards doctrine, they have made great strides in the Christian way of life. Their souls have a complete systematic theology stored in them, waiting for opportunities to apply its principles in daily life. So while the believers who exited the divine system and entered every level of reversionism in the sphere of darkness, those whom John is writing to are making progress towards supergrace spiritual status. The "anointing" is the filling and teaching ministry of the Spirit made available to every believer. Many scholars believe the "holy One" is Jesus Christ rather than the Spirit. I don't.

I see John's contrast between the believers who have left the divine system and those who have remained in it in greater contrast. If you believe John is addressing "all believers" in this passage, you will probably see the indwelling of the Spirit here because "all believers" receive the indwelling of the Spirit. If you believe John is addressing "believers in the divine system" as opposed to "believers in the cosmic system" (antichrists), you will probably see the filling of the Spirit here. Both the indwelling and the filling of the Spirit are true and necessary doctrines; on that we all agree. Whether the indwelling of the Spirit by itself, without the continual filling of the Spirit, enables you to come to understand all things in the Bible is another story. The only way you will ever "come to understand all things" is by the continual filling of the Spirit. The antichrists had the indwelling of the Spirit, but they did not come to understand all things because they were not continually filled with the Spirit.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The first benefit which believers have by this anointing is an illumination of their minds. The Spirit enables them to perceive what the natural man cannot discern, by His effectual application of the Truth to their hearts. In order to see, two things are necessary: the organ of vision within, and light from without – the Spirit imparts the former, the Scripture furnishes the latter. Their knowledge is such as to deliver from fatal delusions and preserve them from apostasy. (A. Pink) The indwelling Spirit is an "unction" and an "anointing" for *each* child of God; for these words are not used concerning a *class* of believers. (L. Chafer) Chafer states the common opinion that the unction is the indwelling of the Spirit, but he is not making the correct identification of the "you" John is addressing; the "you" here refers to those believers who are residing in the divine system as opposed to those who have separated and are residing in the cosmic system. Only those who are filled with the Spirit (in the divine system) are coming to understand the whole realm of doctrine. (LWB) Our entire growth in spiritual wisdom and the knowledge of God is the result of the working of the divine Spirit upon our life and mind through the Scriptures; no spiritual understanding is possible apart from this activity. The witness of the Holy Spirit is, therefore, the effectual reason why the Bible is received as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice by those who are God's children. (J. Boice)

John speaks of this teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in which He, the divine author of the Greek New Testament, interprets its meaning to the Christian expositor ... The anointing to which John refers here is the anointing with the Spirit. All believers have the anointing with the Spirit ... the ability to understand the Word of God is a spiritual possession of the believer by virtue of the fact that he is anointed with the Spirit ... This anointing is the Holy Spirit Himself who indwells the believer ... But we must make a careful distinction. While the anointing with the Spirit makes possible His teaching ministry to the saint, it does not determine the fullness, richness, efficiency, or extent of that ministry. Every saint is anointed with the Spirit. But every saint is not the recipient of the best services of the Spirit in His teaching ministry. That which determines the clearness and depth of understanding of the Word on the part of the expositor, is the degree to which he is controlled by the Holy Spirit ... His teaching ministry is operative only to the extent that the saint is filled with Him, or in other words, controlled by Him. The anointing of itself does not result in the teaching ... Of course, the Spirit does the best He can in teaching a saint who is not wholly yielded. But as in the case of a student who does not want to be taught,

the teacher can make little headway, so in the case of the saint who lives an unyielded life, the great Teacher can do but little teaching. (K. Wuest)

Under His filling ministry the Holy Spirit controls and empowers only when we reside in the divine dynasphere. We begin our Christian lives filled with the Spirit, but that initial filling is short-lived because we still possess volition and the old sin nature still resides in our bodies. As the resident antagonist against the indwelling Holy Spirit, the old sin nature is Satan's inside agent for distracting us from God's game plan. The sin nature is the source of temptation, but our volition is the source of sin. When the sin nature tempts us to commit a sin, we can resist the temptation and remain filled with the Spirit inside the divine dynasphere. We can choose to resist temptation and remain in the love complex, or we can acquiesce to temptation and eject ourselves from God's power system. Because no one can sin inside the divine dynasphere, we exit when we choose to sin. We are still saved, still in the royal family of God, still in union with Christ, still indwelt by the Spirit, but we must return to God's system ... By acknowledging our sins privately to God, we restore the filling of the Spirit and once again reside in the sphere of divine power. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) This ability to know the truth gives the saints the ability also to detect error. (K. Wuest)

1 John 2:20 However (adversative; in spite of their defection from the divine dynasphere), you (Subj. Nom.; believers who continually reside in the divine dynasphere) have (ἔχω, PAI2P, Static) the anointing (Acc. Dir. Obj.; indwelling of the Spirit initially, filling of the Spirit afterwards) from the Holy One (Abl. Source; Spirit) and (connective) have come to understand (οἶδα, Perf.AI2P, Consummative; spiritual perception and momentum inside the divine dynasphere) all manner (categories, kinds) of things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the soul of a mature believer has a complete systematic theology stored in it).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:20** καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:20** sed vos unctionem habetis a Sancto et nostis omnia

LWB 1 John 2:21 I have not written to you because you do not know the Truth [doctrine], but because you have come to know it, and because no lie of any kind comes [originates] from doctrine [the mind of Christ].

^{KW} **1 John 2:21** I am not writing to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because every lie is not out of the truth as a source.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:21** I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John did not write (Constative Aorist tense) to his non-resident congregations because they did not know (Intensive Perfect tense) the Truth (Latin: ignorant). They had been following his instructions and were making progress in the spiritual life. He wrote to them because they had come to know (Consummative Perfect tense) the Truth. He also reminds them that there is no lie of any kind originating (Gnomic Present tense) from the Truth. The Truth is a reference to Bible doctrine, the mind of Christ. The perfect tense means they knew doctrine quite well and many of them possessed the mind of Christ. This made them dear to John's heart, so he wrote to them out of care, concern and personal love.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is important to perceive the intimate connection between these two things: the believer's anointing and his knowledge are related as are cause and effect. Not only are the regenerate separated from the world by this unction, but they are also distinguished from the unregenerate in point of essential knowledge. The gift of the Spirit consecrates their souls and bodies as His temples to dwell in, and His gracious operation within imparts to them the true knowledge of Divine things ... To take the 'you know all things' at its face value, without restriction, would be to affirm that the regenerate are omniscient – a manifest absurdity. Let this be duly noted by those who are fond of saying, "Scripture always means what it says, and requires no explaining by man." There is not a little in the Bible which requires a divinely qualified teacher to interpret, for it is God's general way to make use of such in 'opening' His Word to the rank and file of His people ... By the gracious teaching of the Spirit believers are granted an experiential and effectual knowledge of Divine things so that no propagator of error can fatally deceive them. (A. Pink)

Those who have come to know the truth "as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21) have, it is implied, a built-in spiritual instinct which enables them to detect and refuse whatever is basically incompatible with that truth, no matter how speciously and eloquently it may be set before them. They know that "no lie is of the truth." (F. Bruce) False doctrine is a lie; it is the opposite of truth, and no amount of punitive devotional experience can substitute for it. (G. Clark) There is no occasion to think that such a spiritual gift will synchronize in its bestowment with the time of administration of any external ordinance. Indeed, the opposite is indicated in Eph. 1:13. (A. Plummer)

1 John 2:21 I have not (neg. particle) written (γράφω, AAI1S, Constative) to you (Dat. Adv.) because (causal) you do not (neg. particle) know (οἶδα, Perf.AI2P, Intensive; malfunction at gate 4) the Truth (Acc. Dir. Obj.; doctrine), but (adversative) because (causal) you have come to know (οἶδα, Perf.AI2P, Consummative) it (Acc. Dir. Obj.), and (connective) because (causal) no (neg. particle, denial) lie (Subj. Nom.; falsehood) of any kind (Descr. Nom.) comes (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnomic; originates) from the Truth (Abl. Source; doctrine as the mind of Christ).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:21** οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀλλ' ὅτι οἶδατε αὐτὴν καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:21** non scripsi vobis quasi ignorantibus veritatem sed quasi scientibus eam et quoniam omne mendacium ex veritate non est

LWB 1 John 2:22 Who [what sort of person] is a liar [living a lie] if not the one who continually disregards [repudiates by living in the cosmic system] that Jesus is the Christ? This one [born-again believers] who continually disregards [repudiates by living in the cosmic system] the Father and the Son is an antichrist [believers who serve Satan].

^{KW} **1 John 2:22** Who is the liar if not the one who is denying that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist, the one who is denying the Father and the Son.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:22** Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

What sort of person is a liar? John isn't talking about a person who tells a lie; he is talking about a person who lives a lie. A person who is a Christian but who lives in the satanic system instead of the divine system is living a lie. This is a key verse to the interpretation of other portions of John's epistle. If you translated "arneomai" as "denies," you may end up with unbelievers who reject the incarnation of Jesus Christ. If you translate "arneomai" as "disregards" or "repudiates," you may end up with believers who know Jesus is the Christ, but who don't care anymore. They disregard His mandates and repudiate Him personally by choosing to live in Satan's cosmic system instead of the divine system. If you knew Jesus was the Christ, even God, and you considered His mandates to live in the divine system according to His protocol to be boring or irrelevant or something you put off to a later date after you have some fun in life first – wouldn't you say that was a repudiation of Who He really is, which is the incarnate God?

Since the entire thrust of this epistle is experiential rather than positional, it is more likely that John is referring to a believer who is living a lie by refusing to live as Christ lived ... than an unbeliever who has never accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. This born-again believer who continually disregards both the Father and the Son - by his choosing to reside in Satan's cosmic system instead of the divine system - is an antichrist. He or she is a believer who serves Satan. The very expression of his life denies the reality of his position in Christ. He is a sheep who fell into a mud pit and is happy living like a hog. He knows he is going to heaven, but rather than live the Christian way of life, he wants to raise some hell. This is what John means by living a lie and by disregarding that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah of the Jews. It is not so much a denial of His Person as it is a denial of the life He intends for us to live. It is an experiential rejection - believing in the Father and the Son, but living like the devil.

There was a form of "Christian Gnosticism" which believed in the deity of Christ, but not the humanity of Christ. They believed He was God (spiritual Redeemer), but not man (not visible in the flesh). If they believed in the deity of Christ, but didn't understand the hypostatic union,

could they still be Christians? There was also a form of “Christian Gnosticism” that believed in both the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, but ... “The Gnostic no longer needs the Redeemer as the Incarnate once he himself has acquired the gnosis.” (R. Bultmann) In a strange sort of way, they believed in biblical justification and salvation, but completely rejected experiential sanctification as taught in Scripture. They had their own “higher” spiritual life (Gnostic protocol: knowledge of self and how to find your way back to your heavenly home) instead of what John was teaching (filling of the Spirit and the Word of God). In other words, “It was nice meeting you, Redeemer; now see ya later.” If they believed in the deity and humanity of Christ, but not His continual indwelling or Advocacy, could these Gnostics still be Christians?

The gospel is simple in its pure form, and it is my opinion that these antichrists were Gnostic-leaning *believers*. They heard just enough of the true gospel to become believers, but not nearly enough doctrine to prevent them from following certain Gnostic philosophies that resembled Christianity, but were not. There were a lot of similarities and overlaps between John’s doctrine and that of Gnosticism. John even used their Greek terminology to make an impression on the Hellenistic world, and perhaps to convert a Gnostic or two. Unfortunately, Christianity and Gnosticism often merged into a strange lump, one serious enough to make Paul and John warn believers that their teachings were heretical. I believe there was just enough accurate Soteriology to lead a Gnostic adherent to the Lord, but without serious attention to the Word of God afterwards, they would likely return to their Gnostic spiritual practices. These are the Christians that “went out from us because they were no longer part of us.” The way any Christian can *disregard* the deity of Christ is by refusing to live in the divine system He gave us.

Many commentators believe this is a passage in which the deity of Christ is rejected, not disregarded. They see this passage as proof that the antichrists rejected Christ outright and were unbelievers, not believers. I disagree with this position on two fronts. I disagree that the antichrists *rejected* the deity of Christ; they merely rejected that His deity (Christ) became humanity (Jesus) and walked among men. They denied the hypostatic union, but not the deity of Christ. There are lots of believers who don’t understand the hypostatic union. I disagree that they *denied* Him at all, but instead *repudiated* Him by their manner of life. The first premise is questioned and at least to my satisfaction, eliminated by R. Bultmann. It is possible for Gnostics to be Christians and to return to Gnostic practices. I have added numerous quotes from Bultmann below. The second premise is questioned and to my satisfaction is ably eliminated from consideration by R.B. Thieme, Jr. These antichrists did not reject Christ, but instead disregarded or repudiated Him by refusing to live in the divine system. Thieme’s quotes are scattered throughout the entire epistle.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Because they lack faith in the power of Truth itself, preachers resort to all sorts of carnal devices to render their message more palatable to the unregenerate, and those devices are nothing more than lying deceits, dishonest arts ... Recourse is had to abstruse philosophies, displays of oratory, histrionics, or musical attractions and worldly allurements, rather than the plain and faithful preaching of the Truth itself. (A. Pink) John uses the language current in Gnostic circles to give expression to the Christian understanding of faith. The conclusion perhaps could be

drawn from this that he lays worth on convincing adherents of Gnostic circles as to the truth of the Gospel. (R. Bultmann) The author indicates fairly clearly that those who make this denial are erstwhile members of his own community and therefore presumably Christians ... The secessionists are Christians and the denial here is not what it first seems. The solution with the least problems is that the secessionists were Christians who once belonged to the author's community, and subsequently left it because they had come to accept a different Christology from that espoused by the author and others in his community. (C. Kruse)

Present day modernism denies the deity of Jesus of Nazareth and the substitutionary atonement He offered on the cross, while subscribing to His humanity. Modernism is branded here by John as "the liar." This one is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Here we have modern day Unitarianism with a vengeance. The Jews denied the same thing in the first century ... Our Lord was pinning down these false teachers, these Unitarians, to an admission of the two Persons of the Trinity, God the Father and God the Son. (K. Wuest) We have many systems in the world today which deny Him. They are against Christ, and they also imitate Him and try to take His place. Liberalism and all of the cults and "isms" today have also denied His deity. (J. McGee) Many commentators assume the Gnostics denied His deity but embraced His humanity. Actually, the opposite is closer to the truth. (LWB) Gnosticism had a figure of a Redeemer, who is sent by the Father, mostly in the primeval time, to impart the knowledge ... After his completed work of redemption the Redeemer ascends again and so makes a way for the elements of light that follow him. (R. Bultman)

As the development of the Kyrios-cult drew Hellenistic Christianity into *the syncretistic process*, the development, under Gnostic influence, of the doctrine of redemption did so still more. The extent to which that was the case varied greatly in different social levels and different localities; and side by side with positive influence from Gnosticism we also find rejection of it. But sometimes Christianity and Gnosticism combined. On the whole, one could be tempted to term Hellenistic Christianity a syncretistic structure. The only reason one may not do so is that it is not just a conglomerate of heterogeneous materials; in spite of all its syncretism in detail it retains from its origin an inherent drive toward an independent understanding, all its own, of God, world, and man. But the question is: Will this drive triumph and achieve in learned form a genuinely Christian theology? For Christian missions, the *Gnostic movement* was a competitor of the most serious and dangerous sort because of the far-reaching relatedness between them. (R. Bultmann)

What form the Gnostic religion took in its various groups and congregations, or how, in one place and another, doctrines developed and rites evolved, are secondary questions. By a syncretistic process the movement crept into Christian congregations, or the converse also happened – that Gnostic congregations adopted elements of Christianity ... Both believed in a Creator-God and a Redeemer-God that were one. They also had similar anthropology, eschatology, and sacraments like baptism and the eucharist ... Differences entail a contrast, however, in Christology, since Gnosticism cannot acknowledge the real humanity of Jesus. Apparent humanity to a pre-existent heavenly being is only a disguise; and where Gnosticism adapts the Christian tradition to its own use, if it does not insist upon declaring Jesus' flesh and blood to be only seemingly a body, it has to make a distinction between the Redeemer and the

historical person Jesus and assert some such thing as that the former was only transiently united with the latter and left him before the passion. (R. Bultmann)

The true humanity of Christ is defended against the Gnostics in 1 John 2:22; 4:2, 15; 5:1, 5-8. Now it must be carefully noted that in all this Gnosticism is combated not as if it were a foreign, heathen religion into which Christians are in danger of apostatizing. Rather, it is only dealt with so far as it is a *phenomenon within Christianity*. And it is also clear that the Gnostics here opposed by no means regard the Christian congregations as a mission field which they want to convert from Christianity to Gnosticism. Rather, they considered themselves Christians teaching a Christian wisdom – and that is the way they appear to the churches, too ... It is perfectly clear that to the Church they have the standing of *Christian* apostles, though to Paul they are ministers of Satan (2 Cor. 11:13). They proclaim Christ, though according to Paul another Jesus than the one we preached ... Naturally Gnosticism, just like Christianity, is also spread by wandering teachers ... Hellenistic Christianity was in the maelstrom of the syncretistic process; the genuinely Christian element is wrestling with other elements; “orthodoxy” does not exist at this early period but is still to develop. (R. Bultmann)

At first, Gnosticism probably penetrated into the Christian congregations mostly through the medium of a Hellenistic Judaism that was itself in the grip of syncretism ... It was conceivable that Gnosticism to some was regarded not as a heathen faith, but as a form of Christianity. (R. Bultmann) Gnosticism and Christianity also shared similar teachings on angels, demons, truth and error, light and darkness, spiritual and material, the fall and the resurrection, the earthly and the heavenly. But there are monumental differences between the two once you get past the basic tenets of each, especially when it comes to communion with God and the spiritual life. (LWB) The Gnostic failure to recognize true human existence as fulfilling itself in one’s actual history leads to a non-historical interpretation of the “kinship” idea – to a misconception of what *fellowship in the Church* is. Under this misconception, “knowledge” (gnosis) seeks its culmination in “de-historizing” ecstasy (i.e., an ecstasy which divorces its subject from his concrete existence) instead of finding it in the *Agape* which is its perfect realization – its genuine demonstration in the knower’s actual history. (R. Bultmann)

1 John 2:22 **Who** (Subj. Nom.; what sort of person) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **a liar** (Pred. Nom.; status: not *telling* a lie, but *living* a lie) **if** (subordinate conj.) **not** (neg. particle; “no one else but”) **the one** (Nom. Appos.; person) **who continually disregards** (ἀρνέομαι, PMPTc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Deponent, Articular, Redundant Neg. Particle; denies, repudiates by living in the cosmic system) **that** (Conj. as Dir. Obj.) **Jesus** (Subj. Nom.) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **the Christ** (Pred. Nom.)? **This one** (Subj. Nom.; born-again believers only), **who continually disregards** (ἀρνέομαι, PMPTc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Deponent, Articular; denies, repudiates by living in the cosmic system) **the Father** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **and** (connective) **the Son** (Acc. Dir. Obj.), **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **an antichrist** (Pred. Nom.; believers who serve satan).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:22** Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:22** quis est mendax nisi is qui negat quoniam Iesus non est Christus hic est antichristus qui negat Patrem et Filium

LWB 1 John 2:23 Each one who makes it a practice to disregard the Son [repudiate by living in the cosmic system], neither does he have [fellowship with] the Father; the one who makes it a practice to acknowledge the Son [by living in the divine system], also has [fellowship with] the Father.

^{KW} **1 John 2:23** Everyone who denies the Son, not even does he have the Father. The one who confesses the Son also has the Father.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:23** Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Let me say this again. This epistle is addressed to John's non-resident congregations. It is not addressed to unbelievers. This epistle is about experiential sanctification, not evangelism. Therefore, this passage is not about rejecting Christ or the Father positionally; it is about rejecting them experientially after salvation and not having fellowship with them. Every person who makes it a practice to disregard (Iterative Present tense) the Son by living in the cosmic system instead of the divine system, does not have fellowship with Jesus Christ. And if He does not have fellowship with Jesus Christ, neither does he have fellowship with the Father. The Gnostic Present tense means it is impossible to commune with deity if you are living in Satan's system. On the other hand, the believer who makes it a practice to acknowledge the Son (Iterative Present tense) by living in the divine system, has fellowship with Jesus Christ as well as with the Father. The 2nd Gnostic Present tense means the believer who resides and functions in the divine system is always in fellowship with the Son and the Father. Understanding this principle is quite simple; executing it is not always that simple, thanks to the old sin nature.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Pelagians, and in a lesser degree Arminians, are guilty of this horrible crime, for they transfer to the creature almost all the honour which rightly belongs to the Redeemer alone. And as Calvin pertinently remarked, "So the papists at this day, setting up free will in opposition to the grace of the Holy Spirit, ascribing a part of their righteousness and salvation to the merits of works, feigning for themselves innumerable advocates, by whom they render God propitious to them, have a sort of fictitious Christ I know not what: but the living and genuine image of God which shines forth in Christ they deform by their wicked inventions: they lessen His power, subvert and pervert His office. Christ is denied whenever those things which belong to Him are taken away from Him." (A. Pink)

When you say that you believe in God and deny the deity of Christ, you really do not believe in God, certainly not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is the one who sent His Son into the world to die for our sins. And since the Son is God, He alone is the one who could make a satisfactory sacrifice to God for our sins. (J. McGee) McGee is representative of those commentators who see this passage as a rejection of the Son and the Father, rather than as a repudiation of them by refusing to reside in the divine system. (LWB) Because of homoeoteleuton, K L and most miniscules, followed by the Textus Receptus (KJV), have accidentally omitted the second part of the verse. The words, however, belong to the original text, being strongly supported by ... many manuscripts. (B. Metzger)

1 John 2:23 Each (Nom. Spec.) one (Subj. Nom.) who makes it a practice to disregard (ἀρνέομαι, PPtC.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Deponent, Articular; repudiate by living in the cosmic system) the Son (Acc. Dir. Obj.), neither (neg. particle) does he have (ἔχω, PAI3S, Gnostic: Advantages, Benefits, Comforts; fellowship, social life,, enjoyable company, close association) the Father (Acc. Dir. Obj.); the one (Subj. Nom.) who makes it a practice to acknowledge (ὁμολογέω, PMPtC.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; bear testimony to His presence by living in the divine dynasphere) the Son (Acc. Dir. Obj.), also (adjunctive) has (ἔχω, PAI3S, Gnostic: Advantages, Benefits, Comforts; fellowship, social life, enjoyable company, close association) the Father (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:23** πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:23** omnis qui negat Filium nec Patrem habet qui confitetur Filium et Patrem habet

LWB **1 John 2:24** As for you [positive believers], what [doctrine] you have heard from the beginning [when you first decided to learn the Word of God] must continually reside in you. If what you heard from the beginning [Bible doctrine] continues to reside in you, you will also reside in the sphere of the Son and the Father.

^{KW} **1 John 2:24** As for you, that which you heard from the beginning, in you let it be constantly abiding. If in you there abides that which from the beginning you heard, both in the Son and in the Father you will abide.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:24** Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Continuing on the subject of fellowship, John addresses the positive believers in his non-resident congregations once again. First, the doctrines they learned (when they first decided they wanted to understand God's Word) must continually reside (Imperative of Command) in them. The

Iterative Present tense means their soul must be saturated with doctrine. A short sermon once a week on Sunday will not enable anyone to grow spiritually. That scenario is a guarantee for residence in the cosmic system, not residence in the divine system. Think about it for a minute. If you attend church every Sunday for fifty years of your life and never missed a sermon, that's 2,600 sermons in a lifetime. Since there are 66 books in the Bible, that's 39 sermons per book. That sounds pretty good to most people, but it also assumes *you never hear a sermon or study a book of the Bible more than one time*. If you have perfect knowledge of something after hearing it only one time (Latin: audio), you are smarter than anyone I have ever met.

In order to have doctrine residing in your soul, you need to hear or read it over and over again. Then there is the issue of the filling of the Spirit. The only doctrine that makes it to the launching pad of your soul for application to life is that doctrine you learned while filled with the Spirit. For your sake, let's hope you were filled with the Spirit every single time you went to church on Sunday for 50 years. I think you're getting my point now. The only way doctrine continually resides in your soul is by consistent, daily intake and metabolization of the same. If this doctrine you have been hearing for the past 50-years on Sunday continues to reside in you (Potential Subjunctive mood), you will also reside in the sphere of the Son and the Father. The Predictive Future tense points to continued fellowship with deity ... if you repeatedly cycle doctrine in your soul. Continual doctrine in = fellowship with God. Lack of doctrine in = no fellowship with God. There are no substitutes.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Theology is not to be reserved until converts become mature. It is theology that matures them, and this instruction must begin from the beginning. To this instruction the converts must pay attention and take care not to forget. What they heard must remain with them. They should think about it, talk about it, and even sing about it ... The trouble with the Gnostics was that they did not *know*. They had opinions, beliefs, theories, theology; but their views were false; their theology was error, not knowledge. As it is wrong to reject *faith* or *belief*, just because various people believe falsehoods, so it is wrong to belittle knowledge and theology. Yet this sort of pietism is, in various degrees, the chief weakness of present day conservative Christians. (G. Clark) In present-day language, the apostle made a practical application of what he had written in verses 18-23 ... Truth must be kept before the mind in order for it to keep producing its effect; and how can it be kept before the mind, but by our giving heed to it? There needs to be a serious and diligent fixing of the thoughts upon that which we hear, a bowing and bending of the will to yield unto it, a placing of the affections upon it, a bringing of the entire man into conformity with it. Otherwise, it will soon pass out of the mind, like water out of a leaky utensil. (A. Pink)

In due proportion to our valuation of the Truth will be our earnestness and efforts to make it our own. Silver and gold lie not on the surface of the ground to be picked up by any lazy person, but can be reached and secured only by hard work and persevering toil. Likewise, in order to learn God's will as He has revealed it - the Scriptures must be searched, searched daily, one part carefully compared to another ... In order thereto we need to make the Gospel our constant study, to become thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures, and cordially assent to them, to receive the Truth in the love of it, to feed daily thereon, so that our judgments are formed by its teaching,

our hearts cast into the mould of it, our consciences directed by it. Thereby shall we be enriched with true spiritual wisdom and knowledge, and be enabled to walk acceptably before God and adorn the doctrine we profess ... Make it your food and drink, your sustenance and strength, your comfort and joy: only by so doing will it have its proper influence over you. Then will the Word abide in you and not merely as a fact in the brain, but as that which is actually realized in your experience ... Only by faith in and obedience to the Word is preserved our experiential union with the Lord. (A. Pink)

It is not by deliberate intention that so many depart from the faith and give heed to seducing spirits, but through inattention to what they heard at the beginning – because of their indolence and failure to make the Truth their own. The seed which remains on the surface of the ground is quickly devoured by the fowls of the air. (A. Pink) The Greek word for “abide” has in it the idea of allowing the truth embraced to mature them and thus make them stable. The basis of their fellowship or abiding in Christ was the Truth they have already received. (R. Lightner) It is the responsibility of the believer to nurture the stability and growth of those doctrines by a holy life and a determination to cling to them and remain true to them. (K. Wuest) It is faithful adherence to the message that is intended, and this carries with it faithful adherence to the Father and the Son to whom in that message the Spirit bears witness. This personal relationship with the Godhead is similarly mutual: those who abide in God have God abiding in them. But those who have abandoned the foundation of their faith in the original apostolic testimony have severed themselves from fellowship with the true God, for that is the true testimony to God. (F. Bruce)

We continue to abide in Him only if what we heard from the beginning abides in us. Failure to continue to abide is very real, not hypothetical, and will result in shrinking away from Him in shame at his coming. (J. Dillow) John’s point was that if the readers would resist the lies of the antichrists and let the truth they had heard from the beginning “abide” in them, they would continue to “abide” in the fellowship of God the Father and God the Son. (Z. Hodges) The Word of the gospel must not only be heard but it must be given a vital place in one’s life ... The Word is not present simply as a matter of course, but only where a person is committed to receive it and unite with it ... The Word is not the goal of the fellowship with the Father and the Son, but rather a means through which the fellowship occurs. (F. Gaebelein) It is not enough merely to have heard it and assented to the message in times past. The message must continue to be present and active in the lives of those who have heard it. They must continually call it to mind and let it affect their lives. (I. Marshall) John’s insistence that his readers genuinely know God and know His truth was part of his strategy for fortifying them against the antichrists. (Z. Hodges)

1 John 2:24 **As for you** (Subj. Nom., emphatic form, often Vocative; positive believers), **what** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Bible doctrine) **you have heard** (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Constative) **from the beginning** (Adv. Gen. Time; when you 1st decided you wanted to know His Word) **must continually reside** (μένω, PAImp.3S, Iterative, Command or Entreaty) **in you** (Loc. Sph.). **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe it will, maybe it won’t”) **what** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Bible doctrine) **you heard** (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Constative) **from the beginning** (Adv. Gen. Time)

continues to reside (μένω, AASubj.3S, Gnostic, Potential) in you (Loc. Sph.), you (Subj. Nom.) will also (adjunctive) reside (μένω, FAI2P, Predictive) in the sphere of the Son (Loc. Sph.) and (connective) the Father (Loc. Sph.).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:24** ὑμεῖς ὃ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω. ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη ὃ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μενεῖτε.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:24** vos quod audistis ab initio in vobis permaneat si in vobis permanserit quod ab initio audistis et vos in Filio et Patre manebitis

LWB 1 John 2:25 Likewise, this is the promise which He Himself has promised us: eternal life [social life with God assisted by our resurrection bodies].

^{KW} **1 John 2:25** And this is the promise which He Himself promised us, the life, the eternal life.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:25** And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Fellowship with the Father and the Son in time is promised to every believer who continues to live in the divine system and metabolizes doctrine in his soul. Eternal life has a qualitative element in the present, as well as a timely element extending into the future. Positive believers are promised the qualitative aspect in the present, when they continue to reside in the divine system. We have also been promised (Culminative Aorist tense) social life with God in the future, assisted by our resurrection bodies – a requirement for fellowship in eternity.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is of the utmost importance that the perfect revelation of God which has been made in and by Christ should have a permanent dwelling in your souls. Make it your deep concern that it abides in your minds and regulates your thoughts; in your consciences, to convict of sin and restrain it, and by stirring you up to the practice of holiness; in your affections, melting you with sorrow for sin, promoting a higher esteem of Christ and spiritual things; in your wills, bringing them into compliance with those things which are pleasing to God ... It is by the Truth remaining and operating in us that we have communion with God in Christ ... It is by adhering to the Gospel that fellowship with Christ is maintained, and in that fellowship *eternal life* is experienced in the soul ... The Divine promises are so many declarations to remove some ill or to impart some good unto the objects upon whom God set His heart from all eternity. As such they are a most blessed manifestation of His love unto His saints ... Everything in the way of blessing, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, comes to the believer by way of promise. (A. Pink)

Briefly summarized, eternal life is union with God Himself, in, through, and by Christ. It begins with the Divine operation of grace in our hearts *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. It continues in our beholding by faith the glory of the Lord as it shines in the Word, by which we are experientially and progressively *changed into the same*

image from glory to glory. It is consummated at Christ's return, when He will *change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body*; when in spirit and soul and body *we shall be like Him*. It eventuates in dwelling with Him forever in heaven. God's elect are given both a legal and a spiritual life. (A. Pink) Eternal life, as in the Gospel, is life that is proper to the age to come. But this quality of life is God's gift to believers here and now. It is a life which, though God's gift and thus not earned by human desert, is incompatible with certain human attitudes. (L. Morris)

1 John 2:25 Likewise (adjunctive; also), this (Subj. Nom.) is (είμι, PAI3S, Descriptive) the promise (Pred. Nom.) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) He Himself (Subj. Nom.) has promised (ἐπαγγέλλομαι, AMI3S, Culminative, Deponent) us (Dat. Adv.): eternal (Acc. Extent of Time; assisted by our resurrection bodies) life (Appos. Acc.; social life with God).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:25** καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:25** et haec est repromissio quam ipse pollicitus est nobis vitam aeternam

LWB 1 John 2:26 I have written [non face-to-face teaching] these things [doctrinal warnings] to you [remote congregations] concerning those [apostates & reversionists] who continue to seduce you [trying to lure you into the cosmic system].

^{KW} **1 John 2:26** These things I am writing to you concerning those who are leading you astray.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:26** These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John is writing these things to his non-resident congregations (Epistolary Aorist tense) because he is unable to be there in person. He is covering specific topics in his letter (paper) because there are believers among them who are apostates and reversionists. They have been corrupted by Gnostic beliefs and are separating one-by-one from them. Some aren't leaving quietly. They are trying to lure other believers (Iterative Present tense) to follow them into the cosmic system. They are trying to replace God's protocol plan for the Christian way of life with the Gnostic way of "understanding self and finding one's way to heaven." Their deceptions and distractions are working on some of the weaker brethren. John is not worried about anyone losing their salvation, because that is impossible. But he is concerned that so many are leaving fellowship with God to have fellowship with Satan. So he writes this letter to encourage positive believers to remain in fellowship, and to warn weak believers about where they are headed if they don't acknowledge their sins and turn away from Gnosticism.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Christians are seduced by false teachers, who seek to corrupt their minds and turn them away from the Truth. They tacitly repudiate the total depravity of man, concealing the fact that he is

dead in trespasses and sins, completely incapacitated to perform a single spiritual act; and flatter him by assuring him of his “free will,” and that he has power to decide his own eternal destiny. They pervert God’s way of salvation, omitting that which is abasing to pride, and substituting that which is pleasing to the flesh. They preach *another Gospel* than that of Christ ... The Devil is the instigator of innumerable devices to cheat the unwary and ruin their souls. The wicked one has many of his seducing emissaries in Christendom, who pose as men of superior enlightenment, with great spiritual zeal and love for souls, yet are engaged in stealthily propagating error and undermining the fundamentals of the faith ... They are dissemblers, assuming a character which does not belong to them. They are tricksters, beguiling many by their arts to receive as good and true that which is pernicious and false. They are themselves deluded by the father of lies ... It is only by means of the Truth abiding in our hearts and operating in our lives that we are rendered immune to the Devil’s lies and kept from apostasy. (A. Pink)

1 John 2:26 I have written (γράφω, AAI1S, Epistolary; non face-to-face teaching) these things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; doctrinal warnings) to you (Dat. Adv.; remote congregation) concerning those (Dat. Ind. Obj.; apostates & reversionists) who continue (are trying) to seduce (πλανάω, PAPtc.GPM, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; deceive, mislead, lure, distract you from the plan of God and lure you into the cosmic system) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:26** Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:26** haec scripsi vobis de eis qui seducunt vos

LWB 1 John 2:27 Furthermore, as for you, the anointing [baptism of the Holy Spirit] which you have received [at salvation] from Him [Jesus Christ] resides in you [indwelling of the Holy Spirit]. Furthermore, you do not have need that anyone [false teachers] should teach you, but instead His anointing [ministry of the Holy Spirit] keeps teaching you [through a person with the communication gift of pastor or teacher] concerning all categories of things [a complete systematic theology]. Moreover, it [doctrine witnessed by the Holy Spirit] is never a lie. In fact, just as it [the filling and teaching of the Spirit] has taught you, keep on residing in it [the divine system].

^{KW} **1 John 2:27** But as for you, the anointing which you received from Him remains in you. And no need are you constantly having that anyone be constantly teaching you. But even as His anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as He [the Holy Spirit, the anointing] taught you, be constantly abiding in Him.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

How do we protect ourselves from antichrists? John gives us several things we can do to defend ourselves from their false teachings: (1) the anointing or filling of the Spirit in 2:20, (2) coming to know Bible doctrine in 2:21, (3) fellowship with the Father and Son in 2:23-24, and (4) continual residence in the divine system in 2:27. Residence in the divine system requires the *indwelling* of the Spirit. Learning Bible doctrine requires the *teaching ministry* of the Spirit. Fellowship with the Father and Son requires the *filling* of the Spirit. The anointing in 2:20 was the filling of the Spirit. The anointing here (Latin: unction) is the *baptism* of the Spirit and the teaching ministry of the Spirit. The anointing is a generic term for the Spirit in all His functions and ministries; context determines which function or ministry is under consideration. The believers John is writing to, as well as all believers for that matter, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Constative Aorist tense) at salvation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit which occurred at the new birth is due to the indwelling of the Spirit (Durative Present tense) which was sent to us by Jesus Christ when His earthly ministry ended at the cross.

Furthermore, John warns the positive believers in his non-resident congregations that they do not need any Gnostic-leaning believers to teach them anything. The potential is quite high that some of their apostate or reversionistic friends will try to teach them (Static Present tense) some of the theories and philosophies they have recently added to John's doctrine. God's system is complete; it does not need to be supplemented by any Gnostic practices. If they remain filled with the Spirit, His teaching ministry (anointing) will help them learn everything they need to know about the spiritual life (Perfective Present tense) through a person with the communication gift of pastor or teacher. This phrase does not tell a believer that he can learn the Bible on his own with the help of the Holy Spirit. If that were true, why would the Lord provide the gift of pastors and teachers to the church in the first place? The only way you will ever get a complete systematic theology in your soul is by taking advantage of the Spirit's ministry and a well-trained pastor or teacher. There are no short cuts in God's plan.

Moreover, Bible doctrine as witnessed by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is always true (Gnomic Present tense). Bible doctrine as witnessed by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is never (Gnomic Present tense) a lie. If you hear something that is not true, the Spirit will not convert it into useable spiritual material. It ends up as garbage in the subconscious, if there is such a thing as the subconscious; that's another question we're not getting into here. The filling of the Spirit enables the teaching ministry of the Spirit to properly execute His functions in the believer. If you are not filled with the Spirit, the teaching ministry of the Spirit "reaches deaf ears," so to speak. You can't be in a state of sin in the cosmic system and expect the teaching ministry of the Spirit to override your negative volition. You need to keep on residing in the divine system in the filling of the Spirit (Iterative Present tense) in order for the teaching ministry of the Spirit to function properly. The Spirit never ceases to teach you, if you never cease to reside in the divine system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In view of the defection of so many and the continued activity of antichrists to draw away others, John had addressed their responsibility and bade them persevere in the faith, and heed not those

who sought to entice them away from it. It was their duty to store the Truth in their minds and treasure it in their hearts, to yield their entire beings to its sway and reduce its substance to practice. Abandon it not for any specious novelty ... However sound and extensive their spiritual knowledge, they had real need of more. There is no remaining stationary in the Christian life: unless we progress, we retrogress. Unless we make good use of what God has given us, we are in real danger of losing what we seem to have. In order to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we are required to make daily use of the means which God has provided ... Everywhere else in Scripture the Holy Spirit is said to be the Teacher of the saints, the One who establishes them in the Truth, and there is nothing whatever in our text or the context which requires us to adopt any other signification ... Christ is our Anointer, and the anointing which believers receive from Him is the Holy Spirit ... The external Word is now applied internally. The mind is divinely illumined, so as to receive a clear, convincing, contenting knowledge of the Truth. At the same time the affections are purified and the heart turned unto God, so that it is fitted for spiritual and heavenly things. (A. Pink)

I don't believe in a lot of the silly stuff that is going on today which is purely emotional and which doesn't enlighten you to understand and love the Word of God and to love the Lord Jesus. It does not matter how much whoopee you put into your religion, you can just whoop it up and have all kinds of emotion, but all that is of no value. It is *enlightenment* that we need today. The whole point is that there ought to come a day when you and I can stand on our own two feet as far as the Word of God is concerned ... In other words, we ought to get to the place where the Spirit of God is our Teacher. (J. McGee) Another explanation, I know, is commonly given, "Abide in it," that is, the unction. (J. Calvin) Another question is whether the form of *autos* that is the object of the preposition "in" in the last line of verse 27 is to be read as "it" (the anointing) or as "him" (Christ)? The "it" reading is favored by Buchsel, Bultmann, and Thusing. (R. Brown) Impatience drives men to look without for the guidance which in due time will be recognized within. Such impatience is the opposite to the steadfastness of the Christian. (B. Wescott)

The Spirit is like a seal, by which the Truth is testified and certified to the soul. Therefore we are to measure everything by what the Spirit teaches in the Word ... Certain fanatics suppose it means that the Christian is independent of all preachers, and therefore have contended for the exclusion of oral ministry from the churches. Now it is obvious that John wrote not to promote a spirit of presumption and unwillingness to be taught by others – his own example contradicted any such idea, for he was then engaged in instructing these very persons. (A. Pink) John's readers did not need to learn anything from the secessionists or revisionists ... They had the Holy Spirit in them and were therefore not at the mercy of the antichrists, the false teachers. The phrase must not be taken to mean that John was setting aside the need for the teaching ministry of the Word whether in written or oral form. John himself was teaching them in this very epistle. They needed his instruction, and we need it, too. (R. Lightner) The mind of man is in a state of spiritual darkness. It continues, and will continue so, until the Spirit of God gives it light or knowledge. This giving of light or knowledge is by divine power, a miracle of grace, as truly a miracle as when at the beginning the Lord said, "Let there be light." (A. Pink)

Evangelical Christians must strenuously resist the mystical claim that the Holy Spirit apart from the Scripture gives us all we need. (G. Clark) It is not completely clear whether we are to understand the anointing or the Spirit in the last two clauses of verse 27. Some make the anointing (“it”) subject of “taught” but take *en auto* at the end of the verse to refer to the Spirit (“in Him”), not to the anointing (“in it”) which is also a permissible rendering. Since “the anointing” is the subject of the earlier part of the sentence, we might well retain it throughout: “as it has taught you, abide in it.” (F. Bruce) John holds that the answer to Gnostic inquiries is to be found in more far-reaching inquiries; if these are conducted in the proper spirit, they will be rewarded by the discovery of fresh truth. (B. Easton) We *do* need teachers, or else Paul was certainly wrong in Ephesians when he made the statement that God has given to the church certain men who are gifted – some who are teachers, some who are evangelists, and some who are shepherds to minister to and counsel folk. Paul said that God has given these men to the church to build up the body of believers. I think it is important that we all sit under good teachers. (J. McGee)

1 John 2:27 Furthermore (continuative), as for you (Voc. Address), the anointing (Subj. Nom.; baptism of the Holy Spirit) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) you have received (λαμβάνω, AAI2P, Constative; at salvation) from Him (Abl. Source; Jesus Christ) resides (μένω, PAI3S, Durative) in you (Loc. Sph.; indwelling of the Holy Spirit). Furthermore (continuative), you do not (neg. particle) have (έχω, PAI2P, Descriptive) need (Acc. Dir. Obj.; necessity) that (Conj. as Dir. Obj.) anyone (Subj. Nom.; false teachers) should teach (διδάσκω, PASubj.3S, Static, Potential) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.), but (contrast) instead (comparative) His (Abl. Source) anointing (Subj. Nom.; ministry of the Holy Spirit) keeps teaching (διδάσκω, PAI3S, Perfective) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.; through a person with the communication gift of the pastor-teacher) concerning all categories of things (Obj. Gen.; a complete systematic theology). Moreover (continuative), it (Bible doctrine witnessed by the Holy Spirit) is (είμι, PAI3S, Gnostic) true (Pred. Nom.), furthermore (continuative), it (Bible doctrine witnessed by the Holy Spirit) is (είμι, PAI3S, Gnostic) never (neg. particle) a lie (Pred. Nom.). In fact (emphatic), just as (comparative) it (the filling and teaching of the Holy Spirit) has taught (διδάσκω, AAI3S, Constative) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.), keep on residing (μένω, PAI2P, Iterative) in it (Loc. Sph.; the divine dynasphere).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:27** καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, μένει ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐ χρείαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκῃ ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ’ ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων καὶ ἀληθές ἐστίν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:27** et vos unctionem quam accepistis ab eo manet in vobis et non necesse habetis ut aliquis doceat vos sed sicut unctio eius docet vos de omnibus et verum est et non est mendacium et sicut docuit vos manete in eo

LWB **1 John 2:28** And now [during the Church Age], students, keep residing in it [the divine system], so that when He [Jesus Christ] appears [at the Rapture], we might have confidence and not be ashamed before Him [disgraced from living in the cosmic system] at His coming [at the Rapture].

^{KW} **1 John 2:28** And now, little children [born-ones, bairns], be continually abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is made visible, we may have instant freedom of speech and not be made to shrink away from Him in shame at His coming and personal presence.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:28** And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John commands his non-resident students (Imperative mood) to keep residing in the divine system (Iterative Present tense). This is their primary reason for existence on earth (as well as ours) during the dispensation of the Church Age. The reason he mentions this again is to remind them that when Jesus Christ appears at the Rapture (Temporal Subjunctive mood), they might be bold and confident (Potential Subjunctive mood) rather than ashamed because they have been living in the cosmic system. If our purpose in life as believers is to live and function in the divine system, and we choose to live in the cosmic system instead, won't we be embarrassed and disgraced at the Evaluation Seat of Christ? We are going to receive our resurrection bodies when He returns at the Rapture, but not before our Christian life on earth is reviewed in great detail. John does not want them to be ashamed of living a life in the cosmic system (Culminative Aorist tense) when He returns at the Rapture (Dramatic Present tense). He wants them to receive rewards and decorations for a job well done instead of shrinking away in His presence.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The careful reader will observe that the margin gives an alternative rendering “in it” – that is, the Truth. The Greek allows either. To abide in Christ and to abide in the Truth are here equivalent. (A. Pink) To *abide* in Christ speaks of *communion* with Him. To be *in* Christ speaks of *union* with Him ... Most likely John had in mind the believer's appearance before the *bema*, the Judgment Seat of Christ. After the Rapture all believers will appear at this *bema* to give an account to Christ Himself as to how they lived their Christian life. Did they build on wood, hay, and stubble or on gold, silver, and precious stones? Believers on that day will be ashamed to face Christ if they are out of fellowship with Him. This Judgment Seat of Christ is only for believers who will either receive rewards or lose them even though they themselves will be saved yet so as by fire. Unbelievers will not appear at the *bema*. They will appear at the Great White Throne Judgment. (R. Lightner) The possibility of being “disowned” does not refer to loss of salvation, because the apostle clarifies that, even when we are “faithless,” He will remain faithful to us. But it does mean that we may be “disqualified for the prize” and stand ashamed at His coming. (J. Dillow) This intimates divine disapproval at the judgment seat of Christ. (Z. Hodges)

There are different resurrection bodies:

Class A resurrection body - for believers who lived in the divine dynasphere

Class B resurrection body - for believers who lived in the cosmic system

The superior Class A resurrection body has crowns, commendations, medals, & decorations. The inferior Class B resurrection body receives shame & disgrace. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The anointing consisted of the gift of the Holy Spirit and His saving grace. It is the Spirit as an illuminator and instructor which is here singled out for particular mention. He teaches nothing but infallible Truth, without the slightest mixture of error ... The anointing imparts a secret and infallible assurance unto that which is communicated. Those to whom John was writing were not ignoramuses who were unacquainted with the Truth. They were not dependent upon Gnostics or any other “great” and wise men to indoctrinate them. No so-called ‘infallible church’ or ‘pope’ was required to authenticate God’s Word and persuade of its verity. As divinely enlightened they already knew the things John was setting before them. (A. Pink) To abide in Him is to live in fellowship with Him. It is one thing to be in Him, as having life in Him, but it is another thing to abide in Him as enjoying communion with Him. Many there are who have life in Christ, but are not happy in His presence. They permit something to come into the life that hinders fellowship. (H. Ironside)

The Rapture is not going to be such a thrilling event for a great many believers because of the lives they lived down here. (J. McGee) The saint at the time of the Rapture should be living in such close fellowship with his Lord that the sudden appearance of the Saviour merely continues the fellowship that was in progress on earth, like Enoch who walked with God on earth and suddenly was not, for God took him. There is no need for a gradual adjustment to that fellowship into which he is being introduced at the Rapture, because the latter fellowship is just a continuation of the former. It is an instantaneous freedom of speech, of holy boldness, of assurance. (K. Wuest) The uncertainty of the time of the Lord’s appearing ... does not concern the fact of the Lord’s coming, just the time of that coming. (C. Ryrie) If a person commits a sin and persists in it without confessing and receiving cleansing (1 John 1:9), he will lose his right to rule with Christ. Those walking in such a state, without their sin confessed, face eternal consequences if their Lord should suddenly appear and find them unprepared. They will truly be ashamed before Him at his coming. (J. Dillow)

1 John 2:28 **And** (transitional; in conclusion) **now** (temporal; during the Church Age), **students** (Voc. Address; new believers in John’s non-resident congregation), **keep residing** (μένω, PAImp.2P, Iterative & Progressive, Command) **in it** (Loc. Sph.), **so that** (purpose conj.) **when** (temporal) **He** (Jesus Christ) **appears** (φανερώω, PASubj.3S, Dramatic, Temporal; at the rapture), **we might have** (ἔχω, AASubj.1P, Culminative, Potential) **confidence** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; boldness) **and** (connective) **not** (neg. particle) **be ashamed** (αἰσχύνω, APSubj.1P, Culminative, Potential; shrink away, embarrassed,

disgrace from living in the cosmic system) **before Him** (Prep. Gen.; in His presence) **at His** (Poss. Gen.) **coming** (Loc. Time; at the rapture, when we receive our resurrection bodies).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:28** Καὶ νῦν, τεκνία, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐὰν φανερωθῆ σχώμεν παρρησίαν καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:28** et nunc filioli manete in eo ut cum apparuerit habeamus fiduciam et non confundamur ab eo in adventu eius

LWB 1 John 2:29 If you know that He [Jesus Christ] is righteous, then you should know that every one who makes it a practice to execute integrity [produces righteousness] has been born from Him.

^{KW} **1 John 2:29** If you know in an absolute manner that He is righteous, you know experientially that everyone who habitually does this aforementioned righteousness [which God is], out from Him has been born, with the present result that that one is a born-one.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:29** If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If you understand (Potential Subjunctive mood) that Jesus Christ is righteous, and I'm sure you do since you are maturing believers (Intensive Perfect tense), then you should know that everyone who makes it a practice to execute integrity (Iterative Present tense) has been born from Him. Unbelievers cannot produce righteousness. Believers in the cosmic system cannot produce righteousness. Only a believer who continuously lives in the divine system can produce righteousness. Divine integrity is a high standard to live by; it can only be met by residing in the love complex, the sphere of power. When a believer executes the divine plan, it is a sure sign to everyone that he has been born (Gnomic Perfect tense) from the source of Him.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

They who abide in Christ, who commune with Him regularly, have freedom of approach and liberty of speech at the throne of grace, for assurance of heart is ever the effect of true piety. Hence it is that the godly calmly wait for Christ, nor do they dread His coming ... They will meet Him with confidence and joy, for He is the One they most of all desire to behold. But different far will be the attitude and demeanor of those spoken of in verse 19, and all like unto them ... Paul was deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of believers, and longed to present them unto Christ at His judgment-seat as those who had conducted themselves consistently with their dedication to Him, so that it would then appear that his labours on their behalf had not been in vain ... Ministers are expressly appointed of God for the guarding of their members from error and to warn against those sins which endanger the soul ... See here, my readers, the solemn effect of careless walking: it brings reproach on your pastor that he should have such *seals* to his ministry ... Only those who bear Christ's image and walk before Him in the ways of

righteousness are born of Him. Those who give no evidence of so doing are either deliberate hypocrites or utterly deluded souls. (A. Pink)

Unfortunately there is a tendency in some Christian circles to minimize thought and to substitute for it either ethical demands, sometimes conceived quite legalistically, or subjective experiences, such as so-called “second blessings” or “tongues” or the mere obligation to “love.” Truth, as it is contained in the Scriptures and as it is revealed in Jesus Christ, is an objective standard. It provides a basis for making judgments, and it reveals errors. Consequently, Christians should be concerned with truth ... There are means by which every Christian should achieve victory over error in life: the Word of God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Both are necessary. Without the Spirit, knowledge of the Word becomes but a bitter orthodoxy. Without the Word, the experience of the Spirit can lead to the most unjustified and damaging of excesses. The only safeguard against either and therefore the only sure defense against heresy is to have abiding within us both the Word from which we learn and the Holy Spirit who teaches it to us. (J. Boice) This “doing,” ever doing, is not what the world calls “living a moral life.” A man can live such a life without having been born anew. Natural morality is not “the righteousness” which is declared such by God. (R. Lenski)

1 John 2:29 if (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe you do, maybe you don’t”) you know (οἶδα, Perf.ASubj.2P, Intensive, Potential) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) He (Jesus Christ) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) righteous (Pred. Nom.; and He is), then (apodosis) you should know (γινώσκω, PAI2P, Aoristic, Potential Ind.) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) everyone (Subj. Nom.) who makes it a practice to execute (ποιέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; produces) integrity (Acc. Dir. Obj.; righteousness) has been born (γεννάω, Perf.PI3S, Gnostic) from Him (Abl. Source).

^{BGT} **1 John 2:29** ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστιν, γινώσκετε ὅτι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.

^{VUL} **1 John 2:29** si scitis quoniam iustus est scitote quoniam et omnis qui facit iustitiam ex ipso natus est

Chapter 3

LWB 1 John 3:1 Concentrate on how great a love complex the Father [Inventor of the love complex] has given to us [the royal family], so that we might be designated students of God [under His tutelage]. Therefore [since we reside in the love complex], we are [students of God]. For this reason [our residing in the love complex], the world does not understand us [conflict of the dynaspheres], because it [the world] did not understand Him [Jesus Christ].

