

John's Letter to the Church  
1st John  
Lesson 3

1 [John 3:1](#) See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

John directs our attention to the great "love" given from the Father. It is the benevolent love that gives "what the one loved needs, but not what they want." The Father gives what He thinks is best. This is the word "agape," and it is not found in classical Greek. It is only found in the Word of God.

The love from the Father is given so that we can be called children of God. It is the divine invitation to participate in the blessing of God that is offered to all. To be a child of God requires the beginning of a relationship. The word "children" here implies one being born into a relationship.

The King James Version does not include the phrase "as such we are;" however, it should be included. John is saying that just as you should be called "children of God," we are to be born into the relationship, "as such we are."

The text says this is the reason the "world does not know us." It is because the world does not know Him. They have not been born into the relationship with Him. They are not even acquainted with Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

Pouring out his love to the recipients, John says, "Beloved, now we are children of God." Because of John's word choice, the word "children" makes no distinction of maturity. Whether a newborn in Christ or one well along in our spiritual journey, we are all God's children. This does not include those who have not put their trust in the Lord.

As children of God, John continues to say that right now we do not know what "we will be like." The word "appeared" gives a clue to John's meaning. It is the act of divine revelation, manifested to mankind. John is simply saying, "at this point in our lives we do not know what glory will be like with Jesus because that information has not been given to us yet."

John is quick to include what is known about the future. John indicates that when Jesus "appears" (divinely revealed) to us, we shall be like Him. This is not saying we will be equal to Him, just similar in form. We too will have a glorified body, be at the throne of God, be in heaven, and we will be worshiping God. How do we know this? Because John says "we will see Him just as He is." We will view Jesus in all His glory, majesty, dominion, and honor!

3 And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Having our "hope fixed on Him" is the expectation of obtaining Him with all confidence. This fixed hope "purifies" us just as Jesus is pure. Jesus is pure because He is free from all defilement and imperfections. You are purified because of His dedicated sacrifice that consecrates. The act of purification does not depend on our actions, but His. Putting our hope in Him therefore purifies us.

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

In verse 4 John explains that all sin, no matter what kind of sin, is still sin. In the Greek language, there are twelve different words that are translated "sin" in English. Each Greek word describes a different facet of sin. The Holy Spirit used the different words to describe every possible type of sin against God.

Here the word translated "sin" means the "object or end of the act." In other words, the goal of the sin is known and that is where we are headed if we decide to commit that sin. This is what John means by using the word "practices." It is committing the sin (or trying to reach the end of the sinful act) on purpose. This sin is translated elsewhere as a "transgression." It is the "end of the act," not the process of getting there. The persons who are consumed with reaching the object of this sin do not care how they get there, just that the end is reached.

So if we practice this sin, John says we also practice "lawlessness." Lawlessness is a "willful and intentional act. We know we are sinning and we do it on purpose."

5 And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

But Jesus came to take away sin because in Him there was absolutely no sin. None of the Greek words for "sin" can ever be applied to Jesus. Because of that, He was able to be the final sacrifice for all. As that final sacrifice, He can take away sins. By this, John means to take away the consequences of our sins. John also means that Jesus takes away the desire to go to the "end of the act" when we begin to sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

Verse 6 continues the thought from verse 5. The text states, "No one who abides in Him sins." Holding to the context and an understanding of the words used, John is saying "No one who lives in Christ knowingly sins to the end of the act without knowing it is a sin." If we are in Christ, and we sin, we will know we are sinning.

On the other hand, the text states "no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him." Using the same context and definitions this phrase can better be understood that "no one who commits a sin and goes to the end of the act, without knowing it is a sin, has seen Christ or experienced Christ's saving work." This is simple. If we can sin without knowing we are sinning, we are not a child of God. RESULT: YOU DON'T BELONG TO GOD!

7 Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

"Little children" is John's term of affection from the teacher to his disciples. "Let no one deceive you." Do not let even one deceive us, no matter who they are. The text states we will know the righteous because they practice righteousness. The "righteous" are known because they practice righteousness. It is the process that produces the end result. It brings forth and births righteousness. This righteousness even seems to have an existence of its own within the righteous person. It became the total persuasions of the righteous. It is the act of becoming Christ-like. The righteous are longing to be like Him, because He is righteous.

RESULT: YOU BELONG TO GOD!

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

But the one who practices sin is of the devil. This is the one who falsely accuses and divides people without any reason. We are not to let the one who practices sin deceive us. The devil himself has sinned from the beginning. Here John uses the word for sin that means, "keep missing the mark." The devil has been missing the mark since the beginning.

RESULT: YOU DON'T BELONG TO GOD!

The text continues to state that the purpose of Christ's coming was to destroy the works of the devil. "Destroy the works" is an interesting phrase. Destroy means to "loose, unbind, or untie something." Works involves the "performance or object of employment." So the purpose of Christ's coming was to end the performance and employment of the devil. He has come to untie the web the devil weaves.

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

John now tells us why the child of God can not sin without knowing they are sinning. The answer is "because His seed abides in him." This seed is God's power at work. It is the Holy Spirit in the hearts of every believer. Therefore, we cannot sin without knowing we are sinning. The word "cannot" means unable by virtue of resources or ability. The reason this occurs is because the believer is "born of God." It lies in their relationship to God. They have knowledge of sin and cannot miss the mark without knowing they are committing a sin.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Do not be deceived by anyone. It is easy to know who is trying to deceive us. John says it is obvious. The children of God do not do what the children of the devil do. The children of the devil do not practice righteousness, and they do not love their brother. They do not direct their will in finding joy in something for their brother. It is part of the commandment heard from the beginning.

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

Here the word "message" is used. This is the only place it is used in the Bible. It is related to the term usually translated "messengers" or "angels" who proclaim salvation. These can be angels, bishops, pastors, elders, etc. But the word "message" is a different word. It can be translated the "message of salvation." It is the actual message, not just the proclamation of the message. It should be capitalized in the text because this message is Christ Himself. The message of Christ is love, God's love. God's love is a spiritual love.

12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

But God's love is not like Cain. Cain was the first born son of Adam and Eve. He slew his brother Abel and then hid his body. Cain was of the evil one because his deeds were evil. The word "evil" indicates a moral or spiritual state involving wicked, malicious and mischievous deeds. Do not be deceived by those who are like Cain.

13 Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you.

"Do not marvel" John says. Don't be surprised if the world hates us. John will use the word "hate" again in verse 15, and it means to "detest."

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

Since we know the world hates us, we also know that "we have passed out of death into life." This is not an experience. It is a perception that comes from our relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit living within us. This knowledge is the fact that we have passed out of death into life. It is a change of condition. It is a change from spiritual death into spiritual life. The word "zoe" is used indicating spiritual rather than "bio" indicating physical life. This "zoe" life is a culmination of all the best that comes with Christ. So we love because of this life in Christ. We love because our condition has changed. But those who do not love have not changed their condition. They remain in a state of living death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

John says the hater is a murderer. This is a manslayer or one who commits homicide. We who are in Christ understand that those not in Christ are haters and murderers who do not have eternal spiritual life. This eternal life is the life that is God's to give and is not affected by the limitations of time.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

When John uses the words "we know," he means "what we have experienced." And what we have experienced is God's benevolent love. We experience God's love because Jesus "laid down His life for us." The "life" Jesus laid down is not the "zoe" life but the physical. And so we "ought" to lay down our "lives" for the brethren. The life we are to lay down is the same as the one Christ laid down.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