^{KW} **1 John 3:1** Behold what exotic [foreign to the human heart] love the Father has permanently bestowed upon us, to the end that we may be named children [born-ones, bairns] of God. And we are. On this account the world does not have an experiential knowledge of us, because it has not come into an experiential knowledge of Him.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John commands (Imperative mood) the members of his non-resident congregations to concentrate (Constative Aorist tense) on how wonderful, how great the love complex truly is, that the Father has given (Dramatic Perfect tense) to us. Alternate translation: “Take a look at this love complex!” First, it is amazing that God the Father as the Inventor of the love complex would create such a system for us so that we might have fellowship with Him. Not only is *agape* part of His divine essence and character, He is its source; not only did He give His *agape* system to us as a gift, He commands us to reside and function in it. Second, it is amazing that He would give us such a system in spite of Adam’s imputed sin and our own personal sins. Third, it is amazing that this system might allow us (Potential Subjunctive) to be called His students. All we have to do is live in it, and we become His honor students. No wonder John commands them or entreats them to think hard on what a magnificent thing it truly is. If they really understood it, they wouldn’t be tempted to join their Gnostic-leaning brethren in the cosmic system. There is also a deliberative flavor to this command. Because of all He has done for us to restore fellowship with Him, we *should be* more than grateful to reside and function in His system.

For those believers in John’s non-resident congregations that were residing and functioning in the love complex, they were indeed showing that they were His honor students. The word “sons” in the KJV is totally incorrect; the Greek word is *teknon*, not *huios*. *Honor students* is an inference, a conclusion based on a positive assumption about those to whom he was writing. Since we are His students positionally, we are obligated to reside in His system experientially. Since we are residing in His system experientially, we are therefore His honor students. But this causes a problem with the world. Those who live in the cosmic system do not understand (Gnomic Present tense) those of us who live in the divine system. We live in another galaxy as far as they are concerned. This should be no surprise to you, since the two spheres of power – divine and satanic – are in constant conflict. When Jesus Christ lived in the prototype divine system, the world did not understand Him at all (Gnomic Aorist tense). Why would we think the world would understand where we are coming from, when we live in the operational divine system?

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The purpose of this amazing gift is not simply that we may be saved from suffering and loss, but in order that we may be styled children of God ... so that we have not only the name, but the character. (K. Wuest) Using Thieme’s theological vocabulary, I have added some thoughts

in brackets to another quote from Kenneth Wuest: “People of the world [believers & unbelievers in the cosmic system] have nothing in common with the children of God [believers in the divine dynasphere], they have no fellowship with them, and therefore have no intelligent appreciation and understanding of them. The foreign kind of love produced in us by the Holy Spirit [*agape* virtue love] constitutes us a foreign kind of person to the people of this world [those in the cosmic system]. Children of God [those in the divine dynasphere] could just as well have come to earth from a strange planet so far as the people of the world [those in the cosmic system] are concerned. They are strangers to them.” (K. Wuest) I have read some commentators who deny there is such a creature as a “carnal Christian.” In my opinion, these men are divorced from reality, and will no doubt be led to “meet” one of these “carnal believers” soon enough. (LWB)

This love is not simply exhibited towards believers, but imparted to them. The divine love is, as it were, infused into them, so that it is their own, and becomes in them the source of a divine life. (B. Wescott) The only way *agape* love is infused into a believer is when the believer resides in the *agape* love complex. God is not a divine spigot pouring love and power into us when we are residing in the cosmic system. There are basic requirements here! It must be appropriated by following divine protocol. (LWB) John is exhorting them to contemplate that love in its grand original, in its freeness and sovereignty, in its nature and manner, in its gifts and blessedness; that it was actually bestowed upon them – that the Father had not only conceived love toward them, and willed it unto them, but that He had really and truly imparted it to them. (A Pink) Those who believe the Word of life may really be the children of God, but that does not mean they will gain any respect from the world. (C. Kruse) Here’s an outline of Chapter 3 in four paragraphs: (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

vs. 1-10	conflict of the dynaspheres (thought vs. thought and power vs. power)
vs. 11-16	people distractions
vs. 17-20	systems testing
vs. 21-24	dynamics of the divine dynasphere

Agape (love) is not a strongly emotional word. Instead it describes an attitude in which the intellect and will are predominant. (D. Burdick) The love of God is foreign to the human race. It is not found naturally in humanity. When it exists there, it is in a saved individual, and by reason of the ministry of the Holy Spirit ... From their experience with us, the people of the world, while recognizing us as Christians, children of God, do not come to an understanding and appreciation of the nature of person we are, since unsaved people have never had a saving relationship with and knowledge of God. (K. Wuest) The IRS and the Supreme Court do not know God. They want to usurp his place as Father. From all appearances this liberalism – which is not liberalism at all, but reactionary totalitarianism – will increase. We pray that totalitarianism, terrorism, socialism, and all the antichrists may be overthrown; but we have no indication that God will do so in the near future. (G. Clark)

We have this sacred testimony in our consciousness of the Spirit’s presence and work within us. He inspires within us holy desires and purposes, He restrains us from sin, He comforts us in sorrow, He strengthens us to produce the fruit of the Spirit. (W. Jones) It is one thing to testify

that we know Christ and are in Him; it is quite another to have a life that reveals that He is our righteousness. It is wonderful to know positionally that we are in Christ and that we are accepted in the Beloved, but it is altogether different to have a life down here that is commensurate with that. (J. McGee) There is a new nature in us, and it is to be cultivated, exercised, developed, and ripened. The field in which it is to grow and be matured is not at all congenial or favourable ... The world's influences are all hostile to the great characteristic of the new nature in us which our being born of God creates ... In the face of the world's ignorance of us and of our Father, and its ignorant opposition to us and to our Father; though the world may refuse to acknowledge us as God's children, and give us credit for being what we profess to be; still let us not lose our own sense of the reality of what we are. (R. Candlish)

1 John 3:1 Concentrate on (είδον, AAImp.2P, Constative, Command) how great (Compl. Acc.; wonderful, what sort of) a love complex (Acc. Dir. Obj.) the Father (Subj. Nom.; Inventor of the divine dynasphere) has given (δίδωμι, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic; freely) to us (Dat. Adv.; the royal family), so that (purpose conj.) we might (might, should: Deliberative) be designated (καλέω, PASubj.1P, Descriptive, Command: Potential or Permission; called) students (Pred. Nom.) of God (Gen. Rel.; under His tutelage). Therefore (inferential, conclusio: epicrisis; since we reside in the love complex), we are (είμι, PAI1P, Descriptive, Accents; since we are students of God, we are obligated to reside in the love complex that He has given us). For this reason (Dat. Purpose, retrospective; our residence in the divine dynasphere), the world (Subj. Nom.; those who reside in the cosmic system) does not (neg. particle) understand (γινώσκω, PAI3S, Gnostic) us (Acc. Dir. Obj.; those who reside in the divine dynasphere: conflict of the dynaspheres), because (causal) it (the world) did not (neg. particle) understand (γινώσκω, AAI3S, Gnostic) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:1** ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατὴρ, ἵνα τέκνα θεοῦ κληθῶμεν, καὶ ἐσμέν. διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:1** videte qualem caritatem dedit nobis Pater ut filii Dei nominemur et sumus propter hoc mundus non novit nos quia non novit eum

LWB 1 John 3:2 Beloved [royal family of God], we should be now [in Phase 2 of the spiritual life: experiential sanctification] students of God, and what we shall be [our spiritual status in eternity] has not yet been revealed. We have come to know [through the function of the grace apparatus for perception] that when He appears [at the Rapture], we shall become like Him [having a resurrection body], for we shall see Him [Jesus Christ] just as He is [His glory in hypostatic union].

^{KW} **1 John 3:2** Divinely loved ones, now born-ones of God we are. And not yet has it been made visible what we shall be. We know absolutely that whenever it is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John addresses his non-resident congregation again, this time with the more friendly or tender “beloved,” which means he recognizes them all as members of the royal family of God. He tells them that as goes the spiritual status acquired during experiential sanctification, they should all be students of God by now. They should no longer be mere babies (nepios) in the spiritual life; they should have heard and understood basic doctrinal truths by this time. They should also have passed the stage of childhood (paideia) where they don’t require several spankings a day to get them into line with God’s plan. Normally, older children (teknon) would be next, followed by adolescence and adulthood. But John has used “teknon” several times in his letter as a term that encompasses all those believers who are positive toward Bible doctrine, i.e., students of the Word. What is not clear is what each of them will become in eternity (Deliberative Future tense), since their spiritual growth has not yet ended on earth.

Perhaps they will receive a basic, naked resurrection body. Perhaps they will receive a translucent uniform of glory to wear over their naked resurrection body, one covered with awards and decorations for honorable production while on earth. Nobody knows where they will be at this time, because it has not been revealed (Culminative Aorist tense). But what they do know, because they have been diligently studying the Word of God (Consummative Perfect tense), is that when Jesus Christ returns at the Rapture (Futuristic Present tense), all believers will become like Him (Predictive Future tense) in that they will receive some form of resurrection body. All believers will see Him just as He is, His glory manifested in hypostatic union. Physical eyes in a mortal body could not look upon that glory when He first received it, but eyes in a resurrection body will be able to gaze at His transcendent glory without physical death.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

John is here telling his readers about the same climactic event, the Rapture of the church, as Paul told the Corinthian believers in 1 Cor. 15:51-54. (R. Lightner) Glorification does not mean that every person in the eternal state will possess equal knowledge of God, Christ, the Spirit, and the Scriptures or equal capacities for every task. Rather, glorification means that believers will not be hindered in their earthly pursuits by personal or structural sin, demonic influence, or a ‘groaning’ earthly environment. Believers will evidently be assigned duties based upon their gifts and their faithfulness in the development and application of those gifts prior to death or rapture. (D. Turner) The question at the Great White Throne will be, “Did you believe in Jesus Christ?” The question at the Evaluation Seat of Christ will be, “How much time did you log in the divine system versus the cosmic system?” ... Justification is a down payment on the

believer's ultimate sanctification in heaven where – minus his sin nature, minus human good and evil – he will possess a resurrection body exactly like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The future tense of salvation contemplates that the believer will yet be saved into full conformity to Christ. The fact that some aspects of salvation are yet to be accomplished for the one who believes does not imply that there is ground for doubt as to its ultimate completion. (L. Chafer) While the effect of sin upon the believer is the loss of blessing, which may be renewed by confession, the effect of the believer's sin upon God is a far more serious matter. But for the advocacy of Christ in heaven, sin would separate Christians from God forever. (J. Walvoord) Both the resurrected saints and the translated saints will receive resurrection bodies which will be patterned after that of Christ's own resurrection body. The resurrection of the church is the first massive resurrection and is the forerunner of others to follow. (L. Chafer) The rapture is presented as an imminent event with no intervening prophecies and as such is offered as a ground of comfort and a basis of exhortation. (J. Walvoord) We thus see that union with Christ has its source in the election of God the Father before the foundation of the world and has its fruition in the glorification of the sons of God. (J. Murray)

Saints are spiritually like the Lord Jesus now in a relative sense, and through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, are being conformed more and more to His spiritual likeness ... John is speaking here of the Rapture. The Rapture has to do with the glorification of the physical body of the believer, not with a change in his inner spiritual life. *While the saint enters heaven in a sinless state, yet he is not catapulted ahead to absolute spiritual maturity in an instant of time.* He grows in likeness to the Lord Jesus spiritually through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit *all through eternity*, always approaching that likeness but never equaling it, for finiteness can never equal infinity. The change which comes at the Rapture is therefore a physical one. (K. Wuest) The statement in italics by Wuest is a tremendously important one; it is absolutely crucial for believers to understand today. What we learn here on earth continues into eternity. When we get to heaven, we pick-up right where we are now - and the educational process continues. So why not get a head-start by learning as much as we can here! (LWB)

The devil fell by aspiring to God's *power*; man, by aspiring to His *knowledge*; but aspiring after God's *goodness*, we shall ever grow in His likeness. (R. Jamieson) We are not going to be equal to Him, but we are going to be like Him in our own way. This does not mean that all of us are going to be little robots or simply little duplicates – it is not that at all. We will be like Him but with our own personalities, our own individualities, our own selves. He'll not destroy the person that you are, but He is going to bring you up to the full measure, the stature where you will be like Him – not identical to Him, but like Him. (J. McGee) After our postsalvation lives on earth have ended, God will achieve our *ultimate sanctification* at the resurrection, or Rapture, of the Church. In that future moment He will provide the resurrection body, making us physically like Christ. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The believer's position in the family of God does not depend on his or her spiritual maturity. It depends solely on his or her relation to God through Jesus Christ. (R. Lightner)

1 John 3:2 Beloved (Voc. Address; royal family of God), we should be (εἰμί, PAI1P, Descriptive, Potential Ind.) now (Temp. Adv.; in Phase II) students (Pred. Nom.) of God (Gen. Rel.), and (continuative) what (Acc. Dir. Obj.) we shall be (εἰμί, FMI1P, Deliberative; our spiritual status in eternity: inferior or superior resurrection bodies) has not yet (Temp. Neg. Adv.) been revealed (φανερώω, API3S, Culminative). We have come to know (οἶδα, Perf.AI1P, Consummative; through the function of GAP) that (Conj. as Dir. Obj.) when (temporal particle; at the rapture) He appears (φανερώω, PASubj.3S, Futuristic, Temporal), we shall become (εἰμί, FMI1P, Predictive) like (Comp. Adv.; similar to) Him (Dat. Ind. Obj.; having a resurrection body), for (explanatory) we shall see (ὁράω, FMI1P, Predictive; physical eyes in a mortal body could not look upon that glory) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ) just as (Comp. Adv.) He is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static; His glory in hypostatic union),

^{BGT} **1 John 3:2** ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ οὐπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα. οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῆ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:2** carissimi nunc filii Dei sumus et nondum apparuit quid erimus scimus quoniam cum apparuerit similes ei erimus quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est

LWB 1 John 3:3 **And each person who keeps on having this confidence [while waiting for the Rapture] in Him [trusting in the divine system He tested and provided to us], purifies himself [impeccability inside the operational divine system], just as the unique Person [Jesus Christ] is pure [impeccability inside the prototype divine system].**

^{KW} **1 John 3:3** And everyone who has this hope continually set on Him is constantly purifying himself just as that One is pure.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:3** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The meaning behind “purifies” can be seen by the equivalent Latin word “sanctification.” The believer who resides in the divine system sanctifies himself (Aoristic Present tense). Every believer who maintains the confidence that he is ready for the Rapture (Iterative Present tense) is purifying himself for that great future event. This believer is showing remarkable confidence in Jesus Christ by trusting and believing in the divine system He tested and provided to us. Jesus Christ tested the prototype divine system and gave the operational divine system to us soon after He was resurrected. Our continued residence and function in the divine system is proof of the confidence we have in its efficacy. Jesus Christ remained impeccable inside the prototype divine system. He never sinned, therefore He never left the system for even one second.

Every believer who is inside the sphere of the love complex (divine system) is also impeccable, just as Christ was impeccable. Since we all have sin natures, none of us remain in the divine system indefinitely. We exit the divine system and enter the cosmic system all the time; the goal is to recognize our exit from the divine system and to get back in as soon as possible! While we are in the divine system, we are purifying ourself. Virtue and integrity is being produced in us by the ministry of the Spirit and the Word of God. As might be expected, believers who spend more time in the cosmic system are not showing any confidence in the divine system or in Jesus Christ Himself. Failure to abide in the divine system is placing your confidence in Satan's system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The need to not love the world (2:15), to practice righteousness (2:29), and to abide in Christ (3:6) all support the fact that progressive sanctification is in view in the word *purifies*. When the reality of the imminent return of Christ grips the believer's heart, he or she will be driven to God's Word for cleansing and purifying. (R. Lightner) The first goal of our predestination is to be like Christ. This includes new resurrection bodies of glory like his. But most importantly, it includes spiritual and moral qualities and capacities like Christ's. (J. Piper) The believer should not search for eschatological significance in historical events. Instead, he should concentrate on the execution of the protocol plan of God. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Personal effort is necessarily called out by a definite object of personal devotion. The believer's act is using what God gives ... an inward effort by the application of some outward means. (B. Wescott) This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book. (J. Bunyan)

1 John 3:3 And (continuative) each (Nom. Spec.) person (Subj. Nom.) who keeps on having (ἐχῶ, PAPtc.AMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular) this (Acc. Spec.; confidence in the rapture) confidence (Acc. Dir. Obj.; from doctrine in the soul) in Him (Loc. Sph.; our residence & function inside the operational divine dynasphere shows that we have confidence in His residence & function inside the prototype divine dynasphere: we trust and believe in the system He tested and provided to us), purifies (ἀγνίζω, PAI3S, Aoristic; virtue & integrity is being produced) himself (Acc. Dir. Obj.; impeccability inside the operational divine dynasphere), just as (comparative) the unique Person (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) pure (Pred. Nom.; impeccability inside the prototype divine dynasphere).

^{BGT} 1 John 3:3 καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἀγνίζει ἑαυτὸν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἄγνός ἐστιν.

^{VUL} 1 John 3:3 et omnis qui habet spem hanc in eo sanctificat se sicut et ille sanctus est

LWB 1 John 3:4 Every person [believer] who makes it a practice to commit sin [perpetual function in the cosmic system] is also committing iniquity [perpetual residence in the cosmic system]. In fact, sin [function] is [walks hand-in-hand with] iniquity [residence].

^{KW} **1 John 3:4** Everyone who habitually commits sin, also habitually commits lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:4** Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every believer who makes it a practice to sin (Iterative Present tense) is living a continual lifestyle according to the dictates of Satan. Perpetual sinning is non-stop *function* in the cosmic system. The believer who is continually sinning is also committing (Durative Present tense) iniquity. Committing iniquity is non-stop *residence* in the cosmic system. *Residence* is the sphere in which you live; *function* is the continuing activities in that sphere. Iniquity (lawlessness) is the domain the habitual sinner lives in; habitual sinning is what he is doing in that domain of iniquity. A life of continual sin (Iterative) assures a long-term residence (Durative) in iniquity. Sin and iniquity are so interrelated, that they walk hand-in-hand. You can't have residence without function, and you can't function without having residence. If you are residing in iniquity, you must have done something (sin) to get you there. If you are living a continual lifestyle of sin, you are obviously residing the the sphere where sin is at home, i.e., the cosmic system. Picture it this way: iniquity is the house you live in; sin is the things you do when you are living inside that house.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Iniquity is a better translation of *anomia* than lawlessness. All sin is evil, wicked, and iniquitous. (Z. Hodges) Since the Decalogue contained no reference to the great issues of Christian service and prayer, or the details of the character of the believer's walk in the world, no one, upon serious thought, will be willing to limit this great definition of sin as merely the transgression of the law of Moses. (L. Chafer) The apostle deals here, not with detailed sins, but with *sinning*; not with isolated acts, but with the continuous life of sinning. (A. Plummer) The article in both subject and predicate make "sin" and "lawlessness" convertible and co-extensive terms. (W. Nicole) The dominant thought here is not that of the self-sacrifice of Christ, but of His utter hostility to sin in every shape. (B. Wescott)

The author may have in mind members of a similar group in his church, who were arguing that, even if they practiced sin, it was inconsequential. (S. Smalley) The greatest obstacle to being able to meet Him with confidence (2:28) is a life of sin, which the secessionists dismiss as irrelevant. Their attitude toward sin constitutes the iniquity because by finding sin inconsequential they are supposing the God (who indwells in the Christian) can be manifested publicly in evil actions ... In their theology the believer was already perfect; for them purity would have been brought about through initial contact with Christ, so that the Christian had no need to make himself pure. (R. Brown) By denying iniquity (residence) and sin (function) the Gnostic-leaning believers eliminated experiential sanctification from their thought and practice. (LWB)

1 John 3:4 **Every** (Nom. Spec.; anyone) **person** (Subj. Nom.; believer) **who makes it a practice** (continual lifestyle) **to commit** (ποιέω, PAPTc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; perpetual function in the cosmic system) **sin** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **is also** (adjunctive) **committing** (ποιέω, PAI3S, Durative) **iniquity** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; perpetual residence in the cosmic system). **In fact** (emphatic), **sin** (Subj. Nom.; function) **is** (είμι, PAI3S, Descriptive; walks hand-in-hand with) **iniquity** (Pred. Nom.; residence in the cosmic system).

^{BGT} 1 John 3:4 Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.

^{VUL} 1 John 3:4 omnis qui facit peccatum et iniquitatem facit et peccatum est iniquitas

LWB 1 John 3:5 **Indeed, you [those who have learned Christology and Sotierology] know that the unique Person [Jesus Christ] was revealed for the purpose of carrying away our [believer's] sins. In fact, sin did not exist in Him [impeccability in the prototype divine system].**

^{KW} 1 John 3:5 And you know absolutely that that One was manifested in order that He might take away our sins; and sin in Him doe not exist.

^{KJV} 1 John 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John uses this positional reminder to set up the next verse on habitual sinning. Those believers who have learned the basics of Christology and Sotierology know (Intensive Perfect tense) that Jesus Christ, the unique Person, was revealed (Historical Present tense) for the purpose of taking away our sins (Culminative Aorist tense). “Our” sins means the sins of all believers - the elect, the sheep. John is not writing to the world at large, he is writing to Christians – particularly those in his non-resident congregations. “Sins” in the plural refers to personal sins, not Adam’s imputed sin. John is not, however, launching into a diatribe on the sin that Jesus bore on the cross. He is using this historical fact to remind them not to habitually sin, which is experiential. The emphasis in this passage is on the second phrase: “Sin did not exist in Him.” As long as the humanity of Christ Jesus remained in the divine system, He did not sin (Gnomic Present tense). And as a matter of fact, He never left the divine system, which means He remained impeccable.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The affirmation of His sinlessness is introduced in this verse for a practical reason: to provide the basis for an important criterion to be used in assessing the claims of people who say they know God. (C. Kruse) He never violated *kenosis*, but consistently relied on the power of God the Holy Spirit, Gate 1 of the divine dynasphere. As long as Jesus remained in the divine power system,

He could not sin. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) "Ekeinos" certainly refers to Christ ... because the one spoken of is the one who took away sins. (G. Clark) That the author says 'sins', plural, indicates that he is thinking of Christ's appearance to deal with the consequences of the sinful acts of His people ... To take away sins here is to be understood as making forgiveness available by offering Himself as the atoning sacrifice for those sins. (C. Kruse) Those that expect communion with Christ *above* should study communion with Him *here* in the utmost purity. (M. Henry)

Both the first coming of Christ (vs. 5) and His future coming in the clouds of glory for His own (vs. 2) are incentives for holy living ... The plural "sins" is used here and the singular "sin" in 1:29. Taken together this tells us that the sacrifice of the Saviour was in payment for both the sin nature and the actual individual acts of sin. (R. Lightner) Our blessed Lord not only saves us from the guilt of sin through the work of His cross, but He has provided the means whereby He may save us from the power of sin, take away the habit of sinning, through the indwelling Holy Spirit after the new nature has been communicated to us through the new birth; so that people who loved to sin, loved to take their own way, now delight in holiness and find their joy in doing His will. (H. Ironside) He is able to remove the guilt of sin and to provide the power to deliver us from the habit of sinning. He has given to us a new nature that we might live for Him today. (J. McGee)

1 John 3:5 Indeed (emphatic), you (those who have learned Christology and Soteriology) know (οἶδα, Perf.AI2P, Intensive) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) the unique Person (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) was revealed (φανερώω, PAI3S, Historical) for the purpose of (purpose conj.) taking away (ἀίρω, AASubj.3S, Culminative, Purpose; carry off, removing) our (Poss. Acc.; believers only) sins (Acc. Dir. Obj.). In fact (emphatic), sin (Subj. Nom.) did not (neg. particle) exist (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic & Historical) in Him (Loc. Sph.).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:5** καὶ οἶδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη, ἵνα τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἄρῃ, καὶ ἀμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:5** et scitis quoniam ille apparuit ut peccata tolleret et peccatum in eo non est

LWB 1 John 3:6 Every person [believer] who is abiding in it [the divine system] is not sinning. Every person [believer] who makes it a practice to sin [perpetual function in the cosmic system] does not understand Him [Jesus Christ], neither do they know Him [fellowship: intimate relationship].

^{KW} **1 John 3:6** Everyone who in Him is constantly abiding is not habitually sinning. Everyone who is constantly sinning has not with discernment seen Him, nor has he known Him, with the result that that condition is true of him at present.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:6** Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every believer who is abiding in the divine system at any point in time (Static Present tense) is not sinning (Gnomic Present tense). It is not possible to sin while abiding in the divine system. You must exit the divine system to sin. Every believer who makes it a habit to live a lifestyle of sin (Iterative Present tense) does not understand Jesus Christ, nor have an intimate relationship with Him (Ingressive Perfect tense). The ingressive means not only does he not understand or have a relationship with Him ... he hasn't even begun to have either. If he had begun to understand Him and truly began to have a relationship with Him, he would not be residing and functioning in the cosmic system. It's easier to turn down the spiritual life when you have never experienced it, than to have entered into a legitimate spiritual life and then rejected it in favor of living in Satan's cesspool. A believer can only understand Jesus Christ and be in fellowship with Him while functioning in the divine system. Functioning in the cosmic system (lifestyle of sin) can only help you understand Satan and enable you to fellowship with him.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This verse and another a bit further down have been used by Wesleyans to support sinless perfection. If the present indicative and present participle are taken in such a sense, it would follow that only sinless and perfect people have known Christ. On this showing, ninety-nine percent of the most devout and orthodox believers have neither seen Him or known Him. That John had no such thought in mind is perfectly clear from 1:8 and 1:9. In fact, John in those verses says not only that he addresses sin, he acknowledges that he himself sins. The explanation should be well known: the present tense can and here must refer to habitual conduct. It does not have to do with sporadic acts of sinning. (G. Clark) At the moment when we are abiding in Christ, we are not sinning - at least not then. This is not a reference to positional righteousness; it refers to our state - our actual spiritual condition - at the moment. (R.T. Kendall) John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a *character*, a *habit*. (M. Vincent)

We must first distinguish between the believer being "in Christ" and his or her "abiding" in Christ. In his gospel, John used both phrases, "in Me," referring to *union* with Christ, and "abide in Me," referring to *communion* or fellowship with Christ ... "No one who abides in Him sins," therefore speaks of the believer being in fellowship. (R. Lightner) This is a true statement by Lightner, but I prefer the neuter "it" for the divine system sponsored by Christ. (LWB) No matter how it is educated and refined, no matter how disguised by religious ornamentation, it remains still flesh. It is like everything else which earth produces: no manipulation of art can change the original nature of the raw material. (A. Pink) Character is shown by one's habitual actions, not the extraordinary ones. (K. Wuest) The habit of sin is proof that one has not the vision or the knowledge of Christ. (A. Robertson) To *see* spiritually is a further step than to *know*, for by *knowing* we come to *seeing* by vivid, experimental realization. (R. Jamieson)

If you are God's child, that new nature will not go along with the old nature and commit sin. The believer who abides in Christ does not practice sin - he doesn't live in it ... Only pigs live in piggens; sons do not. Somebody will say, "But the son got into the pigpen." He surely did, my friend, but he got *out* of the pigpen, too - let's remember that. The child of God can get into it,

but he will get out. Why? Because he is a son of the Father, and he takes after his Father. God provides the power to deliver from the habit of sinning, and that is all John is saying here. (J. McGee) The divine seed abides and continues to transform the child of God into the image of God's Son which is the image of God Himself ... The more that this divine seed transforms the Christian, the more impossible it is for the Christian to sin. I have insisted throughout that the author is attacking a static understanding of divine begetting that is held by the secessionists, for whom divine childhood is a once-for-all gift and not a life that has to express itself in the behavior of the Christian. (R. Brown)

1 John 3:6 Every (Nom. Spec.) person (Subj. Nom.; believer) who is abiding (μένω, PAPtc.NMS, Static, Substantival) in it (Loc. Sph.; the divine dynasphere) is not (neg. particle) sinning (ἁμαρτάνω, PAI3S, Gnostic). Every (Nom. Spec.) person (Subj. Nom.; believer) who makes it a practice (continual lifestyle) to sin (ἁμαρτάνω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; perpetual function in the cosmic system) does not (neg. particle) understand (ὁράω, Perf.AI3S, Ingressive; see, perceive) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ), neither (neg. particle) do they know (γινώσκω, Perf.AI3S, Ingressive; intimate relationship) Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:6** πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:6** omnis qui in eo manet non peccat omnis qui peccat non vidit eum nec cognovit eum

LWB 1 John 3:7 Students [teachable believers], stop allowing anyone to deceive you. When a person [believer only] is performing righteousness [royal family honor code], he is honorable, just as the unique Person [Jesus Christ] is honorable.

^{KW} **1 John 3:7** Little born ones, stop allowing anyone to be leading you astray. The one who habitually does righteousness is righteous, just as that One is righteous.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:7** Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Gnostic-leaning believers had a totally erroneous view of sin. Their newly adopted philosophy from the cosmic system made light of sin, even to the point of saying it was not a hindrance in the spiritual life and therefore confession of it was not necessary. This was an abominable lie and those who believed it were destroying their spiritual life. So John gets emphatic with them in this passage, commanding them in the form of a prohibition to stop allowing these confused, lying Christians to deceive them (Customary Present tense) about the spiritual life. He addresses his non-resident congregations as students again, because he wants

those who are genuinely humble and teachable to be on guard against the latest heresies being spread by their friends.

When a believer is residing and functioning in the divine system (Temporal Participle), he is performing divine good. The divine system also produces virtue, integrity and righteousness in the believer – as part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So when a believer is operating from the sphere of divine power, he is in an honorable status (Static Present tense), just as Jesus Christ was and is honorable. Jesus Christ performed righteousness and was honorable when He resided and functioned in the *prototype* divine system. We perform righteousness and are honorable when we reside and function in the *operational* divine system. Sin, unrighteousness and iniquity were being explained away (as *relative* concepts, not absolutes) by the lying Gnostic believers.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

God gives us *community of nature* with Himself. *Partakers of the Divine nature* is the language which Peter employs. Our having God as our Father implies that we can enter into His thoughts, can enjoy His approval and love, can co-operate with Him to the advancement of His ends. Beyond this it was impossible for love to go. Let us rejoice in the *gifting of love*, by which God openly gives us the *title* of His children, and does not give the title without the *reality*. ... Our thoughts, our delights, our motives and ways of acting, are all a riddle to men of the world. That this reason holds good is confirmed by the fact that, when God appeared in Christ, the world knew *Him* not ... Our future is to be our full growth, the bringing out of the Divine features in us to their greatest distinctness. We are being transfigured at present, and when the transfiguration is completed then we will fulfill the *condition* of the beautiful vision ... Righteousness and purification does not imply that he (the believer) is to look to himself for purification, but simply that it rests with himself *to use the appointed means*, as these have already been set forth – trust in the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood, confessing sins, taking advantage of the services of the Advocate. We may think of these as associated with the exercises of prayer and reading of Scripture, and with the struggle after purity in the daily life. (R. Finlayson)

To abide in Him does not mean just positionally. It is true that you have a position in Christ that can never be disturbed, but there is also a practical consideration down here. (J. McGee) John is not thinking of justification at all, but rather of sanctification; of holiness of life being inseparable from holiness of nature. The precise lesson taught, the great principle asserted, is that righteousness, moral righteousness, cannot possibly exist in a quiescent or inactive state; that it never can be a latent power or undeveloped quality; that wherever it is it must be operative ... "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right," is a perilous half-truth. Doing righteousness, in the sense of merely leading what is called a virtuous life, being irreproachable in manners, and performing acts of kindness, may thus be made to constitute the sum and substance of religion and morality. Evidently that is not John's teaching. On the contrary, it is with the inward frame of mind that he is chiefly occupied; it is about the heart being right with God that he is concerned. (R. Candlish)

The believer's *normal* direction is against sin; the law of God after the inward man is the *ruling* principle of his true self, though the old nature, not yet *fully* deadened, rebels. The magnetic

needle, the nature of which is always to point to the pole, is easily turned aside, but always re-seeks it. (R. Jamieson) The word “righteous” may be used in a rather formal way to express “belonging to the divine sphere” rather than to describe people who were, or tried to be, righteous in conduct. (I. Marshall, Houlden) It is a mistake to think that the fact of being a Christian is proof against cunning deceivers. The young, the inexperienced, the unfortified, are not proof of this. (R. Lenski)

1 John 3:7 Students (Voc. Address; teachable believers), stop allowing anyone (Subj. Nom.) to deceive (πλανάω, PAImp.3S, Customary, Prohibition) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.). When a person (Subj. Nom.; believer only) is performing (ποιέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Temporal, Articular) righteousness (Acc. Dir. Obj.; virtue, integrity, royal family honor code), he is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) honorable (Pred. Nom.), just as (comparative, double entendre) the unique Person (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) honorable (Pred. Nom.).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:7** Τεκνία, μηδεὶς πλανάτω ὑμᾶς· ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν·

^{VUL} **1 John 3:7** filioli nemo vos seducat qui facit iustitiam iustus est sicut et ille iustus est

LWB 1 John 3:8 When a person [believer] makes it a practice [lifestyle] to commit sin, he has become an agent of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning [since his fall]. For this purpose, the Son of God [Jesus Christ] was revealed [at the 1st advent]: that He might destroy the works [cosmic system] of the devil.

^{KW} **1 John 3:8** The one who is habitually committing sin is out of the devil as a source, because from the beginning the devil has been sinning. For this purpose there was manifested the Son of God, in order that He might bring to naught the works of the devil.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:8** He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

When a believer makes it a practice (Iterative Present tense) to commit sin, he has become an agent of the devil. The believer who lives his life functioning in the cosmic system, he is in effect turning his back on God and is an evangelist for Satan. The longer he remains in the cosmic system, interlocking in one gate after another, the greater mischief and confusion he inflicts on positive believers (Progressive Present tense). No one stands still in the spiritual life. You are either progressing with God, or retrogressing with Satan. The devil sinned (Historical Present tense) from the very beginning when he fell; then he tempted man and Adam did likewise at his Fall. For this purpose Jesus Christ was revealed at the 1st advent (Dramatic Aorist tense).

He was brought forth to destroy (Dramatic Aorist tense) the works of the devil. What are the works (Latin: operations) of the devil? Satan created the cosmic system to enslave man; this system is composed of two spheres of power, arrogance and hatred. Jesus Christ was revealed to destroy (Latin: dissolve) these cosmic dynaspheres. John does not tell them that their father *is* the devil, because that statement would be false concerning all believers. God is their Father whether they recognize Him by their life or not. What he is communicating is that believers who have God as their Father repudiate Him when they are in the cosmic system, and in effect are following after a surrogate father – one who doesn't care about their present or future life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Man's sinful propensities, issuing from his totally depraved nature inherited from Adam, find their ultimate source in the devil - who brought about the downfall of our first parents. Habitual actions again are an index of character, and here, of source. (K. Wuest) The King shows His power to destroy the havoc and ruin wrought by sin in the human race. (C. Feinberg) He who continually does sin is out of the devil as a source. That is, his sinful propensities, issuing from his totally depraved nature inherited from Adam, find their ultimate source in the devil who brought about the downfall of our first parents. (K. Wuest) Sin is Satan's domain, his sphere, his work; and every sinner is his ally and instrument. The committer of sin makes himself of the devil's party, of the devil's spirit. He is engaged in building up those "works of the devil" which the Son of God came to destroy. To follow such a leader is as futile a course as it is evil. It is to resist the design of the mission of Jesus Christ and thereby to fight against God, opposing the central stream of His purposes toward mankind. To espouse the cause of Satan against Christ is to embark on a sinking vessel, to enlist under the flag of despair. (G. Findlay)

Anaphora from verse 5: repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive sentences. He *was manifested* to take away our sins; the Son of God *was manifested* that He might destroy the works of the devil. In 1 John 3:5, 8 the two great purposes of Christ's manifestation are declared: the one present, and the other future; the one in grace now, and the other in power hereafter; the one in sufferings, and the other in glory. (E.W. Bullinger) During those 30 odd years the key battle of the history of the universe was being conducted, and both sides knew it. Moreover, Jesus' triumph over the principalities and powers of evil is a major theme of the NT. His victory over satanic temptation is held up as an example and an encouragement to Christians during perseverance in suffering. (D. Carson) It was His avowed intention to engage the enemy in order to defeat him, to challenge his power in order to destroy it, or search out the cancerous sore in order to heal it, to undo, in short, all the woe and wickedness Satan had wrought, and to prove His own deity and Messiahship in the conquest of moral and spiritual evil. (M. Unger) The devil's work is essentially trying to undo God's work by turning people aside from doing God's will, that is, causing them to sin. (C. Kruse)

Perhaps the antichrists felt free to sin while at the same time denying their guilt and claiming to behave righteously. John warned about such ideas ... It would be wrong to

water this assertion down. All sin, of whatever kind or degree, is satanic in nature. To take part in sin at all is to take part in his activity. It is also opposing the work of the Son of God who put an end to that activity. (Z. Hodges) The devil is the source of all sin. He is the one who is responsible for sin being brought into the world. He is the one who led our first parents into sin. And the reason that you and I have a sinful nature today is because of the devil ... Let me be very clear that we are talking about *born-again believers*. We are not talking about professing Christians; we are not talking about church members; we are not talking about those that have simply been baptized without ever having been saved; we are not talking about those that go through a ritual or belong to some system. We are talking about those that have been born again. (J. McGee) All those who dream of a perfection of this kind, sufficiently show what stupid consciences they must have. (J. Calvin) Because the devil was the first, sinners today can be called his posterity. (G. Clark)

Two fathers, as it were, desire to have us as children. They are wide as to the poles asunder. Of the one relationship it is characteristic not to sin; of the other, to be always sinning. The one father never has sinned, never could sin, being the “righteous Father.” The other has always been a sinner, sinning from the beginning; his first act was to sin. Each father imparts his own character to his children. The virtue or the vice; the wholesome purity or the poisonous matter; the sweet charm or the sour taint; runs in the blood. The children of one father have infused into them the seed or germ of his impeccability; his being of such a nature that it is impossible for him to sin. The children of the other inherit his absolute incapacity of not sinning; his being of such a nature that it is morally impossible for him not to sin. It is a terrible inheritance. It is the devil’s nature to sin. When we sin we give proof of its being our nature, too. And it is a nature which we derive from him. (R. Candlish) One cannot be neutral: they must belong to one side or the other. (I. Marshall)

1 John 3:8 When a person (Subj. Nom.; believer) makes it a practice (lifestyle) to commit (ποιέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Temporal, Articular) sin (Acc. Dir. Obj.; function in the cosmic system), he has become (εἰμί, PAI3S, Progressive) an agent of the devil (Abl. Agency), because (causal) the devil (Subj. Nom.) has sinned (ἀμαρτάνω, PAI3S, Historical) from the beginning (Gen. Time; since his fall). For this purpose (Acc. Purpose), the Son (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) of God (Gen. Rel.) was revealed (φανερόω, API3S, Dramatic; at the 1st advent): that (purpose) He might destroy (λύω, AASubj.3S, Dramatic, Purpose; break up, untie, reverse) the works (Acc. Dir. Obj.; cosmic dynaspheres) of the devil (Abl. Source).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:8** ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἀμαρτάνει. εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:8** qui facit peccatum ex diabolo est quoniam ab initio diabolus peccat in hoc apparuit Filius Dei ut dissolvat opera diaboli

LWB 1 John 3:9 At the moment when each person [believer] is born of God [at regeneration], he is not committing sin, because His [the Holy Spirit's] sperm [divinely implanted seed] always abides in it [the divine system]. Furthermore, he is not able to sin [while in the divine system], because he has been born from God.

^{KW} **1 John 3:9** Everyone who has been born out of God with the present result that he is a born-one of God does not habitually commit sin because His seed remains in him. And he is not able habitually to sin, because out of God he has been born with the present result that he is a born-one of God.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Each member of God's elect is "born from above." God set them apart, earmarked them, in eternity past by His sovereign will and pleasure. At the moment in time (Temporal Participle) when each believer is called into the spiritual life God has prepared for him (Historical Present tense), he is regenerated, born again. At the same moment when a believer is born of God, he is cleansed of his sins and placed into the divine system by the indwelling of the Spirit. At the moment when he is placed into union with Christ and he enters the divine system for the first time, he is not committing sin (Static Present tense). The Holy Spirit's divinely implanted seed (sperm) always abides in the divine system; where the divinely implanted seed abides, sin cannot co-exist. That is why the new believer is not sinning when he first enters the divine system. The divine dynasphere is a sinless power system, as only a divine system can be.

The *sperm* or life-giving agent is the Holy Spirit; the *spore* is the Word of God. The *sperm* combined with the *spore* creates spiritual life in the soul of the believer.

Furthermore, the new believer is not able to sin while he is inside the divine system (Gnomic Present tense), because he has been born (regenerated) from God (Dramatic Perfect tense). There is a reason John added this phrase. It does not mean a believer cannot sin. Sinless perfection is a heresy of the worst degree; it contradicts hundreds of verses in the Bible. What John is pointing out is that the believer must exit the divine system and enter the cosmic system to sin. Every believer eventually leaves the divine system after his initial entrance at the new birth. The spiritual life is about re-entering the divine system, again and again as necessary, and remaining there as long as possible. By contrast, an unbeliever cannot live in the divine system, and therefore can do nothing but sin. His life is constantly bound up in the cosmic system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Even if it is only for five seconds, the new believer is in the "top circle" and does not sin. He is entering Gate 1 of the divine dynasphere and at this moment he cannot sin. You cannot sin inside the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The Greek text here holds no warrant for the erroneous

teaching of sinless perfection. (K. Wuest) The lifestyle of the believer who keeps God's commands (abides) will be obedience, not sin. The lifestyle of the one who keeps on sinning demonstrates that he does not know God ... Habitual actions indicate one's character ... God's seed refers most likely to the new nature imparted to the believing sinner at the time of salvation. (R. Lightner) God's seed is the divine principle of life. (M. Vincent) There can be no question but "born of the Spirit" refers to birth of the Holy Spirit. It is birth therefore of divine and supernatural character. And it is such because the Holy Spirit is the source and agent of it. (J. Murray) Christ received the prototype divine dynasphere at His virgin birth; the apostles and others received it on the day of Pentecost; we receive the divine dynasphere at the new birth. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Faith is the evidence of new birth, not the cause of it. This is consistent with John's whole book (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:2-3; 4:7). Since faith and repentance are possible only because of the regenerating work of God, both are called the gift of God. (J. Piper) Just as there is no reversal of the creation process, there can be no reversing of the new birth process. If this is accomplished by God and not by man and is entirely on the principle of grace, there is no just ground or reason why it should not continue forever. (L. Chafer) The perfect example of impersonal love was the Lord Jesus Christ living in the original divine dynasphere. Since sin is impossible inside the love complex and Christ remained in the love complex throughout His incarnation, our Lord never committed a mental attitude sin ... During His life on earth, the ultimate demonstration of Christ's impersonal love was His stalwart attitude throughout His trials and crucifixion. Certainly no one can duplicate His saving work, but Christ enjoins us to emulate toward others the attitude He sustained toward all of us when He acquiesced to the ordeal of unjust and prejudiced treatment at the hands of evil men. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

When Paul says that we are now a new creation in Christ, he is not saying that we have been experientially transformed and will inevitably manifest a life of good works. In fact, he repeatedly asks us to act like who we really are. He commands us to put on the new man. His meaning is that we are to be in experience what we already are in Christ. If it is automatic and inevitable that this will happen, why command it? Nowhere does the Bible assert that, just because a man is a new creation, he will act like who he is in Christ to the final hour. (J. Dillow) The Greek personal pronoun *autos* takes the same form in both the neuter and masculine genders. The context determines whether this pronoun is translated "it" or "him." In 1 John 3:9 *autos* can be rendered by the neuter, "keeps residing in it," the divine dynasphere. The power of the Holy Spirit regenerates the believer, making him God's "seed" or son or heir. The same power functions in the divine dynasphere to empower the believer's Christian life. This verse indicates that the divine dynasphere is received at salvation. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

His seed refers to the principle of divine life in the believer. (K. Wuest) The point here is that the child partakes of the nature of his Parent. The thought of a sinless Parent who begets a child who only sins a little is far from the author's mind ... Sin is not, nor ever can be, anything but satanic. (Z. Hodges) The germ of the divine life has been implanted in our souls, and it grows – a gradual process and subject to occasional retardations, yet sure, attaining at length to full fruition. (W. Nicole) There are those who are doubly frantic, who hold under this pretense, that everything is lawful to the faithful, that is, because John says that they cannot sin. They then maintain that we

may follow indiscriminately whatever our inclinations may lead us to. Thus they take the liberty to commit adultery, to steal, and to murder, because there can be no sin where God's Spirit reigns. But far otherwise is the meaning of the Apostle. (J. Calvin) There are no shades of grey here: it is a case of belonging to the light or the darkness, to God or the devil, to righteousness and love or to sin. (I. Marshall)

The present active infinitive can only mean "He cannot go on sinning." A great deal of false theology has grown out of a misunderstanding of the tense of *hamartanein*. (A. Robertson) In so far as the child of God abides in Christ he is separated from sin. In the degree in which the Divine life is realized by him, in that degree he is unable to sin. (W. Jones) It is because of the Spirit's indwelling presence as the "sperma" of God that the regenerated person does not engage continually in the practice of sin ... It is the new life principle implanted in the child of God by regeneration that keeps him from continually engaging in sin. Instead the new life principle provides motivation toward righteousness. (D. Burdick) In the NT the Word of God is called spora (or *sporos* in Luke 8:11), but never *sperma* ... Overall I think the evidence favors identifying God's seed with the Holy Spirit. (R. Brown) As conception precedes birth, so regeneration precedes conversion. (W. Best) Most commentators take "seed" to refer metaphorically to a divine principle of life which abides in the believer. (I. Marshall)

1 John 3:9 At the moment (an instant in time) when each (Nom. Spec.) person (Subj. Nom.; believer) is born (γεννάω, PPPtc.NMS, Historical, Temporal, anthropopathism) of God (Abl. Source; at the moment of regeneration), he is not (neg. particle) committing (ποιέω, PAI3S, Static) sin (Acc. Dir. Obj.), because (causal) His (Poss. Gen.; the Holy Spirit's) sperm (Subj. Nom.; divinely implanted seed) always abides (μένω, PAI3S, Gnostic) in it (Loc. Sph.; the divine dynasphere as a sinless power system). Furthermore (continuative), he is not (neg. particle) able (δύναμαι, PMI3S, Gnostic, Deponent) to sin (ἀμαρτάνω, PAInf., Gnostic, Inf. as Dir. Obj. of Verb; while inside the divine dynasphere), because (causal) he has been born (γεννάω, Perf.PI3S, Dramatic) from God (Abl. Source).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:9** Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:9** omnis qui natus est ex Deo peccatum non facit quoniam semen ipsius in eo manet et non potest peccare quoniam ex Deo natus est

LWB 1 John 3:10 **By this, students of God and students of the devil are manifest: Every person [believer] who does not make it a practice to manufacture righteousness is not an agent from God [living in His divine system], nor the person [believer] who does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love [infused and acquired inside the divine system] towards his brother [fellow believer].**

^{KW} **1 John 3:10** In this is apparent who are the born-ones of God and the born-ones of the devil. Everyone who is not habitually doing righteousness is not of God, also the one who is not habitually loving his brother [Christian] with a divine and self-sacrificial love.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:10** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John gives two things which work together as one, by which it is manifest (Static Present tense) which believers are students of God and which believers are students of the devil. These two things are part of the conflict of the dynaspheres, the conflict between the divine system and the cosmic system. First, every believer who does not make it a practice to produce righteousness (Iterative Present tense) is not an agent of God. The only way to produce righteousness is by abiding in the divine system. Second, every believer who does not make it a practice to exercise impersonal love towards fellow believers (Iterative Present tense) is not an agent of God. Virtue love cannot be produced outside of the system; it is infused by the system God created. Unbelievers and believers in the cosmic system may exercise a relaxed mental attitude toward others; unbelievers and believers in the cosmic system may exercise *phileo* or *eros* love toward others. But unbelievers and believers in the cosmic system cannot exercise *agape* love toward others, because biblical *agape* love can only be generated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Biblical *agape* love toward fellow believers is not something you work-up or practice in the flesh; it is *created by grace* when you are in fellowship with God. It can be rightly called *virtue love* as long as the word *virtue* continues to be an infusion of grace and not a preoccupation with a list of ethical and moral duties. In other words, the Christian way of life is *supernatural* and requires the believer to reside and function in the sphere of divine power. It is a combination of *infused* and *acquired* virtue in the sphere of divine power and love. If an unbeliever or believer residing in the cosmic system can do it, it is not the Christian way of life; it is not biblical *agape* love. The Christian way of life and divine *agape* love can only be produced in God's sphere or system of power; unbelievers and carnal Christians do not reside in it and therefore cannot participate. Morality and ethics without the filling of the Spirit are classified as human good, not divine good. They are honorable things in-and-of themselves, but they do not meet divine standards.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Only recently has love been regarded as an emotion. For 15 centuries or so Christian theologians have understood love to be a volition. With the advent of Freud, volition disappeared and frightful emotions took over. The Christian populace have been unwittingly affected by this behavioralism, and they should immediately return to the biblical position. (G. Clark) To love the neighbor *agape*-istically *is* to know and believe in God, or at least is the self-authenticating way for coming to know and believe in Him. (G. Outka) *Agape* may serve more or less as an abstract noun identifying an attribute which organizes and integrates the several attitudes and intentions oriented toward practice: the agent acts in certain ways because he possesses the

attribute ... Agape may be the instrument of invading grace; it may be infused grace ... Divine love is more than the pattern and prototype for human action; it also intervenes decisively and awakens effectually. (G. Outka)

The source of human agape is outside man's own power of initiation and sustenance and the subject in all genuine neighbor-love is actually God. (A. Nygren) Agape becomes the agent's divinized active principle. It commands all of the active powers in moral activity; it extends its divinizing influence to the depths of self. (Gilleman) This is free-speaking indeed; too free for the false toleration and charity-mongering of the present day; but these are the words of the God of love, through John the apostle of love. (E. Bullinger) When a Christian sins, he *conceals* who he really is rather than making it *manifest*. (Z. Hodges) It does not mean that you necessarily care for his ways, his conversation, or the things that interest him. It does not mean you have to run up and put your arms around him. It means that you are to be concerned for him ... This love is not something that is sloppy and slippery by any means. It does not mean that you are to help, that is, to be taken in by every Tom, Dick, and Harry who comes along. We are warned to be very careful indeed and to keep our eyes open. (J. McGee)

The sin which lost Satan heaven was neither lust nor murder. It was not carnal at all, but merely spiritual. It was pure and simple insubordination and rebellion; the setting of his will against God's; the proud refusal, at the Father's bidding, to worship the Son. And when you so sin, you are of your father the devil ... In order then to enter into the full meaning of John's solemn testimony, it is not needful to wait til some horrid access of diabolical fury or frenzy seizes us. It is enough if the tongue speaks proud things or the heart conceives them ... Is there any rising up in us of such a feeling as this, as if it were hard that we may not occasionally take our own way and be our own masters? It is the devil's seed abiding in us; the seed of the devil's sin, and of his sinful nature. Thus this testimony is of wide range and searching power, when the Spirit brings it home. (R. Candlish) Agape focuses on the "condition" or "mental disposition" of the agent. (A. Gewith)

1 John 3:10 By this (Instr. Means), students (Subj. Nom.; children) of God (Gen. Rel.) and (connective) students (Subj. Nom.; children) of the devil (Gen. Rel.) are (είμι, PAI3S, Static) manifest (Pred. Nom.; conflict of the dynaspheres): Every (Nom. Spec.) person (Subj. Nom.; believer) who does not (neg. particle) make it a practice to manufacture (ποιέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular) righteousness (Acc. Dir. Obj.; honor, integrity) is not (neg. particle) an agent from God (Abl. Agency; living in His divine system), nor (continuative) the person (Subj. Nom.; believer) who does not (neg. particle) make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; infused and acquired inside the divine dynasphere) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:10** ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστιν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου· πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:10** in hoc manifesti sunt filii Dei et filii diaboli omnis qui non est iustus non est de Deo et qui non diligit fratrem suum

LWB 1 John 3:11 Because this is the message which you have heard from the beginning [of the Lord's ministry on earth]: that we should make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers],

^{KW} **1 John 3:11** Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, namely, We should habitually be loving one another with a divine and self-sacrificial love;

^{KJV} **1 John 3:11** For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

This is the message which you have heard (Constative Aorist tense) from the beginning of the Lord's ministry on earth: that we should exercise virtue love towards our fellow believers. Now, in the Church Age, we actually have the power of the Holy Spirit available to us to fulfill this command. All we need to do is live in His system instead of Satan's system. Jesus commanded us to exercise *agape* love on a continuous basis (Iterative Present tense). The potential subjunctive mood in this passage points to the possibility of fulfilling this command only if we reside and function in the divine system. Each believer chooses whether to live in His system or Satan's system; we are not forced to do either.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Love is to be traced to a saving change ... With Christ there is a new principle introduced into our life, which now needs full manifestation for our perfect health and happiness ... Love may very properly find expression in word, tongue, deed, in truth. The link of connection is truth as the sphere in which love moves. (R. Finlayson) Ethical love is not an option, nor an invention of priests or moralists, nor an evolutionary sport. Love confronts men as a Christian categorical imperative from the heart of Reality ... "Brother" here means fellow believer. (A. Wilder) This is not the Mosaic commandment of love to one's neighbor but what Jesus says in John 15:12, 17 to the effect that his disciples love one another. (R. Lenski) Both the "one another" and the "brother" refer to members of the Johannine community. (R. Brown)

1 John 3:11 Because (explanatory) this (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) the message (Pred. Nom.) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) you have heard (ἀκούω, AAI2P, Constative) from the beginning (Gen. Extent of Time; the Lord's ministry on earth): that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) we should make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards (ἀγαπάω, PASubj.1P, Iterative, Potential) one another of the same kind (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believers),

^{BGT} **1 John 3:11** Ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους,

^{VUL} **1 John 3:11** quoniam haec est adnuntiatio quam audistis ab initio ut diligamus alterutrum

^{LWB} **1 John 3:12** Not like Cain was, an agent of the evil one, even [to the point of] cutting the throat of his brother [murder]. And for what reason did he cut his [brother’s] throat? Because his production [evil works] was wicked, while that of his brother *was* righteous [divine good].