John asks an interesting question using some interesting words. He speaks of those who have this "world's goods." At first glance one might think this means "items or possessions." But the word translated "goods" is "bios" meaning physical life. John opens the question by saying "whoever has the world's life and beholds his brother in need." To "behold" means to look with interest and the purpose of carefully observing details. So the text says if we have the world's life and observe with detail a brother in need and we close our heart against him, how can God's love abide in us? The context of this book is spiritual need, not physical need. Therefore, this verse is not speaking of worldly needs like clothes, housing, or food, but in terms of the need of the saving message of God. If you possess the love of God, how can you turn your heart (bowels – in the Greek) against those who have not experienced God's love?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

John says not just to love with God's love in words from our mouth, but put our deeds (performance, work objective) into action with truth. Real truth is the unveiled reality lying at the base of integrity. When we see a brother with a spiritual need, we are not to turn our back on them; we are not to just live in speech alone, but to "get at" helping the person with their spiritual need.

19 We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him,

Verse 19 is concluded in verse 20. It sets up two things we know because of our experience in Christ. Our life in Christ is first in truth. Second, this truth will assure our heart's intent before the living God.

20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

Continuing from verse 19, John states that it is truth that will assure our heart's intent before God. We should not be so concerned in what our heart condemns us. The word "condemns" means to know or perceive in a bad sense. It equals "incrimination." But because of God's truth in us, God is greater than our heart and God knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

Notice the statement and instruction from John. If "our heart does not condemn us," then "we have confidence before God." Is John speaking about anything we do as Christians? Can we make a decision that may be wrong and since our heart doesn't know it is wrong, will we be justified before God? As Paul would say, "God forbid!" The context of this passage is directed toward our sharing spiritual life with those in spiritual need. Remember verse 18? We are to share God's love in deed and truth. Verse 19 states that sharing this love in deed and truth will assure our heart before God. But if our heart does condemn us (verse 20), God is bigger and knows all things. If our heart does not condemn us (verse 21) because

we have shared our spiritual life with those in spiritual needs, we can have confidence before God. This leads to verse 22.

22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

Continuing from verse 21, John says "whatever we ask we receive from Him." What is "whatever?" It is the confidence to share God's love in deed and truth with the brother in spiritual need and we are to do it in love. That is the "whatever." How do we know this? The text states "because we keep His commandments." Remember Jesus' repeating of the commandments. The first was "love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul." The second was to "love your neighbor as yourself." John says when we keep these commandments, then we "do the things that are pleasing in His sight." We are to ask for the confidence to share our spiritual life with those in spiritual need.

23 And this is His commandment that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

God never leaves us without a statement. John repeats God's commandments. First, we must believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ. Second, we are to "love one another." This means not just the brothers, but those in spiritual need as well.

24 And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Those who keep the instructions laid down in the commandments are truly alive in Christ, and Christ is alive in them. But how do we know Christ abides in us? We know He lives in us by the ministry of the Spirit who Jesus gave to us as our comforter, our earnest payment, and our teacher.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

In this verse John gives first a directive, second an instruction, and third a reason. The directive is "do not believe every spirit." By saying "do not believe," he means we are to not put our faith and trust in everything we hear. "Every spirit" refers to a physical body being energized by the "breath of God," the physical life-giving zing that keeps the heart beating and the conscience of human life alive. The context of the first phrase describes a human, not the devil. The context of the verse confirms this by saying "because many false prophets have gone into the world." John is saying "do not believe the talk of every man." Remember I John 3:7, "let no one deceive you" . . . not even one, no matter who they are!

The instruction is "but test the spirits to see whether they are from God." "Test" means to discern or prove whether something is right. In this case the test is whether the words being said "are from God." This testing carries along the idea of proving or discerning whether

something should be received or not. "Put every teacher to the test."

Putting the directive and the instruction together we have "Beloved, don't believe everything every man says, but discern whether what has been said is from God and therefore worthy to be received.