^{KW} **1 John 3:12** Not even as Cain [who] was out of the Pernicious One, and killed his brother by severing his jugular vein. And on what account did he kill him? Because his works were pernicious and those of his brother righteous.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:12** Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John gives an example of a biblical person who did not exercise virtue love towards his brother. As a matter of fact, in this example they were siblings: Cain and Abel. Cain not only did not exercise virtue love towards his brother, he wasn’t even able to maintain a relaxed mental attitude towards him. Cain hated his brother Abel. As John tells us, Cain was an agent of Satan (Descriptive Imperfect tense). Cain may have indwelt by Satan; many commentators think so. So how far in the opposite direction of exercising virtue love did Cain go? He went so far in his hatred that he cut the jugular vein of his brother, murdering him (Culminative Aorist tense). Why did he cut his brother’s throat? He did so because his own works were wicked (Latin: malignant) while those of Abel’s were righteous. God rejected Cain’s offering, but accepted Abel’s offering.

Cain’s offering was based on legalism; Abel’s offering was based on grace. Cain’s offering was considered works of his own flesh (Descriptive Imperfect tense), while Abel’s rested on the spiritual death of Christ as portrayed by the blood of a sacrificial animal. Cain offered his own self-righteous effort; Abel placed himself at the mercy of His Saviour, Jesus Christ. Cain observed his brother Abel when he cut the throat of the sacrificial animal, and that gave him the idea: I’ll cut my own brother’s throat and offer him up as my sacrificial animal. The first murder recorded in the Bible most likely began with such a rationalization and self-justification effort on Cain’s part. This example of Cain is John’s way of leading into another topic: the cosmic system hates Christians who consistently live in the divine system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Not many people today believe in a devil. Perhaps a few weirdos have resurrected devil-worship, but the Western world by a great majority dismisses all such notions as mythology. The Scripture, however, and John in particular, have no doubts about his reality. (G. Clark) The devil motivated the first recorded murder in human history (Gen. 4:8, 1 John 3:12) in an effort to eliminate the regenerate line through which Messiah would come. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) There is no room to “marvel,” to be surprised, when brother hates brother, but hatred from the world toward

all who name His name should be expected. (R. Lightner) This explanation ought to be carefully noticed, for men ever blunder as to the way of living, because they make holiness to consist of fictitious works, and while they torment themselves with trifles, they think themselves doubly acceptable to God, as the monks, who proudly call their mode of living a state of perfection; nor is there any other worship of God under the Papacy but a mass of superstitions. (J. Calvin) Always remember that a Christian is a person whom the world hates. (G. Clark)

Satan's malice is stirred, and he makes his children fierce even to slaying, as he made Cain. He does so by fretting and irritating the conscience, while at the same time he fortifies the stronghold of stout-heartedness and pride. For these two in combination, an uneasy conscience and an unbroken heart, are in his hands capable of being wrought mightily to his purpose. (R. Candlish) We may detect this diabolic spirit in ourselves, if there starts in our mind a misliking toward those whose greater zeal and success, or whose stricter walk and loftier tone, reprove our behavior. (G. Findlay) We might also detect this spirit in ourselves, if we are so disgusted with the overall residence and function of our fellow believers in the cosmic system, that we can't stand to be around them. This is when the doctrine of mental separation becomes so intense that physical separation is necessary. The next test is continuing fellowship with God alone, until believers who reside and function in the divine system are brought into your periphery or you seek them out after prayer. (LWB)

1 John 3:12 Not (neg. particle) like (Comp. Adv.; as) Cain (Subj. Nom.) was (είμί, Imperf.AI3S, Descriptive), an agent of the evil one (Abl. Agency; indwelled by satan), even (ascensive; to the point of) cutting the throat of (σφάζω, AAI3S, Culminative; murder, slaughter) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.). And (continuative) for what (interrogative) reason (Prep. Gen.; "why") did he cut his (Poss. Gen.; his brother's) throat (σφάζω, AAI3S, Culminative, Interrogative Ind.; severing the jugular vein)? Because (explanatory) his (Poss. Gen.; Cain's) production (Subj. Nom.; works, deeds, functions, acts) was (είμί, Imperf.AI3S, Descriptive) wicked (Pred. Nom.; evil), while (comparative, temporal) that (Subj. Nom.; production) of his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Poss. Gen.; Abel's) was (ellipsis, verb supplied) righteous (Pred. Nom.; divine good).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:12** οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ· καὶ χάριν τίμος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:12** non sicut Cain ex maligno erat et occidit fratrem suum et propter quid occidit eum quoniam opera eius maligna erant fratris autem eius iusta

LWB **1 John 3:13** Stop being shocked, brethren, if [believers in] the cosmic system perpetually hates you [believers residing in the divine system].

^{KW} **1 John 3:13** Stop marveling, brethren, if, as is the case, the world hates you.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:13** Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of you might be thinking, “How could Cain kill his own brother? Abel never did anything to deserve that.” John already told us that there is a conflict between two spheres going on: the cosmic system and the divine system. Apparently this was still an abstract concept to many in his non-resident congregation. They were good people; they couldn’t imagine anybody hating them for no reason. John tells them to stop being shocked (Imperative of Prohibition) when somebody in the cosmic system despises them. There are believers living in Satan’s cosmic system who hate believers that are living in the divine system. Believers who are living in the divine system, without saying or doing anything at all, are a constant condemnation to the believer who is continually deciding to live in Satan’s system. Christians must understand the conflict between the divine and the satanic; they must also apply this understanding to real life situations when they occur, eg., don’t be shocked when someone hates them without cause. This is part of divine suffering, something we have the privilege of sharing with our Lord Jesus Christ as part of our momentum in the spiritual life. The Iterative or Durative Present tense means this hatred from a fellow believer may be continuous, lasting perhaps an entire lifetime.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Believers in the cosmic system absolutely hate believers with momentum in the divine dynasphere ... Believers who are amazed, shocked to find that other believers (in the cosmic system) now hate them, after they once had good rapport, cannot switch to impersonal love - so John is telling them to “stop being shocked.” If you get upset, angry and implacable towards this “old friend,” you will enter the cosmic system right along with them. That is a people test. Don’t stop thinking and get caught emoting - feeling sorry for yourself. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The world, oriented against God, is, as John has indicated already in 1 John 2:15-17, inherently inimical to the cause of God. Manifestations of its hostility, therefore, should not take the children of God by surprise. The warfare between the two sides continues, although the decisive victory has been won; this gives the children of God confidence that they can overcome the world by faith in Him who has already overcome it. (F. Bruce)

A true Christian even, and a true Church, may be so lacking in outspoken testimony for God’s truth, and in aggressive attacks on the world’s sin, that they arouse no hostility whatever. And in such a case they will be allowed to pursue their course in peace ... Whatever dislike there may be in the world to the doctrines of the gospel, it will not show itself less towards men than towards systems. And when we come to this point, it is abundantly clear that hatred, and a virulent hatred, too, exists on the part of the world towards the doctrines maintained in the Church. The dislike will vary in detail according to the standpoint of the individual. The worldling will hate the demands for a life consecrated to Christ ... Nevertheless, though the hatred ordinarily is more towards systems than men, yet, let any man move out of the common method of easy-going Christianity, and set forth on a crusade for some Christian doctrine or against some antichristian heresy – let him expose and condemn men’s favorite sins – and no one among men will be hated

more intensely that he! If we are faithful in bearing testimony for God, we shall meet with our share of hatred. (A Plummer)

The world, which hates, would assimilate those it hates to itself, and so be soothed or sated. God, who loves, would assimilate those He loves to Himself, and so have satisfaction in them. This indeed may almost be said to be a universal characteristic of sentient and intelligent mind; be it pure and benevolent or depraved and malevolent; be its ruling passion hatred or love. It is, so far, common to the wicked one and the Holy One ... You need, for yourselves, and with special reference to the world's hatred of you, to be ever on your guard, lest somewhat of the old dark spirit should creep in again into your own hearts. And remember it may insinuate itself very insidiously and stealthily. (R. Candlish) I have never really appreciated it when anyone would say, "When you were a pastor in such-and-such a place, you were a popular minister." I'm not sure that I care for that because there is a certain crowd I would deeply regret to be popular with. If I was ever popular with them, I should not have been, and I don't want to be popular with them because the Lord Jesus is not popular with that crowd. (J. McGee)

1 John 3:13 Stop (neg. particle) being shocked (θαυμάζω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition & Command; marvelled, amazed), brethen (Voc. Address), if (1st class condition, "and it does") the cosmic system (Subj. Nom.; primarily believers in the cosmic system) perpetually hates (μισέω, PAI3S, Iterative & Durative; despises) you (Acc. Dir. Obj.; those in the divine dynasphere).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:13** [Καὶ] μὴ θαυμάζετε, ἀδελφοί, εἰ μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:13** nolite mirari fratres si odit vos mundus

LWB 1 John 3:14 We know that we [believers in the divine system] have changed our residence [relocated] out from the realm of death [cosmic system] into the realm of life [divine system], because we make it a practice to exercise virtue love. The one who does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love resides in the sphere of death [cosmic system].

^{KW} **1 John 3:14** As for us, we know absolutely that we have passed over permanently out of the death into the life, because we are habitually loving the brethren with a divine and self-sacrificial love. The one who is not habitually loving in this manner is abiding in the sphere of the death.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:14** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

We know (Intensive Perfect tense) that believers who are residing in the divine system have changed their residence (Dramatic Perfect tense) from the realm of the cosmic system into the realm of the divine system. Residence and function in the divine system is spiritual life; residence and function in the cosmic system is spiritual death. We know that we are residing and

functioning in the divine system, because we find ourselves exercising virtue love on a regular basis toward our fellow believers (Iterative Present tense). Again, biblical *agape* love is infused and acquired by the filling of the Spirit. It is not an effort of the flesh to follow some rules, regulations, or emotions in order to “work up” this love. The believer who does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense) resides (Gnomic Present tense) in the sphere of death, i.e., the cosmic system. John is giving his non-resident congregation a way of testing themselves to see if they are in fellowship. Exercising *agape* love is that test.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In the majority opinion of the Committee, the shorter reading (without the addition of “the brethren”) is to be preferred, because it is attested by superior witnesses, and because they thought the copyist added this object to complete his understanding of the participle. (B. Metzger) A new love is experienced also for the saved. Love for the brethren is made an absolute test of personal salvation. This is reasonable, since by the regenerating work of the Spirit the believer is brought into a new kinship in the household and family of God, wherein alone the true fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man exist. The fact that the same divine presence indwells two individuals relates them vitally and anticipates a corresponding bond of devotion. (L. Chafer)

The verb “*metabebkamen*” usually describes geographical movement from one location to another. Here it is used metaphorically to depict movement from one spiritual sphere to another. Note the definite articles marking out the two distinct spheres into which the entire human race is divided. The perfect tense “we have passed,” indicates that the transfer has already occurred at a point in the past, and, as a result, the sphere of life has already been entered. Eternal life is not a state to be reached only after death; it is an experience that begins at regeneration ... John does not say that the one who does not love dies, but that he *remains in death* ... he continues to stay in that sphere. (D. Burdick)

1 John 3:14 We know (οἶδα, Perf.A1P, Intensive) that (conj. as Dir. Obj., declarative) we (Subj. Nom.; believers in the divine dynasphere) have changed our residence (μεταβαίνω, Perf.A1P, Dramatic; moved, relocated) out from the realm of death (Abl. Separation; the cosmic dynaspheres) into the realm of life (Loc. Sph.; the divine dynasphere), because (causal) we make it a practice to exercise virtue love (ἀγαπάω, PAI1P, Iterative). The one (Subj. Nom.) who does not (neg. particle) make it a practice to exercise virtue love (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular) resides (μένω, PAI3S, Gnomic; prolonged residence) in the sphere of death (Loc. Sph.; the cosmic system).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:14** ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:14** nos scimus quoniam translati sumus de morte in vitam quoniam diligimus fratres qui non diligit manet in morte

LWB 1 John 3:15 Every person [believer in the cosmic system] who hates his brethren [fellow believers] is a murderer [hatred is *mental attitude murder*]; you also know that not every murderer has eternal life residing in him [not all murderers are Christians].

^{KW} **1 John 3:15** Everyone who habitually is hating his brother [Christian] is a manslayer. And you know absolutely that no manslayer has life eternal abiding in him.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:15** Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John anticipates comments from those in his non-resident congregations. For instance, “Well, that example you are using is Cain, who lived hundreds of years ago. Nobody would do that today.” But John tells them that every believer in the cosmic system who hates his fellow believers is a murderer, or at least a potential murderer in the making. Hatred is *mental attitude murder*, a physical murder that doesn’t happen because the threat of law enforcement prohibits it from occurring. Take away the threat of law enforcement, and who knows what might happen! “But not every murderer (Latin: homicide) has eternal life residing (Static Present tense) in him,” John says. That could mean that all murderers are not Christians, or that all murderers are not Christians residing in the cosmic system. Obviously the majority of murderers are unbelievers. “Eternal life not residing in him” might refer to unbelievers, or cosmic believers who do not have the qualitative essence of eternal life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Did David lose salvation when he murdered Uriah, or was he never a child of God until afterward? (G. Clark) The most intense hatred you will ever experience against you will come from a fellow believer, not an unbeliever. Nobody hates with such intensity as a cosmic believer. It is better to associate with a principled unbeliever than a cosmic, born-again believer. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Is it love to deceive even immature Christians? Is it edifying to hide problems from the more mature? What is love? What does it require? Surely, not deceit and evasion. Then must we say that these cautious Christians are not true Christians because their evasions show they have no love? Or maybe only a little love? (G. Clark) It is an illusion to believe that a real Christian is incapable of hatred and murder. David was guilty of the murder of pious Uriah the Hittite. (Z. Hodges) May I remind you that John’s emphasis in this section is the two natures of the believer. When you become a child of God, you do not get rid of your old nature. Rather, you have two natures – an old nature and a new nature. (J. McGee)

The abiding relationship is not the regeneration experience. Rather, it refers to the degree of intimacy and fellowship with the Lord possible for those who continue to obey His commands. For John, Jesus Christ is “the eternal life” which abides in us. To have Christ abiding in us (eternal life) is not the same thing as being saved. It is a conditional relationship referring to

Christ's being at home in the heart of the obedient Christian who loves his brother. It must also be remembered that these commands are to be fulfilled for a man's Christian brother. If the man is not a Christian, then this term is inappropriate. Can a true Christian hate his brother? Of course he can. (J. Dillow) A Christian who fails to love his brother "remains in death." He is thus experientially living in the same sphere in which the world lives. Because he is a murderer at heart he can make no real claim to the kind of intimate fellowship with God and Christ which the word "abide" suggests. Eternal life (Christ) is not at home in his heart so long as the spirit of murder is there ... Hate, unfortunately, is not confined to unsaved people. (Z. Hodges)

1 John 3:15 Every (Nom. Spec.) person (Subj. Nom.; believer in the cosmic system) who hates (μισέω, PAPtc.NMS, Descriptive, Substantival, Articular; mental & emotional disposition) his (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believers) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) a murderer (Pred. Nom.; hatred is *mental attitude murder*, a potential murderer in the making); you also (adjunctive) know (οἶδα, Perf.AI2P, Intensive) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) not (neg. particle) every (Nom. Spec.) murderer (Subj. Nom.; not all murderers are Christians) has (ἔχω, PAI3S, Gnomonic) eternal (Acc. Extent of Time) life (Acc. Dir. Obj.) residing (μένω, PAPtc.AFS, Static, Circumstantial) in him (Loc. Sph.).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:15** πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν, καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:15** omnis qui odit fratrem suum homicida est et scitis quoniam omnis homicida non habet vitam aeternam in se manentem

LWB 1 John 3:16 By this we [believers] have come to know love [special, discriminating, redemptive, predestinating, sacrificial love]: that He and only He [Jesus Christ is unique] laid down His life on our behalf [believers only]. Consequently, we ourselves ought to lay down our lives [during disaster circumstances] for the benefit of our brethren [even fellow believers we don't like].

^{KW} **1 John 3:16** In this we have come to know by experience the aforementioned love, because that One on behalf of us laid down His soul. And, as for us, we have a moral obligation on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:16** Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

By the singular act of Jesus Christ on the cross, we have come to know (Consummative Perfect tense) the special, discriminating, redemptive, predestinating, sacrificial, *agape* love. He and only He laid down His life (Dramatic Aorist tense) on behalf of all believers, i.e., the elect of God. The "we" in the 1st part of verse 16 (believers) is the same as the "our" which Christ died

for (believers), as well as for the “brethren” in the 2nd half of verse 16 (fellow believers) - all of which point to a definite, effective, limited atonement (particular redemption). I consider the indefinite, ineffective, unlimited atonement as taught by Arminianism to be an anthropocentric, humanistic heresy. The uniqueness of Christ’s sacrifice is highlighted by the Genitive of Substitution. Consequently, since we are recipients of His *agape* love, we ourselves ought to lay down our lives (Dramatic Aorist tense) for the benefit of our fellow believers. “Lives” in the Greek is “psuche,” which can also mean “souls.” This could mean laying down our lives, but it could also mean laying down our souls. The words “of God” are not in the original Greek text, i.e., best manuscripts.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Impersonal love does not make false personality changes; it is exercised on personal integrity. Impersonal love keeps you calm. “Holy, Holy, Holy” really means “Integrity, Integrity, Integrity”. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) God’s love would appear to be limited by the intention of the Atonement since the Atonement was in the final analysis the real demonstration of the scope of God’s love. (A. Custance) When John speaks of *agape* love, it is no sentimental emotion that he has in mind, but something intensely practical. Christians have one supreme example of love, the love shown by their Lord in that He laid down His life for them. (F. Bruce)

1 John 3:16 By this (Instr. Means; unique, singular act) we (believers) have come to know (γινώσκω, Perf.AI1P, Consummative) love (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the special, discriminating, redemptive love that elects, predestinates and justifies; life is purchased by sacrificial love): that (conj. as Dir. Obj., appositional) He and only He (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ is Unique) laid down (τίθημι, AAI3S, Dramatic; sacrificed) His (Poss. Gen.) life (Acc. Dir. Obj.; soul) on our (believers: the elect) behalf (Gen. Substitution). Consequently (inferential), we ourselves (Subj. Nom.; believers) ought (ὀφείλω, PAI1P, Aoristic, Potential; are obligated) to lay down (τίθημι, AAInf., Dramatic, Intended Result; during disaster circumstances) our (Acc. Poss.) lives (Acc. Dir. Obj.; souls) for the benefit of our (Gen. Rel.) brethren (Gen. Adv.; fellow believers, even those we hate).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:16** ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:16** in hoc cognovimus caritatem quoniam ille pro nobis animam suam posuit et nos debemus pro fratribus animas ponere

LWB 1 John 3:17 Moreover, whoever might possess the prosperity [financial wealth] of this world and observes his brother [fellow believer in his periphery] who has extreme poverty

[destitution], but shuts off his emotions from him [lack of compassion], how can this virtue love from God be residing in him [wealth – virtue = unhappiness]?

^{KW} **1 John 3:17** But whoever has as a constant possession the necessities of life, and deliberately keeps on contemplating his brother constantly having need, and snaps shut his heart from him, how is it possible that the love of God is abiding in him?

^{KJV} **1 John 3:17** But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Any believer who possesses the financial prosperity (Potential Subjunctive mood) this world has to offer and shuts-off his compassionate emotions (Culminative Aorist tense) when he sees (Futuristic Present tense) a fellow believer in abject poverty (Latin: necessity) cannot be residing in the divine system. This scenario is created by John using several potential subjunctives, which is one way of creating a hypothetical situation, but one that is probably occurring in truth. This is not a proof-text for communism or socialism, both satanically evil systems. There is a contrast here between a wealthy believer and a destitute believer who know each other. The wealthy believer should have compassion on the destitute believer, and render charitable assistance to him if appropriate. Why do I qualify charity with the word “appropriate”? Some believers end up in poverty by bad decisions, such as quitting their job, gambling, goofing off (general laziness), making poor investments, etc. Do not get in the way of divine discipline on such believers. Help them if you wish, but step back.

Spiritual discernment and discretion should be used before assisting someone financially; but if they have a legitimate need and you have more resources (Latin: substance) than you need, you should be prompted by the Holy Spirit to assist a fellow believer in his time of financial duress. If you are having a Roman banquet every evening and a fellow believer in your periphery is unable to put anything on his table, why wouldn't you help him out? If you turn your back on him when you have great blessings from the Lord, how can you be residing in the love complex? Charity is an honorable way to express your gratitude to the Lord for what He has blessed you with. Sometimes a believer with abundant blessings is called upon to do something tangible with those blessings. It should be a privilege to help a fellow believer in these situations. You don't want this to be your formula: wealth – virtue = unhappiness. This is a much better scenario: wealth + virtue = inner happiness.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is easy to “lay down one's life.” Martyrdom is heroic and exhilarating; the difficulty lies in doing the little things, facing day by day the petty sacrifices and self-denials which no one notices and no one applauds. (W. Nicole) If the secessionists constituted the wealthier branch of the Johannine community and their departure had left the common funds bankrupt, their failure to take care of their former brothers and sisters who were in dire need may have been equivalent to murder in the author's mind ... While living in the

Johnnantine community, they should help those in need ... They should not join the schism, for that will inevitably lead them to hate their former brethren. (R. Brown)

No one can ignore the poverty of a fellow believer unless he himself is destitute of virtue. No one can possess virtue and not have sensitivity. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) If one would go on to maturity, the Word which he has taken in must be worked out in practical living ... There must be an outworking of the inwrought Word. (J. Pentecost) Emotion is part of the expression of human love. When a right lobe saturated with doctrine or establishment principles dominates the soul, the awareness of love for a particular object is expressed by emotion. Such response can be beautiful, gratifying, romantic, and even noble. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 3:17 Moreover (continuative), whoever (Subj. Nom.) might (protasis, verbal particle expressing contingency) possess (ἔχω, PAsubj.3S, Static, Potential) the prosperity (Acc. Dir. Obj.; riches, abundance, wealth) of this (Gen. Spec.) world (Adv. Gen. Ref.; the life or living which the world gives) and (continuative) observes (θεωρέω, PAsubj.3S, Futuristic, Potential; perceives) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer) who has (ἔχω, PAPtc.AMS, Pictorial, Substantival) extreme poverty (Acc. Dir. Obj.; destitution), but (adversative) shuts off (κλείω, AASubj.3S, Culminative) his (Poss. Gen.) emotions (Acc. Dir. Obj.; compassion) from him (Abl. Separation), how (apodosis, interrogative) can this (Dat. Spec.) virtue love (Subj. Nom.) from God (Abl. Source) be residing (μένω, PAI3S, Iterative, Interrogative Ind.) in him (Loc. Sph.; wealth - virtue = unhappiness)?

^{BGT} **1 John 3:17** ὃς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ θεωρῆ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχοντα καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἢ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;

^{VUL} **1 John 3:17** qui habuerit substantiam mundi et viderit fratrem suum necesse habere et clauserit viscera sua ab eo quomodo caritas Dei manet in eo

LWB 1 John 3:18 Students, let us not make it a habit to exercise virtue love with thought or language only [instruments of means without the correct sphere of operation], but also in function [operation inside the divine system] and doctrine [the Word of God permeating your soul].

^{KW} **1 John 3:18** Little born-ones, let us not be loving in the sphere of word, nor even in the sphere of the tongue, but in the sphere of deed and truth.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:18** My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Normally I would translate a subjunctive mood like this as a prohibition (“stop” doing something), but the negative particle “nor” makes an entreaty the more likely choice. John addresses the positive students in his non-resident congregations once again, but this time to encourage them to exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense) within certain guidelines. Thinking about love and talking about love will not accomplish the purpose of biblical *agape* love. An unbeliever can think and talk about love, but it will be *phileo* or *eros* and not biblical *agape* love. Thoughts and language are two *means* (instruments) of exercising virtue love, but those *means* must be used while residing in the *sphere* of power and doctrine. *Instruments of Means* without the correct *sphere of operation* produce *dead works*. *Instruments of Means* within the correct *sphere of operation* produce *spiritual fruit*. Memorize these last two sentences!

Put another way: Biblical *agape* love requires supernatural power from the Holy Spirit (residence and function in the divine system) and metabolization of Bible doctrine.

John’s first emphasis in the passage is on *functioning* (Latin: operation) inside the divine system. The second emphasis on *agape* love in this passage is permeating your soul with Bible doctrine, the Truth. The locative of sphere means if you aren’t filled with the Spirit and doctrine, your *agape* love is merely an activity of the flesh rather than spiritual production. Absolutely the last thing John has in mind here is working-up some fleshly, public display of emotion that fakes-out naïve believers and makes them think you are spiritual and “loving.” John’s two requirements in this passage crush that nonsense. The unfortunate translation in the KJV “deed” as opposed to “function in the divine system” has led many confused believers into emotionalism parading as a genuine expression of love. Biblical *agape* love has more to do with honor and integrity in the divine system than with displays of emotion, such as hugging, patting on the back, and handshakes. Unbelievers do all those things, but they don’t function in the divine system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The verse deplores hypocrisy. (G. Clark) Personal love is optional. Impersonal love is imperative. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) One thing is for sure: Love cannot be equated with sacrificial action! It cannot be equated with *any* action! This is a powerful antidote to the common teaching that love is not what you feel but what you do. The good in this popular teaching is the twofold intention to show that mere warm feelings can never replace actual deeds of love, and that efforts of love must be made even in the absence of the joy that one might wish were present. But it is careless and inaccurate to support these two truths by saying that love is simply what you do and not what you feel. (J. Piper) The slight change of construction marks the difference between the instrument and the sphere of the manifestation of love. It must find scope in our true and full life. (B. Wescott) The use of the verb “know” (*ginosko*) and the noun “truth” (*aletheia*) in this context may be deliberate, and aimed at the gnostically inclined heretics in John’s congregation. (S. Smalley)

The art of politics is taking all the credit and placing all the blame. Leadership requires only that you do your job; managerial systems demand that you change your personality - hypocrisy, evil, do whatever you need to do to get the job done, use people, etc. Managerial rulership destroys

society. All evil organizations are run by managerials. Leadership demands honor and integrity, while managerialism demands sociology, beurocracy, labor unions. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The child is made to share in the Father's nature, and he uses in progressive advance the powers which he has received. This thought of progress will be traced through the whole picture which John draws of the spiritual life. "From strength to strength" is the law by which it is shaped. It is therefore easily intelligible why John never uses the title sons (huious), the name of definite dignity and privilege, to describe the relation of Christians to God. He regards their position not as the result of an adoption (huiothesia), but as the result of a new life which advances from the vital germ to full maturity. (B. Wescott)

1 John 3:18 Students (Voc. Address; dear children), let us not (neg. particle) make it a habit to exercise virtue love (ἀγαπάω, PASubj.1P, Iterative, Hortatory; personal love) with thought (Instr. Means) nor (neg. adv.) language (Instr. Means) only (rhetorical ascensive conj.), but also (adversative & adjunctive) in function (Loc. Sph.; moral character inside the divine dynasphere) and (connective) doctrine (Loc. Sph.; Word of God, impersonal love).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:18** Τεκνία, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ τῇ γλώσσῃ ἀλλὰ ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:18** filioli non diligamus verbo nec lingua sed opere et veritate

LWB 1 John 3:19 By this [exercise of virtue love] we may know that we are out from doctrine, even convincing the mentality of our soul [confidence] in His sight [social life with God],

^{KW} **1 John 3:19** In this we shall know experientially that we are out of the truth, and in His presence shall tranquilize our hearts,

^{KJV} **1 John 3:19** And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

We may know (Latin: cognizant) that we are out from doctrine as a source of operation (Gnomic Future tense) by the fact that we are in the love complex, functioning with virtue love. And if we are indeed residing in the love complex, the mentality of our soul will be confident towards God (Predictive Future tense). This convincing confidence "in His sight" is a reference to social life with God. Believers who are progressing in the spiritual life are not 'left hanging' wondering if they are making any progress. The doctrine circulating in their soul attests to their positive momentum.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The balance of external evidence and internal probabilities warrants the use of square brackets around this "and." (B. Metzger) Since there are a lot of issues with "kai" in this

passage, I did not use it. If I included it, I would have translated it “moreover.” (LWB) Knowing that we are in truth, we shall assure our heart before Him. (R. Finlayson) It is precisely in the sphere of a believer’s love for other Christians, in which Christ has set him so high a standard, that he may feel deeply his own inadequacy and failure. (Z .Hodges)

1 John 3:19 By this (Instr. Means: function of virtue love; Loc. Sph.: “in this”, the love complex) we may know (γινώσκω, FMI1P, Gnostic, Potential Ind.) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) we are (εἰμί, PAI1P, static) out from doctrine (Abl. Source), even (ascensive) convincing (πείθω, FAI1P, Predictive & Durative, Potential Ind.; confidence in our right lobe towards God) the mentality of our (Poss. Gen.) soul (Acc. Dir. Obj.) in His (Poss. Gen.) sight (Prep. Gen.; social life with God),

^{BGT} **1 John 3:19** [Καὶ] ἐν τούτῳ γνωσόμεθα ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν, καὶ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὴν καρδίαν ἡμῶν,

^{VUL} **1 John 3:19** in hoc cognoscimus quoniam ex veritate sumus et in conspectu eius suadeamus corda nostra

LWB **1 John 3:20** **Because if the mentality of our soul condemns us [confession of sin and doctrine in the soul are the deciding factors], bear in mind [remember] that God is greater than the mentality of our soul. Furthermore, He knows [omniscience] all things.**

^{KW} **1 John 3:20** In whatever our hearts condemn us, because greater is God than our hearts and knows all things.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:20** For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John’s use of a 3rd class conditional clause means maybe the mentality of our soul condemns us (Potential Subjunctive mood) and maybe it doesn’t. How then do we know? Two things will tell us for sure whether we are living in the love complex or not: (1) have we acknowledged our sins to God on a regular basis, and (2) is our soul saturated with Bible doctrine. If these two things have not been consistently “in play” in our lives, then the mentality of our soul condemns us (Static Present tense; Latin: reprehensible) because it has insufficient doctrine to meet the pressures of life and we are residing in the cosmic system. By way of an ellipsis, John reminds us that our self-assessment may as well be honest, because God in His omniscience knows everything (Gnostic Present tense).

You can’t fool God by self-denial or self-justification; and you shouldn’t fool yourself by continuing in self-deception. If you have been living in the cosmic system and the desire to learn doctrine has been seriously absent from your life, He already knows it and most likely is (or soon

will be) disciplining you in some way to get your attention. God is also greater than the mentality of our soul (Gnomic Present tense). If we utilize the assets He has provided for us in the divine system, the sin-saturated soul can be purified. You should never think you have gone too far in Satan's system to turn from reversionism and re-enter the divine system; but I wouldn't wait until He is ready to take you out of this world to find out!

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The ignorant servant is not excused; he is merely beaten with fewer stripes. (G. Clark) We thank God for the hope that faith some day will be swallowed up by sight. And that sight is nowhere indicated in Scripture as a lower level of spiritual experience and enjoyment. (C. Feinberg) The believer who is in fellowship with God knows of no unconfessed sin and is living in the power of the Holy Spirit. Each child of God needs to take periodic inventory of his or her walk with God. Such self-analysis is needed in preparation for prayer. (R. Lightner) Remember that we are dealing with God's Word, and that sincere devotion consists not in the superficial reading of a chapter a day but in the very serious consideration of what God meant. What some people call devotion is simply a shirking of responsibility. (G. Clark)

1 John 3:20 Because (causal) if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe it does, maybe it doesn't") the mentality of our (Poss. Nom.) soul (Subj. Nom.) condemns (καταγινώσκω, PASubj.3S, Static, Potential) us (Gen. Disadv.; the function of rebound and doctrine in the soul are the deciding factors), bear in mind (ellipsis; remember) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) God (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnomic) greater than (Comp. Nom.) the mentality of our (Poss. Gen.) soul (Obj. Gen.). Furthermore (continuative), He knows (γινώσκω, PAI3S, Gnomic; omniscience) all things (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:20** ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν καὶ γινώσκει πάντα.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:20** quoniam si reprehenderit nos cor maior est Deus corde nostro et novit omnia

LWB 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if the mentality of our soul does not condemn us [confession of sin and doctrine in the soul are the deciding factors], we may have increasing confidence [by continued residence and function in the divine system] towards God.

^{KW} **1 John 3:21** Divinely loved ones, if our hearts are not condemning us, a fearless confidence we constantly have facing God the Father,

^{KJV} **1 John 3:21** Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If the mentality of our soul does not condemn us (Potential Subjunctive mood) – which means we have been consistently acknowledging our sin to God and metabolizing Bible doctrine in our soul – then we may have increasing confidence (Progressive Present tense) towards God the Father. The 3rd class conditional clause once again points to this as a possibility, not a guarantee. You make the daily decisions to confess your sins and learn Bible doctrine. God put you in His divine system initially, but He doesn't keep you in it indefinitely. Using an athletic metaphor, once He puts you in the game, what you do on the field is up to you. Nothing in the experiential realm of spiritual life is guaranteed. But if you follow His precisely correct protocol without human substitutions of any kind, you will become increasingly confident in your spiritual growth and relationship with Him. This is a side benefit of spiritual maturity. John is so desirous that the members of his non-resident congregations follow God's plan and reach spiritual maturity, that he uses the tender greeting "beloved" again. This is equivalent to saying, "My dear friends."

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Much of life will be lived in the uneventful commonplace; but, even there, we should have the conviction that we are right with God and in His unbroken fellowship. Likewise, we should not mistake worn nerves, physical weakness or depression for unspirituality. Many times sleep is more needed than prayer, and physical recreation than heart searching. (L. Chafer) Prayer is an expression of confidence in God. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) A sin-stained conscience is the most effective barrier between man and God; where the stain is blotted out, the barrier is removed, and instead of separation from God there is boldness toward God – openness in His presence. (F. Bruce) There are eleven different readings for this verse in the original Greek. The pronoun is in question, and is considered by many to be a scribal blunder, or the replacement of a different word which is pronounced alike. (B. Metzger) The consciousness of integrity is, of itself, a well-spring of peace and power in the guileless soul. The clear look, the erect gait, the firm step, the ringing voice, of an upright man, are as impressive upon others as they are expressive of himself. (R. Candlish)

1 John 3:21 Beloved (Voc. Address), if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe it will, maybe it won't") the mentality of our (Nom. Poss.) soul (Subj. Nom.) does not (neg. particle) condemn (καταγινώσκω, PASubj.3S, Static, Potential) us (Gen. Adv.; the function of rebound and doctrine are the deciding factors), we may have increasing (ἔχω, PAIIP, Progressive, Potential Ind.; by residence & function inside the divine dynasphere) confidence (Acc. Dir. Obj.; as a side benefit of spiritual maturity) towards (before) God (Prep. Acc.; the Father).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:21** Ἀγαπητοί, ἐὰν ἡ καρδιά [ἡμῶν] μὴ καταγινώσκη, παρρησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν

^{VUL} **1 John 3:21** carissimi si cor non reprehenderit nos fiduciam habemus ad Deum

LWB 1 John 3:22 Furthermore, whatever we may ask [prayer offered while residing in the divine system] from Him [the Father], we may receive, because we continue to keep His mandates [walk in the Spirit, grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit] and we continue to keep on doing things [function in the divine system] pleasing in His sight.

^{KW} **1 John 3:22** And whatever we are habitually asking we keep on receiving from Him, because His commandments we are habitually keeping with solicitous care, and the things which are pleasing in His penetrating gaze we are habitually doing.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:22** And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

One of the important things about continual residence and function inside the divine system is that it makes our prayers more effective. When it comes to answering prayer, it should be common sense that God is more apt to answer the prayers of a believer who is residing in the divine system as opposed to a believer who is residing in Satan's system. That doesn't mean God will always give you the answer you are praying for, as seen by John's use of the Potential Subjunctive mood, but it does mean we can be confident that the Father will answer our prayers. Prayer should be a part of our daily life (Customary Present tense), and it should always be offered inside the divine system. If you are communing with Satan in the cosmic system, God is not disposed to answer your prayers. As a matter of fact, if you are residing in the cosmic system, your prayers go *nowhere*. That is why this cannot be a Gnostic Present tense.

Those believers who can expect a positive prayer response from God are those who have been keeping His mandates (Iterative Present tense). What are these mandates? They are not the Mosaic Law. Some of the most important mandates for the Church Age believer are: walk in the Spirit, quench not the Spirit, grieve not the Spirit, and reside in the love complex. If you continue to keep these mandates on a consistent basis and you function inside the divine system (doing things), your walk will be pleasing in His sight. God the Father does not see the mature believer and the reversionistic believer in the same light. He is always disposed to listen to the prayers of the righteous believer as opposed to the one who is embracing Satan's system. If you are making progress in the spiritual life, you may have confidence your prayers will be answered.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Many prayers are not answered because the one praying is not in fellowship with God because of sin. Sin in the life of a child of God affects man's fellowship with God. (R. Lightner) Confidence in the validity of petitionary prayer is one aspect of confidence before God. Indeed, it is God Himself who puts into the believer's heart the very petitions he offers. (A. Wilder) There is nothing mechanical or magical about prayer. For it to be effective, the will of the intercessor needs to be in line with the will of God; and such a conformity of wills is brought about only as the believer lives in Christ. Teaching of this kind is distinctively Johannine. (S. Smalley)

1 John 3:22 Furthermore (continuative), whatever (Acc. Dir. Obj., indefinite pronoun combined with conj.) we may ask (αἰτέω, PASubj.1P, Customary, Potential; prayer inside the divine dynasphere) from Him (Abl. Source; the Father), we may receive (λαμβάνω, PAI1P, Customary, Potential Ind.), because (causal conj.) we continue to keep (τηρέω, PAI1P, Iterative) His (Poss. Gen.; the Father's) mandates (Acc. Dir. Obj.; grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit, reside in the love complex) and (continuative) we continue to keep on doing (ποιέω, PAI1P, Iterative; practicing) things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; advancing from Gate 4 to Gate 8 inside the divine dynasphere) pleasing (Adv. Acc.) in His (Poss. Gen.; the Father's) sight (Prep. Gen.; penetrating gaze).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:22** καὶ ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν λαμβάνομεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ τηροῦμεν καὶ τὰ ἄρεστὰ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιοῦμεν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:22** et quodcumque petierimus accipiemus ab eo quoniam mandata eius custodimus et ea quae sunt placita coram eo facimus

LWB 1 John 3:23 **Furthermore, this is His mandate [for positional sanctification], that we believe on the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, and [for experiential sanctification] make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers], just as He [the Father] gave us the mandate.**

^{KW} **1 John 3:23** And this is His commandment, namely, We should believe the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and be habitually loving one another even as He gave a commandment to us.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:23** And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John reminds us of two mandates from the Father, one related to positional sanctification and the other related to experiential sanctification. There are many mandates for the Church Age believer, but these two are foremost in John's mind especially when dealing with new believers. The first mandate is a command (Imperative Subjunctive) to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ingressive Aorist tense). All prayers have to go through the Son to the Father by means of the Spirit. If you haven't believed in the Son yet, you are not a Christian and the Father refuses to hear any prayer you have to offer. If you are an unbeliever, the devil is your father; the only way the Father will listen to your prayers is if you believe in His Son and become related to Him. If you need something in the human realm, you ask your own father, not your neighbor's father. You ask for help, guidance and assistance from your own father. The same thing is true in the spiritual realm. Initial belief in Jesus Christ places (sanctifies) you positionally; now you are ready to start the Christian way of life. "Joining the team" is Phase I of the spiritual life.

Continuing the athletic analogy, positional sanctification means you have now been drafted to join the team. The next step is to begin experiential sanctification, or playing in the game. There are rules you must follow to play the game. Making it a practice to exercise virtue love towards fellow believers is part of experiential sanctification, Phase II of the spiritual life. As you will recall, biblical *agape* love can only be exercised when you reside in the love complex. If you are not residing in the love complex, you have been benched on the sidelines. Nothing you do on the sidelines puts any points on the board in the spiritual life. If you are not filled with the Spirit, it is impossible for you to exhibit biblical *agape* love. This love is infused into believers who are in fellowship with God. If you are out of fellowship, the infusion, the sphere of power needed to exercise *agape* love, has been cut off. You can still express *phileo* or *eros* love, but not biblical *agape* love. *Phileo* and *eros* are mere warm-up exercises on the sidelines. Residing in the *agape* complex is one of the primary mandates the Father have given to us (Constative Aorist tense).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The widespread, so-called non-doctrinal Christianity, which puts great emphasis on experience, has a very narrow view of Christian experience. Where non-doctrinal pietism is rampant, where speaking in tongues is considered the acme of sanctification, where emotional upsets, confrontations, or encounters are recommended, the idea is absent that a study of the incarnation is Christian experience. And the idea that learning the Greek irregular verbs is a Christian experience never occurs to any of them. In fact, these people suggest and sometimes insist that a college student with a 3.5 grade point average cannot possibly be a good Christian ... Many chapel speakers warn the students against studying too much. But even if the warning were legitimate, it would be unnecessary. Hardly one student in a thousand studies too much! Now, more positively, studying the doctrine of the incarnation is certainly Christian experience. At least, studying is an experience; and if anyone studies theology for the purpose of increasing his faith, it is a Christian experience. There are many scriptural commands and exhortations to meditate on God's law day and night. God requires of us daily exegesis. First, we must exegete it and understand it. (G. Clark)

There is nothing here of a legal spirit; nothing of the Pharisee's self-righteous attitude. (R. Candlish) John sums up the commands as one command, which is then expressed as having two parts; in this way the fundamental unity of the two parts is made quite clear. (D. Burdick) The schism in the Johannine community is being fought over what one is willing to confess about Jesus – is it salvifically important that He lived in the flesh? If one believes, one has to be willing to confess that belief in formulas which may prove costly to one's welfare and one's life! Some scholars would deprecate this Johannine “dogmatic” faith in favor of the “purer” Pauline concept of faith as trust in Jesus and obedience to God. Even laying aside the fact that Paul did not hesitate to formulate the gospel in creedal language (Rom. 1:3-4), one may wonder how long Christians could go on trusting in Jesus without having to formulate their evaluation of the one in whom they trusted. (R. Brown)

Thoughts on Evangelism

The simplest gospel message I have heard is: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.” The verse often quoted is John 3:36: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” When an unbeliever hears this message, does he understand the difference between deity and humanity? Does this simple message of the gospel present the doctrine of hypostatic union? I know many *believers* who are unable to dissect the words “Lord, Jesus, Christ, Savior” and tell me what each represents. If believers have a problem doing this, imagine what an unbeliever must think about them! I have no doubt that there are some believers who thought everything out piece-by-piece before giving their calm assent to the gospel message. But what about those who threw themselves on the floor and just screamed, “Yes, yes, I believe!”? Let’s not succumb to ‘front-loading’ the gospel, placing requirements on the presentation or understanding of the message that aren’t necessary. The Holy Spirit does not require a perfect presentation of the gospel to bring one of God’s elect into the fold.

- We must not treat the non-fundamentals as if they were essential to the gospel message.
- We must not assume an individual can only become a Christian if the gospel message is well-presented and well-understood.

[My own experience negates both of these assumptions]

There should be a distinction between teachings that are necessary to enter into salvation and those that are necessary to our spiritual growth. They are both important, but the latter should not become baggage thrust in the face of an unbeliever. There is one piece of information that I think all of us would agree on when it comes to the gospel.

- The deity of Christ is an essential element of the gospel message.

But what about the humanity of Christ? It is an important doctrine of the faith, but is it a basic requirement for salvation? A purist answer would be “yes,” it is crucial to understand the deity and humanity of Christ in hypostatic union; if you don’t, you have not embraced the gospel and you are not a Christian. I have many friends in the ministry who hold this position. I don’t necessarily disagree with them, but I am hesitant when it comes to the humanity of Christ being an essential ingredient for salvation. Why would I be hesitant to require this doctrine as essential to the gospel message? As a believer today, I would always present the Lord Jesus Christ as deity and humanity dwelling together in one Person in my gospel message. But I know in my own case (and others), that this doctrine was not understood when I became a believer. The gospel message I heard was woefully inadequate from a human perspective; but it was obviously enough in its paucity of information to enable the Holy Spirit to get the job done!

Perhaps some of you thought things out for days, weeks or months before you became a Christian. I know a few believers who claim this was their experience. But what I have heard and seen in most cases is quite the opposite. Most people were like me when I heard the gospel message: I didn’t know *doodleysquat*. Did I understand that deity and humanity dwelled together in the Person of Jesus Christ? Absolutely not. The gospel message was not presented to me with

that level of intelligence. The Spirit metaphorically picked me up out of my chair and dragged me down the aisle to a man who prayed for me. All I did was say ‘Yes’ to a simple prayer. There was no exposition on deity or humanity in that service. My question to you is: What is the minimum amount of information required by the Holy Spirit to regenerate a lost sinner? Is the humanity of Christ part of that minimum information? I have friends on both sides of this discussion. By all means, let’s make our gospel message as clear, informative and succinct as possible to our listeners, but let’s not add so many non-fundamentals that we see quizzical faces staring back at us. Chew on this topic if you wish, and send me your opinion. (LWB)

Extra Credit

An arrogant, self-absorbed person cannot exercise impersonal love (as part of virtue love) towards others. An arrogant person who is also unhappy has no motivation to exercise impersonal love toward others because she (or he) is too busy making demands to others to make her happy. This is called the *demand syndrome*. I’m going to throw in some “extra credit” reading for you on the demand syndrome, since a person who lives by it, is totally unable to exercise the impersonal love John is asking for in this passage. (LWB)

In Thieme’s 1 John tape series, the demand syndrome is described as “an arrogance that eliminates virtue and substitutes the demand syndrome, in which preoccupation with self accompanied with lust for attention, results in the vanity of seeking to control one’s environment, or be the center of attention in one’s circumstances. The demand syndrome not only eliminates virtue but destroys any possibility for true happiness which can only exist with virtue. True happiness cannot exist without virtue, for *the source of virtue and happiness is learning doctrine inside the divine system*. The frustration of no happiness in the cosmic system is manifested by the demand syndrome. Cosmic involvement results in the demand syndrome, which is narcissistic preoccupation with self, demanding attention from everyone. The demand syndrome is directed to all and is the direct antithesis of impersonal love towards all. You see the demand syndrome is an arrogant person demanding that everyone pay attention to her, whereas impersonal love is objective and looks out toward others and treats them all with perfect impersonal love as a virtue. So we have everything in reverse (reversionism), subjectivity versus objective reality.

The demand syndrome demands that everyone focus attention on me. Me, me, me. All must focus on me. And so this is the reverse of impersonal love, which is I, with virtue, treating all members of the human race with integrity. The demand syndrome seeks to control everyone by demanding praise, attention, devotion, love, concentration and flattery. In other words, everyone in the periphery must contribute to arrogant preoccupation with self. Everyone must play echo to the demand syndrome’s narcissus – demand for attention and recognition that develops hypersensitivity, so that all persons must conform to the pattern of subservience or else be bullied, punished, disgraced or at least made uncomfortable. The classic illustration of the demand syndrome is the arrogant adolescent, the teenager who controls her parents and her environment at the time when she ought to be controlled through the normal functions of authority. This teenager develops into the frustrated wife, who becomes a slave to unhappiness. They end up going from man to man looking for the “one” who will become their 24-hour slave,

with non-stop attention, devotion and flattery. This ends up in operation butterfly, in which she collects men like butterflies, to pluck their wings off with cruelty and to pin them to a board. She takes him for everything he's got and then tosses him aside. When the devotions aren't continual and intense enough to satiate her need for attention, she sublimates by "burning a hole in his pocket" and leaving him broke on the sidelines. When her husband lavished her with attention, she loved him (pseudo-love), stimulated him, was loyal to him, even worshipped him. But when the attention fades for one reason or another, she seeks to destroy him, compete against him and cremate him entirely. There is no hatred in the world as strong as the hatred of a depressed wife with the demand syndrome who has jealousy and pride. A woman with the demand syndrome who now hates her husband may end up in court with all her lawyers standing by as she attacks him. In one case I have personally dealt with, the patient while in court, suddenly broke down, eyes full of tears, and threw herself into her husband's arms, cancelling all legal action.

Love from a woman with demand syndrome has a shaky foundation at best. If her husband gives up his authority in the home and surrenders his soul to making her happy, she "loves and adores him." But as the newness wears off and life's responsibilities demand his attention elsewhere, her love becomes jealousy, jealousy as hard as a grave-stone. Jealousy then motivates revenge. Revenge strengthens hatred and vindictiveness. And this hatred ends up destroying her capacity to love anyone in life and she ends up neurotic and psychotic. Life of the husband who marries a woman in the demand syndrome is typified by nagging. When her demand syndrome is not fulfilled, she learns how to nag and throw tantrums in order to control a person. A woman can use nagging and tantrums when her husband is weak from work and can completely destroy all domestic tranquility with it whenever necessary to get her own way. This woman is worse than a monster. She seeks for total male enslavement. Most men begin handling this situation with cries of "peace at any price." The price that he ends up paying for this peace becomes complete compliance to the policies, wishes, desires, whims, bad judgments and bad disposition of his wife. Control of the enslaved male is carried on by the behavior pattern of the woman by nagging, sulking, pouting, spreading a pall of gloom over the household, etc. – anything that will destroy the peace and tranquility of the home, because you see, she already has him seeking for "peace at any price." She ends up a frustrated perpetual motion machine, a walking fireball of tantrums, naggings, screechings, fussings, even threatening suicide. She screams, hollers, threatens suicide, threatens to go home to mother and never come back, threatens to do something desperate, threatens to embarrass you, so what do you do? You do it for her and are stripped of your manhood. A demand syndrome woman who is a nagging, tantrum Tilly, can do more to cut-off your manhood than a large knife could! The man, therefore, feels like the only solution to this nagging bitch is to capitulate and then his marriage becomes a series of manipulations with the strings being pulled by the woman.

When the enslaving woman is backed into a corner and proven wrong, she immediately has a number of excuses by which she rationalizes her dictatorship, i.e., she's either pre, mid, or post menstrual, has PMS, hypoglycemia, pre-menopausal, is suffering some kind of psychosis or involuntary melancholy, or pressure from the kids, or everything went wrong today, as if somehow this is an excuse for become a monster dictator. But "operation patsy" only leads to rationalizing away this enslavement of her husband. And the woman with demand syndrome who has developed a clever cover-up, can stand around demanding that you make her happy,

giving you a guilt complex for not making her happy and then creating a martyr out of herself at the same time by playing up to self-pity around friends and family ... The demand syndrome subordinates everyone around you to your preoccupation with self. Everything and everybody must satisfy you or you are insulted. “How dare they do that to you!” If they do it to someone else, that’s OK. But they did it to me, me, me. That’s the demand syndrome. Be nice to me. Do this for me. Preoccupation with self manufactures lust for attention, total locked-in desire to have one’s way. Guess what? The fact that you are pouting, obnoxious, and disagreeable, is an advertisement that you are without virtue and without happiness. Frustration in the demand syndrome comes from those things over which you *have* control, not over things you *have no* control of. It generally comes from making wrong decisions. In other words, you make your own misery. From bad decisions, poor judgment, and lack of acquired Bible doctrine, believers create their own frustrating circumstances. Only Bible doctrine, occupation with Christ, residence and function in the divine system, motivational virtue and impersonal love can destroy frustration and bring happiness and peace in life. Frustration in the demand syndrome makes one totally disoriented in life, full of self-induced misery and minus the true accoutrements of happiness. *A frustrated Christian in the cosmic system is the enemy of God and the servant of Satan.* Perpetual frustration motivates a person to evil, which starts out as sin, but ends up as intensified evil. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 3:23 Furthermore (continuative), this (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) His (Abl. Source; the Father’s) mandate (Pred. Nom.; Phase I: positional), that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) we believe (πιστεύω, AASubj.1P, Ingressive, Imperative Clause with ἵνα) on the Person (Dat. Ind. Obj.) of His (Gen. Rel.; the Father’s) Son (Obj. Gen.), Jesus Christ (Gen. Appos.), and (continuative) make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards (ἀγαπάω, PASubj.1P, Iterative, Potential; grace orientation, relaxed mental attitude) one another of the same kind (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believers), just as (comparative) He (the Father) gave (δίδωμι, AAI3S, Constative) us (Dat. Ind. Obj.) the mandate (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Phase II: experiential mandate to reside in His love complex).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:23** Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύσωμεν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:23** et hoc est mandatum eius ut credamus in nomine Filii eius Iesu Christi et diligamus alterutrum sicut dedit mandatum nobis

LWB **1 John 3:24** In fact, he who keeps His [the Father’s] mandates keeps on residing in it [the love complex], and He [the Father] in him. In fact, by this we know that He [the Father] resides in us: from the Spirit [love complex] which He [the Father] has given to us [royal family of God].

^{KW} **1 John 3:24** And the one who as a habit of life exercises a solicitous care in keeping His commandments, in Him is abiding, and He Himself is abiding in him. And in this we know experientially that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit as a source whom He gave to us.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:24** And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The believer who obeys the Father's mandates on a continual basis (Iterative Present tense) keeps on residing (Iterative Present tense) in the love complex. And when a believer is residing in the love complex, God the Father resides in him. For those of you who have heard of the Spirit's indwelling but have never heard this before - Yes, the Father also indwells obedient believers. When a believer resides in the love complex, there is a reciprocal abiding relationship with the Father. The Father commands us to live in His love complex; when we live in His love complex, He joins us there, residing in us. He designed the love complex for us to live in and gave it to us (Culminative Aorist tense), and when we reside in it, the Father takes up residence in us.

The Father resides in us when we reside in His house. Obviously, if we are residing in Satan's cosmic system, the Father is not going to join us there. We are communing with His enemy in the enemy's house. So His presence "exits" us (*stage left*) until we get back with the divine program. How do we know beyond a shadow of a doubt (Gnomic Present tense) that the Father is residing in us (Perfective Present tense)? We know that when we are filled with the Spirit, we are residing in the love complex. And when we are residing in in the love complex, the Father is residing in us. So the key is to acknowledge our sins to the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ, and we will be filled with the Spirit. Then we have communion with all three Persons of the Trinity.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Holy Spirit is the source from which we draw to sustain fellowship. This precise wording occurs in 1 John 3:24. The condition of remaining in fellowship with Christ is obedience. The Holy Spirit is the energizing source behind this obedience. (J. Dillow) Christ dwells in us and we in him by our thinking and believing his doctrines. (G. Clark) Before His ascension into heaven, Christ also instructed the disciples concerning the future work of the Spirit, speaking of the Spirit's future baptism and infilling. Subsequent to Pentecost the Holy Spirit's indwelling is mentioned repeatedly ... The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is one of the outstanding evidences of the salvation of the individual and also the means by which God can effect sanctification in the experiential and progressive sense. (J. Walvoord) Obedience to God's Word brings assurance, or confirmation, of fellowship with Him. The believer is here said to be abiding in God and God in the believer, (R. Lightner) the mutual indwelling of believers in God and God in believers. When the author speaks about believers living in God and God living in believers, as he does here, it involves something more than keeping God's commands. It is the new and very real spiritual existence that believers enjoy, and this is effected through the agency

of the Spirit. (C. Kruse) The mutual indwelling of God and the believer depends on the believer's keeping God's commands. (C. Clark)

It is as normal for a Christian to have assurance of his salvation as it is for an individual to know that he is physically alive. (L. Chafer) John's favorite term for an intimate walk with Christ is "abide." This term is his word for something conditional in the believer's relationship with Christ, fellowship within the family. (J. Dillow) The reason the Spirit fills us is to supercede human ability and human good; He supplies the divine power and ability necessary for us to attain every objective in the Christian life. In particular, He provides our spiritual IQ for learning doctrine, as well as our very ability to understand the Word of God. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) He bears witness in connection with our human spirit as energized by Him. (K. Wuest) It is by His Spirit that He "abides" in them, and it is equally by His Spirit that they learn of His "abiding" in them. Whether He who "abides" in us and has given us His Spirit is the Father or the Son is not altogether clear; but in the light of the foregoing clauses the Father is most probably meant. In fact, however, the Father and the Son together make their home with the believer and bestow the gift of the Spirit. (F. Bruce) The Holy Spirit verifies these things to our hearts if we have not grieved Him. (J. McGee)

God the Father abiding in the believer is further attested in John 14:23, "If a man love me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him". It is in this communion wherein Father and Son do make their abode with the soul. (J. Owen) Divine mandates for residence and function inside the divine dynasphere (R.B. Thieme, Jr) are:

- be filled with the Spirit, salvation mandate (gate 1)
 1. quench not the Spirit (cosmic II)
 2. grieve not the Spirit (cosmic I)
- authority orientation (gate 2)
- basic impersonal love toward all (gate 3)
- faith rest technique (gate 4)
- motivational virtue - GAP daily, love of truth (gate 5)
- functional virtue - advanced impersonal love (gate 6)
- occupation with Christ (gate 7)
- personal love for God the Father (gate 8)

There are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit (I John 5:7). So then, we are to receive their several testimonies, and in doing so we have communion with them severally; for in this giving and receiving of testimony consists no small part of our fellowship with God. In I Cor. 12:4-6, the apostle, speaking of the distribution of gifts and graces unto the saints, ascribes them distinctly, in respect of the fountain of their communication, unto the distinct persons. "There are diversities of *gifts* (*carismata*), but the same Spirit; and there are differences of *administrations* (*diakonias*), but the same Lord; and there are diversities of *operations* (*energhmata*), but it is the same God" even the Father. [note the reversed order, which may point to a progressive

experience or growth to maturity]. Also, in all our approaches unto God, is the same distinction observed. For in Eph. 2:18, “for through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Our access unto God, whereby we have communion with Him, is “through (dia) Christ”, “in (en) the Spirit”, and “unto (pros) the Father” - the persons being here considered as engaged distinctly unto the accomplishment of the counsel of the will of God revealed in the Gospel. (J. Owen)

1 John 3:24 In fact (intensive), he (Subj. Nom.) who keeps (τηρέω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular; executes) His (Acc. Poss.; the Father's) mandates (Acc. Dir. Obj.) keeps on residing (μένω, PAI3S, Iterative) in it (Loc. Sph.; the love complex), and (continuative) He (Subj. Nom.; the Father) in him (Loc. Sph.). In fact (intensive), by this (Instr. Means; policy) we know (γινώσκω, PAI1P, Gnostic) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) He (the Father) resides (μένω, PAI3S, Perfective) in us (Loc. Sph.; reciprocity): from the Spirit (Abl. Source; love complex) which (Adv. Gen. Ref.) He (the Father) has given (δίδωμι, AAI3S, Culminative) to us (Dat. Adv.; royal family of God).

^{BGT} **1 John 3:24** καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν.

^{VUL} **1 John 3:24** et qui servat mandata eius in illo manet et ipse in eo et in hoc scimus quoniam manet in nobis de Spiritu quem nobis dedit

Chapter 4

LWB **1 John 4:1** Beloved [members of the royal family], stop believing every personality [influential Gnostic-leaning, self-appointed spiritual leader], but rather keep analyzing [checking their dogma] those personalities whether [one-at-a-time] he is from God [as a teaching representative], because many false teachers have gone out [exited the divine system] for the cosmic system [willing and obedient evangelists for Satan].

^{KW} **1 John 4:1** Divinely loved ones, stop believing every spirit. But put the spirits to the test to see whether they are of God and for the purpose of approving them if they are, and finding that they meet the specifications laid down [as to orthodoxy in doctrine], put your approval upon them, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John addresses his non-resident congregations with the tender vocative “beloved” while at the same time issuing another prohibition for their own good. He tells them to stop believing (Iterative Present tense) every personality that comes along teaching some new thing. Evidently, they were quite gullible; anyone who smiled at them got a hearing regardless of what nonsense he preached. The word “spirit” here is “personality,” meaning some influential, Gnostic-leaning teacher who claims to be a spiritual leader. These self-appointed teachers were eloquent speakers; some of our popular radio or television personalities would be a good example. [In our modern vernacular, stop listening to every kook (Latin: pseudo-prophets) you see on the Christian TV networks. Some of these people are clueless and do not represent Christ in spite of the network venue. Most of them are probably Christians, but their teaching comes from Satan’s cosmic system rather than the divine system.] John commands those in his non-resident congregations (Imperative mood) to analyze the content of dogma that these personalities teach. You should do the same, over and over again (Iterative Present tense), one speaker or personality at a time. Just because a person is a good speaker or has a pleasing personality does not mean they are free from spouting one heresy after another!

Many of these dynamic personalities are not from God, meaning they are not His representatives, but are representatives of Satan. “From God” is not a phrase pointing to their status as Christians (source); they are Christians, but of the reversionistic category. “From God” or “of God” points to their relationship with Him, their *representation* of who He is, as teachers (agency). Even in John’s day he warned that many false teachers were out there (who were indeed Christians), but who had long ago exited the divine system (Dramatic Perfect tense). When he says they are “gone out into the world” he means they have entered Satan’s cosmic system and are functioning as his evangelists of evil. They are spreading his heresies; they are eager, willing and obedient to serve him instead of Christ. The content of their teaching was erroneous, but their ability as speakers was mesmerizing. Many of these false teachers understood the gospel message, but presented it incorrectly because they had *altered* it to their liking. Their intention wasn’t to prevent unbelievers from becoming Christians. Their goal was to destroy the spiritual life of those who were already Christians; they preached an erroneous spiritual life (experiential) that was based on the cosmic system rather than the filling of the Spirit and Bible doctrine. This is the major thrust of the angelic conflict.

The center of the angelic conflict during the Church Age is the experiential sanctification of the believer. Satan knows he has no control over who becomes a believer and who doesn’t. God retains that as part of His sovereign grace and omnipotence. But once a believer has been identified, Satan launches his attack from every possible direction to distract the new believer from the Word of God and the filling of the Spirit. Reversionistic believers, especially those who embrace some form of modern-day Gnosticism, are his cosmic evangelists. Counterfeits to the true spiritual life are spread by reversionistic believers every step of the way. “Prophetes” is a transliteration as opposed to a translation; it’s okay to translate it as “prophets” as long as you understand these are false preachers and teachers, not the future-predicting variety of prophets in the OT vernacular. Satan attacks every part of the *grace apparatus for perception* with some counterfeit of his own. He uses reversionistic believers to spread his counterfeit teachings. His goal is to prevent you from growing spiritually by disrupting something (anything) in the system

of divine protocol. He attacks every step in the divine process, hoping to trip-up the positive believer along the way - to 'run him out of bounds' in the spiritual life. Here are some of his attacks on various components of the *grace apparatus for perception*.

1. The authority of the pastor and teacher is maligned, so that you do not trust any of them. Gnostics claim their teachers have advanced knowledge beyond your pastor, as well as beyond Jesus Christ. Gnostics believe He was merely a teacher. Sometimes they deny His deity; more often they deny His humanity. Some go so far as to reject Him as Savior; he was "a mere teacher of the Gnostic mysteries." God is often not a Person to the Gnostic; he (or she) is an impersonal force.
2. The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is attacked, because without the filling of the Spirit, the oral or written teaching from your pastor does not properly transfer to your human spirit. Gnostics will claim their meditations and levels of consciousness are superior to any spiritual truth you might experience under your pastor. Some common replacements for the filling of the Holy Spirit are the emotionalism of holyrollers, mysticism, and various forms of ecstatic experiences.
3. The academic knowledge you learn from your pastor is exegetical and categorical doctrine. It is transferred to the left lobe of your soul by the Holy Spirit. Not only will Gnostics deny that the Spirit is deity, they also deny that you need this Bible doctrine. They have "superior information" attainable only by adhering to *their* practices. The Bible is reinterpreted using a corrupt allegorical and mystical hermeneutic. Bible doctrine is replaced by doctrines of demons - satanic concepts right out of his cosmic system.
4. The doctrines you store in the left lobe of your soul are gradually transferred to the right lobe of your soul as you cogitate (metabolize) it, making it your very own. Your decision to accept or reject doctrinal material enables this transfer to occur. Many Gnostics believe in an instantaneous enlightenment, where everything you need to know or experience by-passes your volition and kind-of "data dumps" into your brain. As you might expect, their instantaneous "data dump" does not include the doctrines of the incarnation, atonement, resurrection, Trinity, divine sovereignty or omnipotence.
5. The application of Biblical truth to your daily life produces visible and invisible fruit. This is called gold, silver, and precious stones when it meets divine standards. The divine standard is: If an unbeliever can do it, it's not the spiritual life. Gnostics replace authentic spiritual fruit with works of the flesh: ethics, morality, service, political action – anything you might do as long as you ignore your personal sins and live without the filling of the Spirit. Any preacher who denigrates learning the Word of God and emphasizes works, programs, service, personality change, psychological gimmicks, etc. is a false teacher.
6. The true spiritual life for the Church Age believer is based on precisely correct protocol. The ingredients of the system were created in heaven and given to us by Jesus Christ. There are no substitutes; none of the parts of the system can be left out. You cannot reject Bible doctrine. You cannot reject the filling of the Spirit. You must have someone qualified to teach you, at least until you have a complete systematic theology in your soul. You must understand the difference between the application of doctrine to life and works of the flesh. Gnostics replace every element of this divine process with their own imprecise, esoteric, mystical protocol. It is quite freewheeling and hard to pin down.

7. Spiritual growth occurs in the divine system by the intake, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit. Gnostic believers bring another system in alongside of God's system. This system initially blurs the truths of God's system, but eventually replaces it outright. The old sin nature "reads back" what it used to know into the dynamics of the spiritual life and corrupts it. Gnostic Christians do this by emphasizing rituals, ceremonies, meditations, psychological theories and practices, various forms of mysticism, etc. Their thrust is that the Bible is not sufficient on its own; it must be supplemented or supplanted by some ancient, Gnostic mysteries in order to be efficacious.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Every *spirit* means every teacher claiming inspiration by the Holy Spirit. (R. Jamieson) Eloquence is often a talent. It may or may not have a spiritual connotation, depending on the content of the message ... The believers to whom John is writing here have already flunked the thought test and are residing in the cosmic system. They are misconstruing talent with the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher ... This negative command constitutes a warning to every believer to discern between the talent of eloquent speaking, which is really not the issue, and the content of doctrinal truth which is always the issue ... It's the message, not the man. They may be eloquent and dynamic as speakers, but may be false and apostate in the content of their message. Eloquent error is still error. Talent in teaching does not change the false to true, nor does it change error into doctrine. Perception of doctrine provides discernment and common sense, which eliminates simple stupidity or naïve appreciation for talent. Naiveness dulls the senses, while doctrinal discernment sharpens both the intellect and the ability to distinguish truth and to discriminate against false doctrine ... This does not imply that every eloquent or dynamic speaker is false, but rather that false teaching is often disguised by eloquence of speech and dynamics of personality ... There are three paragraphs in chapter 4: (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

vs. 1-6 thought testing
vs. 7-12 impersonal love
vs. 13-21 dynamics of the divine dynasphere

Some were clearly carried away by the spirits of error rampant among them, both Docetic and Cerinthian Gnostics. Credulity means gullibility and some believers fall easy victims to the latest fads in spiritualistic humbuggery. Put them to the test of truth as the metallurgist does his metals. If it stands the test like a coin, it is acceptable, otherwise it is rejected. (A.T. Robertson) The spirits whom John has in mind are not the demons and satanic angels, though Satan no doubt inspires them; but rather these spirits are men, preachers, religious leaders of whatever sort, who teach error. (G. Clark) Gnosticism and Christianity have affected each other in a number of different directions from the earliest days of the Christian movement. True, Christianity gradually came to draw a line of demarcation in its struggle against Gnosticism, and although certain features in the Gnostic imagery claimed a rightful place within the Church, other Gnostic ideas were not only ignored, but bitterly resisted. (R. Bultmann) We all must analyze. If you do not analyze, you cannot synthesize. If you cannot synthesize, you cannot apply. You can only apply correctly what you understand correctly. And at least 1/3 of the Christian life is daily

application. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The defense of Christian institutions against socialistic government is a theological battle. (G. Clark)

God is truth, not emotion. Let those who want emotion and experience apply to the whirling dervishes. Those sources will not contaminate them by any truth. (G. Clark) Satan triumphed by artifice, and God has chosen to defeat him by the counsel of His wisdom. Satan exalted himself to dominion over the world; God chose to overcome him, not by power, but by humiliation. Satan by his success, gained the power of death; God, by the death of Jesus Christ, has destroyed him and his power. Who will dare affirm that God's way is not best? (J. Dagg) In 3rd John the Docetists are trying to drive other Christians out of the church (vs. 10), while in 1st John they are themselves leaving the church. (Kirby, Williams) Gnosticism first appeared and attracted the attention of scholars as a movement within the Christian religion, and for a long time it was regarded as a purely Christian movement, a perversion of the Christian faith into a speculative theology, the acute Hellenization of Christianity. (R. Bultmann) There's no excuse for the person in the pulpit not giving the exegesis of the passage so you can see exactly why the translation is the way it is and what is being taught. This immediately gives you a basis for understanding why certain things are found in a passage and why the old King James is not only suffering from anachronism, but is often highly inaccurate as well. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Demonic influence may assume a great variety of forms. Its sign is always departure from the faith or the body of revealed truth, and may manifest itself in open apostasy, or in doctrinal corruption and perversion of the truth, evident in a multiplicity of cults and sects, producing Christian disunity ... As the Church is guided "into all truth" by the "Spirit of truth," the foundation head of all true inspiration, so He is opposed, in His beneficent ministrations, by Satan, "the spirit of error," the arch-enemy of truth and the great deceiver, who, with his demon-helpers, is the source of all false inspiration. But since Satan is a mere creature, and, unlike the Holy Spirit, neither infinite nor omnipresent, he requires the aid of an innumerable host of wicked, deluding spirits to carry on effectively his vast program of doctrinal corruption and deception. As the "Spirit of truth" inspires the genuine prophets and teachers of God, so the "spirit of error," and his spirit-satellites, energize the "many false prophets" who "are gone out into the world." Hence the Apostle John, like the Apostle Paul, traces error to its real source in satanic and demonic activity, rather than in the human agent ... it is arresting and very significant that the Apostle abruptly introduces the expression "false prophets" into this verse, instead of what might naturally be expected "false spirits." The explanation is that the wicked, deluding spirits are definitely identified with their human instruments, because the demons are the impelling impulse and power that energize the spurious prophets. (M. Unger) I don't agree with Unger's translation of "pneuma" as spirits instead of human personalities, but the truth remains that there are demonic influences upon many believers in reversionism. (LWB)

Just as every Athenian was subjected to an examination as to his origin and character before he could hold office, so the spirit of every religious teacher must be examined before his teaching can be accepted ... Earnestness and fervour are no guarantee of truth ... A Christian is under no obligation to let any new prophet gain his acceptance without severely testing him. (A. Plummer) Christianity was at that time wonderfully active in many places. How was it to be counteracted? One way was to incorporate Judaism with Christianity. Another way was to incorporate Gentile

philosophy with Christianity, to which the name of Gnosticism is given. The general drift of Gnosticism is to substitute, for the plain facts of the gospel, philosophic myths. (W. Jones) In John's second epistle he warns against the deceivers who are not avowing Jesus Christ coming in the flesh – that is, in the future. In both cases those who make Him a spirit are associated with the spirit of antichrist ... This spirit has come to pervade, not only the world, but the nominal church, which has become largely a religious world. In its rites and ceremonies are substituted for the salvation of Christ, the energy of the flesh takes the place of the power of the Spirit, and the wisdom of men displaces the wisdom of God. The world is to be saved by social service and sanitation and reconciled by reform. Everywhere are signs that the majority of the churches have lost faith in God's Christ and are attempting to find some better means of carrying on God's work than through the power of His Son. (A. Knoch)

The Cerinthian heresy also had much to say about 'the spirit.' It boasted a larger spirituality. Starting with the philosophical postulate of an irreconcilable antagonism between matter and spirit, it denied the possibility of the incarnation and drew a distinction between Jesus and the Christ ... These 'spirits' are human beings actuated either by demons or the Holy Spirit. In this case they would be the teachers, pastors, and evangelists who circulated around the local churches. (K. Wuest) We live in a whirlpool of spiritual influences, by no means all of which are holy or divine. Not all that appears to be supernatural is genuinely so – there is deliberate deceit and there are delusions – and even after eliminating the spurious, there must be careful discernment as to the source of inspiration, whether of God or of the devil. (R. Orr) They were false prophets, men who falsely claimed to speak by inspiration or men who were inspired by a spirit of falsehood. (F. Bruce) The prominent inroads of Gnostic thinking had apparently already begun to influence John's readers. The incipient seeds of Gnosticism had been sown and had begun to sprout. This was a serious perversion of Christ and therefore of Christianity. It was a mixture of Jewish and Christian doctrines as well as heathen beliefs with a highly speculative emphasis. The entire system of Gnosticism was built on the opposites and antagonism between matter and spirit. Gnostics believed these two opposites were reconciled through spirit beings called "aeons." Gnosticism denied the incarnation of Christ and made a difference between Jesus and Christ. (R. Lightner)

We need to be careful. This lovey-dovey idea that the liberals have – love slopping over on every side – is not what the Word of God teaches. Paul prayed that the Philippians' love might abound in *knowledge* and *judgment*. Just because a man comes along saying, "Lord, Lord," does not mean that we should love him. That may be the man who is more dangerous than a rattlesnake because he may be teaching a false doctrine. He may not really be teaching the Word of God, although he carries a big Bible under his arm. (J. McGee) Worldliness, what we know as the cosmic system, "is primarily a wrong attitude: a determination to be anchored to a society which does not know God ... The writer sets the scene for a discussion of the stark contrast which inevitably exists between the spirits of truth and error. Evidently the orthodox members of the Johannine community were being uncritical of their own charismatic excesses, and even led astray by the heretical enthusiasms which were to be found in their midst. There have been traders in spiritual enchantments in all ages. In the face of such a problematic situation John recalls his readers to the constant need for discrimination where inspiration of any kind is

concerned, for enthusiasm is no guarantee of truth ... Spiritual activity in the church, as in the world, can be divine or evil in origin. (S. Smalley)

The opponents ... gave evidence of their “inspiration” through “prophetic utterances” and perhaps even other signs such as ecstasies and glossolalia. Such “signs” were present in the religious milieu of the Greeks and Romans and most persons took them seriously ... The need for some test to discern the presence of false prophets was all the more critical. (F. Gaebelein) Believe not every *man* but test out all *men* because many false *men* have gone out into the world as *false teachers*. He does not use *pneuma* and *pneumata* to designate the constituent part of a human being, which is the spirit that makes him a personal being and by the *psyche* animates his physical body, as Paul speaks of body, soul, and spirit; nor does John have in mind a supernatural spirit. “Spirit” is the person as such with his inner, spiritual character. There is no need to put more into this word. Every person reveals what kind of a *personality* or spirit he is by his word and his action although he may try to hide what he really is. (R. Lenski) As you can see by my translation, I really like Lenski’s comments – as well as Thieme’s. (LWB) *Pseudoprophetes* does not mean foretelling future things, but as the mouth-pieces of the *pneuma* which inspires them. (H. Alford) When John refers to “spirit,” he is not speaking of a being that comes from the demonic world. He is referring to a teacher or prophet. (J. Pentecost) The renewed warning against the heretical teachers which begins here arises from the concern that the believers are not sensitive enough to resist their seductive talk. (R. Schnackenburg)

1 John 4:1 **Beloved** (Voc. Address; members of the royal family), **stop** (neg. particle) **believing** (πιστεύω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Prohibition) **every** (Dat. Measure) **personality** (Dat. Disadv.; eloquent speaker, influential ascetic gnosticism, self-appointed self-anointed *spiritual* leader), **but rather** (adversative) **keep analyzing** (δοκιμάζω, PAImp.2P, Iterative, Command; checking out their dogma) **those personalities** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; influential principles taught by eloquent speakers) **whether** (interrogative) **he is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Pictorial, Potential Ind.; singular: analyze them one-at-a-time) **from God** (Gen. Rel., Abl. Agency; as a representative), **because** (causal) **many** (Nom. Spec.) **false teachers** (Subj. Nom.; false prophets) **have gone out** (ἐξέρχομαι, Perf.AI3P, Dramatic, Deponent; departed from the divine dynasphere and are now speaking heresies) **for the cosmic system** (Acc. Rel.; willing & obedient evangelists/teaches for satan).

BGT 1 John 4:1 Ἀγαπητοί, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα εἰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

VUL 1 John 4:1 carissimi nolite omni spiritui credere sed probate spiritus si ex Deo sint quoniam multi pseudoprophetae exierunt in mundum

LWB **1 John 4:2** By this [understanding] you may learn to recognize that personality [influential teacher] from God: Every personality [persuasive speaker] who acknowledges Jesus Christ [deity] has come in the flesh [humanity] is from God [as His representative].

^{KW} **1 John 4:2** In this you know experientially the Spirit of God. Every spirit who agrees [to the doctrinal statement] that Jesus Christ has come in the sphere of the flesh [i.e., in incarnation] and still remains incarnate [in human form] is of God;

^{KJV} **1 John 4:2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

How can we tell if a prominent personality is from God or not? First, “from God” is a reference to someone who *represents* God by his teaching, not a statement clarifying whether he is a Christian or not. John is discussing experiential, not positional, sanctification. These false teachers are Christians. Second, by understanding the doctrine of the hypostatic union, you may learn to recognize (Retrospective Present tense) an influential teacher from God. Every honorable minister of the Word of God who acknowledges (Static Present tense) Jesus Christ (deity) has come (Dramatic Perfect tense) in the flesh (humanity: incarnation) is from God. The perfect tense emphasizes the present endurance of a *past historical event*. The designation “Christ” refers to His deity, while “Jesus” refers to His humanity. His coming to earth “in the flesh” represents ½ of the hypostatic union. Some of the Gnostic-leaning teachers no doubt believed in His deity, but sometime after conversion their new philosophy led them to deny that He came in the flesh, i.e., His humanity. Some branches of Gnosticism believed Jesus Christ came in spirit only, not in the flesh. Those speakers who teach both His deity and humanity *represent* God. By process of elimination, if a teacher denies the humanity of Christ, he is an evangelist for Satan. The two options are:

Acknowledges both deity and humanity of Christ = true teacher, representing God
Acknowledges deity, but not humanity of Christ = false teacher, representing Satan

Third, the issue of teaching the deity of Christ, but not His humanity, is the one John is confronting here. Many believers, and perhaps 3/4 of commentators, would not accept this false teacher as a Christian at all. They find it hard to believe that someone could acknowledge Jesus Christ was God, but that when He lived on earth He was in spirit only and not flesh – that His deity “came and went periodically” in a heretical presentation of *kenosis*. This is obviously an error, a heresy that makes the propagator of such doctrine a false teacher. But is it a heresy that prevents one from becoming a believer *initially*? This is not the context of this passage, but it is a question that is expounded in many commentaries, so we should discuss it further. Can an individual accept the deity of Christ, but reject the humanity of Christ, and still become a Christian? What are the absolute minimum requirements for becoming a believer? Does a person need to understand the hypostatic union to become a Christian?

When I became a believer, the gospel message presented to me was quite simple. It did not contain an explanation of the hypostasis, only His deity. I believed that Jesus Christ was God and that He died for my sins. I became a Christian. Later I came to understand the doctrines of hypostatic union and kenosis. So I'm not convinced that believing in His humanity is required to become a Christian, although it is obviously important to understand later when learning the doctrines of substitution, redemption, the near kinsmen and other related soteriological truths. I believe those who restrict the false teachers (antichrists) in this epistle to unbelievers only: (a) do not understand experiential sanctification, and (b) do not understand the doctrine of carnal Christians or reversionism, and (c) are guilty of front-loading the gospel with excessive theological requirements that few (if any of us) would have met when we first heard the simple message. Fourth, when we are discussing experiential sanctification, the only teacher who is "from God" is the believer who obtains his doctrine from the divine system and represents Jesus Christ in His combined deity and humanity.

So what is the bare minimum required in the gospel message? J.I. Packer says it contains four essential parts: God, sin, Christ, and faith/repentance. Theologically, any one of these parts could be preached on for months! But in a simple gospel message, most of us would agree that these basics are necessary. Lightner has three essential facts that he believes should be in the gospel message. "First, all have sinned and come short of God's glory. This sin brings death. Second, Christ died for sinners. He, the just One, died for the unjust to bring us to God. Third, as many as received Christ became sons of God. They will never perish but have everlasting life. There is no other way of salvation. Salvation is not nearly as complicated as we often think." According to the Billy Graham website, "here is how you can receive Christ: 1. Admit your need (I am a sinner). 2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent). 3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the Cross and rose from the grave. 4. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Him as Lord and Savior.)" His 3rd point implies a basic understanding of the humanity of Christ, which might have been a stumbling block to those who were already Gnostics; but what about those who were saved and became Gnostics later?

How many untold millions have been saved by nothing more than hearing or reading a passage such as John 3:16 or 3:36? John 3:16 contains a subtle expression of His deity and humanity which most believers understand. But it does not come right out and say it in express terms that an unbeliever would necessarily understand. Thieme repeatedly offers the simple gospel message in John 3:36 in many of his publications. "If you are an unbeliever, the issue is not naming your sins. The issue is faith in Christ: He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Jonathan Edwards follows the aforementioned gospel outlines in his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." I could go on and on with examples of the gospel message which have demonstrably saved thousands, even millions of people. Few, if any of these messages, require the unbeliever to understand the deity and humanity of Christ in hypostatic union as a condition of salvation. One can only hope that every new believer embraces these truths soon after salvation. But the reversionistic believers John is referring to in this letter (antichrists, false teachers) opted for an erroneous Gnostic Christology instead.

Here's the question I ask myself on this topic; perhaps you will have the same answer that I do today. Think back to the day when you were saved. If someone sat down with you minutes after you believed in Jesus Christ, and asked you this question, what would your response be? "Do you understand that Jesus Christ is both God and man simultaneously, what we call the doctrine of the hypostatic union?" I believe responses would vary. Some believers may have heard a sermon on this very topic before they believed in Jesus Christ, and they would answer in the affirmative. Some believers may have heard a message on a completely unrelated topic (i.e., end times), and all they know was that they believed in Jesus Christ as a "total person" rather than one distinguished by deity and humanity dwelling together in hypostasis. I was of the latter category. The message I heard was a combination of End Times prognostications and a watered-down version of Jonathan Edward's famous sermon – neither of which mentioned the deity or humanity of Christ. At the end of the service, the pastor prayed a simple prayer and the Holy Spirit used those words to save me. I left that church and never returned. I went back to my traveling job in another part of the country with nothing in my hands but a Gideon Bible. It was nearly two years later before I heard any sound teaching on the deity and humanity of Christ.

I traded emails with a number of friends (theologians) who voiced their opinions. Here's one I'll share with you from Miles McKee: "I have to agree that we do not need theology to get saved - I often wonder when I actually got saved - I didn't know I was a sinner till three weeks after I had supposedly come to Christ! All I know is that God is big enough to invincibly bring His elect to Him - but what a mess we are when we first come! Was the Ephesian jailer really wanting to be redemptively saved or merely saved from the consequences of what he thought was a prison break? I don't know these things but the Lord does and I know He is bigger than our bad motives and ignorance. However, what I take issue with are those who deliberately promote another gospel of the Santa Cause Jesus or the Gnostic gospel or any of the nonsense gospels out there - let them be accursed." I have added a number of quotes that Miles sent me on the doctrine of the hypostatic union and the humanity of Christ under *Relevant Opinions*. Here's an email reply from another theologian:

I think very few, if any (do we ever?) have a full (rounded, complete, extensive, mature) knowledge of the Gospel when they believe. A person believes when God saves them, sometimes very young physically and certainly babes in Christ the moment after believing. How much info did they get before God saved them? I don't know, but "enough" if they are truly saved. Do they understand and believe all that is explained by the hypostatic union? I would have to say probably very little, or just the basics. I am a sinner; if I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ I will be saved ... I believe we are saved, justified, in an instant of time, foreordained by God's gracious elective will, His good pleasure. He alone grants us the faith, although it must surely build on some knowledge (faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God). The faith "graced" to the elect is not faulty, and so it must contain the truth about Christ. However, the newly saved surely does not fully understand the doctrines and truths we do ... Is it the faith of a mustard seed that can grow to know these things, or by disobedience disregard them and fall into error after being justified? Belief and understanding of the humanity of Christ is certainly required to grow in Christ, but is it required for, or contained in the initial faith to believe? When the wretched, penitent sinner cries out, "Oh God have mercy on me, a sinner, please save me!" are we then to restrain him and make sure he fully understands the hypostatic union?

Having said all that, if forced to make a choice, I would say the faith (with some requisite level of knowledge and understanding) God gives to His elect would include at least a basic understanding not only of the Divine Savior, but of Jesus as a man who truly walked among us. (P. Osterhus)

Here's a response from yet a third theologian, D. Williams: "Ben, the question may be, 'What can we disbelieve and still be regenerated.' Anyone who knows everything he was thinking and understood at the moment he "believed in Christ, or Jesus, or The Lord Jesus Christ, has one up on me ... How much one understood about the unique person of the universe is probably not important for regeneration, unless there is some specific heresy on which he trusted for regeneration. Not only does the Bible describe many things the 12 disciples were confused about concerning the person of Jesus, on whom they believed, but it describes many doctrines which believers distorted to the point of heresy and many doctrines that had to be taught over and over again long after their regeneration ... I agree with Miles that any believer needs to understand and believe in the humanity of Jesus Christ as well as his Deity. I agree with you that a person who believes in Jesus Christ for regeneration, even if he doesn't understand or appreciate the fact that He was two personalities in one person, humanity and deity, he is regenerated. He may not even have understood at the moment of his regeneration that Jesus rose again. And, should he hear those doctrines later and refuse to believe them, while he has become an "enemy of the cross (Phil 3:18)," I believe he is a reversionistic believer ... I do question whether it's possible for someone to be regenerated if he qualifies his initial belief in Christ with heresy, whether it be that Christ is God, but not man, or that he must add some work to what Jesus Christ accomplished in order to be saved ... I realize how soon after a person's regeneration he can distort the truth of the Word of God, but I don't think that is the issue in regeneration. I say this because so much of the New Testament is addressed to carnal or reversionistic believers who have distorted the truth or simply refused to believe what they were taught."

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The test of the orthodox Bible teacher is his emphasis on Christology and soteriology, the doctrines of the Person and saving work of our Lord. Regardless of how eloquent or persuasive a pastor may be, no matter how moral his life, he is a false teacher if he misrepresents our Lord and presents a false Gospel. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Gnostic Christians believed that since Jesus participated in God's nature, He must be relieved as far as possible from defiling contact with matter. This was accomplished in the thinking of some by supposing that *His divine nature or messiahship descended upon Him at His baptism and left Him just before His death upon the cross*. They held that His sufferings were only seeming and not real ... The profession of these semi-philosophical views of Christ's life and death separated these people from ordinary Christians, and this separation was aggravated by their claims of higher enlightenment, mystic fellowship with God, clearer knowledge of truth, and freedom from sin. (Kirby, Williams) It is precarious to assert: "The man's heart is all right!" when the man's confession is wrong. The Lord has given us the one safe test, the confession. (R. Lenski) In other words, it's the message, not the man. (LWB)

The gospel is simple in the sense that a great chess move is simple ... But this is not what the popular evangelist means by simple. He thinks the gospel is easy to understand. Therefore he gives little explanation, little elucidation, little gospel. Note, however, that Nicodemus, a ruler in Israel, did not easily understand. The early Gentile Christians could hardly understand. Even the Church Fathers were seriously deficient. For three hundred years or more they could not understand the Person of Christ; they learned the Trinity a little faster; but their soteriology, the significance of Christ's death, escaped them for centuries. Justin Martyr, for example, was of course a martyr; he probably was a Christian; but with his view of the atonement I would not have voted to receive him as a communicant member of our congregation. Recall too that the Apostle Paul anathematized the Judaizers in Galatia, who accepted Christ as Messiah, as their Lord, and who most probably, because of their acquaintance with the OT sacrifices, understood the atonement far better than Justin did. (G. Clark) The devil's communion table is emotional appeal. The cosmic system is his smokescreen for the gospel. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) To discover that a person believes in the incarnation does not rule out the possibility that he has other heretical views. The incarnation test was intended to be applied to the early Gnostic heresy. (D. Burdick)

How two natures so widely different, should be so united, we cannot understand. In the union of the body and soul of man in one person, there is a similar fact which we are unable to comprehend; but if we should disbelieve it, we should reject the testimony of our own consciousness ... The union of the two natures does not confound the properties peculiar to each. The humanity is not deified, nor the divinity humanized. So, the body of man does not become spirit, by its union with the soul; nor does the soul become matter, by its union with the body. (J. Dagg) We shall have to go back to the Gnostic Docetism of the first Christian centuries for any influential effort speculatively to construe Christ as a wholly Divine Being. If men have here and there forgotten the human Christ in their reverence for the Divine Christ, they have shown no great inclination to explain Christ to thought in terms of the purely Divine. (B. Warfield) According to Gnosticism, the Son arrays Himself in the garment of the earthly body ... and as redeemer delivers discourses in which He reveals Himself as God's emissary: I am the shepherd, I am the truth, and so forth. After accomplishing His work, He ascends and returns to heaven again to prepare a way for His own to follow Him. (R. Bultmann)

No one has ever advanced an inch spiritually by Christian service. There is no momentum in these organizations, because momentum comes from doctrine. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) True faith receives Christ *entire*, as He is presented in the gospel. A perfect knowledge of Christ is not necessary to true faith, otherwise true faith would be impossible; for the riches of Christ are unsearchable, and His love passes knowledge ... The revelation made to the OT saints was obscure, but so far as they could see Christ - in the light which was afforded them - they rejoiced to see His day and were glad. (J. Dagg) The person of Jesus is sometimes defined in terms of Jewish and apocalyptic categories, sometimes as the Lord of the cultus, as a mystery deity, sometimes again as the Gnostic redeemer, the pre-existent being from the heavenly world, *whose earthly body is only an*

outward garb ... In the Gnostic redemption myth, Jesus is a divine figure sent down from the celestial world of light, the Son of the Most High coming forth from the Father, veiled in earthly form and inaugurating the redemption through His work ... In His earthly disguise He was invisible to them, and as a consequence, by crucifying Him they brought about their own destruction. (R. Bultmann)

It is easy to see why the Christian Church took over these ideas from the Gnostic redemption myth. That myth offered a terminology in which the redemption wrought in the person and work of Jesus could be made intelligible as a present reality ... It also conveyed to the Hellenistic world the Jewish eschatological hope, which looked for redemption in the future ... In Gnosticism the mission and advent of the redeemer and the inauguration of the eschatological event were relegated to a mythical age before history began, while in Christianity these things are events of the recent past. (R. Bultmann) In 1 Tim. 3:16 God is described as manifest in the flesh, that is to say, He was physically incarnate, to be seen and heard – indeed, to be handled (1 John 1:1). These were “the days of his flesh” (Heb. 5:7), of his embodiment. When John wrote that a test of true spiritual understanding is frank acknowledgment of the fact that Messiah has indeed appeared in the flesh, he is talking about the incarnation and he sees no reason not to use the term *flesh* where the word *body* might have been more appropriate. (A. Custance) Test the prophets: ask them if Jesus Christ has come in the flesh or not. If they say Yes, they they are to be recognized as speaking by the Spirit of God; if not, then it is not the Spirit of God but the spirit of Antichrist that speaks through them. (F. Bruce)

The doceticism that is rejected by this variant reading is the kind that posits a differentiation between the man Jesus and the heavenly Christ ... And it was Christ’s status as one come in the flesh in the person of Jesus that the secessionists denied, that is, they denied the reality of his humanity. (C. Kruse) All of the uses of *pneuma* in this section become consistent, signifying someone who is inspired ... the person who acts as a spokesman for the truth of God thus fits the context exactly ... those who are inspired by the Spirit of truth confess Jesus truthfully. (S. Smalley) Like 2:18-25, 1 John 4:1-6 suggests that the Johannine church has split over a christological issue ... He may be challenging a super-spiritualized Christology by asserting that Jesus’ humanity is as theologically integral to His personality as is His divinity ... Doceticism, the notion that Jesus was not really human but only appeared to be, did not vanish in the second century. Doceticism flourishes with remarkable resilience among those of our day who play down the gospel of the Christ who really lived and really died. (C. Black) Christ did not come upon a man already in existence as Cerinthus claimed ... But as crucial as the incarnation test is, there is reason to question whether or not it is applicable to *all* heretical teachings ... Although the incarnation is central to the Christian faith, when supplied as a test it is not capable of ferreting out other doctrinal deviations. (D. Burdick)

They hypostatic union is from eternity, so that the Son is never considered by God apart from the humanity assumed in the Incarnation. Hence, the *logos asarkos*, the eternal Son considered apart from the flesh, is an abstraction ... The NT does not speak expressly about the eternal Son or Word, but about the Jesus Christ who existed before the world

was, who in the eternal sight of God had already taken on Himself our human nature. Colossians 1, Hebrews 1 and John 1 speak of the incarnate Christ. From all eternity, God wanted to see and know and love His only begotten Son as the mediator – the Word incarnate ... Jesus' participation in the Godhead is not the dissolution, but the foundation, of His humanity. John's gospel shows that the eternal, divine Logos was this man Jesus, and this man Jesus was in the beginning with God. His participation in the divine is the basis of His humanity. He is the Son of God as He is man, and He is man as He is the Son of God. (R. Letham) In the hypostatic union the Son causes His divine existence to be the existence of the man Jesus. It is also only as the Son of God that Jesus Christ also exists as man. The divine expresses and reveals itself wholly in the sphere of the human, and the human serves and attests the divine. Divine and human are and remain as different as God and man, not interchangeable, the divine still above, the human below. But in Jesus Christ they work together. So the human and divine wills in Christ (*dyothelietism*) are coincident. (K. Barth)

Quotes on the Hypostatic Union

We need to ask whether or not the Bible teaches the Hypostatic Union, the two nature doctrine. If it does, we must receive it as true. Furthermore, to reject His humanity is to leave us with an unqualified mediator and a flawed salvation. The genius of the Christ of the Gospel is that He is both God and man thus we are left with a substitute who was man, a High priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and God of very God. (M. McKee) The major Christological belief that the Church struggled to accept was Christ's humanity. The Docetic, Gnostic, and Marcionite errors stumbled on Jesus' true humanity in the first centuries of the Church's life. (J. Ligon Duncan) To come in the flesh is the same term John uses in his gospel in 1:14 with reference to the humanity of Christ - "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us." If ever we are to understand the Lord Jesus, we must grasp that He is one person with two natures: One nature is fully human and the other fully divine. In other words, Jesus Christ is fully God and, at the same time, fully man. He is not a little bit human and a little bit God. He is fully human yet fully God. But how is that possible---- fully man yet fully God? Well, on that subject, I take sides with the old Irish preacher who said he'd not been sent to explain the gospel but rather to proclaim it. That God became a man is something the Bible declares rather than explains. This hypostatic union is the very heart of the Gospel. (M. McKee)

Some religions, such as Islam, reject this idea saying that God has no Son. But at the core of the Good News we discover it was the one true and living God who appeared in Bethlehem as a little baby. The angels were astonished and broke out in unrestrained praise and adoration saying, "Glory to God in the highest." They were staggered and amazed for they could see that at the same time as this infant lay in Bethlehem's manger, He was upholding the universe with the word of His power. As you well know, God does not owe any of us an explanation about anything. God can declare whatever He will without any obligation to explain Himself. That the Scriptures declare Christ Jesus to be both God and man is perfectly plain. We can dismiss this idea and fly in the face of the

evidence but that will not alter the truth that the invisible God has objectified Himself and become visible in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So let's say it again, to understand Christ Jesus properly it is essential to grasp that He is both God and man. He is one person with two natures. He is fully human and at the same time fully divine. God became man without ceasing to be God. He did not become partly man and partly God. He, in the person of Christ Jesus was fully God and fully man. (M. McKee)

Undoubtedly we freely admit, that in the constitution of the Person of the God-man lies the absolutely insoluble mystery of godliness. How is it possible that the same Person can be at the same time infinite and finite, ignorant and omniscient, omnipotent and helpless? How can two complete spirits coalesce in one Person? How can two consciousnesses, two understandings, two memories, two imaginations, two wills, constitute one Person? All this is involved in the scriptural and Church doctrine of the Person of Christ. Yet no one can explain it. The numerous attempts made to explain or to expel this mystery have only filled the Church with heresies and obscured the faith of Christians. (A. Hodge) But that Christ Jesus is both God and man is evident from the Bible record. Let's consider what the Bible says. His Humanity: Here are some of the scriptural proofs concerning his true humanity. (I quote them here to show the scriptures declare Christ to be an actual human being and not merely some phantom appearing in the form of man.) Lk 2:40: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." Lk 2:52: "And the child increased in wisdom and stature." In both these scriptures, Christ Jesus is plainly called a child, indeed a child who was both growing and increasing. God does not grow or increase in wisdom - humans do! The cults point to these scriptures in an attempt to prove Christ was not God saying, "See, here it makes it clear, Jesus can't be God because he is said to grow and increase". But these verses have nothing to do with his Deity they are, rather, verses to establish His genuine humanity. (M. McKee)

Furthermore, it is vital for us to realize that Jesus was a real human. He went through all the stages of growth that children go through. He had to be fed and toilet trained. Someone had to teach Him how to read. And just like any normal child He would have played with the other children in his street. He would have run errands for His parents and have had household chores to complete. At some stage of His life He would have become aware of the opposite sex though we are not given any details of this. But this we know, He was genuinely human and was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin (Heb 4:15). This kind of talk offends some folk because they do not believe that Jesus was really human. Perhaps, they still have a sanitized picture of Jesus. Their Jesus, perhaps, never got his hands dirty but floated through this life immune to the feelings and bombardments which hit human beings every day. They have not yet grasped that He was a true human being. However, just as it is heresy to deny His Deity so it is equally heresy to deny His true humanity. That Christ was fully human is one of the great pillars of our faith. (M. McKee) One thing, however, is perfectly clear, and we shall do well to lay firm hold upon it. Our Lord partook of everything that belongs to man's nature, sin only excepted. As man He was born an infant. As man He grew from infancy to boyhood. As man He yearly increased in bodily strength and mental power, during His passage from

boyhood to full age. Of all the sinless conditions of man's body, its first feebleness, its after growth, its regular progress to maturity, He was in the fullest sense a partaker. We must rest satisfied with knowing this. To pry beyond is useless. To know this clearly is of much importance. An absence of settled knowledge of it has led to many wild heresies. One comfortable practical lesson stands out on the face of this truth, which ought never to be overlooked. Our Lord is able to sympathize with man in every stage of man's existence, from the cradle to the grave. He knows by experience the nature and temperament of the child, the boy, and the young man. He has stood in their place. He has occupied their position. He knows their hearts. Let us never forget this in dealing with young people about their souls. Let us tell them confidently, that there is One in heaven at the right hand of God, who is exactly suited to be their Friend. He who died on the cross was once a boy Himself, and feels a special interest in boys and girls, as well as in grown up people. (J.C. Ryle)

He was genuinely human! Have you ever noticed in Matthew 4:2 how we read of Christ being hungry? This was a genuine hunger that gripped his body. He was famished! Does this mean He was not God? Not at all, it simply demonstrates once more that He was human.

"Hosanna to the royal Son
Of David's ancient line!
His natures two, his person one,
Mysterious and divine"
Isaac Watts

In John 4: 6 we read of Christ being fatigued and exhausted after His long journey to Samaria. He experienced the same kind of weariness we would experience after such a long period of physical exercise. Again this goes to show He was human. The critics say, "But how could He be weary if He was God? Doesn't the Bible say that, 'the God of Israel fainteth not, neither is weary'?" Of course it does! But Jesus, as God, did not get tired; it was Jesus as man who suffered the exhaustions of the human condition. The amazing truth is that although Jesus was God, He was also a genuine human, subject to human limitation. Write this truth large in your thinking; Christ Jesus is one person with two natures! Furthermore, in Matt.8:24 we discover Christ sleeping. "Wait a minute," say His enemies, "this really proves He was not God for", they say, "The God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." Again, however, these would be troublers of the faith, fail to grasp that this scripture and others like it are there to establish his true humanity, not his Deity. It was necessary that Christ should be a man for we needed someone to represent us. We needed a human being to live in our place. Why? Because all of us have sinned and have fallen short of God's holy standard - that's why! When God came to earth He came as one of us. He divested Himself of His glory, veiled his Deity and became our substitute in His birth, life and death. It was a real man who lived for us; it was a real man who died in our place and it is one of us, a real man, who intercedes for us now. We needed a life of perfect righteousness to present to God and our flawed efforts did not make the grade. That's one of the great reasons why Christ came. He came as our

substitute, the substitute man. If He were not a man, truly a man, then there is no Gospel, no redemption and no salvation. (M. McKee)

It was man who had sinned and man who was guilty before God therefore it had to be one of us, a human representative who would take the punishment on our behalf. But more than that, we needed a representative, a human to stand in our place and produce a perfect flawless righteousness which could be reckoned as ours. An angel could not represent us or become our substitute in life and death. The representative had to be one of us! There is no good news if Christ was a created human-like supernatural being! For there to be any Gospel at all Christ Jesus had to be one of our race, a true human, descended from Adam. Adam was human and as the head and representative of humanity he brought condemnation upon us all. Christ Jesus then, if He was to be the Last Adam had to be totally human, one of us. We had to be rescued by one of our own! But where would God find such a human? Where would He find someone untainted with Adam's sin. His eyes ran throughout the whole world and his verdict was, "There is none righteous no not one, there's none that doeth good, there's none that understand, there's none that seeks God" (Rom. 3:10-11), "their whole head is sick" (Isa 1:5) and "their heart is divided" (Hosea 10:2). Man had been so totally ruined by sin and had fallen so far short of God's glory that no qualified redeemer could be found. A qualified redeemer, by law, had to be a near kinsman, therefore, since no perfect man could be found, God came here Himself and assumed a true and genuine human nature and yet remained God. Some suggest that God merely possessed a man called Jesus and worked through him. This man, they say, was not God but a man filled completely with God. This, however, is a very foolish notion! There was no point in God taking possession of a man and filling him with Himself for that man would still be a sinful descendant of Adam, tainted with human depravity. A depraved man could, therefore, never be a suitable and sinless substitute and representative for us. (M. McKee)

Every human, without exception, was disqualified from being a fitting substitute because every one of us had sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God. But, if the Redeemer was not human there could be no redemption. Likewise if the redeemer was not God then no redemption could be accomplished for no mere man could absorb the wrath of God and live again. Indeed, if He was not God, this redeemer would have need of a Saviour himself and therefore could save no one. God alone can save (Is 43:11). Someone may ask why it was necessary for Christ to have two natures. The answer is simple: if ever there was to be a redemption which upheld the integrity of God's holy, just, righteous, and loving nature, God must become man. All humanity had sinned and deserved to suffer the weight of God's wrath but God, as a man, suffered in order that we might live. The genius of the Dual nature of Christ is this: *if He was a mere man, He could not conquer death, and if He was only God, He could not die - therefore, the Lord Jesus had to be both God and man in order that He could both live, die and rise again.* As man he took man's curse and condemnation and became liable for our sins. In His living He conquered life and in His dying He conquered death! In order live for us, to die for us and to overcome death on our behalf, He must be both man and God in one person. What a glory there is in this gospel! (M. McKee)

The wrath of God being infinite, there was no human or angelic strength known which could bear such a weight without being crushed (John 14:10, 12, 31; 16:32; 2 Cor. 5:19). He who was to live again, after having conquered the devil, sin, the world and death united to the wrath of God, had to be therefore not only perfect man, but also true God ... In order to better manifest this incomprehensible goodness, God did not wish that His grace should only equal our crime; He willed that where sin abounds, grace superabounds (Rom 5:15-21). For this reason, while he was created in the image of God, the first Adam, author of our sin, was earthly, as his 'frailty showed well (1 Cor. 15:45-47). Jesus Christ, on the contrary, the last Adam, through whom we are saved, while being true and perfect man, is nevertheless the Lord come from Heaven, that is to say, the true God. For, in essence, all the fullness of divinity dwells in Him (Col. 2:9). If the disobedience of Adam made us fall, the righteousness of Jesus Christ gives us more security than we had previously. (T. Beza) Christ Jesus is both fully God and fully man. It could have been no other way. But not grasping the essence of redemption, the opponents of the Gospel refuse to see this essential gospel truth. They point to matters that belong to His ministry as the representative man and try to prove from these that He was not the Eternal One. A good example of this is when they point to His prayer life as a supposed proof that He was not God. "Surely, God does not need to pray" they say. Indeed not! God has no need of prayer, but man does. So when we see Jesus praying, we see the representative man praying. Furthermore, because we needed a perfect righteousness we needed, of a necessity, a perfect prayer life to present to God and Jesus gave us one - His own. He prayed not only for us but also prayed in our place as the substitute and representative man. (M. McKee)

In a similar way, all of us needed a perfect obedience to present to God but, let's face it, not one of us have come close to being perfectly obedient to God. But Christ lived as our substitute and representative. His total obedience is now ours. His was the only perfect life. He was totally submitted to the Father, His will was totally subjected to the Father's will. This is the lifestyle that as Christians we all strive to have. We desire to have God first and foremost but alas, it only sometimes works out that way. But Christ emptied Himself of the divine prerogatives, became a servant, submitted His will to that of the Father and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (see Phil. 2:5-11). The opponents of Christ's deity, not understanding the glory of the Gospel, point to every instance where Christ Jesus as our substitute and representative subjected Himself to the Father and say, "See here, this man is not equal to God because He is in submission to God." They rise up like noisy thankless children protesting that Christ, therefore, can not possibly be God. Not understanding the Gospel, they try to argue that since Christ is subordinate He must, therefore, be a created being who had a beginning! With great delight and salivating relish they point to scriptures such as, Luke 22:42, "not my will but thine be done"; John 5:30, "I seek not mine own will but the will of Him who sent me"; John 5:19, "The Son can do nothing of Himself"; John 6:38, "I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of Him who sent me". (M. McKee)

However, the barren deficiencies of their Gospel understanding are merely exposed when they hurl their insults and challenges at the Lord of Glory. One has to ask, therefore, do these people ever read the Bible without their pre-conceived ideas! Have they any love for the truth? Don't they know that man's redemption had to be undertaken by a kinsman redeemer - a member of the same family, another human? Furthermore, have they not grasped that we need a perfect righteousness to present in Heaven? Don't they know where to find it? If they are not looking to Christ alone, then they must look for this righteousness, not in a substitutionary representative but within themselves. But, have they not grasped, it is beyond our ability to render to God a standard of perfection which will satisfy His holiness for there is 'none righteous no not one!' Don't they know that, in every respect, Christ Jesus lived a life that fully glorified God? It was a life we had failed to live. Had He not become human, He could not have lived a substitutionary and representative life that could be credited to our account. Now that, as believers, we are 'in Christ,' all that He has done for us is reckoned as having been done by us. We now, in Christ, have a life of perfect prayer, perfect worship, perfect obedience, perfect submission and perfect love. If Christ was merely a spirit who looked like a man or was an angel impersonating man then we are all lost. We cannot be saved by a spook or represented by a phantom. It was a man, Adam, who had sinned and caused the human race to be lost and it therefore had to be a man who would come to the rescue. Christ the last Adam, lived, died and rose again and by His accomplishments secured Salvation for His people. That Christ is both God and man is sheer and total wisdom. (M. McKee)

I often delight myself with the thought of a fishing hook that fishermen cast into the water, putting on the hook a little worm; then comes the fish and snatches at the worm and gets the hook in his jaws and the fisherman pulls him out of the water. Even so has our Lord God dealt with the devil; God has cast into the world his only Son, as the fishing line, and upon the hook has put Christ's humanity, as the worm; then comes the devil and snaps at the (man) Christ, and devours him, and therewith he bites the iron hook, that is, the Godhead of Christ, which chokes him, and all his power thereby is thrown to the ground. This is called divine wisdom. (M. Luther) In summary, there would have been no salvation, no redemption, no upholding of God's justice had there been no God/Man. But, in the Lord Jesus Christ the justice, holiness, love, goodness and saving power of invisible God is made visible in a genuine and true man. From this revelation of Christ we see, above all, that God is personal. He is not just some great power or mighty force; He is the God who has displayed Himself by becoming a man. And as a man, Jesus the Christ, He was hungry (Matthew 4:2); thirsty (John 19:28); exhausted (John 4:6); He slept (Mark 4:38); was inundated with sorrow, (John 11:35); and tortured in His body with frightful wounds at the hands of Pilate's soldiers (John 19:1-3); All these were evidences that Jesus was truly human. And yet this same human Person could command trees to wither, storms to cease, loaves and fish to multiply, water to become wine, the blind to see, the lame to walk, the demons to flee, and the decaying dead to come forth from the grave fully restored. And the reason he could do this was that He was fully God. (M. McKee)

Can somebody out there give me a hearty "Amen!"