Finally John gives the reason for testing every spirit when he says, "Because many false prophets have gone out into the world." The New Testament is full of warnings concerning false prophets. Jude 4 states . . . "For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only sovereign and Lord." 2 Peter 2:1 says . . . "But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves." Jesus warns in Matthew 7:15, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves." Again in Matthew 25:11 Jesus says "so when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—" Further down Jesus warns in Matthew 24:24 "for false Christ's and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible." The Matthew 24 passages are very interesting because he is speaking mainly to Jews about the "end times." Notice Jesus' words "and false prophets . . . if it was possible, shall deceive the very elect."

This statement should have raised the eyebrows of His listeners. The term "elect" is used to describe the Jews. Remember in the New Testament that the Jews are always "elect." But in referring to the believers in the church, they are "called" (called) or they are there because they have accepted the "divine invitation" as in I John 3:1 (called children).

Matthew 24:24 is a divinely prophetic verse because

- 1) The church was not established at that time,
- 2) Those gathered around Jesus were Jews or Jewish converts, and
- 3) He is speaking about the time of the Great Tribulation at the end of the world and uses a term that is only used in the New Testament in reference to Jewish believers.

It is interesting to note the term "false prophet." We think of this as one who speaks with authority as the "mouthpiece" of God or Satan. Some have wrongly interpreted this to be "false teachers." But the word here is "pseudo prophets." "Pseudo" means false, wicked, or deceitful. "Prophets" means testifier or witness. This is not a forth teller or a foreteller. This is simply one who gives a word of witness or testimony on a subject. Therefore, the text is plainly stating that there are many wicked and deceitful witnesses out in the world falsely testifying concerning the true and living Savior of the world.

"Beloved, do not believe . . . but test the spirits . . . because many false prophets have gone out into the world." In just six short decades, not even the full promised life span of man, there are false teachers in the world. The men are claiming to be Christian and part of the church, yet they are anything but part of the true church. But how does a true believer discern a true prophet? I John 4:2-3 gives the test.

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

"By this you know the Spirit of God." By what? What is "this"? How do we "know"? Which "know" are we dealing with? This "know" means "to experience!" By this we "have experienced" the Spirit of God. This is not a perception or intuition, it is an experiential fact. By our experience we know that "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." John is saying that just as we had to experience the fact of "confessing Jesus," so too, that is the same measuring stick to test prophets. The question might be asked this way, "What do they do with Jesus the Christ?" It is the same basic question for recognizing cults today. If a group believes that Jesus was "just a good man among many good men," they are a cult. If they believe as this verse states that "Jesus has come in the flesh and is from God," they are most likely Christian. The purpose of this entire letter seems to be fighting the false prophets who are implying that Jesus was never really on earth. Yet throughout this letter John states, "we heard, we saw, we held" as historical proof that Jesus was a reality.

The term "confesses" simply means to "agree with." It does not matter if this is our standard. Do we agree with God's standard? That is what matters! The pure fact is that in order to be saved we must say, "I agree that Jesus is the Christ" and we must then make Him our personal Christ. Christ of course means "Messiah" or "Savior."

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

Verse 4:3 is a repeat of verse 4:2 except with the insertion of the negative words "does not." "Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God." Confess means to agree. Therefore, this statement is better understood as "Every spirit that does not agree with Jesus is not from God." The New American Standard Bible continues by stating ". . . and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world." The text "spirit of" is not in the original Greek. Therefore the phrase is correctly stated ". . . and this is the antichrist, of which you have heard. . . ." The reason the NASB includes the "spirit of" is because the phrase relates to the previous phrase ". . . and every spirit that does not confess Jesus . . ."

We should not confuse the word "antichrist" with "the Antichrist" which John will refer to in his last book "The Revelation." This verse refers to the "spirit" or "attitude" of those who do not agree with the fact that "Jesus is from God." It has nothing to do with them being "the Antichrist." It simply means they are thinking, believing, acting, and following the same vein as "the Antichrist."

Concerning this "spirit of the antichrist" the text continues by stating "of which you have heard it is coming." John is writing this book in 93-95 AD. During these years he will write:

- 1) Gospel of John,
- 2) This book - I John,
- 3) 2 John, and
- 4) 3 John.