1 John 4:2 By this (Acc. Means; procedure, understanding) you may learn to recognize (γινώσκω, PAI2P, Retrogressive, Potential Ind.; know) that (Dat. Ref.) personality (Acc. Dir. Obj.; influential teacher) from God (Abl. Source): Every (Nom. Spec.) personality (Subj. Nom.; persuasive speaker, honorable minister of the Word of God) who (Nom. Appos.) acknowledges (ὁμολογέω, PAI3S, Static) Jesus Christ (Acc. Dir. Obj.) has come (έρχομαι, Perf.APtc.AMS, Dramatic, Circumstantial, Deponent) in the flesh (Loc. Sph.; His humanity: ½ of the hypostatic union) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) from God (Gen. Rel., Abl. Agency; His representative, deity of Christ is a "must" doctrine).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:2** ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκετε τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ· πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν,

^{VUL} **1 John 4:2** in hoc cognoscitur Spiritus Dei omnis spiritus qui confitetur Iesum Christum in carne venisse ex Deo est

LWB 1 John 4:3 Furthermore, every personality [persuasive speaker] who does not acknowledge this Jesus [of orthodox Christianity] is not from God [as His representative]. Furthermore, this [false teaching] is from Antichrist, about whom you have heard that he is coming [during the Tribulation]; even now [during the Church Age], he [the essence of antichrist] is already in the world [believers in the cosmic system are under Satan's control and are therefore antichrists].

^{KW} **1 John 4:3** And every spirit who does not confess this aforementioned Jesus [agree to the above teaching concerning Him] is not of God. And this is the spirit of antichrist which you have heard that it comes, and now is already in the world.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every persuasive speaker (personality) who does not acknowledge (Customary Present tense) this Jesus of historical, orthodox Christianity is not a representative from God. The orthodox doctrine of Jesus Christ includes both His deity and humanity residing together in hypostatic union. When some of the Gnostic teachers (believers) John is confronting deny the humanity (flesh) of Jesus, they are eliminating ½ of the hypostatic union. They are severing His deity from His humanity. This is a heresy from the cosmic system, not the divine system. Those that teach this heresy are living in the cosmic system and are *representatives of Satan*; they are not living in the divine system and are not *representatives from God*. This does not mean they are not Christians; it just means they are believers who have "gone over to the dark side." In the context of these verses, being "from God" is not a distinction between believer and unbeliever; it is a

distinction between teachers who *represent* God and teachers who *represent* Satan. Teachers who obtain their doctrine from the divine system *represent* God; teachers who obtain their doctrine from the cosmic system *represent* Satan.

Furthermore, this false teaching about Jesus is always from the Antichrist (Gnomic Present tense) whom you have heard previously (Intensive Perfect tense) that he is coming (Predictive Future tense) during the Tribulation or Jacob's Trouble. Even now, during the dispensation of the Church Age, the *essence of antichrist* exists (Perfective Present tense) in the world. The future personage known as the Antichrist may or may not be alive today; but the spirit or personality of antichrist already exists in the cosmic system. Teachers who reside in the cosmic system are under Satan's control and are therefore *antichrists*. The Gnostic teachers (believers) John is battling are antichrists. Many false teachers we hear today in a variety of communication mediums are antichrists. This distinction is very difficult for some to grasp, because they have become victims to overly restrictive interpretations of what constitutes a false teacher, i.e., that they must be unbelievers. Please memorize this: False teachers (antichrists) can be Christians. This understanding may save you from some deceptive teachings and unpleasant associations.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Nearly everyone has heard religious and other leaders urge people to emphasize the positive and not to be so negative. Positive is good; negative is bad. This is both anti-Christian and illogical. There can be no positive without a negative. The Bible is full of negatives. Therefore, those who repudiate negative thinking repudiate Christian thinking. In fact, they do not think; at least they do not think logically, for there is no positive without its complementary negative. And even aside from the law of contradiction, and contraposition, John asserts other negatives. (G. Clark) John provides a singular criterion for identifying antichrists: a heretical Christology ... John's emphasis is on orthodox Christology and serves as a perfect vehicle for the teaching of the crucial doctrine of Christ's true humanity. Christ did in fact come "in the flesh." That little phrase opens the gate to a wealth of teaching. (J. Nichols) Many consider an antichrist to be a person who is "against" Christ. If that were the case, it would seem odd that any Christian would be fooled by such a person. However, careful study of the Scriptures reveals that antichrists are subtle ... In 1 John they have a defective doctrine of Christ (B. DeWaay)

The Greek preposition "anti" has a dual connotation: (a) Against, or (b) Instead of, in place of. The connotation for this study is that it means conflict; therefore 'against' is the primary meaning. An antichrist is someone against the Lord ... In the Church Age, antichrist refers to any believer who resides and functions in the cosmic dynaspheres of Satan. The Church Age is the only time to use the divine dynasphere to avoid being an antichrist ... Antichrist is synonymous with the "enemy of the cross" in Phil 3:18, "the enemy of God" in James 4:4, and "the hater of God" in Jn 15:23. These believers are called antichrist in 1 Jn 2:22, 4:3; 2 Jn 7; 1 Jn 2:18. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Christianity found itself in a new spiritual environment: The gospel had to be preached in terms intelligible to Hellenistic audiences and their mental outlook, while at the same time the audience themselves were bound to interpret the gospel message in their own way, in the light of their spiritual needs. Hence the growth of diverse types of Christianity: Palestinian version, Jewish version, Gentile version, Hellenistic version, Gnostic version, etc. (R. Bultmann)

We conclude that the preaching of the false prophets today is controlled, like the preaching of their predecessors, by the principles, ideas, and purposes of the Antichrist. But when we do so, and suggest that the National Council and World Council, financing terrorism, are controlled by Satan, we are looked down upon as being uncivilized. These fundamentalists are simply hopeless. (G. Clark) Most of these false teachers, at this time during the period of Doceticism, were born again believers - but they were teaching false doctrine. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The apostle John refers to a heresy similar to incipient Gnosticism when he emphasizes Christ's genuine humanity. Some heretics said Christ only appeared to be human. This view led to a view of Gnosticism called Doceticism. (R. Lightner) The Apostle John connects the "spirit of antichrist" with "the world" or the Satanic system ... The Satanic world system is not only wholly evil, but as a world order it is limited and temporary. It is limited in its leadership. Satan, although powerful, is not, like Christ, omnipotent. It is limited in its knowledge and understanding. (M. Unger)

Reverse-process reversionism is the status quo of unrestrained and perpetual sinfulness, fragmentation, and extensive cosmic involvement. The believer is brainwashed by satanic propaganda. In this stage he is described as (1) hater of God (John 15:23), (2) an enemy of God (James 4:4), (3) double-minded, or in a state of spiritual schizophrenia (James 4:8), (4) anti or against Christ (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7), (5) a disciple of the devil (1 John 3:8, 10). While I have presented the stages of reversionism in isolation in order to portray the major aspects of spiritual retrogression in a logical sequence, these stages overlap and intertwine to form an intricate fabric of degeneracy. The believers in Galatia are a prime example of the negative volition that precipitates the downward spiral of reversionism ... All these phrases refer to eternally saved believers, not unbelievers. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) In John's day the earmark of the false teaching he was opposing was a denial of Christ's true humanity. The teaching that denied that Christ was both God and man was not of God but instead had its source in Satan. Such teaching was not from God but was of "the spirit of antichrist." (R. Lightner)

In practice, the Gnostics were organized as mystery communities ... with sacraments, baptisms, sacred meals, purifications for strengthening the self, ascetic practices, etc. (R. Bultmann) Even the Holy Spirit is neuter in Greek, for unlike English, Greek and most other languages do not have natural gender. (G. Clark) The simple *Jesus* emphasizes the humanity of our Lord considered in itself. (M. Vincent) The aim of the antichrist is to deceive people by denying the truth about Jesus Christ, and in particular, within the context of 1 John, by denying the true humanity of Christ. (C. Kruse) First John 4:1-6 injects important caveats into our considerations of the Spirit and the church. In the elder's opinion, "captivating preaching" and "being spiritual" are not necessarily good things, because false prophecy and spirits counter to Christ really exist ... The rallying cry is not aimed at dissidents who have seceded from the community, but at those with whom the elder is friendly. (C. Black) When we speak from the Spirit of God, the majority snore. (M. Luther)

1 John 4:3 **Furthermore** (continuative), **every** (Nom. Spec.) **personality** (Subj. Nom.; persuasive speaker) **who** (Nom. Appos.) **does not** (neg. particle) **acknowledge** (ὁμολογέω, PAI3S,

Customary; some manuscripts have: annuls, severs Christ's humanity from His diety) **this** (Acc. Spec.) **Jesus** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; of orthodox Christianity) **is** (είμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **not** (neg. particle) **from God** (Gen. Rel., Abl. Agency; as a teaching representative). **Furthermore** (continuative), **this** (Nom. Appos.; false teaching) **is** (είμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) **from Antichrist** (Abl. Source), **about whom** (Acc. Appos.) **you have heard** (ἀκούω, Perf.AI2P, Intensive) **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj.) **he is coming** (έρχομαι, PMI3S, Futuristic, Deponent; during the tribulation); **even** (ascensive) **now** (Adv. Time; during the Church Age) **he** (the essence of antichrist) **is** (είμί, PAI3S, Perfective) **already** (Adv. Time) **in the world** (Loc. Sphere; believers in the cosmic system are under satan's control and are therefore *antichrists*).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:3** καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἔστιν ἤδη.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:3** et omnis spiritus qui solvit lesu[m] ex Deo non est et hoc est antichristi quod audistis quoniam venit et nunc iam in mundo est

LWB 1 John 4:4 You [believers in the divine system] are from God, students [points to some progress in doctrine], and have overcome them [momentum tests], because greater is He in you [indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit] than he [Satan] in the cosmic system.

^{KW} **1 John 4:4** As for you, out of God you are, little born-ones, and you have gained a complete victory over them and are still victors, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:4** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John has been warning those in his non-resident congregations about false teachers and the heresies they are propagating. But before they get “punchy,” he reminds them that they are not alone in this spiritual battle. There are several things working in their favor in this passage. First, those who are residing in the divine system are representatives from God. They have the benefit of the power sphere to assist them in their defensive posture. Second, John calls them “students” again, which means they have made some progress in doctrine and are not clueless believers. Third, they have won some victories in the angelic conflict. They have overcome (Intensive Perfect tense) momentum tests, especially people testing. The Gnostic-leaning teachers, some of whom were friends, tried to lure them to join their Gnostic community. In other words, they have enough doctrine and power from the Spirit to be combat ready and have won their initial skirmishes. These spiritual victories provide positive momentum in the spiritual life. All tests and trials strengthen positive believers if they relax and apply doctrine to the issue at hand.

Fourth, they have the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit to empower them. The filling of the Spirit is essential to residence in the divine system, so there is an overlap here. But John adds some additional information by wording it in this way the second time: the Holy Spirit in them is greater than (Gnostic Present tense) Satan who empowers the cosmic system. Do not underestimate the power and lure of Satan's cosmic system. It has engulfed 95% of Christians today. And the leader of the cosmic system, Satan, has managed to persuade the greater portion of those 95% that he doesn't even exist or is already bound in chains! The good news, however, is that if believers stay in the divine system and continue to metabolize Bible doctrine – they have more than enough power to continue overcoming the wiles of the devil and the trickery of the false teachers employed by him. They might stumble once in awhile and spend some time in the cosmic system with their Gnostic-leaning friends, but eventually they will wise-up and return to the divine system where they belong.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Gnostic redemption myths were used to describe the person and work of Jesus Christ and the nature of the Church, and, accompanying these, ascetic and even libertine tendencies ... Thus Hellenistic Christianity is no unitary phenomenon, but taken by and large, a remarkable product of syncretism. It is full of tendencies and contradictions, some of which were to be condemned later on by orthodox Christianity as heretical. Hence also the struggles between the various tendencies, of which the Pauline Epistles give such a vivid impression. (R. Bultmann) If, in a pressure situation, you are still afraid after seeing the rationale behind this first conclusion, you are not yet a mature believer. But don't be dismayed! We all start out immature with scanty doctrinal resources in our souls. God still has a plan for your life; you simply must understand that fact more thoroughly so that you will be better equipped to meet the next crisis when it comes. Failing a test should be a sobering reminder of the need to keep on learning doctrine ... God's counterattack: combat readiness and strengthening in the intensified stage of the angelic conflict. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

The believer is brought, through his new position in Christ, into a sphere wherein Satan's enmity is directed against him as it is directed against God. The victory is provided only through the indwelling Spirit ... The believer's conflict with Satan is as fierce and unceasing as that mighty being can make it. Before him we of ourselves are as nothing; but God has anticipated our helplessness and provided a perfect victory through the indwelling Spirit. A Christian, because of the power of the new enemy, must "walk by means of the Spirit" if he would be spiritual. (L. Chafer) John knows nothing of any neutral position from which the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error can be criticized with absolute impartiality ... It is an unspeakable mercy to have the Spirit dwelling within us; by virtue of His unction, light, and might we shall have an inward and effective guard against the heresies of this and of every age ... By their fidelity to the truth they had obliged the teachers of error to retreat. The false prophets were probably plausible, persuasive, and influential; but they were not irresistible. They had been repulsed; they would be completely vanquished. We are not bound to accept any teaching that is offered to us. If we please, we may refuse to read the questionable book or to hear the teacher of whom we stand in doubt. Or we may read the book and hear the teacher, and then test their teaching by that of our

Lord and His apostles, and accept or reject it according to its agreement or disagreement with the Divine standard. (A. Plummer)

God is infinite, but Satan is finite. However great the power of the evil one may be, it is limited. His intelligence is limited, his agencies and instruments are limited, and the duration of his power is limited. But God is infinite in intelligence, in wisdom, in power, in duration, in perfection ... God's presence within His people is the secret of their victory over heretical teachers. "You have overcome them, because greater is He, etc." This Presence in the soul imparts power for spiritual conflict and conquest. (W. Jones) The spirit which will animate the Antichrist is a spirit which the world finds congenial. (R. Orr) John's readers were not more learned, more skilled in philosophical debate, than the false teachers; yet by refusing to be persuaded by the false teachers they had overcome them. This they were able to do because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, whose anointing had imparted to them the true knowledge – a built-in spiritual instinct, as it was called in the comment on 1 John 2:20, enabling them to hold fast to truth and reject error. (F. Bruce) These antichrists are identified as people who were once members of the author's own Christian community, but they have seceded from it. (C. Kruse)

The Corinthian Christians were just about everything they should not have been, and yet they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. You need to have the Holy Spirit teach you, and the Holy Spirit teaches through His Word. You cannot stay away from the Bible, be ignorant of it, ignore it, and yet expect to have the Spirit of God lead you and guide you ... Generally, these false teachers are very attractive persons. Many of them have charisma, and they make a fleshly appeal to folk. But they can be tested by the Word of God for the Holy Spirit is there to be our teacher and guide. (J. McGee) These two kinds of spirits that are of opposite origin never remain peacefully side by side. Those who are not from God constantly attack those who are from God. It is John's way of writing steadily to advance in stating the facts. (R. Lenski) John encourages the readers of his first letter to be confident and buoyant in their conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil on the grounds that those born of God will be kept by him and the evil one cannot touch them. (D. Carson) John states that the saints to whom he is writing have overcome these false teachers. The verb speaks of a past completed victory, and a present state of being a conqueror. (K. Wuest)

1 John 4:4 **You** (Subj. Nom.; believers who are residing in the divine dynasphere) **are** (εἰμί, PAI2P, Descriptive) **from God** (Gen. Rel., Abl. Agency), **students** (Voc. Address; points to some progress in Bible doctrine), **and** (connective) **have overcome** (νικάω, Perf.AI2P, Intensive; combat readiness and strengthening in the intensified stage of the angelic conflict) **them** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; momentum tests, trials, suffering from those in the cosmic system), **because** (causal) **greater** (Pred. Nom., Comparison) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) **He** (Subj. Nom.; the Holy Spirit as Restrainer) **in you** (Loc. Sph.; indwelling & filling of the Spirit) **than** (comparison) **he** (Subj. Nom.; satan) **in the cosmic system** (Loc. Sph.).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:4** ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστε, τεκνία, καὶ νενικήκατε αὐτούς, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν ἢ ὁ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:4** vos ex Deo estis filioli et vicistis eos quoniam maior est qui in vobis est quam qui in mundo

LWB 1 John 4:5 They [Gnostic-leaning false teachers] are from the cosmic system, therefore, they make it a practice to speak as agents [representatives] of the cosmic system, and the cosmic system [those believers residing in it] hears them [they are in perfect agreement].

^{KW} **1 John 4:5** They themselves are out of the world as a source. On this account out of the world as a source they are constantly speaking, and the world listens to them.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:5** They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Gnostic-leaning false teachers operate from the source of the cosmic system (Customary Present tense). Because this is where they reside and function, they make it a practice to speak as representatives or agents of the cosmic system (Iterative Present tense). And as one might expect, those believers who are also residing in the cosmic system hear their false teaching (Customary Present tense) and are in perfect agreement with them. False teachers always get a good hearing and make a good living among believers who are residing in the cosmic system. The plethora of false teachers today point to the overall apostate status of the church. Nobody is interested in the Word of God. Everyone has their own personal substitute for the spiritual life. The cosmic system has captured 95% of all believers in the United States.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The reason for the widespread apostasy in Christendom is that the people and the false prophets have the same inclinations. When the latter emphasize the dignity of man and attack total depravity, the people are gratified. In spite of the corruption in government, the violence of labor unions, embezzlement and fraud in business, people like to think “I’m all right, you’re all right.” (G. Clark) Divorcement from reality in the business and political spheres is in full swing today. Conservatives are in Cosmic 1, the arrogance complex of sins; liberals are in Cosmic 2, the hatred complex of sins. Conservatives are fighting themselves; liberals are fighting God. So it’s difficult to have “human heroes” in the political realm at all, since they are all in one stage of degeneracy or the other. (LWB) The world likes their speech; their speech is the world’s own language. It never rises any higher than that which the world considers wisdom. The world hears and nods full approval whenever they speak. This is true to this day. It generally also pays its speakers well. (R. Lenski)

The author whose works have been sympathetically and diligently studied may be said to be in the student. The student knows the views and opinions, the thoughts and theories, the principles and convictions, of his favorite author, and sympathizes with them. The godly soul knows God in his Word; and by means of His Word is filled with His thoughts, feelings, and principles. (W. Jones) The false teachers are successful “in the world” because their thinking, their theology, is

accommodated to the world's beliefs. So their teaching is philosophically congenial to the prevailing currents of the day ... The term "world" is probably to be understood in two ways: as a system of thought antithetical to Christian belief and as a description of those members of the community who were led astray by the false teachers. (F. Gaebelin)

1 John 4:5 They (Subj. Nom.; false teachers) are (εἰμί, PAI3P, Customary) from the cosmic system (Abl. Source, Agency), therefore (inferential, causal: "because of this") they make it a practice to speak (λαλέω, PAI3P, Iterative) as agents of the cosmic system (Abl. Agency) and (connective) the cosmic system (Subj. Nom.; those believers residing in it) hears (ἀκούω, PAI3S, Customary; understands, false teachers always get a good hearing because the vast majority of believers are continually residing in the cosmic system) them (Obj. Gen.; the false prophets and the world are in perfect unison).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:5** αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰσὶν, διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου λαλοῦσιν καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν ἀκούει.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:5** ipsi de mundo sunt ideo de mundo loquuntur et mundus eos audit

LWB 1 John 4:6 We [orthodox pastors & teachers] are from God [as a representative]. He [positive believers] who has come to know God keeps listening to us [orthodox pastors & teachers]; he who is not from God [as a representative] does not listen to us [orthodox pastors & teachers]. For this reason [continual listening to orthodox pastors & teachers], we have come to know the nature [spiritual significance] of Truth [Bible doctrine] and the nature [pervading influence] of error [false doctrine].

^{KW} **1 John 4:6** As for us, out f God we are. The one who is knowing God in an experiential way is listening to us. He who is not out of God is not listening to us. From this we know experientially the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:6** We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

We orthodox pastors and teachers are representatives of God. Positive believers who have come to know God and who are continuing to know God (Progressive Present tense) keep listening (Iterative Present tense) to us. Negative believers who are not representatives of God do not listen to us (Customary Present tense). They are residing in the cosmic system, so they are not interested in anything we have to say. They are anywhere from cold and indifferent to our doctrine to completely hostile to what we believe and teach. From this continual listening to doctrine from orthodox ministers of the Word of God, we have come to know and are continuing to know (Progressive Present tense) the nature of Truth and the nature of error. "Pneuma" does not mean "spirit" in this context. It means nature, principle, important concept, disposition or

influence. I like Thieme’s dual use of “spiritual significance” for the nature of Truth, and “pervading influence” for the nature of error. They are quite excellent translations of the positive and negative sides of “pneuma” in this passage. The “coming to know” is the believer’s ever-growing discernment of true and false doctrine when he resides in the divine system.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

If this reference to head knowledge is meant to suggest a contrast with heart knowledge, the whole is unscriptural, for the OT uses the term *heart* as a metaphorical term for the mind. In OT language it is the heart that knows, thinks, calculates, either good or evil. (G. Clark) “Of God” means he is not of God in the sense that the source of his behavior is not of God, not that he is unregenerate. He means their source of authority is God. (J. Dillow) The knowledge is regarded as progressive, experiential, and not complete. It is the growing saint to whom reference is made ... The “Spirit of truth” is the Holy Spirit who teaches the truth, and the “spirit of error” is the spirit who comes from the devil, teaching lies and seducing men into error. (K. Wuest) The knowledge is regarded as progressive and not complete. (M. Vincent) The present tense of “anyone who knows” suggests a relationship with God which is continuous and growing ... “We know” unequivocally includes all orthodox members of John’s congregation, and indeed all faithful adherents to the Christian faith. (S. Smalley)

1 John 4:6 We (Subj. Nom.; proleptic: “and only we”; orthodox pastors, teachers, apostles) are (εἰμί, PAI1P, Descriptive) from God (Gen. Rel., Abl. Agency; as a representative). He (Subj. Nom.; positive believers) who has come to know (γινώσκω, PAPtc.NMS, Progressive, Substantival, Articular) God (Acc. Dir. Obj.) keeps listening (ἀκούω, PAI3S, Iterative) to us (Obj. Gen.; orthodox pastors); he who (Subj. Nom.; negative believer) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) not (neg. particle) from God (Gen. Rel., Abl. Agency; as a representative, and therefore is in the cosmic system) does not (neg. particle) listen (ἀκούω, PAI3S, Customary; cold, indifferent, hostile) to us (Obj. Gen.; orthodox pastors). For this reason (Abl. Source; from this fact: continual listening to orthodox ministers), we have come to know (γινώσκω, PAI1P, Progressive & Perfective; discern) the nature (Acc. Dir. Obj.; spiritual significance) of Truth (Adv. Gen. Ref.; Bible doctrine) and (connective) the nature (Acc. Dir. Obj.; pervading influence) of error (Adv. Gen. Ref.; deceit, false teaching).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:6** ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν, ὁ γινώσκων τὸν θεὸν ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. ἐκ τούτου γινώσκομεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:6** nos ex Deo sumus qui novit Deum audit nos qui non est ex Deo non audit nos in hoc cognoscimus Spiritum veritatis et spiritum erroris

LWB 1 John 4:7 Beloved [members of the royal family], let us make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers], because virtue love is from God [the Father]. Furthermore, every person who makes it a practice to exercise virtue love has been born [positional truth] from God [the Father] and has come to know [experiential truth: spiritual growth] God [the Father].

^{KW} **1 John 4:7** Divinely loved ones, let us be habitually loving one another with a divine and self-sacrificial love, because this aforementioned love is out of God as a source; and everyone who is in this manner habitually loving, out of God has been born with the present result that he is regenerated and knows God in an experiential way.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John urges (Hortatory subjunctive mood) his beloved members of the royal family to exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense) towards their fellow believers. This means they should have a relaxed mental attitude and grace orientation toward other believers, even those who annoy them. This is not something they can work up in the flesh. This is not something unbelievers can do, nor believers who reside in the cosmic system. Virtue love comes from God the Father as a source (Gnomic Present tense) and from no one else. And the only way his virtue love can be exercised is by residing and functioning in His love complex. Furthermore, every believer who makes it a practice to exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense) has been born from God the Father (Gnomic Perfect tense). That is, the first requirement is that the individual must be a Christian; this phrase refers to positional sanctification. The second phrase refers to experiential sanctification. Coming to know God the Father (Progressive Present tense) is continual spiritual growth. The believer is perfectly placed into union with Christ by the Spirit and comes to know God the Father on a continual, intimate basis when he resides in His love complex.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

John has a winning way of urging duty, addressing his readers as objects of his affection, and desiring himself to be stirred up to duty. (R. Finlayson) The love with which children of God should love one another is the *agape* love which God is in His nature, the love which is produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the yielded saint, the love which was seen in action at the Cross, and the love whose constituent elements are defined for us in 1 Corinthians 13. There should be reciprocity in the exercise of this love. (K. Wuest) *Agape* whether manifested in God or in man, is of divine origin, being God's own nature ... The divine begetting preceded the love: love is an activity of the implanted eternal life, and is therefore a proof that the life is present. (R. Orr) Being born of God is quite distinct from natural human procreation. It is brought about by God through His Spirit, in conjunction with faith in Christ on the part of those concerned. (C. Kruse) "Agape" is defined as the love of intelligence, of *comprehension* and understanding.

Combined with this is *purpose*, a purpose that corresponds to the comprehension of the object. (G. Clark)

The Bible reveals that there are different manifestations of divine love. It teaches that there is a non-redemptive, general benevolence directed, through providence, toward all men as the creatures of God. But, it also teaches that there is a special redemptive love of God directed, through regenerating grace, toward all those whom He has “chosen” in Christ “before the foundation of the world”. This love of God is a sacrificial love which is the highest expression of personal love, for “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” The intent under this subheading in I John 4 is not to discuss the natural propensity of the general, non-redemptive love of God for His creatures as creatures, but to discuss the special discriminating love, “a love that elects and predestinates” some rational creatures unto eternal life according to the free and sovereign good pleasure of His infinitely wise and holy will. (G. Long) There is a special redemptive love of God directed towards His elect when the reference is to positional truth, when we were “born from God” as this verse reminds us; but the other references to *agape* love in this passage are experiential in nature and refer to a different expression of His *agape*. (LWB)

All through this section, the word for love is *agape* love. It is not sentimental, it is not sexual, and it is not social love. It is supernatural love. It is that which the Holy Spirit can put in our hearts, and only the Spirit of God can make it real to us. It is the love of God, and only the Spirit of God can enable us to extend this love to others. This is not the kind of love you have for friends whom you delight in being with. I am afraid this verse has been misused by many. (J. McGee) I come now to declare what it is wherein peculiarly and eminently the saints have communion with the Father, and this is *love* – free, undeserved, and eternal love. This the Father peculiarly fixes upon the saints; this they are immediately to eye in Him, to receive of Him, and to make such returns thereof as He is delighted withal. This is the great *discovery* of the gospel: for whereas the Father, as the fountain of deity, is not known any other way but as full of wrath, anger, and indignation against sin, nor can the sons of men have any other thoughts of Him – here He is now revealed peculiarly as *love*, as full of it unto us, the manifestation whereof is the peculiar work of the gospel. (J. Owen) Believing does not regenerate. (W. Best)

Does everyone who is born again manifest love? The answer is obviously “no.” That is why John goes on to say that everyone who loves is born of God “and *knows* God.” There is a difference between being born again and knowing God. Knowing God is a matter of degrees, while being born again, like physical birth, is an absolute transition from hell to heaven ... Knowing Him experientially is not all or nothing. There are degrees. Our fellowship with Christ is not something that happens at a point in time; it is a process which continues over a lifetime and varies in intensity proportional to our obedience. (J. Dillow) God’s love possesses all the strength of His integrity. Likewise, in the divine dynasphere our personal love for a few derives its strength from *our* integrity, and our integrity is demonstrated in our impersonal love for all. Human integrity fulfills divine integrity ... Love is from God because He is the source of the love complex and because His love is the pattern for all genuine human love. As John continues to explain Christian love, he specifies “everyone who loves,” referring to believers only, those to whom the epistle is written. Unbelievers are never addressed as “beloved.” (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Love for one's brother comes "from God." It is not a virtue innate in us nor is it learned behavior. It is "from God." He is the originator, the giver of love. (F. Gaebelin) The main point being expressed in 1 John 7-16 is not an exhortation to love but a declaration that Christians do love because they have been born of God, who is love ... The kind of love John has in mind is the *agape* that comes only from God. Anyone who manifests this kind of love gives evidence that he is born of God ... John assures his readers that the love manifested in their lives indicates that they are the possessors of genuine knowledge. In reality they are the true Gnostics. (D. Burdick) The initial challenge "Beloved, let us love one another" is not meant to open up a discussion of the special theme of mutual love ... the real Christian is one who loves, while everyone who belongs to the world hates. (R. Schnackenburg) Surely it is false to say that everyone who experiences emotional highs is born of God. (G. Clark)

1 John 4:7 Beloved (Voc. Address; members of the royal family), let us make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards (*ἀγαπάω*, PASubj.1P, Iterative, Hortatory; relaxed mental attitude, grace orientation) one another of the same kind (Acc. Dir. Obj., Reciprocal; fellow believers), because (causal) virtue love (Subj. Nom.; *agape*, virtue, impersonal) is (*εἰμί*, PAI3S, Gnostic) from God (Abl. Source; the Father). Furthermore (continuative), every (Nom. Spec.) person (Subj. Nom.) who makes it a practice to exercise virtue love (*ἀγαπάω*, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival) has been born (*γεννάω*, Perf.PI3S, Gnostic; positional truth) from God (Abl. Source; the Father) and (continuative) has come to know (*γινώσκω*, PAI3S, Progressive; spiritual growth) God (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the Father).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:7** Ἀγαπητοί, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται καὶ γινώσκει τὸν θεόν.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:7** carissimi diligamus invicem quoniam caritas ex Deo est et omnis qui diligit ex Deo natus est et cognoscit Deum

LWB 1 John 4:8 When anyone [believer in the cosmic system] does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love [lacking virtue which comes from residence in the divine system], he has not come to know [have continued fellowship with] God [the Father], because God [the Father] is love [one of His divine attributes].

^{KW} **1 John 4:8** The one who is not habitually loving in this manner has not come to know God, because God as to His nature is love.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:8** He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The believer who resides in the cosmic system does not make it a habit to exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense). And because he lacks the virtue which is made available inside the divine system only, this reversionistic believer has not come to know God the Father (Ingressive Aorist tense) in the manner of divine fellowship. God knows Him, but he does not know God. He is a believer, but a believer out of fellowship. Prolonged residence in the cosmic system interrupts fellowship with the Father. God is love. *Agape* love in one of His divine attributes (Descriptive Present tense). When a believer resides in the divine system, His *agape* love produces virtue in him. God the Father expresses His *agape* love toward believers positionally through His sovereignty and omnipotence; He expresses His *agape* love toward believers experientially by infusing those who reside in His divine system with the highest form of virtue.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Many good, devout people, who view contemporary depravity with horror, nevertheless have been contaminated by romanticism, emotionalism, and experiences of titillation and excitement. Very few people misunderstand truth. (G. Clark) Whereas the Pauline “Agape of the Cross” gives the supreme description of the content of the primitive Christian Agape motif, the Johannine “God is Agape” gives the supreme formal statement of it. Nothing greater can be said than this: God is love, and love, Agape, is God. Agape is the *fellowship* of love ... which is often restricted and particularistic, i.e., for the brethren. Just because love in John is limited to the narrower circle of “the brethren,” it is able to develop a far greater warmth and intimacy than it otherwise could; but this limitation involves for Christian love the risk of losing its original unmotivated character, and of being restricted to the brethren to the exclusion of outsiders and enemies. (A. Nygren) The absence of the article emphasizes nature, essence, character. (K. Wuest)

In designing the power system that would sustain Christ’s humanity on earth, God patterned the love complex after His Own divine attribute of love. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) *Agape* love is the highest form of love, used to state the character of God. It describes the attitude of the eternal Father to His Son as expressed by Christ in John 17:26. (R.E. Baxter) While the concept of ‘impersonal love towards others’ is part of *agape*, it is not the only expression of *agape* from God. *Agape* is used in many passages where it is not possible to translate it as “impersonal love” and accurately communicate the concept appropriately. (LWB) Psychology is nothing but a justification of the old sin nature. It makes a patsy out of the environment. It distorts human viewpoint into a system of pseudo-sciences such as sociology, philosophy, etc. Psychology is an expression of Satan’s failure in the invention of the cosmic system, because the cosmic dynaspheres cannot produce virtue under any category. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

That the name of God is here taken personally, and for the person of the Father, not essentially, is evident from verse 9, where He is distinguished from His only begotten Son whom He sends into the world. Now, saith he, “The Father is love,” that is, not only of an infinitely gracious, tender, compassionate, and loving nature, according as He has proclaimed Himself in Exodus 34:6-7, but also One that eminently and peculiarly dispenses Himself unto us in free love ... In 2 Corinthians 13:14, ascribing sundry things

unto the distinct persons, it is *love* that he peculiarly assigns to the Father. And the fellowship of the Spirit is mentioned with the grace of Christ and the love of God, because it is by the Spirit alone that we have fellowship with Christ in grace, and with the Father in love, although we have also peculiar fellowship with Him. (J. Owen) We must be *filled* with the Spirit to be in fellowship with Him; the indwelling of the Spirit is not enough. The filling of the Spirit brings us into fellowship with the Father and the Son. (LWB)

It is true indeed (and as I told you in John 16:26-27), that I will pray the Father to send you the Spirit, the Comforter, and with Him all the gracious fruits of His love; but yet in the point of *love itself*, free love, eternal love, there is no need of any intercession for that: for eminently the Father Himself loves you. Resolve of that, that you may hold communion with Him in it, and be no more troubled about it. Yea, as your great trouble is about the Father's love, so you can no way more trouble or burden Him, than by your unkindness in not believing of it. The apostle Paul teaches us the same in Romans 5:5, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us." God, whose love this is, is plainly distinguished from the Holy Spirit, who sheds abroad that love of His; and verse 8, He is also distinguished from the Son, for it is from that love of His that the Son is sent: and therefore it is the Father of whom the apostle here specially speaks ... He is also called "the God of love," 2 Cor. 13:11, and is said to be "love:" so that whoever will know Him, 1 John 4:8, or dwell in Him by fellowship or communion, verse 16, must do it as "He is love." (J. Owen)

The eternal duration of the love of God stems from the fact that "God is love." He has not attained to love by self-effort or cultivation, nor does He hold love as a detached possession which might be abandoned at will. Love is a vital part of His being. It began when He began. If His love were to cease, a very essential part of the person of God would cease. He is what He is, to a large degree, because of His love ... The love of God is the motivation for His ceaseless activity ... The love of God has transparent purity ... The love of God has limitless intensity ... The love of God has inexhaustible benevolence. (L. Chafer) For what it is worth, the tenses and the context of 1 John 5:1 strongly argue that faith, like love in 1 John 4:8, is the *evidence* of the new birth, not its cause. (D. Carson) Love is the absolute virtue and benevolence of God's thinking and actions. Love is what God is as well as what He does. As with all the attributes of God, love belongs to the being of God and cannot be dissociated from His eternal being. His love never diminishes or improves. His nature is to bestow Himself, to give of Himself. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

God's love is different from human love, which God does not possess. Even if we understand human love, that is no guarantee that we understand God's love. Divine love in its totality is beyond our comprehension ... God's love is not emotional or sentimental. Because He is omniscient, His love cannot be complicated with ignorance or absurdities ... God's love depends on His integrity and is governed by His integrity ... God is very particular about whom He personally loves and admits into heaven. Jesus Christ is the only one worthy, and only through His merits are we acceptable. There is absolutely

nothing we can do to earn the personal love of God or the right to live with Him forever ... The love of God is expressed through grace. God's gracious gift of His Son is the greatest demonstration of His love ... Genuine love between members of the human race originates from God because He invented the love complex and through the love complex has provided Bible doctrine. Capacity for human love involves thought, emotion, and physical and spiritual expression from doctrine in the soul. Knowledge of doctrine builds our integrity, which is our capacity for love, and orients us to the reality of God's essence. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 4:8 When anyone (Subj. Nom.; believer in the cosmic system) does not (neg. particle) make it a practice to exercise virtue love (ἀγαπάω, PAPTc.NMS, Iterative, Temporal, Articular; lacking virtue), he (Subj. Nom.) has not (neg. particle) come to know (γινώσκω, AAI3S, Ingressive & Constative) God (Acc. Dir. Obj.; prolonged residence in the cosmic system interrupts fellowship with the Father), because (causal) God (Subj. Nom.; the Father) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive; one of His divine attributes) love (Pred. Nom.; God loves sinful men *sovereignly* and with *virtue*).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:8** ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:8** qui non diligit non novit Deum quoniam Deus caritas est

LWB 1 John 4:9 **By this the [sovereign, electing, discriminating] love of God [the Father] was made manifest unto us [the electing love of God preceded the sending of His Son]: that God [the Father] sent His uniquely born Son into the world [cosmic system] so that we might live [experiential: the Christian way of life] through Him.**

^{KW} **1 John 4:9** In this was clearly shown the love of God in our case, because His Son, the uniquely begotten One, God sent off into the world on a mission in order that we may live through Him.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:9** In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

There was a purpose for the work of Jesus Christ beyond bringing His elect into heaven. That is only the positional side of the divine equation. Indeed, God the Father revealed to us (Dramatic Aorist tense) His sovereign, electing, discriminating love before He sent (Intensive Perfect tense) His uniquely born Son into the world. The elective love of God, another aspect of His *agape* love, preceded the arrival of Jesus Christ on earth. When the Father sent His Son into the world, this world was enslaved in Satan's cosmic system. Jesus Christ resided and functioned in the prototype divine system while living in the devil's world so that believers might live (Constative Aorist tense) in the operational divine system through Him. The potential subjunctive mood

points to our decision to either reside in the divine system or the cosmic system by the filling of the Spirit. Residence and function in the divine system is not automatic; you have to acknowledge your sins to God to get back in, and then you have to walk by the Spirit to stay in.

So not only was there a positional dimension to His coming to earth to die for His elect, there was also an experiential dimension to His coming to earth - to teach His elect how to live while surrounded by the world's system. You are going to read a number of *relevant opinions* on the doctrine of the trinity and our fellowship or communion with the Godhead, something I think is quite important in more advanced stages of "bring matured" in Him. "Yet if we were to take a random of half a dozen people in each of our churches and ask them what relevance the Trinity has for their daily lives, we would for the most part likely meet with blank incomprehension. If that is so, does it not show a defectiveness at the heart of the Christian experience of many in conservative and Reformed churches, to say nothing of the theology that has engendered it?" (R. Letham) I think Owen, Thieme, Dillow, Chafer and to an extent Pink help remedy this, because they approach 1 John from the viewpoint of sanctification which is missing in most commentaries.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The pre-existence of Jesus Christ is clearly implied in the expression, "God has sent His Son into the world." (W. Jones) The phrase "His own individual volition" is very poor theology. The three Persons of the Trinity have but one will. On earth Christ did not act on His own volition. (G. Clark) God's love to man originated entirely within Himself. This love in its beginning was all on God's part, and none on ours. We did not love Him. There was nothing in us to awaken His love to us. (W. Jones) Our Lord is the uniquely begotten Son of God in the sense that He proceeds by eternal generation from God the Father as God the Son ... possessing co-eternally with God the Father and God the Spirit, the essence of Deity. (K. Wuest) The kind of love of which John is writing is not to be seen everywhere among men, or indeed anywhere among men. We know it because it was made manifest and this when God sent his only Son into the world. The purpose of this sending of the Son was to bring men life. Life in the full sense comes to men through Him alone. (L. Morris) "That we might live by means of Him" refers to more than eternal life. God the Father sent His Son to provide eternal salvation *and* to provide the environment in which we can produce virtue in this life. The environment of virtue is the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

It should be evident from Scripture that God does not manifest the same uniform affection or goodness toward all mankind, as Arminian unlimited redemptionists claim. One only has to provide one scriptural illustration, contextually cited, to prove this. For example, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Romans 9:13). To say that Christ's sacrificial death, which is the highest expression of divine love to man, applies equally to all men and then observe that a multitude of mankind has and is entering a Christless eternity certainly does not magnify God's love or His wisdom. Will God love those who are in hell equally with the redeemed who are with Christ in eternity? Certainly not, for a love of this nature cannot be that love of God which is immutable and eternal. What kind of God is it Who delivers up His Son to die for the redemption of each and every individual of mankind, yet does not send multitudes the gospel to acquaint

them with the gift of salvation, or send them His Spirit to apply the benefit of redemption, or give them saving faith to lay hold upon it? Such a love would be unworthy of God and a mockery to the very persons who, according to the theory of universal redemption, were bought with Christ's blood. In effect, the universal redemptionist's view reduces to this: God loved each and every one enough to have Christ die for them, but He did not love them enough to save them, or for that matter, enough to pray for them, cf. John 17:9. (G. Long)

Virtue, honor, integrity and love are left out of psychology's classification of urges entirely. (Prof. Gates, Columbia Univ.) As a believer, you should be able to handle your own problems under the function of your royal priesthood by Bible doctrine in your soul, so seeking counseling is an admission of your inability to handle your own problems and evidence of no Bible doctrine in your soul. You should be able to handle the problems of personal love, which has no virtue, with impersonal love, which has virtue, morality, courage & Bible doctrine. When you hear someone say "You bring out the worst in me," it is a statement that they cannot handle you or love of any kind. It is immaturity and a complete lack of integrity. So they switch from love to hate, which is where you get the statement "Hell hath no fury like a woman's scorn." She couldn't handle love, but she sure can handle hate. She sure hates the hell out of you, which is a sign of weakness and cosmic involvement, the tragic-flaw syndrome, which means she is in for a miserable life, whatever there is left of it ... Psychology is the study of the old sin nature, while sociology is the study of the cosmic system. There is no love in psychology or sociology as sciences. Sociology seeks to dignify the interactions of the cosmic system while psychology seeks to dignify the old sin nature. Both of them are bankrupt, because love must be defined by Truth - Category I Truth: the laws of divine establishment, and Category II Truth, Bible doctrine. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

"Mongenes" denotes not that the Son was *begotten* of the Father, but rather His uniqueness as God's one and only Son. The emphasis is upon Jesus' unique role as the bearer and revealer of the glory of God. (C. Kruse) The main thrust of *mongenes* is not 'only begotten' but 'only,' perhaps in the sense of *unique*. Jesus is the only Son of God in the sense of full deity. Christians are also called sons of God as begotten in the Spirit in the new birth. (R. Earle) The viewpoint of the unlimited redemptionist, which demands that "world" refer to each and every individual of mankind (instead of both Jew and Gentile scattered throughout the world who are ultimately manifested through faith as God's elect), logically requires this view to teach that: (1) God's love toward innumerable persons (i.e. the non-elect) is fruitless and vain; (2) the Son of God was given for innumerable individuals who never heard of Him, even more, who had no power given to them to believe in Him; (3) God is mutable in His love, unless He still loves those that be in hell; (4) God does not give all things to them for whom He gives His Son, which is contrary to Romans 8:32. (G. Long) The *distinction* which the Scripture reveals between Father, Son, and Spirit, is that whereby they are three hypostases or persons, distinctly subsisting in the same divine essence or being. Now, a divine person is nothing but the *divine essence, upon the account of an especial property, subsisting in an especial manner*. (J. Owen)

There is a twofold divine love, *beneplaciti* and *amicitie*, a love of good pleasure and destination, and a love of friendship and approbation, and they are both peculiarly assigned to the Father in an eminent manner. (J. Owen) This is an excellent statement of the two expressions of His love

that I am trying to communicate. One expression is positional and relates to our eternal destination; the other expression is experiential and relates to our friendship and fellowship with Him. The sovereign, electing, discriminating love of God placed us into His family by His good pleasure and will; the forgiving, maturing, caring love of God assists us in living the Christian way of life through His Son by the power of agape love infused in us when we reside in His divine system or love complex. There is the love of John 3:16 where He gave His Son with the love of His purpose, good pleasure, and determinate will – and the love of John 14:23 where we come unto Him and make our abode with Him and dwell with Him by the Spirit. (LWB) A move towards individualism is noticeable in Owen. “The soul addresses itself unto the want of Christ: when it finds Him not in any private endeavors, it makes vigorous application to the ordinances of public worship; in prayer, in preaching, in administration of the seals, does it look after Christ.” The order here is first private devotions, then if that fails, the ministry of the Word and sacraments, as a second back-up alternative. Communion with God is firstly a private matter. (R. Letham)

1 John 4:9 By this (Instr. Means) the love (Subj. Nom.; sovereign, electing, discriminating love) of God (Poss. Gen.; the Father) was made manifest (φανερώω, API3S, Dramatic; revealed) unto us (Dat. Adv.; the elective love of God precedes the sending of His Son): that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) God (Subj. Nom.; the Father) sent (ἀποστέλλω, Perf.AI3S, Intensive) His (Gen. Rel.) uniquely born (Adv. Acc.) Son (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Jesus Christ) into the cosmic system (Loc. Sph.) so that (purpose) we (His elect) might live (ζάω, AASubj.1P, Constative, Potential; experiential: Christian way of life) through Him (Instr. Means, Manner).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:9** ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι’ αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:9** in hoc apparuit caritas Dei in nobis quoniam Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum ut vivamus per eum

LWB 1 John 4:10 **By this [sending of His Son] virtue love came into being – not because we love God [the Father], but because He [the Father] loved us [sovereign electing love] and sent His Son [Jesus Christ], the propitiation [emphasis on *experiential* rather than *positional* cleansing, *temporal* rather than *eternal* washing] for our [the elect’s] sins.**

^{KW} **1 John 4:10** In this is the love, not that we have loved God, but that He Himself loved us, and sent off His Son, an expiatory satisfaction concerning our sins.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Virtue love came into being (Perfective Present tense) on earth when God the Father sent His Son. This expression of virtue love was His sovereign, electing, discriminating love for His sheep, His royal family. The Father does not love us because we love Him (Iterative Present tense). He loved us first (Constative Aorist tense) because virtue love is one of His divine attributes. Our love is mutable, His love is immutable. We exercise virtue love when we reside and function in His divine system, but we sin and exit His system all the time. That's why our love is mutable – it changes. But His love never changes. His virtue love was expressed to us in eternity past when He elected us by His sovereign will and pleasure. Jeremiah 31:3 says He loved them (Israel) with an everlasting love. This everlasting love as expressed for His wife (Israel) also exists for the Bride of Christ. It is not just a corporate love; it is an individual, discriminating love. Experientially, His love is also individual and discriminating; only believers who chose to reside in His system receive this love. His virtue love continues to be expressed to us by *infusion* when we reside in His love complex. In the prior verse, Jesus Christ was uniquely born so that we might live through Him. This “living through Him” is a reference to experiential sanctification. There is indeed an underlying hint of positional truth in the arrival of Jesus in 1 John, primarily as a refutation of those believers who were rejecting His humanity.

But the primary context of 1 John is living the Christian way of life, experiential sanctification. God the Father sent His Son (Dramatic Aorist tense) to earth, a propitiation for our sins. “Our” is a discriminating pronoun that points to the elect, those whom He chose in eternity past. It does not refer to all humanity indiscriminately. In particular, John is using the word to refer to those in his non-resident congregations. They are all believers; John is not writing an evangelistic invitation to unbelievers in this letter. This is a family matter. Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins. He is both our High Priest and our atoning sacrifice. This is positional sanctification. But the most important part after we become Christians is that He *continues* to be our offering for sins. Propitiation indeed has the idea of being a positional, expiatory satisfaction for our sins. But it also has the idea of being an experiential cleansing, a temporal washing of our sins – as related to the acknowledgement and subsequent forgiveness of sins in 1 John 1:9. For the second time in this epistle, the idea of propitiation has a *positional* element in the *background*, but an *experiential* element in the *foreground*. His love began when He sent His Son to be our eternal Savior, and His love continues to express itself to us throughout the Christian life. The genitive of substitution refers to an actual substitution for a specific group of selected people, not a hypothetical substitution for an indiscriminate blob of humanity.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In the Johannine writings the basic mood is altogether different. The author's interest centres primarily in the little circle of believers whom Christ has taken out of the world, that circle which is the object of Christ's special love and care and of which the chief distinguishing mark is the members' brotherly love for each other. To this circle Jesus will manifest Himself, and for it He prays, not for the whole world. (A. Nygren) This verse reveals the motivating cause of propitiation: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” The propitiation is restricted here to the definite pronouns, “we,” “us,” and “our”; that is, to believers, God's elect ... *Kosmos* has many uses and meanings - the usual meaning being “many of mankind.” According to the NT Greek text, *kosmos* occurs about

185 times. It is used some 105 times by John, 47 times by Paul and 33 times by other writers. With the use of a concordance, it is readily observed that *kosmos* is never used by Paul or the other writers to mean all mankind generically in a salvation context unless John's usage is the exception. It is used of all mankind universally in a context of sin and judgment (Rom. 3:6, 19; 5:12), but never in a salvation context. (G. Long)

In John's writings, *kosmos* is used a total of 78 times in his gospel, 23 times in I John and 4 times in II John and Revelation. A check of each of these references, in context, reveals that there are perhaps, at the most, 11 occurrences in 10 verses which could possibly, even according to Arminianism, mean all mankind generically in a salvation context. These occurrences are found in John 1:29, 3:16; two times in 3:17; once each in John 4:42, 6:33,51; 12:47; 16:8 and once each in I John 2:2 and 4:14 ... Concerning the possible usage of *kosmos* to mean all mankind without exception in the redemptive context of I John 2:2, let the reader observe that *kosmos* is used differently at least 21 out of 23 times elsewhere in the epistle. As a matter of fact, the identical term "whole world" is used in I John 5:19 where it cannot possibly mean all mankind absolutely. The burden of proof rests upon those who interpret "whole world" generically to establish that the term means all mankind in any redemptive context. (G. Long) That this love is peculiarly to be eyed in Him (the Father), the Holy Spirit plainly declares, in making it antecedent to the sending of Christ, and all mercies and benefits whatever by Him received. This love, I say, in itself, is antecedent to the purchase of Christ, although the whole fruit thereof be made out alone thereby. (J. Owen)

His *love* ought to be looked on as the fountain from whence all other sweetness flows. In Titus 3:3, "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." All naught, all out of order, and vile. Whence, then, is our recovery? The whole rise of it is from *this love* of God, flowing out by the ways there described. He is a father, a mother, a shepherd, a hen over her chickens, and the like. There is love in the person of the Father peculiarly held out unto the saints, as wherein He will and does hold communion with them. (J. Owen) In verse 9, I made a distinction between (a) the sovereign, electing, discriminating love of God that placed us into His royal family by His good pleasure and will, and (b) the forgiving, maturing, caring love of God that assists us in living the Christian way of life through His Son by the power of *agape* love infused in us when we reside in His divine system or love complex. *It is this same twofold nature of His agape love, positional and experiential, that is likewise contained in the Son's propitiation for our sins.* I have endeavored to point out this twofold distinction in 1 John 2:2 and here in this passage, with John's hint at the positional (background: secondary reference) but emphasis on the experiential (foreground: primary reference) side of propitiation. The vast majority of theological writing is on the positional side; there is very little on the experiential side. (LWB) The essence and expression of divine love are inextricably related, and both are present. (S. Smalley)

We must have an access to the Father ... in order to see His love that He peculiarly bears unto us ... the issues and fruits thereof are made out unto us through Christ alone. Though there be no light for us but in the beams, yet we may by beams see the sun, which is the fountain of it. Though all our refreshment actually lie in the *streams*, yet by them we are led up unto the

fountain. Jesus Christ, in respect of the love of the Father, is but the beam, the stream; wherein though actually all our light, our refreshment lies, yet by Him we are led to the fountain, the sun of eternal love itself. *Would believers exercise themselves herein, they would find it a matter of no small spiritual improvement in their walking with God.* This is what is aimed at ... All here is serene and quiet ... For the love of the Father is the only rest of the soul ... But how to attain to this pitch they know not. (J. Owen) The only way to experience this rest of the soul, serene and quiet, is by residence and function in His love complex. As I have estimated before, about 95% or more of Christians today do not know how to do this. About 5% of believers know about it and exercise it regularly; the rest of Christianity occasionally but rarely “stumbles” into it for a brief time after acknowledging their sins to God (1 John 1:9). Unfortunately, this confession of sins is more often than not brought about by divine discipline, not an understanding and desire to have continuous communion and fellowship with Him in the divine system. (LWB)

It is true, as was said, we do not do this *formally* in the first instant of believing. We believe in God through Christ, 1 Peter 1:21; faith seeks out rest for the soul. This is presented to it by Christ, the Mediator, as the only procuring cause. Here it abides not, but by Christ it has an access to the Father, Ephesians 2:18, into His love; finds out that He is love, as having a design, a purpose of love, a good pleasure towards us from eternity – a delight, a complacency, a goodwill in Christ – all cause of anger and aversation being taken away. The soul being thus, by faith through Christ, and by Him, brought into the bosom of God, into a comfortable persuasion and spiritual perception and sense of His love, there reposes and rests itself. And this is the first thing the saints do, in their communion with the Father; of the due improvement whereof, more afterward. (J. Owen) What Owen and the apostle John is saying is that the new believer comes to know the love of the Father at the point of regeneration. But this understanding of His positional love for us - all the blessings that come to us by way of His sovereign, electing, discriminating love – is not all there is to His *agape* love. There is another expression of His love that we can experience in our daily life if we take advantage of the experiential side of Christ’s propitiation - by acknowledging our sins to God and residing in His love complex. That is what Owen means by “the due improvement whereof” and what the apostle means by “His virtue love being matured in us” in 1 John 4:12 that soon follows. (LWB)

The Father communicates no issue of His love unto us but through Christ; and we make no return of love unto Him but through Christ. He is the *treasury* wherein the Father disposes all the riches of His grace, taken from the bottomless mine of His eternal love; and He is the *priest* into whose hand we put all the offerings that we return unto the Father ... The love of the Father unto us is an *antecedent* love; our love unto Him is a *consequent* love ... Never did creature turn his affections towards God, if the heart of God were not first set upon him ... The love of God is like Himself – equal, constant, not capable of augmentation or diminution; our love is like ourselves – unequal, increasing, waning, growing, declining. (J. Owen) Propitiation is not the cause but the result of God’s eternal love. (W. Best) The inherent power of virtue love is generated by God, the inventor of virtue. Virtue or honor or integrity is His monopoly, and since we are inherently weak, we can acquire virtue only inside His sphere of power. “That we might live by means of Him” refers to more than eternal life. God the Father sent His Son to provide eternal salvation and to provide the environment in which we can produce virtue in this life. The environment of virtue is the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) *Agape* love can only be given to God when it

has first been received from God. It exists only as response to His initial love for us ... The false teachers claimed to love God, but understood love not in Christian terms but in those of Greek philosophy. (F. Gaebelien)

1 John 4:10 By this (Instr. Means; sending of His Son) virtue love (Subj. Nom.) came into being (είμι, PAI3S, Dramatic & Pefective) - not (neg. particle) because (causal) we love (ἀγαπάω, Perf.AIIP, Iterative; when residing inside the divine dynasphere which is *mutable*) God (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the Father), but (contrast) because (causal) He (the Father) loved (ἀγαπάω, AAI3S, Constative; sovereign electing love which is *immutable*) us (Acc. Dir. Obj.; everlasting love for His elect as in Jeremiah 31:3) and (continuative) sent (ἀποστέλλω, AAI3S, Dramatic) His (Gen. Rel.; the Father's) Son (Obj. Gen.; Jesus Christ), the propitiation (Pred. Acc.; experiential not positional cleansing, temporal not eternal washing) for (substitutionary prep.) our (Poss. Gen.; the elect's) sins (Gen. Substitution).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:10** ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήκαμεν τὸν θεὸν ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἰλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:10** in hoc est caritas non quasi nos dilexerimus Deum sed quoniam ipse dilexit nos et misit Filium suum propitiationem pro peccatis nostris

LWB 1 John 4:11 Beloved [members of the royal family], if God so loved us [believers only], we also ought to make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers].

^{KW} **1 John 4:11** Divinely loved ones, since in that manner and to that extent did God love us, also, as for us, we are under moral obligation to be constantly loving one another.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John once again uses the tender vocative “beloved,” addressed to the members of his non-resident congregations. They are all members of the royal family of God. If God so loved them (Dramatic Aorist tense), and according to the 1st class conditional clause He did, they also ought to exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense) towards their fellow believers. God loved us in eternity past and elected us. He loved us historically by sending His Son, the propitiation for our sins, both positionally and experientially. He loves us continuously by infusing His love into us when we reside in His divine system. When we exit the love complex, He loves us by forgiving us our sins when we acknowledge them to Him through His Son. The adverb “so” or “in this manner” adds emphasis to the extraordinary nature of His *agape* love, which obligates us (Static Present tense) to return that love by exercising it toward our fellow believers. Now let me ask

you a few questions. Who is the “we” that ought to love their fellow believers? Who is the “us” that He loved? Who are the “beloved” John is addressing?

They are all believers. They are part of God’s elect. They are royal family. They are the only ones Jesus Christ came to redeem. They are the only ones who received the benefit of His propitiation. When the high priest made offerings for the people in OT times, it was for Israel only, not the nations. They were a nation selected out from all other nations in the world. The same principle applies during the Church Age; our High Priest was made an offering for His people only, His sheep, not for the rest of unbelieving humanity. He is the High Priest for those whom the Father had given Him, not for those whom the Father did not give Him. The Holy Spirit regenerates those whom the Father has given to Christ, and those whom Christ died for; the Holy Spirit does not regenerate those whom the Father did not give to Christ, and not those whom Christ did not die for. Unlimited atonement is a heresy that attempts to open up the election of God to all humanity, thus emptying the very meaning of “election.” It pits the persons of the Trinity against each other in the plan of salvation. It tries to take the accomplishment of salvation out of God’s hands and give it to arrogant, sinful, spiritually dead human beings.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Unacquaintedness with our mercies, our privileges, is our sin as well as our trouble. We harken not to the Spirit which is given unto us ... This makes us go heavily, when we might rejoice; and to be weak, where we might be strong in the Lord. How few of the saints are experimentally acquainted with this privilege of holding immediate communion with the Father in love ... Let it have its proper *fruit* and efficacy upon your heart ... The privilege of the saints is to have communion and fellowship with the Father. They deal with Him in the *interchange of love* ... While others have their fellowship with Satan and their own lusts, making provision for them, and receiving perishing refreshments from them, they have this sweet communion with the Father. (J. Owen) What’s more, believers can share this communion with other believers. The only requirement is to reside and function in the love complex. But it takes two. Why does it take two? Can’t the believer who resides in the love complex “carry” the believer who resides in the cosmic system? No, he cannot carry a friend who is continually residing in a completely separate sphere of existence. (LWB) Communion with the Father is wholly inconsistent with loose walking. (J. Owen)

A lewd person will not desire to hold fellowship with a sober man; and will a man of vain and foolish imaginations hold communion and dwell with the most holy God? The most specious and glorious pretence made to an acquaintance with the Father, without holiness and obedience to His commandments, serves only to prove the pretenders to be liars. The love of the world and of the Father dwell not together. And if this be so, how many that go under the name of Christians, come short of the truth of it. How unacquainted are the generality of believers with the mystery of this communion, and the fruits of it ... May the Lord open the eyes of men, that they may see and know that walking with God is a matter not of form, but power! ... But you who are seeking earnestly after a righteousness, and are religious persons, consider a little with yourselves – Has Christ His due place in your hearts? Is He your all? Does He dwell in your thoughts? Do you know Him in His excellency and desirableness? Do you indeed account all things “loss and

dung” for His exceeding excellency? Or rather, do you prefer almost anything in the world before it? Harden not your hearts. (J. Owen)

There is a lot of nonsense going on today. We are not talking about backslapping, calling somebody “brother,” or behaving so nicely in church. But do you have a concern for believers? Do you have a concern to get out His Word? Do you have a concern to serve Him? (J. McGee) According to Owen, our communion with the Father consists principally in our response to His *love*, which elicits “a peculiar delight and acquiescing in the Father.” Our distinct communion with the Son is with Him as our mediator, in response to His *grace*. Our communion with the Holy Spirit focuses on His *actions*, His working effectually, giving, glorifying Christ, and as a seal, and an earnest. Our access is to the Father, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit; when any one person is worshipped the whole Godhead is worshipped. (R. Letham) Impersonal love also rejects self-pity and never seeks to arouse or exploit the pity of others. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 4:11 Beloved (Voc. Address; members of the royal family), if (protasis, 1st class condition, “and He does”) God (Subj. Nom.; the Father) so (adv.) loved (ἀγαπάω, AAI3S, Dramatic) us (Acc. Dir. Obj.; restricted to the *beloved* – believers only), we (Subj. Nom.) also (adjunctive) ought (ὀφείλω, PAI1P, Static; are obligated) to make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards (ἀγαπάω, PAInf., Iterative, Inf. as Dir. Of Verb) one another of the same kind (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believers).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:11** Ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:11** carissimi si sic Deus dilexit nos et nos debemus alterutrum diligere

LWB 1 John 4:12 **No one has ever seen God [the essence of God cannot be seen empirically]. If we make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards one another of the same kind [fellow believers], God is residing in us [indwelling of the Father] and His virtue love is being matured in us [invisible God has visible and invisible influence in the believer who is residing inside the love complex].**

^{KW} **1 John 4:12** God in His [invisible] essence no one has ever yet beheld, with the result that no one has the capacity to behold Him. If we habitually are loving one another, God in us is abiding, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us and exists in that state of fullness.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:12** No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

No one has ever seen God (Dramatic Perfect tense). This is a reference to the invisible essence of the Father. Empirically, nobody has ever seen Him, but He indwells believers who reside and function in His love complex. If we make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards our fellow believers (Iterative Present tense), God the Father resides in us. The protasis of a 3rd class condition combined with the Potential Subjunctive mood means maybe we will fulfill our side of the equation and maybe we won't. It is up to us to maintain fellowship with Him by residing in the love complex. If we do, the Father not only indwells us, but His virtue love matures us spiritually (Progressive Perfect tense) while He functions in us. "The invisible God has visible and invisible influence in the believer who is residing inside the love complex." (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) This *agape* love is from the Father, as distinct from the Son and Spirit. This can be seen in 2 Corinthians 13:13-14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and *the love of God*, and the communication of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Therefore this indwelling (residing) is by the Father, as distinct from the Son and Spirit.

The Father's positional love, as the purpose of His will, is never altered. The Father's experiential love, as the dispensations of His grace, changes from day-to-day as we change from day-to-day. Woe to us should He ever change in His positional love for us, or take His kindness from us. But He will rebuke us, chasten us, and hide His face from us in experiential love when we reside in unconfessed sin. We will always be vessels in His house, loved in eternity past and throughout eternity future, but whether we become vessels of honor or vessels of dishonor in His house depends on us. I believe many of the fellowship passages in 1 John (like this one: His residing in us, our residing in Him) are referring to the Father, rather than the Son or Spirit. It is because of the uniqueness of the Father's distinct relationship to *agape* love and our encouragement to abide in His love complex or system that led me in that direction. It is almost impossible to force the Son or the Spirit into either the Greek language or the context of this and other passages on fellowship in 1 John.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Our love towards God is perfected and brought to maturity by the exercise of love towards our brethren in Him. (A. Plummer) If saints have this *agape* love habitually for one another, that shows that this love which God is in His nature, has accomplished His purpose in their lives. (K. Wuest) God the Father fulfils and executes the plan of His love. This He does by showing Himself propitious, by forgiving sins (by removing and destroying them according to the OT notions of sin and expiation), by establishing His reign, instead of that of Satan, over mankind, by communicating His own life to men, so that they no longer are 'in the power of the evil one' but 'in the power of the true one, in His Son Jesus Christ' who is 'the true God and eternal life,' no longer 'children of the devil' but 'children of God.' (C. Kruse) Unfortunately, too many believers are trying to please the world instead of trying to preach to the world. We are concerned about what the world thinks of us, but the important thing is: What do they think of Jesus? What do they think of us as we represent Him? (J. McGee)

Only if we love one another, does the love of God "remain in us." In order for the love of God to remain in us, it must first have been in us to begin with. As elsewhere, "remain" never signifies the initiatory event of saving faith, but the enduring relationship of walking in fellowship. The

very meaning of the word “remain” implies staying in a position already obtained or entered into and not entering into a position or state for the first time. If a nonbeliever outside of Christ should ask, “What must I do to be saved,” only another gospel would answer, “Remain in Christ.” We “remain” in Christ (i.e., remain in fellowship) by keeping His commandments *after* we have been saved ... God remains in fellowship with us only if we love one another. We become Christians, however, by faith alone. (J. Dillow) God loves, that He may be beloved. (J. Owen) There is an unmistakable reciprocity expected from God with reference to His virtue love. *We reciprocate His love by residing and functioning in His divine system.* A side-benefit, a fruit of that residence in His divine system, is that we exercise the *infused virtue love* available in His divine system towards our fellow believers. (LWB)

When He who is the Father is considered as a father, acting love on the soul, this raises it to love again. This is, in faith, the ground of all acceptable obedience ... It begins in the love of God, and ends in our love to Him. (J. Owen) Owen leaves out the 3rd part of *the agape love equation* in this statement. God loves us, we love Him, and His love extends out from us to our fellow believers. In this way we have communion with the Father in love, and that communion extends to other believers who are communing with the Father in love. Does this happen automatically by virtue of the fact that we are a Christian? No! Does this happen if we are communing with the Father in His love complex while our fellow believer is communing with Satan in his cosmic system? No! If we are residing in His love complex, He is residing in us and His virtue love is being matured in us. Two parts of *the agape love equation* are functioning, and the potential for the 3rd part of the equation is being produced in us towards our fellow believers. But our fellow believers participate in this 3rd part of the agape love equation only if they are also residing and functioning in His love complex – *reciprocating* virtue love towards us. (LWB) To abide in love is to abide in God and to sustain the conditions under which God abides in us. (C. Clark)

God’s *personal* love is conditional; He personally loves only what His righteousness approves. God’s personal love is reserved only for those who through faith alone in Christ alone become members of His family possessing the imputed righteousness of God ... God demonstrates His personal love toward us in His provisions for sustenance through the grace pipeline, as a point of reference for the unique spiritual life, and even in discipline. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Here most commentators see a reference to the false teachers who may have claimed “visions” of God, visions from which their own knowledge was mediated to them. John’s response is blanket rejection. (F. Gaebelin) I knew a “pastor” in a church in Austin, TX many years ago who used to say on the radio: “I saw Jesus Christ, outside my window, and then right in my bedroom.” I still have a cassette recording of this false teacher. My conclusion was one of three things: (a) he was a liar, (b) he needed medical attention for hallucinations, or (c) he was involved in occultic practices and was seeing demon spirits. He was a Christian, not an unbeliever. But he was a false teacher, an antichrist. A lot of similar nonsense permeates so-called ‘charismatic’ circles. (LWB)

1 John 4:12 **No one** (Subj. Nom.) **has ever** (Adv. Time; at any time) **seen** (θεάομαι, Perf.MI3S, Dramatic, Deponent; empirically) **God** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; invisible essence of the Father). **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe we will, maybe we won’t”) **we make it a practice to exercise virtue**

love towards (ἀγαπάω, PAsubj.1P, Iterative, Potential) one another of the same kind (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believers), God (Subj. Nom.; the Father) is residing (μένω, PAI3S, Static; living, functioning, abiding) in us (Loc. Sph.; due to our residence in the love complex) and (connective) His (Poss. Gen.; the Father's) virtue love (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Progressive) being matured (τελειόω, Perf.PPTc.NFS, Progressive, Modal; accomplished, perfected) in us (Loc. Sph.; invisible God has visible and invisible influence in the believer who is residing inside the love complex).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:12** θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται. ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν τετελειωμένη ἐστίν.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:12** Deum nemo vidit umquam si diligamus invicem Deus in nobis manet et caritas eius in nobis perfecta est

LWB 1 John 4:13 By this we know that we are residing in Him [the Father] and He [the Father] in us [reciprocal communion]: because by means of His Spirit [infusions from the Spirit] He [the Father] has given it [virtue love inside the love complex] to us.

^{KW} **1 John 4:13** In this we know experientially that in Him we are dwelling and He Himself in us, because He has given us from His Spirit as a source [spiritual gifts and their operation] as a permanent gift.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:13** Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John assumes that some of his readers are uncertain about whether they are residing in the Father and whether the Father is indeed residing in them (Static Present tense), i.e., reciprocal abiding or communion. There is one way they may know (Latin: intelligence) beyond a shadow of a doubt (Gnomic Present tense). The Father by means of His Spirit has given them (Dramatic Perfect tense) virtue love when they abide in the divine system. He gives them an infusion of His divine attribute of virtue love every time they reside and function in His love complex. This is His gift which is never withdrawn; it is always available to us if we acknowledge our sins to Him through Jesus Christ and return to the sphere of divine power. If we ever think He does not love us, or we do not love Him, or we do not love our fellow believers – all we need to do is realize that at that moment we are probably residing in the cosmic system and we need to get back into the divine system. Unbelief is a sin!

As support for my contention that these verses are referring to the Father, rather than to the Son or the Spirit, there is considerable emphasis on love - which is obviously an attribute of all Persons of the Godhead, but which has special emphasis for the Father. For instance, note the special emphasis of Paul in his solemn benediction in II Cor. 13:14 - “The grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ, and *the love of God*, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” I would go so far as to compare these to some of the earlier gates of the divine dynasphere: grace orientation related to the Son (the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ), personal love for God and impersonal love for mankind related to the Father (the love of God), and teachability and authority orientation related to the Spirit (communication of the Holy Spirit). I don’t know if Thieme makes this correlation or not.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, all are there, each fulfilling His own part in the saving work. The Father the Origin, the Son the Channel, the Spirit the Agent, in the redemptive economy ... The gift of the Holy Spirit within us is gratuitous on God’s part as the gift of His dear Son. He is bestowed by the Son, as the Gift of the Father’s love ... The Spirit of God, by controlling us, transforms us ... This transformation to the divine likeness is the proof and seal of a divine indwelling. (A. Plummer) Participation in the Spirit is the sign of fellowship with God. There can be no fellowship with God apart from the Incarnation. (R. Finlayson) The saint experiences the work of the Holy Spirit in him, and from that experience, he deduces the fact that the Holy Spirit is in him, a gift of God. This experiential knowledge confirms the fact that the saint dwells in God and God in him ... The presence of spiritual gifts in him, shown by their outworking in his life, is also an evidence of the presence of the Spirit in him. (K. Wuest) The presence of spiritual gifts in our life is no guarantee that we are in fellowship and that they are functioning properly. (LWB) The Christian’s consciousness of the fact of God dwelling in him is due to the Spirit of God whom God has given. This gift of God is proof of our fellowship with God. (A. Robertson)

The argument is that God would not have granted us this priceless gift if he were not in intimate relation with us and had not a steadfast purpose of grace toward us. (R. Nicole) Inward, to have joy of heart in gladness, is the highest expression of delight in love. The highest outward expression is exultation in joy, “to leap, as men overcome with some joyful sound or singing.” And if any man draws back, the Lord’s soul has no pleasure in him. He takes pleasure in those who abide with Him in the rest and complacency of His love ... He makes God his *rest*; that is, he in whom his soul does rest, without seeking farther for a more suitable and desirable object ... Thus the soul gathers itself from all its wanderings, from all other beloveds, to rest in God alone – to satiate and content itself in Him – choosing the Father for his present and eternal rest ... Austin, on this place, calls it “*super vitas*,” extending it to the several courses of life that men engage themselves in ... From His love, He sheds or pours out the Holy Spirit richly upon us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. (J. Owen) Gregory of Nazianzus: “No sooner do I conceive of the one than I am illumined by the splendour of the three; no sooner do I distinguish them than I am carried back to the one.” (R. Letham)

Love is first poured out on Christ; and from Him it drops as the dew of Hermon upon the souls of His saints. Though the love of the Father’s purpose and good pleasure have its rise and foundation in His mere grace and will, yet the design of its accomplishment is only in Christ. All the fruits of it are first given to Him; and it is in Him only that they are dispensed to us. So that the saints may, nay, do, see an infinite ocean of love unto them in the bosom of the Father, yet

they are not to look for one drop from Him but what comes through Christ. He is the only means of communication ... Our love is fixed on the Father; but it is conveyed to Him through the Son of His love. He is the only way for our *graces* as well as our *persons* to go unto God; through him passes all our desire, our delight, our complacency, our obedience. (J. Owen) John of Damascus was to apply the term *perichoresis* to refer to the mutual indwelling of the three. In Gerald Bray's imagery, they occupy the same divine space ... The three are distinct "by certain relative properties" – a phrase reminiscent of Calvin's "by certain characteristic properties." Owen understands communion as "the mutual communication of such good things as wherein the persons holding that communion are delighted, bottomed upon some union with them." (R. Letham)

So strong is Owen's focus on the three persons consecutively that the casual reader, not knowing his theology, might accuse him of tritheism, were it not for a couple of paragraphs where he recognizes the danger and makes clear statements to assuage it. (R. Letham) When I assign any thing as *peculiar* wherein we distinctly hold communion with any person, I do not exclude the other persons from communion with the soul in the very same thing. Only this, I say, *principally*, immediately, and by the way of eminency, we have, in such a thing, or in such a way, communion with some one person; and therein with the others *secondarily*, and by the way of consequence on that foundation; for the person, as the person, of any one of them, is not the prime *object* of divine worship, but as it is identified with the nature or essence of God. (J. Owen) Here Owen follows the principle of appropriations whereby particular actions are attributable to one or other person of the trinity but, since the works of the trinity are indivisible, all three persons are in some way or other involved. (R. Letham)

It is through the experience of the Holy Spirit that we enjoy the fellowship of the Father and He with us. It is literally "out of" the Spirit that we enjoy this relationship. The Holy Spirit is the source from which we draw to sustain fellowship. (J. Dillow) It should be obvious that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is one of the outstanding evidences of the salvation of the individual and also the means by which God can effect sanctification in the experiential and progressive sense ... With growth and maturity, spirituality may clearly become more significant and effective. The combined qualities of spirituality, or filling of the Spirit, and spiritual maturity, which is achieved gradually, are the two major factors that determine the quality of a Christian's spiritual life. (J. Walvoord) The writer may be insisting that the certainty that we live in God, and He in us, belongs potentially to all believers who share in the Spirit, and not to an intellectual [Gnostic] elite. (S. Smalley)

1 John 4:13 **By this** (Instr. Means; dual-function: *personal* love for God the Father and *impersonal* love toward human beings) **we know** (γινώσκω, PAI1P, Gnostic) **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj.) **we are residing** (μένω, PAI1P, Static) **in Him** (Loc. Sph.; the Father) **and** (connective) **He** (Subj. Nom.; the Father) **in us** (Loc. Sph.): **because** (causal, explanatory) **by means of** (out from) **His** (the Father's) **Spirit** (Abl. Means, Source) **He** (the Father) **has given** (δίδωμι, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic) **it** (Obj.

Gen.; infusions of virtue love inside the love complex) to us
(Dat. Adv.).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:13** Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:13** in hoc intellegimus quoniam in eo manemus et ipse in nobis quoniam de Spiritu suo dedit nobis

LWB 1 John 4:14 Indeed, we ourselves [John’s fellow Jewish believers] have understood and we keep confirming [to those outside Israel] that the Father sent His Son *to be* the Savior of the world [Gentile believers scattered throughout the earth, as *contrasted* to the earlier Jewish dispensation which was exclusivistic].

^{KW} **1 John 4:14** And as for us, we have deliberately and steadfastly contemplated, and we are testifying that the Father has sent off the Son as Saviour of the world.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:14** And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

In spite of all the verses that teach exactly the opposite of the heresy they are proposing, those of Arminian persuasion often take this passage out of context as one of their prooftexts for unlimited atonement. First of all, the “we ourselves” refers to John’s fellow Jewish believers. They have understood (Aoristic Perfect tense) and continue to confirm (Latin: testify) to those outside Israel (Iterative Present tense) that the Father sent His Son (Dramatic Perfect tense) to be the Savior of the world. “Aha!” says the Arminian steeped in Greek philosophy, “that proves He died for every single individual on planet earth who has ever lived.” But that is an incorrect assumption. The “world” here as well as in every other passage in Scripture must be understood in its context. The “world” here refers to Gentile believers scattered throughout the earth, as *contrasted* to the earlier Jewish dispensation which was exclusivistic. The “world” should be understood by another Johannine passage in his gospel, 11:51-52: “He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” The “world” refers to Gentiles as well as Jews. The formerly exclusive Jewish religion has been opened up to Gentiles everywhere. Furthermore, John is addressing the members of his non-resident congregation, reminding them that there are believers in other geographical regions than the one in which they live. This is a global gospel, not a gospel restricted to their community, state or nation.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Again I must come back and repeat: Christian love is not sloppy or sentimental; it is not sexual; it is not social. It is not something that you have at the church banquet. It is something which reveals itself when we take Christ to a lost world of sinners. That is the way we manifest our love. (J. McGee) 1 John 4:13-14 is one of the passages in Scripture which presents the Trinity. So I’m going to insert a little Trinitarian theology here. (LWB) The doctrine of the Trinity

demands a conception of the triune persons which integrates their distinctness and particularity, on the one hand, and their radical union and communion, on the other. (A. Torrance)

Distinctness and particularity, union and communion – both are equally ultimate and equally necessary. Therefore, both should equally be the focus of our attention. These parameters should be equally balanced in the way we view the Holy Trinity: unity and diversity, identity and difference, equality and order, union and particularity. (R. Letham) If we were to deny the threefoldness in God, we would be referring to another God than the God revealed in Holy Scripture ... These modes of being are distinctive modes of being, not to be equated with divine attributes nor relegated to three departments of the divine essence. They are distinguished by their distinctive relations to one another ... Father, Son, and Spirit are distinguished from one another by the fact that without inequality of essence or dignity, without increase or diminution of deity, they stand in dissimilar relations of origin to one another. (K. Barth)

A doctrine of the Trinity that is to be faithful to the Bible from which it emerges must give equivalent expression to each of these vital parameters: (1) One being – three persons, three persons – one being. We need to recognize the equal ultimacy of the being of God and the three persons. He is in fact a communion of three persons. We must give equal weight to the distinctness of the persons and to the oneness of God's being. Both sides of the picture must be seen. If we were to stress the three irreducibly distinct or different persons, we would be toward *tritheism*. If we were to stress the one indivisible union, we would be in imminent danger of *modalism*. Both must be equally weighted. (2) The three persons are *homoousios*. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are identical in being. Each person is the whole God. The three together are not more God than any one by Himself. Since all three are one identical being, no one person is of higher or lesser status than any other. There are no gradations of deity. (3) The three persons mutually indwell one another in a dynamic communion. The doctrine of *perichoresis* affirms that the three persons of the Trinity occupy the same infinite divine space. Since each is wholly God and fully God, no one person is any greater than any other, while the three together are not greater than any one. Thus, the three mutually indwell each other. (4) The three persons are irreducibly different from one another. That the three persons of the Trinity are not simply subsistent relations is demonstrated by the Incarnation. In becoming flesh, the Son took a human nature into personal union, and that for eternity. This the Father and the Holy Spirit did not do. The Son is forever united to humanity, which is not the case with the Father and the Spirit. This points to the fact that the three are different from each other. The three work together as one since they are one being. (5) There is an order (*taxis*) among the persons. The most common order in terms of the outworking of salvation, is from the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit; the reverse movement in our response to God's grace is by the Holy Spirit through the Son to the Father. However, the NT presents variations. (R. Letham)

This I give you to share, and to defend all your life, the one Godhead and power, found in the three in unity, and comprising the three separately; not unequal, in substances or natures, neither increased nor diminished by superiorities or inferiorities; in every respect equal, in every respect the same; just as the beauty and the greatness of the heavens is one; the infinite conjunction of three infinite ones, each God when considered in Himself; as the Father, so the Son; as the Son, so the Holy Spirit; the three one God when contemplated together; each God because consubstantial; one God because of the monarchia. No sooner do I conceive of the one than I am

illuminated by the splendour of the three; no sooner do I distinguish them than I am carried back to the one. When I think of any one of the three I think of Him as whole, and my eyes are filled, and the greater part of what I am thinking escapes me. I cannot grasp the greatness of that one so as to attribute a greater greatness to the rest. When I contemplate the three together, I see but one torch, and cannot divide or measure out the undivided light. (G. Nazianzen) Calvin found great delight in this quote. (LWB) Gregory oscillates back and forth from the one to the three. When he considers the one, he is illuminated by the splendour of the three. When he distinguishes the three, he is carried back to the one. Gregory points to the dangers of building our doctrine of the Trinity *either* on the one being of God in isolation or on the three persons (or any one of them) in isolation. These dangers are demonstrated thoroughly in the subsequent history of the church. (R. Letham)

The dogma of the Holy Trinity is not only a doctrinal form, but a living Christian experience which is constantly developing; it is a fact of the Christian life. For life in Christ unites with the Holy Trinity, gives a knowledge of the Father's love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is no truly Christian life, apart from knowledge of the Trinity; this is abundantly witnessed in Christian literature. (S. Bulgakov) In the West, the Trinity has in practice been relegated to such an extent that most Christians are little more than practical modalists ... But the Scripture refers to the three persons, particularly in the communication of grace to us. However, as Owen is quick to point out, when we hold distinct communion with any one person, the other two persons are also included. We may have communion with one person principally, but the other two are included secondarily, "for the person, as the person, of any one of them, is not the prime *object* of divine worship, but as it is *identified* with the nature of essence of God ... We have communion with the whole deity as such." ... General theistic worship is defective worship. I refer to the common focus on "God," undefined and undifferentiated, particularly evident in philosophy of religion circles. How much of what passes for Christian worship falls into this category? (R. Letham)

1 John 4:14 **Indeed** (emphatic), **we ourselves** (Subj. Nom.; John's fellow Jewish believers) **have understood** (θεάομαι, Perf.MI1P, Aoristic, Deponent; perceived) **and** (connective) **we keep confirming** (μαρτυρέω, PAI1P, Iterative; witnessing to those outside Israel) **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj.) **the Father** (Subj. Nom.) **sent** (ἀποστέλλω, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic) **His** (Poss. Acc.) **Son** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **to be** (ellipsis) **the Savior** (Acc. Appos.) **of the world** (Obj. Gen.; Gentile believers scattered throughout the earth, as *contrasted* to the earlier Jewish dispensation, which was exclusivistic).

^{BGT} 1 John 4:14 καὶ ἡμεῖς τεθαύμαθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέσταλκεν τὸν υἱὸν σωτῆρα τοῦ κόσμου.

^{VUL} 1 John 4:14 et nos vidimus et testificamur quoniam Pater misit Filium salvatorem mundi

LWB **1 John 4:15** If anyone [Jew or Gentile] acknowledges that Jesus [humanity] is the Son of God [deity], God [the Father] resides in him [positional truth] and he in God [experiential truth].

^{KW} **1 John 4:15** Whoever agrees with the statement that Jesus is the Son of God, God in him dwells and he himself in God.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:15** Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If anyone, Jew or Gentile, acknowledges (Potential Subjunctive mood) that Jesus is the Son of God, God the Father resides (Aoristic Present tense) in him. John's use of Jesus points to His humanity, while the phrase "Son of God" refers to His deity. John is once again pointing to the doctrine of the hypostatic union. Believers are indwelled by the Spirit, the Father, and the Son. The Holy Spirit provides an environment in the believer's soul that is suitable for the Father and Son to reside in. The indwelling of the Spirit is permanent; the filling of the Spirit is temporary. So is this indwelling of the Father permanent or temporary? That's a tough question! It appears that John teaches in his gospel that this indwelling is temporary; but is indwelling and fellowship the same thing? Fellowship with the Father and Son is definitely temporary. God the Father and God the Son only abide (live) in the believer if certain conditions are met. The first condition is the filling of the Spirit, referred to by John in this epistle as residence in the love complex, i.e., loving Me (Jesus Christ). The second condition is keeping the Words of Christ. John 14:23 states: "If a man loves **Me**, he will keep **My** words, and **My Father** will love him, and **We** will come unto him, and make **Our** abode with him."

The personal pronouns ME and MY both refer to Jesus Christ. The personal pronouns WE and OUR refer to the Father and the Son. Love from the Father is conditioned on keeping the Son's Words. The Father's & Son's abiding with you is also conditioned on keeping the Son's Words. It is by this communion in the Word wherein the Father and Son do make their abode with the soul of the believer. The Greek word *τηρέω* means *to pay attention to* and *to guard zealously* and *to obey*. These are all *experiential* concepts, not *positional* concepts. The basis of being *loved* and *abiding* is therefore twofold: **paying attention to** (studying as *motivational virtue*) and **obeying** (exercising what you have studied as *functional virtue*) the Word of God. This is so simple, yet so complicated for most believers to understand: Communion with God is through His Word. This verse does not cancel the requirements of residing in the love complex and keeping the Words of Christ for fellowship with the Father. In fact, the next verse equates this residing in God the Father and His residing in us with our residence in the love complex. I'm still wrestling with whether indwelling, abiding, and fellowship are the same thing. Stay tuned. ☺

By now you should know that though this passage in the KJV looks like an evangelistic statement about unbelievers, it is not. This is an experiential sanctification passage, like so many others in John's 1st epistle. Acknowledging the truth of the hypostatic union is not a requirement

for salvation. It is, however, a sign of experiential sanctification. Anything that has an attached requirement in it that is not given to you as a gift of God (such as the gift of *faith*) is related to experiential sanctification, not positional sanctification. The emphasis here is not on the acknowledgment, but on the fact that both Jews and Gentiles (anyone) can acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. You have to keep prior verses and subsequent verses together as a whole in order to understand what John is saying. Don't isolate a passage out of its context and wrestle it into an "altar call" when the issue is the Christian way of life. This is a difficult section to comprehend in John's epistle. The positional and experiential elements are intertwined, and naturally so, since the one (positional) is the basis for the other (experiential). But the focus must ever remain on fellowship with God; when there are requirements from you, it is experiential.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In some passages the Dweller in the heart is spoken of as "Christ," sometimes as "the Spirit," sometimes as "the Father with the Son," sometimes as "God by the Spirit." In all cases the meaning is that there is a Divine Energy within the man, quickening, inspiring, and controlling him – a new directing and strengthening force, leading on to all holy action, to patient endurance, to final victory. Man moves not upward and heavenward by a self-elicited force, but soars thither by a Divine power imparted and sustained from above. (A. Plummer) The concept of the mutual indwelling of believers in God and God in believers occurs in four places in this letter (3:24, 4:13, 15, 16). Assurance of this mutual indwelling is related in two cases to the presence of the Spirit, who bears witness to Jesus (3:24, 4:13). In the other cases it is related to the confession of Christ (4:15) and abiding in love in 4:16. (C. Kruse) Observe three stages: get to know, believe, confess. (W. Nicole)

There are far too many floodlit concentration camps for comfort. The quiet atmosphere of a prayer meeting, the frenetic mood of evangelism and charismatic worship – now almost pervasive in conservative churches – are all vehicles for crass spiritual pressure and manipulation. How often do evangelists use music to get their audience into the right mood, to soften them up, so that they can influence them more easily and so change their behavior? This is reprehensible. In the search for statistics and success, lives are subordinated to an evangelist's or a preacher's ego. Much "worship" today is not worship at all, for it is not directed to the Holy Trinity, but to the advancement of hidden agendas, the bolstering of human pride, or the entertainment of seekers ... We must work toward the abandonment of postmodernism ... by abandoning manipulation, by teaching and doing the truth. (R. Letham)

The condition of remaining in fellowship with Christ is obedience. The Holy Spirit is the energizing source behind this obedience. This same Spirit not only stimulates love and obedience but also public confession of Christ. A refusal to confess Christ results in Christ no longer remaining in fellowship with us or us with Him. (J. Dillow)

1 John 4:15 **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe yes, maybe no") **anyone** (Subj. Nom.; Jew or Gentile) **acknowledges** (ὁμολογέω, AASubj.3S, Culminative, Potential) **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj.) **Jesus** (Subj. Nom.; humanity) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S,

Descriptive) the Son (Pred. Nom.) of God (Gen. Rel., Abl. Source; diety), God (Subj. Nom.; the Father) resides (μένω, PAI3S, Aoristic; temporary residence) in him (Loc. Sph.) and (connective) he (Subj. Nom.) in God (Loc. Sph.; experiential truth).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:15** Ὁς ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ θεῷ.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:15** quisque confessus fuerit quoniam Iesus est Filius Dei Deus in eo manet et ipse in Deo

LWB 1 John 4:16 Furthermore, we [believers with Bible doctrine in their souls] have come to understand [perception] and trust [retention] this virtue love which God [the Father] has towards us. God is [by attribute and essence] virtue love. In fact, the one who resides in the love complex is residing in God [the Father] and God [the Father] is residing in him.

^{KW} **1 John 4:16** And as for us, we have known experientially the love which God has in our case, and have that knowledge at present, and we have believed and at present maintain that attitude. God is, as to His nature, love, and he who dwells in the aforementioned love in God is dwelling, and God in him is dwelling.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:16** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul and those believers in his congregation who have Bible doctrine in their souls, have come to understand (Consummative Perfect tense: perception of doctrine) and trust (Consummative Perfect tense: retention of doctrine) this virtue love which God the Father has (Durative Present tense) towards us. This expression of virtue love includes His sovereign predestinating love, His electing discriminating love, and His personal love and care for the members of His royal family. Whether He is blessing us or disciplining us, His love never fails. The believer who resides in the love complex (Static Present tense) is residing in God the Father, and God the Father is residing (Static Present tense) in him. This reciprocal relationship is how our Christian life is meant to be lived. Please notice that the believer who is not residing in the love complex – which means he is residing in Satan’s cosmic system – is not residing in God the Father and in turn God the Father is not residing in him. As I mentioned earlier, in fact over and over again, this epistle is about experiential sanctification.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

These interwoven phrases with their reciprocal relationships stress the intimate fellowship between God and the believer. What is meant by intimate fellowship? Intimate fellowship consists of having the same ideas, of thinking alike, of being in extensive agreement. Hence, intimacy with God, too, consists in knowing what God thinks. This is to say, in knowing a good

bit of theology. (G. Clark) It is “in us,” and is exercised towards Him and our brethren, but in reality it is His – it is He Himself abiding in us. (A. Plummer) Confession follows experimental knowledge and confident trust. Believers are the sphere in which the love of God operates. So he gathers up the whole argument that one who is abiding in love is abiding in God and shows that God is abiding in him. Thoroughly Johannine style. (A. Robertson) The love of God is an inherent attribute of divine essence, a vital aspect of His infinite being. Love *motivates* all God’s actions in conjunction with righteousness and justice. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

This is the glorious indwelling contemplated in the prayer of Jesus (John 17:21-23) that all believers “may be one, as Thou, Father, are in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us, that the world may believe that Thou did send Me. And the glory which Thou has given Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one, I in them and Thou in Me, that they be perfected into one.” (M. Terry) People deceived by current charismatic doctrine need this better way as a foundation for a more biblical gift theology. It is the way of love – *agape* love. What a word is this! The Holy Spirit could have moved John to use the word *philanthropia*, which denotes tender affection, love for mankind and kindness, but He did not. *Agape* is the highest form of love, used to state the character of God when we read twice over (1 John 4:8, 16) that “God is love.” (R. Baxter)

Virtue must be learned. We begin with doctrine, not with virtue. We must obey God’s mandates and make the many positive decisions necessary to submit to the *process* of learning doctrine: reception, retention, recall. Bible doctrine reveals the nature of virtue love, which reflects the essence of God. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) To dwell in love speaks of living constantly in the sphere of love, so that love is the atmosphere, as it were, in which one lives. Thus one’s attitude, one’s outlook, and one’s actions are permeated with love. To dwell in God is to be in a mystical relation with Him so that one is in His presence and in fellowship with Him. It is to know Him intimately. (D. Burdick) The love of God is indeed made up of these four things: rest, delight, reverence, and obedience. By these do we hold communion with the Father in His love. (J. Owen)

God is a triune communion of persons. Love is intrinsic to who He is. Attributes like grace, mercy, justice, and even holiness are all relative to His creatures. His wrath is relative to sinners, as the expression of His holiness in response to human sin. Love, however, belongs to who He is in Himself in the undivided communion of the three persons. The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the Father. The Father loves the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit loves the Father. The Son loves the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit loves the Son. This reciprocal love of the three persons exists in the unbreakable union of the undivided Trinity. In that we are enabled to be “partakers of the divine nature,” “changed from glory to glory” by the Spirit of the Lord, we are brought into this communion of the love of God. (R. Letham)

1 John 4:16 **Furthermore** (continuative), **we** (Subj. Nom.; believers with Bible doctrine in their souls) **have come to understand** (γινώσκω, Perf.AI1P, Consummative; perception at Gate 4) **and** (connective) **trust** (πιστεύω, Perf.AI1P, Consummative; retention at Gate 4) **this virtue love** (Acc.

Dir. Obj.; personal love) **which** (Acc. Gen. Ref.) **God** (Subj. Nom.; the Father) **has** (ἔχω, PAI3S, Durative; possesses) **towards us** (Dat. Adv.). **God** (Subj. Nom.; the Father) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive; by attribute and essence) **virtue love** (Pred. Nom.; all categories: sovereign electing love, impersonal love, personal love). **In fact** (intensive), **the one** (Subj. Nom.) **who resides** (μένω, PAPtc.NMS, Static, Substantival) **in the love complex** (Loc. Sph.) **is residing** (μένω, PAI3S, Static) **in God** (Loc. Sph.; the Father) **and** (continuative) **God** (Subj. Nom.; the Father) **is residing** (μένω, PAI3S, Static) **in him** (Loc. Sph.).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:16** καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχει ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν. Ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐν τῷ θεῷ μένει καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:16** et nos cognovimus et credidimus caritati quam habet Deus in nobis Deus caritas est et qui manet in caritate in Deo manet et Deus in eo

LWB 1 John 4:17 By this [residence in the love complex], virtue love is being accomplished [matured] in company with us [joint venture between the positive believer and the *agape* love of the Father], so that we might have confidence [advancing in the plan of God] on the day of evaluation [Judgment or Evaluation Seat of Christ], because just as He was [the incarnate Christ residing in the prototype divine system], so also are we [believers residing in the operational divine system] in this world.

^{KW} **1 John 4:17** In this has been brought to completion the aforementioned love which is in us [produced by the Holy Spirit], which love exists in its completed state, resulting in our having unreservedness of speech at the day of the judgment, because just as that One is, also, as for us, we are in this world.

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

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

By our residence in the love complex, virtue love is being matured (Consummative Perfect tense) in company with us. The preposition “meta” means this spiritual maturation process is a joint venture between the positive believer and the *agape* love of the Father. It is not happening automatically “in” us without our volition, and our volition is not accomplishing it without the power of the Holy Spirit and the Father’s *infusing* of virtue love. The purpose for this joint venture is so we might have confidence (Customary Present tense) at the Evaluation Seat of Christ (Potential Subjunctive mood) when it is time to receive rewards for our spiritual life on earth. Jesus Christ lived inside the love complex, the prototype divine system, during the dispensation of the hypostatic union. Believers who maintain fellowship by the regular acknowledgement of sins (1 John 1:9) live inside the operational divine system. The One who lived in the divine system perfectly has every right to evaluate how we lived in the system He

tested and proved to work without error. It is the nature of His humanity living in the love complex that brings Him close to us in experience. He was tempted like we are tempted; but He never exited the divine system for even a split second – proving to the world that the divine system was perfect.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Love has been carried to its end when we are like Jesus, His visible *representatives*. Jesus is in the world unseen, and our office is to make Him visible. We are to Him what He was to the Father in the days of His flesh. (W. Nicole) John has in view a victorious perseverance in the midst of trials by which a Christian merits special rewards in eternity. (J. Dillow) The *motivational* virtue of confidence in God stands behind the *functional* virtue of courage toward people and circumstances. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Progress toward maturity is not to be measured by victory over the sins we are aware of, but by hatred of the sins which we had overlooked and which we now see all too clearly. The nearer we come to the Lord, the more sinful we shall undoubtedly feel ourselves to be. When we hate sin with a perfect hatred, then it may be we are ready to be taken into the presence of the King, for to hate sin perfectly is to have our love made perfect also. (A. Custance)

The Greek noun *agape*, love, establishes a category that encompasses the entire system of practical theology. Virtue love becomes a description of the Christian way of life. God's purpose in keeping you alive is that you may develop a personal love for Him inside the love complex. Until you have achieved love for God, you have accomplished nothing as a believer. Christianity is not witnessing, prayer, giving, singing, sacrifice, emotion. Even in their proper place these are secondary. Your primary function as a believer is virtue love as a result of residence in the divine dynasphere. Personal love for God is the motivator of all the normal, legitimate activities of the Christian way of life ... Along with virtue love comes confidence. The advancing believer has mental poise and eager anticipation regarding even the ultimate test in life, the Judgment Seat of Christ, where our lives will be evaluated for eternal reward or loss of reward. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The true idea is that love is perfected in fellowship. The love of God is perfected *with us*, in communion with us, through our abiding in Him and He in us. (M. Vincent)

This, too, is the goal to which God's love has been brought, "in company with us," in its companionship with us, namely that with God's love as our companion we have boldness whenever we think of the day of judging and have one great goal which God's love wants to reach in us ... When he now uses *meta* he makes God's love our companion, writes as though that love walks arm in arm with us and assures us in regard to the final judgment. (R. Lenski) It is vitally important that we understand precisely what Christ will look for in lives. If we are to be evaluated, what are the criteria for passing the test? There seem to be three: our deeds, our faithfulness, and our words. (J. Dillow) Only dispensationalists distinguish between these two future judgments as they do between the rapture and the second coming of Christ to the earth and between the time of the resurrection of the just and the unjust. (R. Lightner)

1 John 4:17 **By this** (Instr. Means; residence in the love complex), **virtue love** (Subj. Nom.; both personal love for God

the Father and impersonal love towards mankind) **is being accomplished** (τελειόω, Perf.PI3S, Consummative; matured) **in company with us** (Abl. Means; a joint venture between the positive believer and the *agape* love of the Father), **so that** (purpose) **we might have** (ἔχω, PASubj.1P, Customary, Potential) **confidence** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; advancing in the plan of God) **on the day** (Loc. Time) **of evaluation** (Adv. Gen. Ref.; at the Judgment Seat of Christ), **because** (causal) **just as** (comparative) **He** (Subj. Nom.; the incarnate Christ) **was** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Historical; inside the prototype divine dynasphere), **so also** (adjunctive; also) **are** (εἰμί, PAI1P, Static) **we** (Subj. Nom.; Church Age believers inside the operational divine dynasphere) **in this** (Dat. Ref.) **world** (Loc. Place).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:17** Ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ' ἡμῶν, ἵνα παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, ὅτι καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:17** in hoc perfecta est caritas nobiscum ut fiduciam habeamus in die iudicii quia sicut ille est et nos sumus in hoc mundo

LWB 1 John 4:18 Fear [inability to apply Bible doctrine to a given situation when under pressure] does not exist in the love complex. On the contrary, mature [advanced] virtue love drives out [banishes] fear, because fear causes torment [self-induced misery and divine discipline]. In fact, the person who is afraid has not been matured in the love complex.

^{KW} **1 John 4:18** Fear does not exist in the sphere of the aforementioned love. Certainly, this aforementioned love which exists in its completed state throws fear outside, because this fear has a penalty, and the one who fears has not been brought to completion in the sphere of this love, and is not in that state at present.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Fear in experiential sanctification terms is the inability to apply Bible doctrine to a given situation when under pressure. It is easy to apply doctrine to life when there is no pressure. It is the trials and tests of life in the working world - Satan's cosmic system - that causes a believer to grow and mature. Two categories of people immediately fail this test and have no spiritual life whatsoever: holy-rollers and ascetics. Holy-rollers are emotional misfits who cannot think their way through pressure. Ascetics, especially monks and nuns, exit the battlefield and rarely have occasion to apply anything they learn under pressure. For those holy-rollers and ascetics who are indeed Christians – and many of them are not – they are not the spiritual giants they often presume to be; in reality, they are the most spiritually dwarfed of believers. This is especially evident today, for whenever they are forced into the world to apply the doctrine they have learned, many of them become the worst kind of despicable sinners. They flunk basic spiritual testing and often take many casualties with them.

Fear, or the inability to apply doctrine under pressure, does not exist inside the love complex (Gnomic Present tense). The moment you are afraid of something, you exit the divine system and enter the cosmic system. Virtue love and fear are mutually exclusive. As a matter of fact, virtue love casts out (banishes) fear. The initial sin of fear eventually causes torment in the soul, either in the form of self-induced misery or divine discipline. You can't reside in the love complex and be miserable; and you can't reside in the love complex and be under divine discipline. The believer who is continually afraid may enter the love complex now and again, but he has not been matured (Consummative Perfect tense) by continual residence in it. If you acknowledge your sins once a week during a prayer at church on Sunday, and that is the only time you are prompted to do so, it is likely that you have been living in the cosmic system the entire week. If that is the kind of spiritual life you are living, you really have no maturity in doctrine to draw from.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The spiritual life of the mature believer is intimately dependent on virtue-love. Three of the ten problem-solving devices are categorized under virtue-love: personal love for God the Father, impersonal love for all mankind, and occupation with the person of Christ. When virtue-love saturates the soul, fear cannot take root. With fear dislodged from the soul the spiritual life flourishes and both courage and common sense become the believer's *modus vivendi* ... Uncontrolled fear is the opposite of courage. Courage toward man and confidence toward God stand together as counterpart virtues, so that when the mental attitude sin of fear controls the soul, all virtue is eliminated. Fear is a destroyer of love because fear destroys virtue. The love complex is the sphere of virtue, in which fear cannot possibly persist ... Fear causes self-induced misery. By remaining in a position of weakness, a believer becomes his own worst enemy. He continually makes poor decisions, dedicating himself to a life of self-punishment. He cannot blame circumstances, environment, or other people for his unhappiness. He is the product of his own decisions to disobey the divine mandates concerning rebound, to ignore God's game plan, and to refuse to live in the sphere of virtue. He has failed to achieve virtue love ... Since fear is a mental attitude sin, cowardice removes the believer from the environment of virtue, the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

Fear is antithetical to the believer's confidence and courage inside the love complex. Everyone is susceptible to fear, even the mature believer. When fear catches you off-guard, you must quickly recover your mental poise, your ability to think and apply the doctrine in your soul. Rebound is the first requirement, for fear is a sin. But rebound alone will not conquer the source of fear. You need a technique that will interlock gate one with gate two and then, with the function of the love complex restored, will enable you to apply doctrine in gate four. The relaxed mental attitude of gate two is recovered by claiming promises found throughout the Bible ... Describing love, the Greek adjective *teleios* indicates that nothing which belongs to this love is left out; nothing can be added to it as an improvement; nothing of its own excellence is lacking ... *Teleios* becomes a synonym for virtue, so that what is often quoted from the KJV as "perfect love" takes on tremendous significance when recognized to mean "virtue love." (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The Christian should not live his life in coward fear, but in the boldness that comes from the

assurance of victory. Christ has defeated the devil and all his hosts. That victory bears fruit in the lives of believers. Let them accordingly live in joyous confidence. (L. Morris)

1 John 4:18 Fear (Subj. Nom.; inability to apply Bible doctrine to a given situation when under pressure: especially true of holy-roller people who cannot think their way through pressure) does not (neg. particle) exist (είμι, PAI3S, Gnostic & Customary) in the love complex (Loc. Sph.). On the contrary (adversative), mature (Nom. Descr.; advanced) virtue love (Subj. Nom.; from Gate 7) drives (βάλλω, PAI3S, Static; casts, banishes) out (adverb) fear (Acc. Dir. Obj.), because (causal) fear (Subj. Nom.) causes (έχω, PAI3S, Gnostic; produces) torment (Acc. Dir. Obj.; self-induced misery and divine discipline). In fact (emphatic), the person (Subj. Nom.) who is continually afraid (φοβέομαι, PMPTc.NMS, Iterative, Circumstantial, Deponent) has not (neg. particle) been matured (τελειώω, Perf.PI3S, Consummative) in the love complex (Loc. Sph.).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:18** φόβος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἀλλ' ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον, ὅτι ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει, ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τετελείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:18** timor non est in caritate sed perfecta caritas foras mittit timorem quoniam timor poenam habet qui autem timet non est perfectus in caritate

LWB **1 John 4:19** We [believers only] exercise virtue love, because He [God the Father] first loved us.