Sometime in 95-96 AD, John will write the final book of the Bible, The Revelation. All the other books of the New Testament were completed between 45 AD (with the first Book written - James) and 80 AD (with the last Book written - Jude.)

In other words, it has been nearly 15 years since the church had a new word from God. In this three-year period five of the twenty-seven New Testament books were written. The other 25 books have had multiple copies made and were well circulated in the churches across the world.

Finally John states in 4:3, ". . . and now it is already in the world." These words sounded a warning alarm to the church. John is saying "you have heard it was coming . . . it's already here!" "It" is the spirit, attitude, or belief system of the antichrist.

4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

Again John addresses the recipients as "little children." As before, a directive statement, an instruction, a reason, and an explanation accompany it.

Here the directive is "you are from God!" In 4:3 John sounded the alarm "the spirit of the antichrist is already in the world" but do not fear because as 4:4 states "you are from God." We have a relationship with God. We abide in Him and He abides in us. The spirit of antichrist cannot and does not affect us.

The instruction to the "little children" is ". . . and [you] have overcome them." A good question is who is "them?" Is it the antichrist? No. Is it the spirit of the antichrist? No. Is it the people who do not confess Jesus? Yes! John is saying that "you are from God" and "you have overcome the people in the world who testify falsely about Jesus and have obtained the attitude and belief system of the antichrist."

But how have you overcome them? In John's consistent style, he always gives a reason. The reason is "because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." John is saying, "You have overcome the world because of the greatness of Jesus who abides in you." It is based solely on His actions. There is nothing in this world we can do on our own to overcome the world. It is done for us by the greatness of God. The context of this passage is speaking about the people who:

- 1) falsely testify about Jesus and
- 2) have the spirit of the antichrist within them.

"He that is in the world" refers to false prophets. "He that is in you" refers to Jesus, the Christ. We have overcome those who follow the spirit or belief system of the false prophets, because Jesus Christ has overcome the false prophets. John is saying "have no fear; they have no power over you."

5 They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.

This verse begins an explanation that John began in 4:4. "They who are from the world"

refers to those who have the spirit of the antichrist. The text continues "therefore they speak as from the world." Holding this to the context from 4:1 and following verses, evidently these false prophets are claiming to speak for Christ, but they are really speaking against Christ. John wants the listener to know and recognize that their words are "from the world." John also says, "The world listens to them." Imagine the damage done to the church. They are speaking, falsely, for the church, and the world is "listening to them." These false prophets are acting as if they are speaking for God and millions are listening. Millions believe in a false testimony that leads them to the antichrist, not God.

6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

"We are from God" John says. At the end of the verse, he says "By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." But how do we know? First, "he who knows (experienced) God listens to us." The key to this test is whether we have experienced God or not. When we have experienced God the Holy Spirit dwells within us (1 John 2:20) and teaches you (1 John 2:27) and tests the words of every testimony (4:1) so we know the spirit of truth.

The second test is "he who is not from God does not listen to us." In 4:5 the false witnesses of the world speak and the world listens to them. In this verse we see that those who are of the world [not from God] do not "listen to us." "Us" refers to John and those who are speaking the spirit of truth. When we see a person testify falsely concerning Christ, and will not listen to those of God, speaking the words of God, they are of the "spirit of error."

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Love is one of the key elements in knowing that we belong to God! Do you remember Paul stating the following?

[Galatians 5:22](#) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness ...

John is picking up on that same theme here in his letter. Love is a vital part of belonging to God. No one can know true love unless they know the love of God. Once that love is experienced, they can share true love with other humans.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Can it be plainer than this? If we do not know God, then we do not know how to love.

What is Love? Remember the words of 1 Corinthians 13!

[1 Cor. 13:4-8](#) Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if there are gifts of

prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

Are we kind and patient? Does jealousy rise in our life? Do we brag and are we arrogant? Do we act unbecoming? As we go on down the list, which side of the fence do we fall? Is love in our life?