^{KW} **1 John 4:19** As for us, let us be constantly loving, because He himself first loved us.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:19** We love him, because he first loved us.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Believers exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense) because God the Father first loved us (Constative Aorist tense). He loved us in eternity past, He predestinated us in love, and He elected us in love. He provided us with the love complex, and He keeps on loving us even when we fail to reciprocate. His love for us is both positional and experiential. John's "we" refers primarily to believers in his congregation, but it extends to all believers in reality. The only kind of love that God extends to the non-elect is impersonal love. There is no personal love for unbelievers in this passage; this is love for members of the royal family only.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

God did not create machines. He created real flesh-and-blood human beings. And when humankind fell in the Garden of Eden and lost the capacity to love their Maker, God redeemed

them through the cross and re-impacted this capacity to every believer in Christ. Now He calls His children to the kind of loving obedience which is rooted in a gift of life that is absolutely free. God Himself loves us freely and He loves us with infinite spontaneity. So He obviously desires that our love for Him should mirror His own for us and be spontaneous in return. For that reason, in the NT Scriptures, God seeks our love. He encourages and invites it, and He promises to meet it with an experience of rich fellowship with Himself. (Z. Hodges) Love must never be conceived of as a “natural” experience of the natural man. There is such a “natural” love, but it must not be confused with the divine *agape* love. The love John speaks of originates with the Father. It became manifest in and through the Son and now characterizes the life of the children of God ... The love with which we love is not our own. We do not create it, nor do we even have the power to express it. It is always God’s love or Jesus’ love in us. But because we abide in the Father and in the Son, the love becomes also our own love. (F. Gaebelein)

Until this new capacity was given, man was without natural affection. He could neither know the love of God, nor respond to that love. But the fact that we love Him demonstrates that we have received a new heart, or a new capacity ... A natural man may manifest *phileo* love, responding to that which is attractive, but only the child of God, in whom the Holy Spirit reproduces the love of God, can manifest God’s love, *agape* love. (J. Pentecost) The whole objective of life is to qualify for blessings in eternity by being blessed on earth. When we are headed for such absolutely wonderful rewards from the hand of our glorified Lord, any trouble that besets us along the way is no reason to lose our mental poise or to cease living by the Word of God in our souls. The mature believer carries on with the objectivity and clear thinking of divine viewpoint. He is upheld by the righteousness of God, blessed by His justice, and motivated and encouraged by His love. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) It was not Adam who sought God, but rather God who sought Adam. The enslaved will cannot of itself love God. Men who love God do so because God first loved them. (W. Best) The grace of God does not find men fit to be elected, but makes them so. (Augustine)

1 John 4:19 We (Subj. Nom.; believers) exercise virtue love (ἀγαπάω, PAI1P, Iterative & Customary; both personal love for God the Father and impersonal love towards mankind), because (causal) He (Subj. Nom.; the Father) first (temporal; in eternity past, Jeremiah 31:3) loved (ἀγαπάω, AAI3S, Constative) us (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:19** ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν, ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:19** nos ergo diligamus quoniam Deus prior dilexit nos

LWB 1 John 4:20 **If someone [believer in the cosmic system] alleges: I love God, and yet he hates his brother [fellow believer], he is a liar, for he [believer in the cosmic system] who does not make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards his brother [fellow believer] whom he has seen, is not able to love God [the Father] whom he has not seen.**

^{KW} **1 John 4:20** If anyone says, I am constantly loving God, and is as constantly hating his brother [Christians], he is a liar. For the one who is not constantly loving his brother [Christian]

whom he has seen with discernment and at present does not have within the range of his vision he is not able to be loving.

^{KJV} **1 John 4:20** If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John provides a hypothetical situation (Potential Subjunctive mood), although one in which he knows is occurring in some members of his non-resident congregations. The 3rd class condition usually means “maybe this believer is functioning this way, and maybe he isn’t.” In this case, it is used to build a straw man for illustrative purposes. If a believer who is residing in the cosmic system claims (Constative Aorist tense) that he loves God (Pictorial Present tense), but he hates his fellow believer (Pictorial Present tense), he is a liar. The progressive present tense means he is not only a liar, but he is living a lie. Hatred is a function of cosmic 2 activity. It is impossible to hate a fellow believer and love God at the same time. And the more you are enslaved by your hatred for a fellow believer, the longer you are out of fellowship and the deeper enmeshed you become in Satan’s system. The mental attitude sin of hatred will destroy your spiritual life in short order. John continues.

This believer who is residing in the cosmic system and who is not exercising virtue love towards his fellow believers (Iterative Present tense) is going to have major problems convincing anyone that he loves God. He is rejecting a fellow believer whom he has seen in the flesh (Aoristic Perfect tense), but claims to love God (Gnomic Present tense) whom he has not seen (Aoristic Perfect tense). This isn’t possible (Perfective Present tense); this is self-justification and self-deception in operation, two liabilities from residing in the cosmic system with unconfessed sin. There is only one way to “see” the invisible God and that is through Bible doctrine. A believer who is residing in the cosmic system is not metabolizing anything he hears or reads from Scripture. His residence in the cosmic system has short-circuited the grace apparatus for perception. He has lost control of his life through mental attitude sins. His retention and application of any doctrine he learned has seriously malfunctioned. He does not “see” God.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The saint who approaches that tribunal in a spirit of fear is the saint who has not experienced the fullness of this love, and for the reason that he did not maintain a Spirit-filled life during his earthly sojourn. (K. Wuest) Brothers and sisters in Christ who are indwelt by the Spirit of God should experience unity based on the union they have with the triune God. (R. Lightner) Hatred will never, under any circumstances, come from the new capacity given by the new creation. The apostle says he that hates his brother is in darkness. Such a man is manifesting the fruits of the old capacity. But he that loves his brother abides in the light. The old heart manifests itself in hatred, rancor, bitterness, and maliciousness; the new heart manifests itself as the love of God is manifested through the individual. Constant warfare therefore exists between the old heart and the new heart within the child of God. (J. Pentecost) Because we have been transformed by the Gospel, our love is to be self-originating, not elicited by the loveliness of the loved - for that is

the way it is with God. He loves because love is one of His perfections, in perfect harmony with all His other perfections. (D. Carson)

Hatred of one's fellow believer is a malfunction of the ambassadorship. The lack of impersonal love as a *functional* virtue, which can be seen, indicates the lack of personal love for God as a priestly, *motivational* virtue, which cannot be seen. Malfunction in the visible indicates malfunction in the invisible. And the believer who lacks the integrity of impersonal love toward others and yet claims to love God lives a lie ... First John 4:20 presents a hypothetical case in which a believer has lost control of his life, as manifest in the malfunction of virtue love. When a believer is filled with self-righteousness, guilt, self-pity, jealousy, antagonism, bitterness, or implacability, he is not in control of his life. Mental attitude sins are a sign of having relinquished command of the soul to the old sin nature, succumbing to the devil's influence. If a believer does not control his life, he cannot produce virtue ... Having removed himself from the power sphere of God, he resides in a position of weakness from which he can only make bad decisions. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 4:20 if (protasis, 3rd class condition, "maybe he will, maybe he won't") someone (Subj. Nom.; believer in the cosmic system) alleges (εἶπον, AASubj.3S, Constative, Potential; hypothetical case in which a believer has lost control of his life): I love (ἀγαπάω, PAI1S, Pictorial) God (Acc. Dir. Obj.), and yet (contrast) he hates (μισέω, PASubj.3S, Pictorial, Potential; cosmic system activity, malfunction of the ambassadorship function) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer), he is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Progressive) a liar (Pred. Nom.; living a lie), for (explanatory) he (Subj. Nom.; the believer in the cosmic system) who does not (neg. particle) make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.NMS, Iterative, Substantival, Articular) his (Gen. Rel.) brother (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer) whom (Acc. Gen. Ref.) he has seen (ὀράω, Perf.AI3S, Aoristic), is not (neg. particle) able (δύναμαι, PMI3S, Perfective, Deponent) to love (ἀγαπάω, PAInf., Gnostic, Inf. as Dir. Obj. of Verb) God (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the Father) whom (Acc. Gen. Ref.) he has not (neg. particle) seen (ὀράω, Perf.AI3S, Aoristic; the only way to see God is through Bible doctrine).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:20** εἰάν τις εἶπη ὅτι ἀγαπῶ τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῆ, ψεύστης ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν ἑώρακεν, τὸν θεὸν ὃν οὐχ ἑώρακεν οὐ δύναται ἀγαπᾶν.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:20** si quis dixerit quoniam diligo Deum et fratrem suum oderit mendax est qui enim non diligit fratrem suum quem vidit Deum quem non vidit quomodo potest diligere

LWB 1 John 4:21 Furthermore, we have this mandate from Him [the Father]: that he who loves God [personal love] should also make it a practice to exercise [impersonal] virtue love towards his brother [fellow believer].

^{KW} **1 John 4:21** And this commandment we have from him, [namely], The one who is constantly loving God should constantly be loving also his brother [Christian].

^{KJV} **1 John 4:21** And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John reminds us that we have a mandate (Perfective Present tense) from God the Father. He who loves God through the *motivational* virtue in his soul (Progressive Present tense) should also love (Potential Subjunctive mood) through the *functional* virtue in his soul his fellow believer. Personal love for God and impersonal love for a fellow believer should go together as a package, just as motivational virtue should lead to functional virtue. Even more to the point, personal love for God is the motivation for impersonally loving other believers. Love for God is progressive and causes spiritual growth; impersonal love towards a brother is iterative and should follow as an application of the doctrine metabolized on the way to spiritual maturity. Both personal and impersonal love are expressions of *agape* love.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When you acquire spiritual self-esteem and develop personal love for God, you gain the virtue necessary to express impersonal love toward everyone in your periphery ... *Spiritual self-esteem* is prerequisite to the function of impersonal love. The mandates to “love your neighbor as yourself” imply that spiritual self-esteem is the essential foundation for impersonal love. Then, as the believer advances to *spiritual autonomy*, he builds the spiritual muscle to comply with every divine mandate regarding impersonal love for all mankind. Capacity for impersonal love is acquired through *providential preventative suffering*, which carries the believer into spiritual autonomy. Impersonal love is then tested through the people test as part of *momentum testing* on the way to *spiritual maturity* ... This is the divine mandate for a *totality* of virtue, for the *unity* of virtue love toward God and man. In order to love all mankind with impersonal love, you need a strong personal love for God. Love for God is based on a solid foundation of Bible doctrine in the soul, applied in the power of the Holy Spirit, the objectivity of basic Christian modus operandi, and the continued teachability of genuine humility. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

You obey this command, not by seeking to love God and man, but by acquiring virtue in the sustained, coordinated function of Gates 1-4 of the *divine dynasphere*. Virtue must be properly motivated. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Hungry congregations are familiar with love made insipid in the bromides and pabulum peddled by best-selling televangelists and pop psychologists. Deep down, however, Christians remember that love is not what supports our interests and makes us feel better or better adjusted. (C. Clark) We are not mandated to create or develop a quantity of love. Rather we are to love outwardly toward others what we received personally in our belovedness from God. (L. Ogilvie) There has been a lot of theological terms in this chapter of 1 John. If you are unfamiliar with them, I recommend first that you browse the glossary I have provided on my web site. I also recommend books by Thieme, Dillow and Letham to help round out your understanding of the crucial terminology necessary for experiential sanctification. (LWB)

1 John 4:21 **Furthermore** (continuative), **we have** (ἔχω, PA1P, Perfective) **this** (Acc. Spec.) **mandate** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **from Him** (Abl. Source; the Father): **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj.) **he** (Subj. Nom.) **who loves** (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.NMS, Progressive, Substantival; motivational virtue) **God** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; personal love for God in Gate 5) **should also** (adjunctive) **make it a practice to exercise virtue love towards** (ἀγαπάω, PASubj.3S, Iterative, Potential; functional virtue) **his** (Gen. Rel.) **brother** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; impersonal love for his fellow believer in Gate 6).

^{BGT} **1 John 4:21** καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχομεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 4:21** et hoc mandatum habemus ab eo ut qui diligit Deum diligat et fratrem suum

Chapter 5

^{LWB} **1 John 5:1** Every person who believes that Jesus is the Christ was born in the past [regeneration precedes faith] from God [being *born from above* in the past determines who will be *born again* in the future]. Moreover, every person who loves the One [the Father] who has begotten, should also exercise virtue love towards the person [fellow believer] who was born in the past from Him [the Father].

^{KW} **1 John 5:1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Chris, out from God has been born and as a result is His child. And everyone who loves the One who begot loves the one who has been begotten out from Him.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:1** Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Regeneration precedes faith. Arminians should blush with shame when they get to this verse. But they won't, because their heretical views of soteriology are more important to them than God's truth. Faith does not save you; grace saves you. God gets there first, every time. He selects those who will be in His royal family and regenerates them. Regeneration means their spiritually dead will is reactivated so that it has the ability to embrace the gospel. Without divine regeneration *from above*, nobody has the ability to embrace the gospel. Every person who believes that Jesus is the Christ (Perfective Present tense) was born from God in the past (Dramatic Perfect tense). Being "born from God in the past" is the doctrine of regeneration. John calls it being "born from

above” in His Gospel (John 3:3, 7). Being born *from above* determines who will be *born again*. You have to be *born from above* before you can be *born again*. Nothing was or is ever left to chance in God’s plan. Everyone who will eventually believe in Christ was marked out well in advance by the sovereignty of God. The active voice points to God the Father as the One who “begets.” The passive voice is required to refer to Jesus Christ who “was begotten.”

Moreover, every believer who loves (Progressive Present tense) the One who has begotten (Gnomic Aorist tense), should also exercise virtue love (Iterative Present tense) towards their fellow believer who was born in the past (Dramatic Perfect tense) by God the Father. “Begotten” is a word that points to family relationship. God the Father places us in His royal family. Our love for the Father (motivational virtue) should be the springboard for our loving (functional virtue) our fellow believers. Our love for the Father is a matter of degrees, depending on our communion with Him (Progressive Present tense). The more we come to know Him intimately, the greater will be our incentive to exercise virtue love towards other believers. This love for other believers is not guaranteed, as John has pointed out in prior verses – especially when refuting the claims of Gnostic-leaning believers who do not have virtue love. This is pointed-out by the Potential Indicative mood; maybe they will love their fellow believers and maybe they won’t. It depends on whether they are residing in the love complex.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The first part of verse 1 is very important. For one thing it shows that faith is the result, not the cause, of regeneration: He who believes – present tense – has already been begotten – perfect tense. There is a theme in theology books called the *ordo salutis*. In plain Latin that means the order in which the stages of salvation follow one another. No evangelical would suspect that sanctification precedes justification, and it is impossibly stupid to suppose that glorification precedes regeneration. But does faith precede and cause regeneration? Some popular evangelists think so and urge people to stir up their natural abilities and believe in order to be regenerated. But obviously a person dead in sin cannot believe. Faith is a gift of God, and it is the first activity that God causes in the new life. This verse distinctly says that everyone who believes has, already – perfect tense, been born again. Unfortunately, many popular evangelists know very little Scripture. The desire to make regeneration the result of belief is coupled with the notion that being born again is an *experience*. It is no more an experience than being born the first time was. An adult convert almost immediately experiences the result of regeneration, and even recognizes it as such; but the divine activity of resurrecting a man from the dead and implanting in him a “habitus” – a scholastic term – character, or nature, is not consciously perceived. We know it has happened when we realize that we believe that Jesus is the Christ. (G. Clark)

The Divine Begetting is the antecedent, not the consequent of the believing. (Law, A.T. Robertson) The tenses and context of this verse strongly argue that faith, like love, is the evidence of the new birth, not its cause. (D. Carson) Many modern evangelicals are attempting to evade this by invoking some special definition of saving faith. In the process, they cloud beyond hope the Biblical doctrine of faith and distort in a tragic way the Biblical message of grace. In fact, in a real sense, they are trying to do God’s work for Him. But when we do that, it is always

a serious mistake and most often it is also disastrous. In this case, it certainly is disastrous. (Z. Hodges) Like the case of Lazarus, who must first have been animated before he could respond to the command to come forth from the tomb, so life precedes faith. It would be foolish to preach in a cemetery, trusting that some of the interred dead would hear the Gospel and come to life; and yet this is what many ministers are doing. (A. Custance) Being born from God is passive; we do nothing but receive the regenerating power of God. As a result of regeneration, our believing (exercise of the will) is active. (LWB) Faith is a grace rather than a virtue; it is a yielding to God's power, rather than the exerting of our own. It is not so much that we apprehend Christ; He apprehends us – our souls are laid hold of and possessed by the truth concerning Him. (G. Findlay)

Faith is something merely passive, bringing nothing of ours to the recovering of God's favour but receiving from Christ that which we lack. (J. Calvin) Unless God makes some of them alive, they cannot possibly respond with saving faith and be redeemed ... Moreover, it is not even our own faith but a faith given to us from the Father, channeled through the Son, and made effective through the power of the Holy Spirit. (A. Custance) The previous considerations regarding man's deadness in sin point to the obvious conclusion that man must first be made capable of such a spiritual activity as saving faith, and the fact that the glory for salvation goes solely to a sovereign, life-giving God bears upon this issue as well ... If a person is now believing that Jesus is the Christ in a true and saving fashion, they are doing so because, as a completed action in the past, they were born again through the work and agency of God. The verb "to be born" is passive: they were caused to be born by another, that being God. They did not cause their own spiritual birth. And what is the *inevitable* result of being born of God? Belief that Jesus is the Christ. (J. White) What is absent is a need for gathering faith, voluntarism, faith as man's act, and faith that must await experimental knowledge to verify its presence. (Z. Hodges) In John *pisteuo* is always connected with an object. (R. Bultmann)

It is true that no one is born from God who does not receive Christ and believe on His Name; but it is equally true that no one receives Christ and believes on His Name, who is not born of God. (D. Carson) In the NT, God is clearly active, creating a people for Himself by calling them out of darkness and enabling them to believe the gospel and walk in the light. John teaches most clearly that regeneration precedes and enables faith. The verb tenses make John's intention unmistakable ... Faith is the evidence of the new birth, not the cause of it. This is consistent with John's whole book. (J. Piper) No declarations that we do not become Christians without creative prevenient grace could be clearer ... Grace is given according to a pretemporal divine plan, whereby its present recipients were chosen as sinners to be saved. (T. Schreiner) Since faith is God's gift to us in our being made alive with Christ, it cannot be said that sinners must exercise faith in order to have faith. The grace of God, which is unmerited favor, cannot stand with man's faith or anything in man. Therefore, being born of God precedes faith. His having been born of God is completed action in past time with continuing results. Therefore, he is continuing to believe, and he will always believe. He will never do anything but believe. Everyone believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. He does not believe in order to be born of God. (W. Best) We believe and, in fact, do everything else of a spiritual nature precisely because we have first been made alive. (J. Boice)

If the new birth is a quickening from the dead (Eph. 2:1), then faith must be a gift of God issuing forth from the new birth. For no spiritually dead person can spiritually understand the Word of God except he be born again, can he (John 3:3, 1 Cor. 2:14)? And does not 1 John 5:1 teach that divine life precedes saving faith? (G. Long) How much time, if any, the new birth precedes believing is not stated in Scripture, for the two cannot be separated. Saving faith always results from regeneration because regeneration is inseparable from its effects and one of the effects is faith. Without regeneration it is morally and spiritually impossible for a person to believe in Christ, but when a person is regenerated it is morally and spiritually impossible for that person not to believe. (J. Murray) This love is extended to him that shares with him the same Divine life. There is thus created a brotherhood, with a common source of life and a common stream of life. And shall not all who have a common origin and common movements love one another? (R. Finlayson) Some Christians are always wanting others to do for them, and then there are Christians who are always trying to do for others. You know which are the happier of the two. The folk that are constantly looking for attention are never happy. They are ever feeling hurt and slighted. But with those who are manifesting the love of Christ, how different! (H. Ironside) The antichrists call each other “brother, brother;” so also do men in self-made brotherhoods. When such brothers love one another, this is not evidence that they love God. (R. Lenski)

The Cerinthian Gnostics denied the identity of Jesus and the Christ. That is, they denied that the individual whom the Christian Church knew by the name “Jesus” was also the Christ. (K. Wuest) Our poor minds are inclined to narrow down brotherhood to some special fellowship, some group of assemblies with which we are linked ... It is not a question with whom you may associate, what church connection you may have; for, after all, there is only one great Assembly, the Body of Christ, which God Himself recognizes as His Church. We speak in a limited way with regard to church membership, for we think of a local fellowship, yet when the Word of God speaks of this, it means the vast company of which Christ is the glorified Head in heaven. To that Church every believer belongs, every member of the family of God in this present age. (H. Ironside) He could not be our “Jesus” (God-Saviour) unless He were “the Christ,” for He could not reveal the way of salvation except He were a *prophet*: He could not work it out except He were a *priest*: He could not confer it upon us except He were a *king*. He could not be prophet, priest, and king except He were the Christ. (R. Jamieson) The *world* here is the *cosmos*, that is, the world with all its organizations, all of its governments, all of its selfishness, its greed, its sorrow, its sickness, and its awful sin. (J. McGee) “Believing” in Jesus is a direct consequence of our “having been born” of God and therefore becomes a “test” or proof of that birth. (F. Gaebelien)

1 John 5:1 **Every** (Nom. Spec.) **person** (Subj. Nom.) **who believes** (πιστεύω, PAPtc.NMS, Perfective, Substantival) **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj.) **Jesus** (Subj. Nom.) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **the Christ** (Pred. Nom.) **was born in the past from God** (γεννάω, Perf.PI3S, Dramatic; regeneration comes before faith) (Abl. Source, Agency; being *born from above* in the past determines who will be *born again* in the future). **Moreover** (continuative), **every** (Nom. Spec.) **person** (Subj. Nom.) **who loves** (ἀγαπάω, PAPtc.NMS, Progressive, Substantival;

motivational virtue) **the One** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the Father) **Who has begotten** (γεννάω, AAPTc.AMS, Gnostic, Substantival, Articular; family relationship), **should also** (adjunctive) **exercise impersonal love towards** (ἀγαπάω, PAI3S, Iterative, Potential Ind.; functional virtue) **the person** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer) **who was born in the past** (γεννάω, Perf.PPtc.AMS, Dramatic, Substantival & Circumstantial, Articular; regenerated) **from Him** (Abl. Source; the Father).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:1** Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ [καὶ] τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:1** omnis qui credit quoniam Iesus est Christus ex Deo natus est et omnis qui diligit eum qui genuit diligit eum qui natus est ex eo

LWB 1 John 5:2 **By this we may know that we are exercising virtue love towards the students of God: whenever we keep on loving [motivational virtue] God [the Father] and we continue to execute [functional virtue] His mandates [to reside and function in the love complex].**

^{KW} **1 John 5:2** In this we know experientially that we are habitually loving the born-ones of God, whenever God we are habitually loving and His commandments are habitually obeying.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

There is a way that we may know beyond a shadow of a doubt (Gnostic Present tense) that we are exercising virtue love (Iterative Present tense) toward the students of God. “Teknon” refers to students or baby Christians; I prefer students. Whenever we keep on loving God the Father (Iterative Present tense) we are exercising *motivational* virtue. Whenever we continue to execute His mandates (Iterative Present tense) we are exhibiting *functional* virtue. His primary mandates in this context are to reside and function inside the love complex. As we have noted several times before in this epistle, residing in the love complex is not automatic. The potential subjunctive mood points to our loving God and executing His mandates as a decision we have to make in the affirmative. And it isn’t just one decision; it is daily decisions to remain in fellowship with Him according to His precise protocol. Motivational and functional virtue do not happen automatically. You must make many positive decisions - many months and years consistently residing in the divine system. Our motivational *modus vivendi* (means) is a new way of life toward God, part of the exercise of our royal priesthood. Our functional *modus operandi* (result) is a new way of operation towards man, part of the exercise of our royal ambassadorship.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When can we say that we love the children of God? The answer given is, when we love God. Have we some real love to God? Then inseparable from that is love to His children. (R. Finlayson) Our perception of the existence of love to our brethren is developed on every occasion when we exercise love and obedience toward God. (M. Vincent) *Agape* love on the part of a saint for his brother in Christ is shown when that saint observes the commandments of God, for obedience to the commandments puts that saint in right relationship to his brother Christian, which relationship results in his acting in a loving manner toward that Christian. (K. Wuest) Satan often succeeds in creating a do-not-care attitude in Christians. He does this by killing the spirit, keeping us discouraged and defeated. (R. Lightner) This statement troubles commentators because it reverses what is expected. One anticipates a conclusion like this: “And this is how we know that we love God: by loving His children and obeying His commands.” Instead, the author concludes: “This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out His commands.” (F. Gaebelein)

If you are a Christian and do not find delight in the will of God, it is because you are grieving the Holy Spirit, because there is something in your life that is dishonoring the Lord, and so you have lost your joy. Judge everything in your life that is contrary to the Word of God, and you will be surprised to find how sweet His will is. You come to the crossroads and know that God’s will is this way and your will is the other way. You know His way will mean happiness and that your way will bring misery. You may try your own way only to find that you are heaping wretchedness upon wretchedness, instead of finding true joy and peace. (H. Ironside) What does John mean here by “his commandments”? The commandments, as I understand it here, are not referring to the OT at all, but they are the commandments which the Lord Jesus gave when He was here. For example, we find not ten commandments, but about twenty-two in the 5th chapter of 1 Thessalonians: Rejoice evermore (vs. 16), pray without ceasing (vs. 17), quench not the Spirit (vs. 19), etc. These are the commandments for believers today. (J. McGee)

Instead of concluding that those who belong to God the Father must love their fellow-believers, John appears to maintain that we know we love God’s children when we love God and carry out His orders ... We know that we love God’s children when we love God. John is then saying once more that love of others is grounded in the love of God. (S. Smalley) Obedience is the medium through which love is communicated. (C. Black) All the devices which have been used to extract from this verse a sense different from that which it really conveys, are wholly unneeded, nay, out of place. (H. Alford) It is our obedience to all that God commands of us that verifies that we love the children of God. (Z. Hodges) Verse 2 is a complement to verse 1, one that makes the (spiritual) fruit inspector howl. They love to take notes on the behavior of believers, and either resign them to hell (not really a believer after all) or one who studies too much and doesn’t love the brethren - which usually means the believer they are observing is “minding his own business” and –unlike them - hasn’t changed John’s use of *agape* into some expression of *phileo* or just plain emotionalism. (LWB)

1 John 5:2 **By this** (Instr. Means; motivational virtue) **we may know** (γινώσκω, PAI1P, Gnostic, Potential Ind.; cognizance in Gate 4) **that** (conj. as Dir. Obj.) **we are exercising virtue love towards** (ἀγαπάω, PAI1P, Iterative; in Gates 2,6) **the**

students (Acc. Dir. Obj.; children: baby Christians) of God (Abl. Source): whenever (temporal) we keep on loving (ἀγαπάω, PASubj.1P, Customary & Iterative, Temporal; motivational virtue in gate 5) God (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the Father) and (connective) we continue to execute (ποιέω, PASubj.1P, Customary & Iterative, Potential; functional virtue in Gates 2,6) His (Poss. Gen.; the Father's) mandates (Acc. Dir. Obj.; to reside and function inside the love complex).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:2** ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπῶμεν καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ ποιῶμεν.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:2** in hoc cognoscimus quoniam diligimus natos Dei cum Deum diligamus et mandata eius faciamus

LWB 1 John 5:3 Indeed, this is [motivating virtue] love from God [the Father]: that we might continue observing His mandates [advancing in the spiritual life], and His mandates [when residing and functioning in the love complex] are never difficult.

^{KW} **1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, namely, that we are habitually and with solicitous care guarding and observing His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome,

^{KJV} **1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Motivating virtue comes from the Father's infused love when we reside in His divine system. It enables us to continue observing His mandates (Iterative Present tense) as we advance to tactical victory in the spiritual life. His mandates for the Church Age dispensation are not the Ten Commandments. They are not a set of rules and regulations. They are a way of life, a life that is not difficult to live if we reside in His system of virtue love and power. They are easy to fulfill when we are in fellowship with Him; they are not weighty or burdensome like the Mosaic Law was during the Jewish dispensation. "Guarding" or keeping his mandates (Latin: custodian) is not a part-time activity, nor is it automatic. John's use of the potential subjunctive mood means we have to choose to observe His mandates day after day after day in order to make progress in the spiritual life. Don't kid yourself; there is no short-cut.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Sensitivity vs. hypersensitivity is a major conflict (campaign) in angelic warfare, fought every day of our lives. Subjectivity vs. objectivity also figures into this battle ... Arrogance is not always seen. It is usually invisible, but motivational towards outwardly observable sins. Hypersensitivity is usually visible, a functional exhibition of inward mental attitude sins. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The commandments are not the law, or any aspect of the law; they rather constitute "the law of love," and "the perfect law of liberty." They enter into the teachings of grace as those

teachings are set forth by Christ, and by those to whom He gave authority and commandment. (L. Chafer) The connection between love for God and obedience is meant as a protection against thinking of love for God as “emotional feelings” about God. (F. Gaebelein) “Difficult” is a relative term, depending upon the relation between the thing to be done and the powers of the doer of it. The Christian, whose will is united with the will of God, will not find obedience to that will a task. (A. Plummer) The reason why believers feel any irksomeness in God’s commandments is, they do not realize fully by faith their spiritual privileges. (R. Jamieson)

The saint’s love for God is shown by keeping His commandments. This should be the motivating factor in our keeping God’s Word, our love for Him. This love is *agape*, that divine love produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit, which love impels us to obey Him. (K. Wuest) It is not difficult to see how God’s commandments must be grievous to me, if I am bent on giving full scope to the movement of my inner man which are opposed to them. I cannot shake off the sense of their being binding on me; and binding on me under the sanction of terrible responsibilities. Let me drown conviction as I may in pleasure’s bowl, or stifle it in the din and whirl of worldly business, conscience will not let me take my ease; I cannot get rid of God’s commandments. They haunt and harass me, they disturb and trouble me; they are grievous, often beyond expression grievous. How shall I ever shake off the feeling of their grievousness? (R. Candlish) This is the inner life of the babe in Christ, and the legalist who has no idea what the spiritual life truly is. (LWB) The seeds of victory are found in our new birth; but these must be nurtured until they ripen into mature, victorious Christian living. (Z. Hodges)

1 John 5:3 Indeed (emphatic & explanatory), this (Subj. Nom.; motivating virtue) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) love (Pred. Nom.) for God (Obj. Gen.; the Father): that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) we might continue observing (τηρέω, PASubj.1P, Iterative, Potential; advance to tactical victory in the love complex) His (Poss. Gen.; the Father’s) mandates (Acc. Dir. Obj.; His game plan for this dispensation), and (continuative) His (Poss. Gen.; the Father’s) mandates (Subj. Nom.) are (εἰμί, PAI3P, Descriptive; when residing in the divine dynasphere) never (neg. particle) difficult (Pred. Nom.; weighty, burdensome).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:3** αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν, καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσίν.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:3** haec est enim caritas Dei ut mandata eius custodiamus et mandata eius gravia non sunt

LWB 1 John 5:4 Because every category of person [racial, educational, economic, male-female, slave-free] who has been born from God may overcome the cosmic system [strategic victory as the basis for tactical victory]. Moreover, this is the instrument of victory which overcomes the cosmic system: our doctrine [resident in the soul].

^{KW} **1 John 5:4** Because everything that has been born of God is constantly coming off victorious over the world. And this is the victory that has come off victorious over the world, our faith.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:4** For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Every category of person who has been born from God (Dramatic Aorist tense) has the opportunity (Potential Subjunctive mood) to overcome the cosmic system. Race, educational level, economic status, sex, free or slave – none of this matters. Every believer may overcome the cosmic system (Futuristic Present tense). Every believer may take the strategic victory of being born from God as the basis for their tactical victory in life. The change from spiritual death to spiritual life, from being an unbeliever to becoming a believer, is a strategic victory in the angelic conflict. God wins this victory for us by placing us in His royal family. All members of the royal family are strategic winners. The question for us is: Will we become tactical winners as well? The tactical victories that follow depend on us. Our positional sanctification is the springboard for our experiential sanctification. The love complex, His divine system, is there to assist us in the daily battles. In addition to the love complex, God has also provided a weapon for us to wield in battle. This instrument of victory which helps us overcome (Constative Aorist tense) the cosmic system is the Bible doctrine in our soul. The only use of “pistis” in the Johannine epistles is right here, and it means Bible doctrine, the content of our faith. The intake, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine in the filling of the Spirit is how we conquer the cosmic system and become tactical winners in the angelic conflict.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Some in the past seem to misunderstand the context of I John and feel it refers to the test of whether or not one is a Christian, when in fact, it refers to tests of our walk and fellowship with God. All who are overcomers in I John 5:4 must be walking in fellowship ... Those who know the Lord have, according to John, overcome by virtue of the fact that they have believed and for no other reason. (J. Dillow) Victory, the effect, is put for “our doctrine,” which accomplishes it. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) It is the world that hinders obedience to God’s commandments and makes them seem grievous. (A. Plummer) The reason why God’s commandments are not burdensome is that obedience to them enables the saint to overcome the world. (K. Wuest) The “world” refers to Satan’s anti-God system in which all humans live. (R. Lightner) The old nature is a part of the flesh and will naturally be dealt with as God deals with the flesh. The flesh is one of the Christian’s mighty foes – the world, the flesh, and the devil; but He provides victory over these by His Spirit. (L. Chafer) The world puts its faith in psychology to solve life’s problems, so Christians blend the world’s answers with the Bible’s and thus destroy both ... We have achieved victory over the false doctrines about who Christ is when we believed the gospel, but the battle is still raging. (Ice, Dean)

The term “world” has here a wide meaning, for it includes whatever is adverse to the Spirit of God: thus, the corruption of our nature is a part of the world; all lusts, all the crafts of Satan, in short, whatever leads us away from God. Having such a force to contend with, we have an immense war to carry on, and we should have been already conquered before coming to the

contest, and we should be conquered a hundred times daily, had not God promised to us the victory. But God encourages us to fight by promising us the victory. (J. Calvin) You and I cannot overcome this world by fighting it. I would never serve on a committee, nor would I have part in it as pastor of a church because I do not think I was called to get into that at all. You don't overcome the world by fighting it ... I'm not trying to straighten up our government, although I think it needs straightening up. I think that both Democrat and Republican parties are in a shambles today. We are without leadership as a nation. Although I recognize all this, it is not my business to try to change it. My business is to give out the Word of God. (J. McGee) It is not the man but his birth from God, which conquers. (A. Plummer)

1 John 5:4 Because (causal) every category of (Nom. Spec.; racial, educational, economic, male-female, free-slave) person (Subj. Nom.) who has been born (γεννάω, Perf.PPtc.NNS, Dramatic, Substantival) from God (Abl. Source; strategic winners) may overcome (νικάω, PAI3S, Futuristic, Potential Ind.; strategic victory as the basis for tactical victory by continued residence in the divine dynasphere) the cosmic system (Acc. Dir. Obj.). Moreover (continuative), this (Subj. Nom.; and only this) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static) the instrument of victory (Pred. Nom.; weapon of success) which overcomes (νικάω, AAPtc.NFS, Constative, Attributive; binds, conquers) the cosmic system (Acc. Dir. Obj.): our (Poss. Gen.) doctrine (Acc. Dir. Obj.; resident in the soul; only use of πίστις in the Johannine Epistles).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:4** ὅτι πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον· καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:4** quoniam omne quod natum est ex Deo vincit mundum et haec est victoria quae vincit mundum fides nostra

LWB 1 John 5:5 Who is the person who is beginning to overcome the cosmic system [in the face of pressure], if not he [the new believer] who has come to believe that Jesus [humanity] is the Son of God [deity]?

^{KW} **1 John 5:5** Who is he who is constantly coming off victorious over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

^{KJV} **1 John 5:5** Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Who is the person who is beginning to overcome (Tendential Present tense) the cosmic system? Obviously the person must be a believer, because an unbeliever cannot conquer the cosmic system. An unbeliever doesn't even know there is an alternative to the cosmic system! Do you have to be a supergrace believer to overcome the cosmic system? We know that you must consistently reside and function in the love complex in order to overcome the cosmic system.

You must be filled with the Spirit and have enough doctrine in your soul to fight Satan's system while in pressure situations. But any believer who resides and functions in the divine system can do this; even new believers can be filled with the Spirit and fight evil with whatever doctrine they have learned. The spiritual life is not reserved for an elite few. John further identifies this person by pointing to his understanding that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is a reference to His humanity; Son of God is a reference to His deity.

The uniting of deity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ is not an advanced doctrine for supergrace believers. The doctrine of the hypostatic union is one of the first things you should learn as a young Christian. As soon as you come to believe this truth (Perfective Present tense), you already have enough doctrine to fight some spiritual battles. This is a somewhat subtle slap in the face of the Gnostic-leaning believers. They are claiming a superior state of spirituality over their fellow believers because of the Gnostic philosophies and practices they are engaged in. But their denial of some of the most basic of Christian doctrines means they are truly spiritual morons when compared to their fellow believers who have not left John's doctrinal framework for one of their own making. A similar comparison can be made to two other arrogant and completely confused groups of believers: charismatics and legalists. Both claim a form of superior spiritual life over their fellow believers, when in reality they are enmeshed in heresy.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

By His atoning death the prince of this world was cast out. By His intercession He secures a like victory to all His followers. By the use of His Name, the powers of the world had been met and worsted ... Thus strengthened, their faith achieves a continuous victory over the world. By Christ, the world is crucified to them and they to the world. And however so many may be the aspects of wrong-thinking and wrong-doing which are seen in the world, so many will be the ways in which the children of God will meet and overcome them. They will overcome its errors, its glare, its enticements, its threats, its unbelief, its hatred, its opposition, its persecution. They will overcome by powerful argument, by holy living, by sturdy resistance, by faithful testimony ... By the Word of truth, by the power of God ... Apart from Christ's light, men's vision is bounded by things seen and temporal; apart from Christ's life, their pursuits are entirely of the earth, earthy; apart from Christ's love, their aims are all for self. Hence the world is ever conquering them, and will make them first its tools, then its slaves, and at last its victims. (A. Plummer)

Here the forces of the world-system of evil, the flesh (totally depraved nature), the devil, and the pernicious age-system with which the saint is surrounded, are all engaged in a battle against the saint, carrying on an incessant warfare, the purpose of which is to ruin his Christian life and testimony. (K. Wuest) Here there is sharp antithesis between Jesus (humanity) and the Son of God (deity) united in one personality. (A. Robertson) Here again, as in verse 1, John is not content with the words "believe" and "our faith" but adds the content of this faith ... Everything depends on *what* we believe. Believing some fiction, some lie is not victory but defeat, surrender, victory for the devil, the father of lies, for the world, the devil's children who cling to his lies and his deceptions. (R. Lenski) It appears that in John's first epistle the overcomer is simply the true Christian. The particular kind of overcoming is believing in Christ. (J. Dillow)

The Greek word “nikao” means to overcome or be victorious – from which Nike sports gear gets its name. (LWB)

1 John 5:5 Who (Subj. Nom., interr. pronoun) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive, Interrogative Ind.) the person (Pred. Nom.) who is beginning to overcome (νικάω, PAPtc.NMS, Tential, Substantival, Articular; in the face of pressure) the cosmic system (Acc. Dir. Obj.), if (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe yes, maybe no”) not (neg. particle) he (Nom. Appos.; even a new believer can do this) who has come to believe (πιστεύω, PAPtc.NMS, Perfective, Substantival, Articular) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) Jesus (Subj. Nom.; humanity) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) the Son (Pred. Nom.; deity) of God (Gen. Rel.)?

^{BGT} **1 John 5:5** Τίς [δέ] ἐστὶν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ;

^{VUL} **1 John 5:5** quis est qui vincit mundum nisi qui credit quoniam Iesus est Filius Dei

LWB 1 John 5:6 **This One is He who came [Incarnation] by serum [plasma & platelets] and blood clots [red blood cells]: Jesus Christ – not by serum only [which would mean he bled to death], but by serum and blood clots [He dismissed His life in the flesh]. Furthermore, it is the Spirit who testifies [witness to the doctrine of the Incarnation], because the Spirit is truth.**

^{KW} **1 John 5:6** This is the One who came through the instrumentality of water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the sphere of the water only, but in the sphere of the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the One who is constantly bearing witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:6** This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Jesus Christ is the One (Historical Present tense) who came (Constative Aorist tense) by serum and blood clots. He was the Incarnation, the uniting of deity and humanity in hypostatic union. He was not a spirit or a phantom. He had flesh and blood. When the soldiers pierced His side as He hung on the cross, serum and blood clots came forth. Serum (Latin: aqua) was the plasma and platelets that rose to the top. This is a far more accurate translation than the word “water.” Blood clots were the red blood cells that formed at the bottom. Modern medicine explains in different terms exactly what those who were present at the cross saw firsthand. John uses it here as a refutation against Docetic Gnosticism, some sects which denied the humanity of Christ. Also of interest is the fact that in Greek mythology, the gods did not have ordinary blood, but they had “blood mixed with water.”

Serum is not a figurative term referring to water baptism or the spirit, contrary to the opinion of many commentators. I have read hundreds of pages on various schools of Gnosticism, and none of them say anything about Jesus being baptized. It's easy to see where this idea came from, but there is no reason for interpreting "water" as a figurative representation for "spirit" nor "blood" as a figurative representation of "flesh." Just because those facts are true is no reason to make a figurative interpretation of a literal pair of terms. "Water" is a literal term for plasma and platelets. The Holy Spirit was a personal witness to the Incarnation and continues to testify to it today (Durative Present tense). The Spirit is truth (Gnomic Present tense), and He would not violate His teaching ministry or His divine attributes by lying about the nature of the Incarnation.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It is true that at the Cross both water and blood came out of the side of Jesus when pierced by the soldier, as John bore witness (John 19:34), a complete refutation of the Docetic denial of an actual human body for Jesus and of the Cerinthian distinction between Jesus and Christ. (A.T. Robertson) His prescience must be all-encompassing if His promises are to be trusted – and He is truth itself. (T. Schreiner) The eternal Son of God is identical with the historic Person, Jesus. (A. Plummer) A new sense of the sinfulness of sin is the normal experience of one who is saved. As water removes that which is foreign and unclean, so the Word of God displaces all human conceptions and implants those ideals which are of God, and by the action of the Word of God as applied by the Spirit the divine estimate of sin displaces the human estimate. (L. Chafer) This is what Thieme calls *post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation*. (LWB) The verse is directed specifically against Cerinthus, who taught that "Christ" descended on Jesus at his baptism but left him before his Passion, thereby emptying the death of Jesus of all religious meaning and making. (B. Easton) There is the more usual and far more likely interpretation which explains Jesus' coming "by blood" in terms of His death on the cross ... Here "the blood" denotes Jesus' death by which He made atoning sacrifice for the sins of His people. Thus the reference to His "blood" refers, not to something done to Jesus, but to something Jesus did. (C. Kruse) "Blood" would then refer to His death, by which His earthly work was terminated. (Z. Hodges)

The idea that water refers to His baptism and blood refers to the Lord's Supper is imagination gone wild, especially when there is no ritual economy during the Church Age dispensation. The idea that water refers to baptism, and blood to His crucifixion, is better - but it's still spiritualizing. Water as Spirit and blood as flesh is, at least, a reasonable spiritualization – if there is such a thing – since it would point to deity and humanity in hypostatic union. (LWB) The scene is that of the flow of blood and water from the side of the dead Jesus, a scene that provoked amazement because of the water, which was interpreted as a literal fulfillment of Jesus' promise about himself, "From within Him shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38), with the Spirit symbolized by the living water. (7:39). The flow of blood, while in itself not startling, had a sign value as well; for it showed that Jesus died according to the law for a sacrificial victim where the blood could not be congealed but had to flow forth at the moment of death so that it could be sprinkled ... The true salvific coming in water was not John's baptizing with water, but water flowing from the side of Jesus. For the Christian the life-giving moment of the Spirit was not simply the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus in the form of a dove, but the Spirit flowing from within Jesus after His death. And the flowing blood, the sign of the sacrificial

victim, showed that Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice for sin, as the author has already affirmed in 1 John 1:7 and 2:2. (R. Brown)

The word "hudor," water, is used in the medical sense for the grayish-yellow fluid that separates from the clot in the coagulation of blood. Thus, instead of "blood and water," a more accurate translation would be "blood clots and serum." To anyone watching the Crucifixion as John did, the only positive proof of physical death was seeing blood separated into clots and serum. The obvious exception would be a trauma such as decapitation or profuse, unchecked bleeding, or, later on, some stage of decomposition. If someone dies from excessive loss of blood, clots and serum do not form; the blood simply exits the body as whole red blood, the same form that you see if you cut your finger. For the blood inside the body to precipitate into clots and serum, death must not have been caused by bleeding. Despite prolonged physical torture during His trials and suffering on the Cross, His physical death came suddenly when, with complete self-control and clarity of mind, Christ sent away His spirit. He did bleed – from His flogged back, from His hands and feet, and from the thorns that were forced into His scalp. This merely demonstrated that, as true humanity, His mortal body functioned as any normal human body would. But all these lacerations and puncture wounds did not kill our Lord. The wonderous fact about Christ's physical blood was that it contained sufficient vitamin K and coagulation factors to cause coagulation almost immediately! External bleeding was not the cause of death. Internal hemorrhaging would have resulted in very little blood remaining in the heart. The very sight of blood clots and serum is medical proof not only that Jesus was physically dead, but that He did not bleed to death. With Christ's body thrust forward, it remained in the perfect position for the maximum amount of blood to settle in the dependent portion of the heart, so that the soldier's spear would provide the evidence to all who witnessed the Crucifixion and to those studying the verse as to the exact manner of His physical death, recorded forever in the Word of God ... He died physically by His own volition – no one took His life! His work on earth was finished, the Father's plan called for Him to depart and He dismissed His own spirit. His birth was unique, His life was unique, His spiritual death was unique, and now, even His physical death was unique in that He was the only Person ever authorized to dismiss His own life when His assignment was complete. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 5:6 **This One** (Subj. Nom.) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Historical) **He** (Pred. Nom.) **Who came** (ἔρχομαι, AAPtc.NMS, Constativ, Substantival, Deponent, Articular; referring to the Incarnation in the flesh: hypostatic union) **by serum** (Abl. Means, Gen. Accompaniment; plasma & platelets rose to the top) **and** (connective) **blood clots** (Abl. Means, Ge. Accompaniment; red blood cells at the bottom): **Jesus Christ** (Nom. Appos.; refuting docetic gnosticism) - **not** (neg. particle) **by serum** (Instr. Means) **only** (adverb; not a figurative use of serum), **but** (adversative) **by serum** (Instr. Means; literally) **and** (connective) **blood clots** (Abl. Means; in the flesh). **Furthermore** (continuative), **it is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) **the Spirit** (Pred. Nom.) **Who testifies** (μαρτυρέω, PAPtc.NNS, Durative, Substantival, Articular; to this

doctrine, as a witness to the incarnation), **because** (causal) **the Spirit** (Subj. Nom.) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) **Truth** (Pred. Nom.; doctrine, teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:6** οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι· καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ μαρτυροῦν, ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:6** hic est qui venit per aquam et sanguinem Iesus Christus non in aqua solum sed in aqua et sanguine et Spiritus est qui testificatur quoniam Christus est veritas

LWB 1 John 5:7 As a matter of fact, there are three who continue to bear witness:

^{KW} **1 John 5:7** Because three there are constantly bearing testimony,

^{KJV} **1 John 5:7** For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

There are (Static Present tense) three who continue to bear witness (Durative Present tense). The Holy Spirit from the prior passage is only one of the witnesses (Latin: testimonies) to the Incarnation. That is all there is to this passage – the introduction to the three. The Trinity, while a true doctrine, is not in this verse. The KJV followed some illegitimate inserts to come up with its expansion. It is not in the original text.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Not only our rebirth but our entire growth in spiritual wisdom and the knowledge of God is the result of the working of the divine Spirit upon our life and mind through the Scriptures, and no spiritual understanding is possible apart from this activity. The witness of the Holy Spirit is, therefore, the effectual reason why the Bible is received as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice by those who are God's children. (J. Boice) Some have based the doctrine of the Trinity on 1 John 5:7-8. The evidence, however, comes from late manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate that added about 25 words, including those translated as "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit." This reading cannot be sustained as being a part of the original text; therefore it should not be used for theology and doctrine. Such procedures are cases of "proof-texting," a method that uses texts simply because they have a certain word or idea in them but gives no consideration to the context or the way in which the original author was using the text. (W. Kaiser)

Spirit, water, and blood are literal in verse 6, figurative in verse 8. The Spirit is retrospective, the blood is historical, and the water is prophetic. (J. Boice) The remainder of this verse and the first clause of verse 8 are spurious. Words which are not contained in a single Greek uncial manuscript, nor in a single Greek cursive earlier than the 14th century (the two which contain the passage being evidently translated from the Vulgate), nor are quoted by a single Greek Father during the whole of the Trinitarian controversy, nor are found in any authority until late in the 5th

century, cannot be genuine. (A. Plummer) The words on the Trinity are not in verse 7. This is because they have no basis in the Greek text. Under Roman Catholic pressure, Erasmus inserted them from the Latin Vulgate. They are not a part of the inspired Bible. (R. Earle) I don't see how the apostle Paul ever wrote the Epistle to the Romans without my notes! (a jest by A. Robertson)

1 John 5:7 As a matter of fact (introductory, confirmation), there are (εἰμί, PAI3P, Static) three (numeral) who continue to bear witness (μαρτυρέω, PAPTc.NMP, Durative, Substantival, Articular):

^{BGT} **1 John 5:7** ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες,

^{VUL} **1 John 5:7** quia tres sunt qui testimonium dant

LWB 1 John 5:8 **The Spirit and the water [figurative representation for the Word of God] and the blood [representative analogy for Christ's spiritual death on the cross]. Furthermore, these three are one in purpose.**

^{KW} **1 John 5:8** The Spirit and the water and the blood. And the aforementioned three concur in the one thing.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:8** And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The three witnesses are the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the spiritual death of Christ on the cross. The indwelling and filling of the Spirit are essential gifts that testify to the truth of the Incarnation. Water is a figurative representation for Bible doctrine, the water of the Word. Blood is a representative analogy for Christ's spiritual death on the cross. These three witnesses are in perfect agreement with each other (Perfective Present tense). Why are the three neuter while "these" is in the masculine? Masculine would refer to a person, while neuter would refer to things. This is a figure of speech called *heterosis of gender*, an exchange of one gender for another.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The Textus Receptus adds spurious words that have no right to stand in the New Testament, both due to (a) external evidence, and (b) internal probabilities. (B. Metzger) Jerome copied them correctly from the Vulgate, but they were changed by the pope at that time for political reasons. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Some Latin scribe caught up Cyprian's exegesis and wrote it on the margin of his text, and so it got into the Vulgate and finally into the Textus Receptus by the stupidity of Erasmus ... The fact and the doctrine of the Trinity do not depend upon this spurious addition. (A. Robertson) The spirit, and the water, and the blood are all neuter, and these three (masculine) are one. Because persons are meant, the pronoun is masculine, through the other words are

neuter. (E. Bullinger) The three witnesses tend to give the same testimony ... and are of one accord ... in terms of convergence. (R. Brown)

Sometimes dogmatic and party purposes lead to willful corruption of the text ... so guard against false inferences and rash conclusions. When a theologian assumes the standpoint of an ecclesiastical creed, and thence proceeds, with a polemic air, to search for single texts of Scripture favorable to himself or unfavorable to his opponent, he is more than likely to overdo the matter. His creed may be as true as the Bible itself, but his method is reprehensible. The whole Bible is ransacked and treated as if it were an atomical collection of dogmatic prooftexts. Such procedures are not exposition, but imposition. (M. Terry) The Word of God delivers us from the defilement of sin in the world today. This is my reason for being a fellow with a one-track mind. All I have ever emphasized in my ministry is the Word of God. I just have one tune that I play – I just have one message that I give. I hope it doesn't get too monotonous, but, my friend, the Word of God is the only thing which can clean up your life even as a believer, and it is the only thing which will keep it clean. This is something very important to know. (J. McGee)

1 John 5:8 The Spirit (Pred. Nom.; Gate 1 of our power system: filling of the Spirit in the divine dynasphere) and (connective) the water (Pred. Nom.; Gate 4 figurative representation for Bible doctrine, the Water of the Word) and (connective) the blood (Pred. Nom.; figurative sense which represents Christ's spiritual death on the cross). Furthermore (continuative), these (Nom. Appos.) three (numeral) are (εἰμί, PAI3P, Perfective; a fortiori) one in purpose (Loc. Purpose, Sph.; agreement, unified, concur, accord).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:8** τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:8** Spiritus et aqua et sanguis et tres unum sunt

LWB 1 John 5:9 Since we accept the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater [so obviously we should accept it, too], because this testimony [of the preceding three witnesses] is from God [the Father], because He has testified concerning His Son [Jesus Christ].