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

"Through him" is through Christ, who is the life!

[John 14:6](#) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Christ also lives in us.

[Galatians 2:20](#) "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

This life begins here and now.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

On the great Day of Atonement, the high priest carried the blood of the sacrifice he offered for all the people behind the veil and sprinkled it on the "mercy-seat," and so made a propitiation. On the cross, Jesus shed His blood for everyone. Christ is called the "propitiation for our sins." Christ is "the propitiation," because by His becoming our substitute and assuming our obligations He expiated our guilt, covered it, by the vicarious punishment which He endured.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

The command is simple! Love others because God loved you!

12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

Beholding God! It is something that we all long to do! What does this mean? John actually explains this in his gospel.

[John 1:14-18](#) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [15] John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' " [16] For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. [17] For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. [18] No

man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

No one has seen God the Father, but God the Son explained everything we need to know about the Father! John means that no one has seen God the Father with the human physical eye. God is invisible.

[Exodus 33:20](#) But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

[Deut. 4:12](#) Then the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form-- only a voice.

And yet in John 14:7, Jesus claims that the one who sees Him has seen the Father.

[John 14:7](#) "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

The fact that we know that the Holy Spirit of God is dwelling in our lives is one of the most incredible gifts from God. It is the proof that we are in a relationship with God. There is no greater gift than the Holy Spirit!

14 And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

When John says "we have beheld," he is absolutely qualified to make this claim. Do you remember Acts 1:8? John was there and he was commissioned to make this claim.

[Acts 1:8](#) but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Jesus was the Savior of the world! John knew it for he had seen Him with his own eyes!

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

This can not be just pure lip service! It has to be a true surrender to the fact that Jesus Christ is God. We must be obedient in our confession concerning the deity of Jesus Christ! This too is one of the proofs that we are in a relationship with God!

[1 Cor. 12:3](#) Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

[Romans 10:6-12](#) But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), [7] or 'Who will descend into the ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." [8] But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, [9] that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; [10] for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. [11] For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be DISAPPOINTED." [12] For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him;

[16](#) And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Love only occurs with humans and God. This is the place where the love of God exists! This verse repeats 1 John 4:8 in stating that God is love.

[1 John 4:8](#) The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Think of it this way! If a person is dwelling fully in the love that God desires, then it is a proof that God is dwelling fully in them!

[17](#) By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

"Love is perfected in us!" Does this mean that God works with man? I think it does! For a person to have confidence in the Day of Judgment, a person must have help from the only one who can redeem him and that is God! Just as Jesus came to the world to manifest God the Father, so too we are in the world to manifest Jesus as the Christ!

[18](#) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

There are two types of fear spoken of in the scripture. One refers to a reverence and obedience to God the Father. But in verse 18 this is the second type of fear! It is a dread of the heart that shakes us to the bone. Where there is love, there is no dread. Why is this? It is simple! The love of God does away of all the dread of fear! If we are afraid of God and the punishment of God, then we do not have the love of God within us! When we love God and God loves us, He is working to perfect that love. Then His promise is that perfected love casts out the dead of fear. There is no punishment for those who love God.

[19](#) We love, because He first loved us.

The order is so important! Our love is only in response to God's first overture! God loved us before we loved him.

[John 3:16](#) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

God loved us before we could ever love Him!

[20](#) If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Love and hate cannot co-exist in the same person. John is extremely forward in his assertions. The fact is that if a person hates someone then he can not truly love anyone with the kind of love that God provides.

[21](#) And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Here is the commandment! Do we remember when we saw this first in this book?

[1 John 2:7-8](#) Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. [8] On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

The commandment is to love our brothers!

[Mark 12:29-31](#) Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; [30] and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' [31] 'The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

It is an old commandment from the Old Testament, and it is a new commandment from the New Testament! They are the two greatest commandments in the world! They are to love God and love your neighbor!