^{KW} **1 John 5:9** Since the testimony of men we are habitually receiving, the testimony of God is greater, because this is the testimony of God, [namely], that He has borne testimony concerning His Son, and this testimony is on record.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:9** If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

All of us accept (Customary Present tense) the testimony of men as part of daily life. We are inundated by experts informing us on a wide variety of fields. Since (if) we accept the testimony of these expert witnesses, and we do, then obviously we should accept the testimony of God because His Word is always greater (Gnomic Present tense) than man's. Men are sinful, fallible beings; God is not sinful and is infallible. Furthermore, the three witnesses from the prior verse – the Spirit, the Word, and the spiritual death of Christ on the Cross – all have their source from God the Father. Therefore, these three witnesses are absolutely true in all respects. God the Father has testified (Dramatic Present tense) concerning His Son and what He communicates to us by the Spirit, the Word and His spiritual death is 100% accurate. And even though the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in verse 7 alone, it is nevertheless still present in this pericope. In verse 6, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, comes to earth in the flesh. In verse 8, the Holy Spirit witnesses the 1st advent of Jesus Christ. In this verse, God the Father also witnesses the 1st advent of His Son.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

I don't know about you, but many folk whom I have talked to have reached a credibility gap between themselves and the news media, the politicians, and all who are on television today. I'll be very candid with you that there are certain news commentators whom I won't listen to any longer. I know that they are doing nothing in the world but giving out propaganda. They are not giving facts. Everything they give is biased and distorted and twisted for a liberal position. Apparently, they are willing even to misinform you, and they are willing to withhold facts to gain their objective. I have come to the place where it does not matter who they are or to what party they belong, I have no confidence in politicians. Therefore, we are in a place today where it is difficult to receive the witness of men, but the interesting thing is that John Q. Public swallows it hook, line, and sinker. You can tell by the different polls which are taken that a man's influence or his popularity is determined by what the news media says about him. The biggest frauds in the world can be built up by the media – Hollywood, of course, has done this for years. Most people do receive the witness of men; they are taken in by it. If it is said over television or if it is put into print, they will believe it. There are many people who believe whatever they read or hear, but they will not receive the witness of God. Oh, my friend, the witness of God is greater! (J. McGee)

1 John 5:9 **Since** (protasis, 1st class condition, "and we do") **we accept** (λαμβάνω, PAI1P, Customary) **the testimony** (Acc. Dir. Obj.) **of men** (Abl. Source), **the testimony** (Subj. Nom.) **of God** (Abl. Source) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnomic) **greater** (Pred. Nom., Comparative, so obviously we should accept it too), **because** (causal) **this** (Nom. Spec.) **testimony** (Subj. Nom.; of the preceding three witnesses) **is** (εἰμί, PAI3S, Static) **from God** (Abl. Source; the Father), **because** (obj. particle) **He has testified** (μαρτυρέω, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic) **concerning His** (Gen. Rel.) **Son** (Adv. Gen. Ref.; Jesus Christ).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:9** εἰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαμβάνομεν, ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων ἐστίν· ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:9** si testimonium hominum accipimus testimonium Dei maius est quoniam hoc est testimonium Dei quod maius est quia testificatus est de Filio suo

LWB 1 John 5:10 **The person who has believed on the Son of God [after regeneration] already has this witness in himself; the person who does not believe God has made Him in the past and continues to make Him in the present a liar, because he has not believed in the deposition [threefold: filling of the Spirit, water of the Word, spiritual death of Christ] which God has testified concerning His Son.**

^{KW} **1 John 5:10** The one who believes on the Son of God has the testimony in himself. The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, and as a result considers Him to be such because he has not believed the testimony which God has given concerning His Son, which testimony is on record, with the result that he is in a settled state of unbelief.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:10** He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The person who has believed on the Son of God (Historical Present tense) immediately after regeneration already has this witness (Gnomic Present tense) in himself. The person who does not believe God (Static Present tense) makes Him a continual liar (Intensive Perfect tense) because he has not believed (Intensive Perfect tense) in the threefold deposition which God the Father has testified (Dramatic Perfect tense) concerning His Son, Jesus Christ. The threefold deposition is the filling of the Spirit, the water of the Word, and the spiritual death of Christ. At least initially at the moment of salvation, all believers receive these three witnesses. Continued residence in the cosmic system may blur, dull, or even destroy their realization of these truths, but they remain true nevertheless. The unbeliever has none of these witnesses due to his rejection of God's deposition about Jesus Christ. His continued unbelief is a form of calling God the Father a liar (Latin: mendacity).

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Unbelief is not a misfortune to be pitied; it is a sin to be deplored. (J. Stott) John signals clearly that the abiding relationship is conditioned on obedience, in contrast to the regeneration experience which comes through faith alone. We conclude that the abiding relationship is not the regeneration experience. Rather, it refers to the degree of intimacy and fellowship with the Lord possible for those who continue to obey His commands. For John, Jesus Christ is "the eternal life" which abides in us. To have Christ abiding in us is not the same thing as being saved. It is a conditional relationship referring to Christ's being at home in the heart of the obedient Christian who loves his brother. It must also be remembered that these commands are to be fulfilled for a man's Christian brother. If the man is not a Christian, then this term is inappropriate. (J. Dillow)

Our human spirit, energized by the Holy Spirit, gives us the consciousness that we as believers are children of God. (K. Wuest) Faith itself is God’s own gift to the believer to lay hold of the Father. “Believing” becomes a “receiving,” and the work of God in Christ results in cleansing from sin and forgiveness of sins and inward establishment of the love of God. (F. Gaebelein) Neither here nor anywhere else does John introduce the complications often proposed by theologians. There is nothing here about “head or heart belief,” or about a “faith that yields to God as over against mere intellectual assent,” etc. The Bible does not complicate faith like that. Once we have understood the message, the issue is: Is it true or false? Do we believe it, or do we not? (Z. Hodges)

1 John 5:10 The person (Subj. Nom.) who has believed (πιστεύω, PAPtc.NMS, Customary & Historical, Temporal; after regeneration) on the Son (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of God (Gen. Rel.) already has (έχω, PAI3S, Gnostic; possesses) this (Acc. Spec.) witness (Acc. Dir. Obj.) in himself (Loc. Sph.); the person (Subj. Nom.) who does not (neg. particle) believe (πιστεύω, PAPtc.NMS, Static, Substantival, Articular) God (Dat. Disadv.) has made Him in the past and continues to make Him in the present (ποιέω, Perf.AI3S, Intensive) a liar (Acc. Dir. Obj.), because (causal) he has not (neg. particle) believed (πιστεύω, Perf.AI3S, Intensive) in the deposition (Acc. Dir. Obj.; 3-fold: filling of the Spirit, water of the Word, spiritual death of Christ) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) God (Subj. Nom.) has testified (μαρτυρέω, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic) concerning His (Gen. Rel.) Son (Adv. Gen. Ref.).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:10** ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐκ ἐπίστευκεν εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ θεὸς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:10** qui credit in Filio Dei habet testimonium Dei in se qui non credit Filio mendacem facit eum quoniam non credidit in testimonio quod testificatus est Deus de Filio suo

LWB 1 John 5:11 In fact, this is the deposition [written account of the three witnesses] that God [the Father] has given to us: eternal life, and this life [especially the qualitative, experiential side] is in His Son.

^{KW} **1 John 5:11** And this is the testimony, that life eternal God gave us. And this life is in His Son.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

God the Father has given us a gift (Culminative Aorist tense) to go along with the account of His three witnesses. This gift is eternal life, both qualitative and temporal. We receive eternal life at the moment of salvation by imputation. The temporal or futuristic guarantee of eternal life with

God can be enhanced and experienced right now by residing and functioning in the love complex. This eternal life is in the sphere of His Son, Jesus Christ. John is slapping the Gnostic-leaning believers once again, because when they reject the humanity of Jesus Christ, they are rejecting eternal life which is only available in the sphere of Jesus Christ. In other words, if they don't want eternal life – just keep rejecting the Father's deposition concerning His Son (sanctified sarcasm). The emphasis in this epistle, as I have stated many times before, is experiential sanctification. So while there is a definite temporal side of eternal life that all believers receive, the qualitative (experiential) side of eternal life is only experienced by those believers who reside and function in the *operational* love complex like Jesus Christ resided in the *prototype* love complex.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

In the OT believers were given the righteousness of God and eternal life through imputation rather through union with Christ. In the Church Age every believer receives divine righteousness and eternal life by imputation and by union with Christ. This double portion belongs to spiritual royalty alone. Both are required for a relationship with God. To live with perfect God forever, man needs God's own righteousness and God's own life. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) The importation of a new life is a gift of God to all those who believe on Christ; it is from Christ; it is Christ indwelling the believer in the sense that eternal life is inseparable from Him, and therefore is as eternal as He is eternal. (L. Chafer)

In 1st John to “have the Son” means to be indwelt by the Son, something which viewed from the human perspective is initiated when people believe in Him. To “have the Son” is to have eternal life because the Son Himself is the eternal life that was with the Father ... To have eternal life means to have one's spiritual hunger and thirst satisfied, to be raised up on the last day and to live forever, to have the light of life so that one does not walk in darkness, to have abundant life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent, and that, though we die, we will live. (C. Kruse) Physical life is *bios*; eternal life is *zoe*. (LWB)

1 John 5:11 In fact (emphatic), this (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) the deposition (Pred. Nom.; written account of the three witnesses) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) God (Subj. Nom.; the Father) has given (δίδωμι, AAI3S, Culminative) to us (Dat. Adv.): eternal (Qualitative Acc., Extent of Time) life (Acc. Dir. Obj.), and (connective) this (Nom. Spec.) life (Nom. Appos.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) in His (Gen. Rel.) Son (Loc. Sph.).

BGT **1 John 5:11** Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεός, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.

VUL **1 John 5:11** et hoc est testimonium quoniam vitam aeternam dedit nobis Deus et haec vita in Filio eius est

LWB **1 John 5:12** He [the positive believer] who has the Son [fellowship with Jesus Christ] may have this [qualitative] life; he who does not have the Son of God [no fellowship with Jesus Christ] does not have this [qualitative] life.

^{KW} **1 John 5:12** The one who has the Son has the life. The one who does not have the Son of God the life he does not have.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The emphasis on eternal life in this passage is on the qualitative, experiential aspect. “Having the Son” is a reference to fellowship with Jesus Christ. All believers have the opportunity to have fellowship with Christ (Potential Indicative mood), but all too few know how to maintain this fellowship or even know that it exists. Believing in Christ after regeneration does not guarantee a qualitative, experiential life of fellowship with the Lord. It should be experienced by all believers (Customary Present tense), but negative believers do not experience (Gnomic Present tense) this eternal life. Believers in the cosmic system are not experiencing a qualitative life with Christ. They are going to heaven, but they do not “have heaven to go to heaven in.” They are living in hell on their way to heaven. What a tragedy! Again, those believers who do not “have” fellowship with the Son of God (Gnomic Present tense) do not “have” this life.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Christ is also at work in His church on earth while He is bodily at the right hand of God in heaven. In numerous passages Christ is said to indwell His church and to be with His church. He also abides in His church in the sense that He is the giver of eternal life to His church. In addition to Christ’s own ministry to the church, He has sent His Holy Spirit to accomplish a present work in the believer, and the Father, likewise, indwells all believers in this age. (L. Chafer) To have eternal life means to have the Son, that is, to have Christ indwelling us. To have Christ indwelling us means that we will love fellow believers. Therefore, to say that we have eternal life while we hate fellow believers is a contradiction in terms. (C. Kruse) Both *aion* and *aionios* are used to describe the kind of life which is received at regeneration. This quality of life is the possession of believers now and in the age to come without end or interruption. (R. Morey)

1 John 5:12 **He** (Subj. Nom.; positive believer) **who has** (ἐχῶ, PAPtc.NMS, Customary, Substantival, Articular; experiential) **the Son** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellowship with Jesus Christ) **may have** (ἐχῶ, PAI3S, Customary, Potential Ind.) **this** (Acc. Spec.; qualitative, eternal) **life** (Acc. Dir. Obj.); **he** (Subj. Nom.; negative believer or unbeliever) **who does not** (neg. particle) **have** (ἐχῶ, PAPtc.NMS, Gnomic, Substantival, Articular; experiential) **the Son** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; no fellowship with Jesus Christ) **of God** (Gen. Rel.) **does not** (neg. particle) **have** (ἐχῶ, PAI3S, Gnomic; experiential) **this** (Acc. Spec.;

qualitative, eternal) **life** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; neither *eternal* or *temporal*).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:12** ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει τὴν ζωὴν· ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ ἔχει.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:12** qui habet Filium habet vitam qui non habet Filium Dei vitam non habet

LWB 1 John 5:13 I have written these things [Bible doctrines] to you who have believed on the Person of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life [positional and experiential].

^{KW} **1 John 5:13** These things I write to you in order that you may know with an absolute knowledge that life you are having, eternal life, to you who believe on the Name of the Son of God.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John has written (Epistolary Aorist tense) these Bible doctrines to those in his non-resident congregations who have believed (Historical Present tense) on the Person of the Son of God. John is not addressing unbelievers. This epistle is for believers only; he is taking care of family business. All those to whom he is writing possess eternal life (Perfective Present tense) in the positional sense; they are all going to heaven. Hopefully this letter or treatise will enable them to know beyond a shadow of a doubt (Intensive Perfect tense) that they have this eternal life. Even more to the point of this letter, however, is that they might know (Potential Subjunctive mood) that they possess the qualitative aspect of eternal life that is available right now by fellowship with Christ in the love complex. This is the thrust of the entire epistle. It's great to know you're going to heaven; but it's also great to know you can have a slice of heaven here by communing with the Lord. First they need to understand that this is possible, by metabolizing the applicable doctrines; then they can apply them to daily life and enjoy communion with Him day after day.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

This must be understood as referring not to an eternal damnation or quantity of life, but to experiencing an endless and abundant quality of life, ie., a life of satisfaction and joy ... experiencing "everlasting life" now. (R. Morey) God's regeneration invariably results in faith. John fulfills his purpose by describing the fruit of regeneration. (R. Peterson) The Gospel has an evangelistic purpose, whereas the purpose of this letter is to reassure those who are already believers. (C. Kruse) The use of doctrine is, not only to initiate the ignorant in the knowledge of Christ, but also to confirm those more and more who have been taught already. It therefore becomes us assiduously to attend to the duty of learning, that our faith may increase through the whole course of our life. For there are still in us many remnants of unbelief, and so weak is our

faith that what we believe is not yet really believed except there be a fuller confirmation. (J. Calvin)

The recipients are addressed as “you who believe.” This epistle is not an evangelistic tract but a letter to Christians. (L. Morris) Are these tests of life, tests of whether or not one is born again, or tests of whether or not one is walking in fellowship with God? One cannot assume the former, which is the very point in question, and then use that to determine the meaning of the purpose clause. To do so is to argue in a circle. In a word, are they tests of regenerate life or are they tests of abundant life? The verse is written to those “who believe,” that is, to regenerate people. How do born-again people acquire assurance that they are born again? It is not by reflecting on their works ... John makes it plain that the only condition for knowing that you have eternal life is that you have believed, and it is belief alone that is the subject of the preceding 5:9-12. (J. Dillow) By this passage assurance is given to every believer, carnal and spiritual alike, that they may know they have eternal life. (L. Chafer)

1 John 5:13 I have written (γράφω, AAI1S, Epistolary) these things (Acc. Dir. Obj.; Bible doctrines) to you (Dat. Adv.; believers) who have believed (πιστεύω, PAPtc.DMP, Historical, Substantival, Articular) on the Person (Acc. Dir. Obj.) of the Son (Adv. Gen. Ref.) of God (Gen. Rel.), in order that (explanatory) you may know (οἶδα, Perf.ASubj.2P, Intensive, Potential; Gate 4 perception of doctrine) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) you have (ἔχω, PAI2P, Perfective) eternal (Qualitative Acc., Extent of Time) life (Acc. Dir. Obj.; positional & experiential).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:13** Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:13** haec scripsi vobis ut sciatis quoniam vitam habetis aeternam qui creditis in nomine Filii Dei

LWB 1 John 5:14 In fact, this is the confidence [motivating virtue manufactured in the love complex] which we have towards Him [fellowship], that if we ask anything [through prayer] according to His will, He will hear us.

^{KW} **1 John 5:14** And this is the assurance which we are having toward Him, that if we keep on asking anything for ourselves, [which is] according to His will, He hears us.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:14** And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The confidence we have towards Him (Customary Present tense) is motivated by our residence and function in the love complex. When we function in the love complex, we have face-to-face

fellowship with Him. On the basis of that intimate relationship, we may ask anything in prayer (Customary Present tense) according to His will and He will hear us (Futuristic Present tense). “Hearing” in the case of deity is an anthropopathism, but still communicates the essential concept intended. Confidence in our prayers comes from fellowship with Him. We need to make our requests known to Him in prayer; if we don’t, He can’t answer us! We also need to be in fellowship with Him when we pray. If we have been residing in the cosmic system instead of His love complex, why would He answer our prayers? Maybe He will, but don’t count on it. John also adds the phrase “according to His will,” because a lot of prayers that are offered are ridiculous. God isn’t a slot machine; we don’t drop a quarter in and get an answer to every frivolity we might ask for.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

If you and I are in fellowship with Him, walking with Him, then our prayer would be for God’s will in every circumstance. (J. McGee) At the moment of regeneration (new birth), the saints receive *everlasting life* as a present possession. This must be understood as referring not to an eternal duration or quantity of life but to experiencing an endless and abundant quality of life, a life of satisfaction and joy. True believers can taste the kind of life that will be theirs after the resurrection. They can experience *everlasting life* now. (R. Morey) It is not “any” prayer that is answered, but the prayer of the disciple who is in fellowship with the Father, who asks in Jesus’ name (John 14:13, 15:16), who “remains” in Him (15:7), and who obeys His commands (1 John 3:22). This is not meant to dampen the expectation we have in prayer, but the condition for addressing God is to know He will hear and act. He who is in “fellowship” with God, who has received life from the Father, knows that he may address God in confidence. Prayer becomes not only a time for petitioning but of yielding one’s life to the will and work of God. Prayer made in these circumstances is always heard because it is God’s will that is being done and His intention for humankind that is being met. (F. Gaebelein)

1 John 5:14 In fact (emphatic), this (Subj. Nom.) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) the confidence (Pred. Nom.; motivating virtue manufactured in the love complex) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) we have (ἔχω, PAI1P, Customary) towards Him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellowship, face-to-face with), that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) if (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe we will, maybe we won’t”) we ask (αἰτέω, PMSubj.1P, Customary, Potential) anything (Acc. Dir. Obj.; through prayer) according to His (Poss. Gen.) will (Adv. Acc.), He will hear (ἀκούω, PAI3S, Futuristic, expectative; anthropopathism) us (Gen. Adv.).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:14** Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτόν ὅτι εἴαν τι αἰτῶμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:14** et haec est fiducia quam habemus ad eum quia quodcumque petierimus secundum voluntatem eius audit nos

LWB 1 John 5:15 In fact, when we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask [according to His will], we know [confident expectation] that we will obtain the prayer requests which we have asked from Him.

KW 1 John 5:15 And if we know with an absolute knowledge that He hears us, whatever we are asking for ourselves, we know with an absolute knowledge that we have the things which we have asked from Him.

KJV 1 John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

When we know (Intensive Perfect tense) that He hears us (Gnomic Present tense), whatever we may ask according to His will (Customary Present tense) we know (Intensive Perfect tense) that we will obtain those prayer requests (Futuristic Present tense). The perfect tense of the phrase “we know” points to our being in fellowship with Him. If we have been residing in the cosmic system instead of the love complex, the “we know” would have been in the imperfect tense. Our knowledge based on lack of fellowship with Him would be presumption. The potential subjunctive mood points to a prayer that meets the appropriate requirements. The second “we know” is also in the perfect tense and points to the confident expectation that we will receive a positive reply to our prayer requests (Latin: petitions). Again, this confidence is only possible if we have a close experiential relationship with the Lord. The Gnomic Present tense of “He hears us” means He always hears the prayer of a believer who is in fellowship with Him. Prayers from a believer in the cosmic system are regularly ignored.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

It may be years before we perceive that our prayers have been answered: perhaps in this world we may never be able to see this; but we know that God has answered them. (A. Plummer) Here the words, “according to His will,” are to be supplied from the preceding verse – an ellipsis called *repetition of preceding connected words*. (E. Bullinger) If we are in fellowship with Him, if we are not regarding sin in our lives, and if there are no other hindrances to prayer in our lives, we are not going to pray selfishly. When we are walking in fellowship with Him, when we are following Him, we can have the confidence that He will hear what we ask and answer our prayer. We are not to come to Him with mistrust or in a begging attitude, but we are to come with boldness to ask that God’s will be done. (J. McGee) Of course, God sovereignly determines the means and the timing of His answers. It may well be that a prayer for assistance in keeping God’s commands will result in a process of spiritual education that will lead us to the realization of the thing we have asked for ... All victorious Christian experience is totally dependent on the Christian’s willingness to rely upon the power of the risen Christ, whose exalted *name* is our only sufficient source of spiritual strength. (Z. Hodges)

John is confronting a crisis precipitated by the secession of some members who have been powerfully influenced by some form of protognosticism. Their departure left behind believers

who were, spiritually speaking, badly bruised. The raw triumphalism of most forms of Gnosticism dented the confidence of those who refused to go along with the movement. In this light, the so-called tests are not primarily given to exclude certain people on the grounds that they failed to meet the challenges, but to reassure believers that their fidelity to the gospel, along the lines indicated, was itself reason enough to enable them to regain their quiet Christian assurance. The very places where the seceders failed or made outrageous counterclaims, thereby threatening the Christians and jolting their assurance, were the places where the Christians were proving faithful and reliable – in doctrine, obedience, and love. Such faithfulness and reliability constituted evidence of God’s work in their lives, and therefore could legitimately be taken by those who believed in the name of the Son of God as corroborating grounds that they truly enjoyed eternal life. Such restored confidence before God had other practical ramifications: in particular, it also issued in renewed confidence in prayer. (T. Schreiner)

1 John 5:15 In fact (emphatic), when (temporal) we know (οἶδα, Perf.AI1P, Intensive) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) He hears (ἀκούω, PAI3S, Gnostic) us (Gen. Adv.), whatever (verbal particle) we may ask (αἰτέω, PMSubj.1P, Customary, Potential; in prayer, ellipsis: add the phrase *according to His will* to complete the intended meaning), we know (οἶδα, Perf.AI1P, Intensive; confident expectation) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) we will obtain (ἔχω, PAI1P, Futuristic) the prayer requests (Acc. Dir. Obj.) which (Acc. Gen. Ref.) we have asked (αἰτέω, Perf.AI1P, Intensive) from Him (Abl. Source).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:15** καὶ ἐὰν οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀκούει ἡμῶν ὁ ἐὰν αἰτώμεθα, οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἔχομεν τὰ αἰτήματα ἃ ἠτήκαμεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:15** et scimus quoniam audit nos quicquid petierimus scimus quoniam habemus petitiones quas postulavimus ab eo

LWB 1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother [fellow believer] sinning a sin not face-to-face with [terminating unto] death, he [the intercessor] shall ask [in prayer] and He [the Father] will give [temporal] life to him [the carnal believer], for those [carnal believers who are under warning or intensive discipline] who are not committing sin [prolonged residence in the cosmic system] face-to-face with [terminating unto] death. There is sin [prolonged residence in the cosmic system] face-to-face with [terminating unto] death; I do not recommend that anyone should pray [discipline for this believer is under the sovereign hands of God] about that [advanced stage of reversionism].

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which is not in its tendency towards death, he should ask, and He will give him life, to those who are sinning not with a tendency towards death. There is a sin which tends toward death. Not concerning that one [sin] do I say that he should ask.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:16** If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

If anyone sees (Potential Subjunctive mood) a fellow believer sinning a sin (Durative Present tense) not unto death, he shall intercede in prayer (Cohortative Indicative mood) and God the Father will give (Predictive Future tense) the carnal believer temporal life. Maybe you will come across a Christian friend or acquaintance (3rd class conditional clause) who is living in perpetual carnality and either does not know how or does not care to acknowledge his sin to God and re-enter the divine system. There are many believers out there who are in such carnality that they are almost beyond hope. The term “sin unto death” means a believer can live in perpetual carnality for so long that there is no return to the protocol plan of God. God is going to “punch them out” of this life and bring them home as loser believers. It will be their final dose of divine discipline – dying discipline. You can’t acknowledge another believer’s sins for him, but you can ask the Lord to bring them to their senses one way or the other! There is no definite article in front of sin, so it is not necessary to translate it “a sin” as opposed to just “sin.” *Sin unto death* is a *state* of sinning that is constant - eventually leading to physical death. The translation “a sin” has led many commentators down an erroneous path of trying to figure out what “that sin” is.

If you come across a believer who is under warning or intensive discipline because of prolonged residence in the cosmic system, you should still intercede for them in prayer (Predictive Future tense). If you do and you are in fellowship, there is a good chance the Father will honor your prayer and help this misguided believer out by giving him temporal, qualitative life (Predictive Future tense). What this means is that the carnal believer will be led to recognize his sin and to acknowledge it, partially due to your intercessory prayer for him. John repeats this prayer qualification; you should only pray for those who are not committing sin face-to-face with death. John is referring to physical death, the result of prolonged residence in the cosmic system. If you know you are in fellowship and your prayer was heard, step back and allow God to do what is appropriate. There is a stage of advanced reversionism where John does not recommend (Customary Present tense) that we should pray (Subjunctive of Prohibition). These believers should be left in the sovereign hands of God; He knows best how to deal with them and when He is ready to remove them from planet earth. The last thing you want to do is get between a reversionistic believer and divine discipline from God.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

Certainly this is the ultimate consequence of Divine discipline brought upon the sinning Christian, as well as characterizing the life of the sinning Christian as spiritually dead. (J. Dillow) The sin unto death is the 3rd and final stage of divine discipline, following warning discipline and intensive discipline. It is a horrible departure from time into eternity. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) Against the canon that believes this to be a particular sin are all those interpretations far too numerous to mention, which make any atrocious and obstinate sin to be that intended. (K. Wuest) A true believer because of his waywardness may be chastened or disciplined just as a child is disciplined by his father, and this may be even to the point of taking away his physical

life. (L. Chafer) Death is the most severe form of God dealing with Christians who refuse to forsake their sin. We sometimes speak of such sin as “sin unto death.” Nowhere in Scripture is the “sin unto death” or the sin which results in God’s judgment in physical death, defined. It could be any sin which the believer refuses to confess and forsake. (R. Lightner) I think that if a child of God goes on disgracing the Lord down here, the Lord will either set him aside or take him home by death. God doesn’t mind doing that. I think He does it in many instances. (J. McGee) What God does when He gives life for these sinners is to strengthen their damaged, declining spiritual life, which they have not as yet lost. (R. Lenski) It is patent that John does not think that prayers in reference to deadly sin would be according to God’s will. (R. Brown)

The prayer of one human being can never cancel another’s free-will. When a human will has been firmly and persistently set in opposition to the Divine will, our intercession will be of no avail. (A. Plummer) *Sin* describes the character of a class of acts ... The sin unto death does not refer to a *specific act*, but to a *class or species* of sins, the tendency of which is to cut the bond of fellowship with Christ. Hence the passage is in the key-note of *fellowship* which pervades the Epistle. Whatever breaks the fellowship between the soul and Christ, and, by consequence, between the individual and the body of believers, is *unto death*, for there is no life apart from Christ. (M. Vincent) I agree with the first half of Vincent’s comments, but believe this sin unto death goes beyond *fellowship breaking* and ends up in physical death. (LWB) We see at once that the reference here is not to a loss of salvation but to a situation in which disobedience has proceeded beyond the point where the offender will any longer benefit by chastening. All that remains is to take him home, in order that his spirit may be preserved. (A. Custance) I am of the opinion that every believer is capable of committing the sin unto death – whatever it is for him. You can go on in sin until God will remove you from the scene. (J. McGee) Another possibility is that he has apostasy in mind. (F. Bruce) Supplication for nondeadly sinners will be granted, but no assurance is given about prayer for deadly sins. (R. Brown)

The implication clearly is that sometimes – not always, but sometimes – sickness comes to children of God as divine chastening, as a means of correction and discipline because of waywardness. Sometimes the discipline has the desired effect in the spiritual restoration of the one who had failed and the body is healed also, but at other times it does not seem to be the will of God to raise up the disciplined one and put him in the place of testing again. Of course it is physical death that is in question. He is not speaking of eternal death: he is not speaking of the soul, but of the death of the body under divine discipline. It is not that there is some specific sin that always results in death, but there is *sin unto death* ... God gives His people opportunity after opportunity, but if at last they deliberately go on refusing obedience to His Word, He says, “Now I am going to take you home; I won’t trust you in the world any longer. I will deal with you at the judgment seat of Christ. (H. Ironside) Death refers here to physical death. It has no reference at all to spiritual death because the child of God has eternal life. John is saying that believers can commit a sin for which their heavenly Father will call them home; that is, He will remove them from this life physically, perhaps because they are disgracing Him. (J. McGee) The promise in verse 16 is that in answer to believing prayer God will not bring premature death to the believer who has committed sin not leading to death. (R. Lightner)

It appears that physical death is in view. This is suggested by the fact that it is contrasted with physical life. Second, John instructs his readers to pray for their “brother” that he might obtain “eternal life.” A “brother” already has eternal life. But if abundant life is meant, then the phrase not only makes sense but fits well with the thrust of the epistle: fellowship and joy. Also it makes sense to pray that God will spare a sinning brother and restore him to fellowship. (J. Dillow) There are two ways of killing the soul: (1) The benumbing and hardening practice of disregarding spiritual appeals and stifling spiritual impulses. (2) A decisive apostasy, a deliberate rejection. This was the case of those heretics ... It inflicts a mortal wound on the man’s spiritual nature. He can never be forgiven because he can never repent. He is “in the grip of an eternal sin.” This is “sin unto death.” There is a fearful possibility of a man putting himself beyond the hope of restoration; but we can never tell when he has crossed the boundary. (W. Nicole) The wages of scar tissue are threefold: first, strong delusion, which is actually a synthesis of blackout of the soul and hardness of the heart; second, the slide into Christian degeneracy that results in reverse-process reversionism; and third, intensified divine punishment eventuating in the sin unto death ... When a nation is saturated with reversionists, it is cursed and warned through five cycles of discipline. The fifth cycle of discipline ends in military defeat – the destruction of the nation and the enslavement of its survivors. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

God is exceedingly patient with His children. He extends to the believer every possible opportunity to fulfill His protocol plan. But with each rejection of God’s gracious appeal to return to the divine dynasphere, the Christian renders himself less capable of making a positive decision. “Hardness of heart,” or scar tissue of the soul, eventually locks his volition in negative. Unless he rebounds, he will arrive at the third and final stage of divine discipline, the sin unto death. Dying discipline, or the sin unto death, is a horrible departure from time into eternity. The Christian involved has no inner resources for meeting death. In ignorance of doctrine, death becomes a terrifying plunge into the unknown ... Growing believers run the gamut from spiritual infancy, to adolescence and maturity. Any believer – the infant, the adolescent, or the mature – can be carnal at any given time. The advancing believer is out of fellowship, in carnality, for relatively short periods. Recovering quickly with rebound he keeps on advancing in his spiritual life. In contrast, the reversionistic believer perpetuates his carnality indefinitely by repeatedly failing to rebound. His carnality intensifies through the various stages of reversionism until he is under the sphere of maximum punishment, the sin unto death, and he is removed from time without the benefit of dying grace. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.) There is no need for the word “a” before “sin.” John was not likely thinking of only one kind of sin. (Z. Hodges)

1 John 5:16 **If** (protasis, 3rd class condition, “maybe we do, maybe we don’t”) **anyone** (Subj. Nom.) **sees** (εἶδον, AASubj.3S, Constative, Potential) **his** (Gen. Rel.) **brother** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; fellow believer) **sinning** (ἁμαρτάνω, PAPtc.AMS, Durative, Modal) **a sin** (Cognate Acc.: Obj. Result, Content) **not** (neg. particle) **face-to-face with** (prep.; terminating unto) **death** (Adv. Acc.), **he** (the intercessor) **shall ask** (αἰτέω, FAI3S, Predictive, Cohortative Ind.: “let him ask” in prayer) **and** (connective) **He** (the Father) **will give** (δίδωμι, FAI3S, Predictive) **life** (Acc. Dir. Obj.; temporal) **to him** (Dat.)

Adv.; the carnal believer), for those (Dat. Adv.; carnal believers who are under *warning* or *intensive* discipline) who are not (neg. particle) committing sin (ἀμαρτάνω, PAPtc.DMP, Durative, Substantial, Articular) face-to-face with (prep.; terminating unto) death (Adv. Acc.). There is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Gnostic) sin (Pred. Nom.) face-to-face with (prep.; terminating unto) death (Adv. Acc.; prolonged residence in the cosmic system); I do not (neg. particle; leave them alone with God) recommend (λέγω, PAI1S, Customary) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) anyone (Subj. Nom.) should pray (ἐρωτάω, AASubj.3S, Constative, Prohibition; discipline for this believer is under the sovereign hands of God) about (concerning) that (Gen. Disadv.; advanced stage of reversionism).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:16** Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτάνοντα ἀμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωὴν, τοῖς ἀμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. Ἔστιν ἀμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:16** qui scit fratrem suum peccare peccatum non ad mortem petet et dabit ei vitam peccantibus non ad mortem est peccatum ad mortem non pro illo dico ut roget

LWB 1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness [wrongdoing] is sin [function of the believer in the cosmic system], and yet there is sin [which can be cleansed by confession] not face-to-face with [terminating unto] death.

1 John 5:17 Every unrighteousness is sin. And there is a sin which does not tend towards death.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:17** All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

The bad news is: All unrighteousness or wrongdoing (Latin: iniquity) is sin and is a function of the believer inside the cosmic system. The good news is: You can acknowledge your sins to God, be forgiven and cleansed, and not face physical death (Latin: mortem) while in a state of perpetual sin. If there was no provision for temporal sin in 1 John 1:9, we would all remain in the cosmic system as long as we were allowed to live and eventually we would all die the sin unto death. John is merely clarifying that just because we have sinned doesn't mean we are going to get "punched-out" by the Lord at any time. There is a divine provision for cleansing of sin that we can avail ourselves of at any time. The sin unto death is a state of long-term unconfessed sin that a believer carries without availing himself of that remedy until the day he dies.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

The new creation, being the product of a sinless and perfect parent, cannot sin even once. The Gnostics, seeing a mixture of sin in God, allowed that the new creation (i.e., the "born again" Christian) inevitably sinned and this was not a matter of great significance. The Gnostics could

derive no justification for antinomianism from the notion of an imperfect God and a resultant imperfect new creation. (J. Dillow) One difficulty is what John means by “sin leading to death.” First, it should be noted that the Greek has no indefinite article *a*. Therefore, it should read simply “sin,” not “a sin.” Another problem is whether the death John mentions is physical or spiritual. Since the warning in 5:16-17 is given to believers, the promise that God will give life to those committing sin not leading to death does not refer to spiritual life, since they already had that. It would seem rather to refer to physical life. (R. Lightner)

If we pray for the impenitent, it must be with humble submission to God’s will, not with the intercessory *request* which we should offer for *a brother* when erring. (R. Jamieson) So long as a man is capable of repentance, he has not sinned unto death. (W. Nicole) Believers who are alive today have all sinned, but we haven’t sinned a sin unto death. We did something that was wrong, it was unrighteousness, but God didn’t take us home. If He were taking home every believer who sinned, I would have been taken home a long time ago. (J. McGee) Where the way for this is still open, the sinning is not unto death. Our intercession for each other is to the effect that God may help us to use this way. He has His means for driving us to the cross of Christ. (R. Lenski) He wishes to be sure that his reaffirmation of forgiveness does not make wrongdoing seem less sinful. (R. Brown)

1 John 5:17 All (Nom. Spec.) unrighteousness (Subj. Nom.; wrongdoing) is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) sin (Pred. Nom.; function of the believer inside the cosmic system), and yet (continuative) there is (εἰμί, PAI3S, Descriptive) sin (Pred. Nom.; which can be cleansed by rebound) not (neg. particle) face-to-face with (prep.; terminating unto) death (Acc. Dir. Obj.).

BGT 1 John 5:17 πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν, καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

VUL 1 John 5:17 omnis iniquitas peccatum est et est peccatum non ad mortem

LWB 1 John 5:18 **We have learned that anyone who has been born from God [believer] does not have to make it a practice to sin [a lifestyle of sin is not inevitable]. On the contrary, He [Jesus Christ] who is born from God guards him [the believer who is in fellowship] so the evil one [Satan] does not touch [harm] him [the believer inside the love complex is protected from evil].**

1 John 5:18 We know absolutely that everyone who has been born of God maintains a watchful guardianship over him, and the Pernicious One does not lay hold of him.

KJV 1 John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

This is a 3-part sentence: principle, precedent, and protection. We have learned (Aoristic Perfect tense) that anyone who has been born from God (Intensive Perfect tense) does not have to make it a practice to sin (Iterative Present tense). The provision for the cleansing of sin by acknowledging our sin to God (1 John 1:9) enables us to exit the cosmic system and re-enter the divine system. As long as we reside in the divine system, we are not sinning. The potential indicative mood means we have the option to live in the divine system without continually sinning or live in the cosmic system in perpetual sin. So contrary to the false teaching of some of the Gnostic-leaning believers at that time, a lifestyle of sin is not inevitable. Just because we have all inherited the sin nature from our parents does not mean there is no provision for coping with that sin and living a life of *agape* love and power inside the divine system. Some Gnostic-leaning believers denied sin entirely; others said there was no way out of it, so you might as well “sin your brains out and enjoy it.” Yes, we still hear some of that today in certain quarters.

“On the contrary” is an adversative conjunction meant to refute the lies of the Gnostic believers. Jesus Christ, who was born from God just like us (Aoristic Present tense), guards the positive believer (Customary Present tense) so that the evil one is not able to harm him (Perfective Present tense). How does He guard the positive believer? When we reside in the divine system, He becomes our *wall of fire* against Satan. The believer who resides inside the love complex is protected from evil (Latin: malignancy). What about the believer who resides in the cosmic system? This believer has rejected the divine *wall of fire* and is at the mercy of the world, the flesh and the devil. If he is a young believer who doesn’t know any better, he might receive an extraordinary measure of divine mercy; but every believer is eventually required to execute the protocol plan of God for the Church Age or die the sin unto death. All believers possess *eternal security*, but only positive believers possess *temporal assistance*.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

When the Christian is viewed as “one born of God,” the reference is evidently to his true identity as a new man in Christ. The Christian is described as “one born of God,” the verb in the Perfect tense. In the second instance, however, the Present tense refers to Christ, as in John 17:12 “While I was with them, I protected them [from Satan] and kept them safe by that name you gave Me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.” (J. Dillow) The defeat and downfall of Satan is decisively accomplished in the death and resurrection of Jesus and will come to pass without fail. (J. Piper) The elder’s interest is radically epistemological: to remind the church how it knows what it knows. In 1 John, such knowledge does not have its origin in more effective politics, extended therapy, better education, improved commentary, or anything else whose creation is of this world. To regard such provisional resources as definitive of eternal life is to court idolatry. (C. Black)

1 John 5:18 We have learned (οἶδα, Perf.A11P, Aoristic) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) anyone (Subj. Nom.) who has been born (γεννάω, Perf.PPtc.NMS, Intensive, Substantival) from God (Abl. Source) does not (neg. particle) have to make it a practice to sin (ἁμαρτάνω, PAI3S, Iterative, Potential Ind.; a lifestyle of sin is not inevitable as some Gnostics claimed).

On the contrary (adversative), He (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) Who is born (γεννάω, PAPtc.NMS, Aoristic, Substantival, Articular) from God (Abl. Source) guards (τηρέω, PAI3S, Customary; the divine dynasphere as the believer's wall of fire) him (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the believer, both *eternal security* and *temporal assistance*) so (adjunctive) the evil one (Subj. Nom.; Satan) does not (neg. particle) touch (ἅπτω, PMI3S, Perfective; harm) him (Gen. Adv.; the believer inside the love complex is protected from evil).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:18** Οἴδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει, ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ αὐτόν καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:18** scimus quoniam omnis qui natus est ex Deo non peccat sed generatio Dei conservat eum et malignus non tangit eum

LWB 1 John 5:19 We have learned in the past and now know with a certainty that we [believers residing in the love complex] are representatives of God [His agents on earth] while the entire cosmic system [every person residing in it] lies under the control of the evil one [Satan].

1 John 5:19 We know with an absolute knowledge that out of God we are, and the whole world is lying in the Pernicious One.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:19** And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

John continues his last minute review before he closes this letter. Repetition is the price of knowledge. We have learned in the past and now know with a certainty (Intensive Perfect tense) that we believers who are residing in the love complex are from God. This is not a statement of positional truth; this is a statement of experiential truth. All believers, regardless of which system they reside in on a regular basis, are from God as a *source*. But all believers are not representatives (agency) of God; only believers who consistently reside and function in the love complex are representatives of God. The rest of the inhabitants of planet earth, both unbelievers and reversionistic believers, are under the control of Satan (Gnomic Present tense) in his cosmic system. The Greek word “holos” means every single person inside the cosmic system, not every person on planet earth. John has just taught us that some believers are residing in the love complex instead of the cosmic system! This is yet another use of the word “kosmos” (world) where context determines its interpretation. It does not mean “every person without exception.”

RELEVANT OPINIONS

There is no reason why we should hesitate to shun the world, which condemns God and delivers up itself into the bondage of Satan; nor is there any reason why we should fear its enmity, because it is alienated from God. (J. Calvin) The word is stronger than “is,” indicating the

passive, unprogressive state in the sphere of Satan’s influence. (K. Wuest) The strategies and warfare of Satan against the children of God as declared in this passage are proof positive of the personality of Satan. There is no mention in Scripture of a warfare by Satan against the unregenerate: they are his own and therefore under his authority. (J. Walvoord) The apostle John, a Jewish Christian, says that Christ’s atonement was not only for his fellow Jews but also for Gentiles. We see this because of the reference to “the whole world.” Here the “whole world” is in contrast to “children of God” and refers not to every person but to sinners viewed collectively as God’s enemies. (R. Peterson) Every believer as he walks with God has this blessed inward knowledge. The only believer who loses it is the one who is disobedient to God. He loses the sense of this hallowed assurance, but when he comes back to God, makes a frank confession of his failure and is restored, he has once more this blessed inward knowledge by the Holy Spirit. (H. Ironside)

The world is the instrument which was appropriated by Satan and is used to promote his goals, his aims, his ends, and his ambitions ... This organized system with Satan as its prince and its god is the means which he uses to accomplish these ends. When we were born into this world as worldlings, we were born under Satan’s authority. He is the god who controlled, guided, and directed our lives. His purposes became our purposes. His standards became our standards, his ethics were our ethics, his morality or righteousness was our standard of morality or righteousness, for we were in the world ... The world, as a system is characterized by corruption, and those who are in the world partake of the defilement and the corruption of the world system. (J. Pentecost) The world is distinguished from the church of Christ – the children of God. The radical difference between the two opposing companies was intimated at the beginning in the word of Jehovah to the serpent, when He made mention of “thy seed” and “her seed.” Those two seeds were referred to by Christ in His parable of the tares, and designated by Him as “the children of the kingdom” and the “children of the wicked one.” (A. Pink)

“The whole world” refers to those who are under the control of the wicked one. It is clear that the phrase does not refer to each and every individual, for the evil one does not touch those who are born of God. In light of this, we conclude that here “the whole world” refers only to all of a certain description, which description must be derived from the context. (T. Nettles) John was seeking in these summarizing statements to reinforce the readers’ consciousness that they are distinct from the satanically controlled world system and basically free from its power. They need not listen to the worldly ideas advanced by the antichrists. Nor need they succumb to worldly desires. (Z. Hodges) You and I are living in a world that is asleep in the arms of the wicked one – if you look around today, you must agree with that statement. (J. McGee) Concerning the possible use of *kosmos* to mean all mankind without exception in the redemptive context of 1 John 2:2, let the reader observe that *kosmos* is used differently at least 21 out of 23 times elsewhere in this epistle. As a matter of fact, the identical term “whole world” is used here where it cannot possibly mean all mankind absolutely. (G. Long)

1 John 5:19 We have learned in the past and now know with a certainty (οἶδα, Perf.A1P, Intensive) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) we (believers in the divine dynasphere) are (εἰμί, PA1P, Static) representatives of God (Abl. Agency; believers

in the cosmic system are from God as *Source*, but not as *Agency*) **while** (contrast) **the entire** (Nom. Spec.; obviously not the whole world, i.e. every single person) **cosmic system** (Subj. Nom.; inhabitants thereof) **lies under the control of** (κείμεαι, PPI3S, Gnostic; ellipsis: *under the power of*) **the evil one** (Loc. Sph., Dat. Poss.; satan).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:19** οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κείται.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:19** scimus quoniam ex Deo sumus et mundus totus in maligno positus est

LWB 1 John 5:20 Moreover, we have learned in the past and now know with a certainty that the Son of God has come [1st advent] and has given to us [believers] the faculty for perception [reasoning process] so that we may understand objective reality [the truth]. Furthermore, we are in the sphere of objective reality [veracity] by means of His Son, Jesus Christ. This One [Jesus Christ] is the true [objective reality] God and eternal life.

1 John 5:20 We know with an absolute knowledge that the Son of God has come and is here, and that He has given us a permanent understanding in order that we may be knowing in an experiential way the One who is genuine. And we are in the genuine One, in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the genuine God and life eternal.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:20** And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Continuing his last minute review, John reminds us that we have learned in the past and now have absolute certainty (Intensive Perfect tense) that the Son of God has come (Historical Present tense) at the 1st Advent. The Gnostic-leaning believers may deny historical reality, but believers who are communing with Him know better. This same Son of God has given to every believer (Dramatic Perfect tense) at the moment of regeneration the divine reasoning process so that we may understand divine truth (Customary Present tense). The potential subjunctive mood means the Gnostic-leaning believers may deny He exists and deny there is a divine system, but it nevertheless exists and they ignore this fact to their peril. Ignorance is no excuse. The faculty for perceiving divine truth only functions when you are residing in the divine system. When you are inside the cosmic system like the Gnostic believers, it malfunctions and gravitates towards anthropocentric nonsense and demon doctrines.

There is an objective reality (truth), but it is only comprehended inside the love complex. Not only is it only comprehended inside the love complex, it can only grow and progress in that sphere. Furthermore, the only way we may function in the sphere of objective reality (truth) is by means of His Son, Jesus Christ. So if you deny His deity and humanity in hypostatic union like the Gnostics did, by process of self-elimination, you can only function in the sphere of satanic subjectivity. The sphere of objective reality is the love complex, the divine system. There is no

true objective reality outside that system. Believers (and unbelievers) in the cosmic system are divorced from reality. The only true God, the God of objective reality, is Jesus Christ (Gnostic Present tense). Jesus Christ was the Creator, He controls history, he provides salvation, etc. He is also the sole provider of eternal life because He *is* eternal life, both temporal and qualitative.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

God has given us the intellectual ability to understand this. It is not an emotion or mystical experience, but an activity of understanding, intelligence, mind, as any lexicon will show. More exactly it is Christ who has given us the intelligence to know the true God ... Intellect, truth, and understanding are not concepts always well received in this century. (G. Clark) It must be observed, that this gift is peculiar to the elect. Christ, indeed, kindles for all indiscriminately the torch of His gospel; but all have not the eyes of their minds opened to see it, but on the contrary Satan spreads the veil of blindness over many. Then the apostle means the light which Christ kindles within in the hearts of His people, and which when once kindled, is never extinguished, though in some it may for a time be smothered. (J. Calvin) God is not jockeying for a place among our everyday affairs, to add something useful to our *bios*. Through Jesus Christ, God is reconfiguring life itself into *zoe aionios*, life that dispels this world's illusions and conforms us with the indestructible reality that is God. (C. Black)

Our faith is not a matter of intellectual theory but of personal and growing acquaintance with God through the enlightenment of Christ's Spirit. (W. Nicole) The gracious operations of the Spirit were never designed to be a substitute for the Christian's discharge of his duty. True, His influence is indispensable, though it relaxes us not from our individual responsibility. God requires from His people something more than a passive waiting from Him to stir them into action. O my reader, beware of cloaking a spirit of slothful indolence under an apparent jealous regard for the honor of the Spirit. Is no self-effort required to escape the snares of Satan by refusing to walk in those paths which God has forbidden? Is no self-effort to be made in breaking away from the evil influence of godless companions? (A. Pink) God has given them a power of understanding so that they may know by a continuous and progressive apprehension. (B. Wescott)

Subjectivity is living in a false reality which is ultimately unreality, a position of weakness. Virtue is strength of character, which brings happiness to the believer and glorifies the Lord. The Attic Greek noun *dianoia* means "the ability to think, a way of thought, a purpose, a plan," and in this verse, "faculty for perception." *Dianoia* calls attention to the divine dynasphere as the believer's God-given power to think spiritual truth, resulting in virtue. The result of functioning in the divine dynasphere is expressed by the conjunction *hina* plus the verb *ginosko*: "so that we may understand." The grammatical mood of *ginosko* is called the potential indicative mood of obligation. This means that any believer's understanding of Bible doctrine is a potential, not an actuality, and that every believer is obligated to fulfill this potential through his own decisions to reside and function in the divine dynasphere. (R.B. Thieme, Jr.)

1 John 5:20 Moreover (continuative), we have learned in the past and now have absolute certainty (οἶδα, Perf.AI1P,

Intensive) that (conj. as Dir. Obj.) the Son (Subj. Nom.) of God (Gen. Rel.) has come (ἦκω, PAI3S, Historical; 1st advent) and (connective) has given (δίδωμι, Perf.AI3S, Dramatic) to us (Dat. Adv.; believers) the faculty for perception (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the operational divine dynasphere, reasoning process, disposition) so that (purpose) we may understand (γινώσκω, PAsubj.1P, Customary, Potential) objective reality (Acc. Dir. Obj.; the Truth, life in the divine dynasphere vs. life in the cosmic system). Furthermore (continuative), we are (εἰμί, PAI1P, Progressive) in the sphere of objective reality (Loc. Sph.; veracity in the divine dynasphere) by means of His (Gen. Rel.) Son (Instr. Means), Jesus Christ (Dat. Ref.). This One (Subj. Nom.; Jesus Christ) is (εἰμί, PAI1P, Gnostic) the true (Descr. Nom.; objective reality) God (Pred. Nom.; the Creator, controls history, provides salvation, etc.) and (connective) eternal (Descr. Nom.) life (Pred. Nom.).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:20** οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν, καὶ ἐσμέν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος.

^{VUL} **1 John 5:20** et scimus quoniam Filius Dei venit et dedit nobis sensum ut cognoscamus verum Deum et simus in vero Filio eius hic est verus Deus et vita aeterna

LWB 1 John 5:21 Students [positive believers], guard yourselves from idols [anything that distracts you from learning Bible doctrine].

1 John 5:21 Little children [born ones, bairns], guard yourselves from the idols.

^{KJV} **1 John 5:21** Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Paul closes this epistle by addressing the positive believers in his non-resident congregations as “students.” He commands them (Imperative mood) to guard themselves from idols (Constative Aorist tense). They are to be custodians (Latin) over the content of their souls. “Idols” is not merely a reference to the demon cults active in their geographical regions. John’s use of idols means anything that might distract them or usurp the authority over Bible doctrine in their lives. The intake, metabolization and application of Bible is their #1 priority in life. They must separate themselves from anything that stands in its way.

RELEVANT OPINIONS

As so often happens with converts from a religion full of gross superstition, a good many of the superstitious observances survived the adoption of Christianity. With facts such as these before us, we can hardly be wrong in interpreting “the idols” quite literally ... To a Christian anything is an idol which usurps the place of God in the heart, whether this be a person, or a system, or a

project, or wealth, or what not. All such usurpations come within the sweep of the apostle's injunction ... It is as if the apostle had said, "I have done what I can in writing down the truth and in warning you against the errors of the day. Now, where my responsibility ends, yours begins." The last stroke of the pen reminds the apostle of his own inability to do more than he has done. He cannot always be with the churches. (A. Plummer) Anything that comes in between your soul and the path of obedience to God is an idol, and sometimes God has to come and take these idols away from us in a way that seems very hard, and we may even charge Him with being cruel, but it is in order that Christ may have His rightful place, that our hearts may be entirely devoted to Him. (H. Ironside)

Lacking a sound, biblical, and well-understood theology, evangelicals have fallen prey to the pragmatism and consumerism of our times. Instead of calling God's people to worship and serve God, and teaching them how to do it, we treat parishioners as buyers and market the gospel as a "product." A therapeutic world view has replaced classical categories such as sin and repentance, and many leaders have identified the gospel with such modern idols as a particular political philosophy, psychological views of man, and sociology. To the extent that the doctrines of the Bible no longer guide preaching, teaching, publishing, evangelism, worship, and the daily life of the people of God, to that extent evangelicalism has declined to become a movement that is shaped only by popular whim and sentimentality. To stand in awe of God once again, evangelicals must recognize these idols as idols and confess how much we have been taken captive by them. (J. Boice)

It is the maintenance of this Christian faith, in the face of heretical opinion, which John is urging upon the members of his congregation ... Avoid the sham, John warns, and keep to the genuine. (S. Smalley) "Idols" could stand for the mystery religions and their practices, Gnostic ideologies or philosophies, a compromise with paganism, food dedicated to idols, images of pagan deities, sins of various kinds, Jewish worship in the temple, the secessionists themselves - anything that takes the place of God ... In speaking of joining the secession and accepting its theology as "going after idols," the author would have been intelligible to a Christian community whose language and thought had Jewish parallels. (R. Brown) The moment we cease to abide "in Him that is true (by abiding) in Jesus Christ," we become part of "the world that lies in the wicked one," given up to *spiritual*, if not in all places *literal, idolatry*. (R. Jamieson) The heart is a citadel, and it must be guarded against insidious assailants from without. (K. Wuest)

1 John 5:21 Students (Voc. Address; positive believers), guard (φυλάσσω, AAImp.2P, Constative, Command) yourselves (Nom. Appos.) from idols (Abl. Separation; primarily the demon cults, but could also include any *distraction* which usurps the authority of, or takes the #1 priority over, Bible doctrine in your life).

^{BGT} **1 John 5:21** Τεκνία, φυλάξατε ἑαυτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων.

^{BNM} **1 John 5:21** τεκνίον@nvnpc φυλάσσω@vdaa2p ἑαυτοῦ@rxanp ἀπό@pg ὁ@dgnp εἶδωλον@ngnpc

^{VUL} **1 John 5:21** filioli custodite vos a simulacris

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