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1 John 3

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

1 John 3.

Topics.

- The world does not know us because it does not know God.
- No-one who keeps on sinning has either seen Christ or known him.
- Christ appeared to take away sin.
- Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil.
- Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil.
- Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin.
- Do not be surprised, that the world hates you.
- Whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart.
- Whatever we ask we receive from him.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter John said, "If anyone sins, they have an advocate Jesus Christ the righteous" and gave three tests for those who confess Christ. He talked of a darkness that is passing away; of a true light that is shining; of a new commandment; of abiding in light and abiding in darkness; of a darkness that has blinded people's eyes and of antichrist and antichrists. He spoke of being anointed by the Holy One, having all knowledge and of certain Christians having no need for anyone to teach them.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

1

1 JOHN 3:1

No-one knows what Kind of Resurrected Body those in Christ will Have.

- **1 John 3:1:** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children (the sons in KJV) of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

The words, "What kind of love God the Father has giving to us" carries the idea that the love God has given us is so awesome, so overwhelming, so abundant that John cannot find words to adequately describe it. Consider for a moment, the Most Almighty, Holy God, the God who created all things and is the source of all life loves us with such love that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Whoever stands with an honest and open heart before God's absolute pure holiness and not only takes a deep look at the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that dwell in the heart and the mind but also perceive the depth of self, ego, pride and see the many other fleshy thoughts, attitudes and desires lurking about would no-doubt exclaim as John does "God what great love you have showered upon us."

The world does not know us because it does not know God: ever wondered why your family and friends don't understand your faith, John gives us the answer, it's because they don't know God as a heavenly Father of love they cannot know you spiritually because they do not know the one you love. They cannot perceive the love of God dwelling in the heart of God's children. This is why we are called to do-good and treat others with respect and decency because it is, "God's kindness (goodness

in KJV) that leads a person to repentance" (Rom. 2:4) and God, "Does not wish that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9) and humble themselves, believe in His Son and become part of His adopted family and as such become partakers of the promised eternal inheritance.

1 JOHN 3:2

What We Will Be Has Not Yet Appeared.

- **1 John 3:2:** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

No-one knows exactly what type of body those in Christ will have in eternity, except that it will be immortal and eternal anything else is simply speculations since even John Christ's beloved disciple says, "What we will be has not yet appeared" which implies that that the body that Christ appeared to the apostles in after his resurrection is not necessarily the final form of the eternal, immortal and glorified body. When Paul was asked what kind of body the dead will be raised with, he said:

- There is one kind of body for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish, there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable is raised is imperishable; what is sown in dishonour is raised in glory; what is sown in weakness is raised in power; what is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:39-44).

To imagine what our eternal body will look like maybe fun, but we can only speculate, nevertheless knowing that it will be immortal and eternal clearly means that we will never feel pain, sorrow, sickness of any kind or any form of tiredness, but rather be in a perpetual state of happiness and joy, energy and vitality and peace and calm is there any other religion on earth that promises such eternal glory (this author has not found one).

When he appears: the words, "When he appears" (v2) refer to that glorious, majestic and world changing event when the Lord returns in spectacular and awesome power and glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy city Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

God the Father and Christ the Son: some have used the words:

- Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (v2).

To support the mistaken theory that Jesus is God, but it should be remembered that John is writing to new converts, sons and fathers in Christ (see previous chapter) so they are Christians who have received the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ therefore they understand that Jesus is the most beloved and most highly exalted Son of God the Father and that Jesus is returning to gather to himself all who have died in faith and all who are alive. They clearly understand that:

- God (the Father) so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

So it would not even enter their mind that John's words, "We know that when he appears we shall be like him" would be referring to God the Father, but rather they would naturally read them as applying to Christ the Father's most beloved Son who is returning in majestic glory to gather to himself those who by faith and God's grace belong to his Kingdom.

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from

Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God 'and' Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3). For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

1 JOHN 3:3-6

No-One who Keeps on Sinning has either seen Christ or Known him.

- **1 John 3:3-6:** And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
⁴Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.
⁵You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

The words, "You know that he appeared to take away sins" (v5) show that the one we are to hope in is the Lord Jesus Christ. John is highlighting the reality that anyone who confesses to believe in Christ, but continues to live a lifestyle of sin does not really know Christ. This is a natural law of love (i.e., if a man says he loves a woman and yet abuses her verbally or physically his confession of love is words in the wind), they mean nothing and are a deception not only to himself, but to the woman who continues to believe them. This is because the meaning of love is to protect the one loved from hurt or harm it is about putting the well-being of the one loved before ourselves. Likewise, whoever confesses to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but continues to live a lifestyle that offends and brings dishonour to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith are deceiving themselves and do not know the one that they are professing to believe in. If a person confessing to be in Christ is truly abiding in him their outward life will manifest their faith in that it will be clear that they are endeavouring to do all they can to live a life that would honour God (howbeit not perfectly) and bring a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. If a spotlight was aimed upon the global Christian community sadly its brilliant light would reveal that many of us do not manage to live the perfect life before God that the heart and mind desires (this is why we are saved by grace and not self-effort). But there is a major difference between those who might give into sin through weakness of the flesh, temptation, emotional hurts, lack of maturity, past baggage and such like things and those John has in mind. Those who truly love Christ endeavour to live a life that honours God, but because of weakness of the flesh, temptation, emotional hurts, lack of maturity or past baggage may at times fall into sin. John in the previous chapter referred to these brothers and sisters as little children.

Now here is the difference: these brothers and sisters feel sorrow toward God when they fall short whereas the ones John has in mind are not only indifferent, but unaware that the manner in which they are living their life is an offence to God, they have no consciousness or heartfelt conviction that what they are doing is totally contrary to the nature God and the character and Spirit of Christ.

A human example of this principle: a husband may love his wife, but no-matter how deep his love is there are moments when he will most likely emotionally hurt her, but his heart is broken at seeing her hurt, he sincerely says sorry, she forgives and they make up in glorious wonder. There is a vast difference in this relationship to one in which the husband says he love his wife, but is not only totally insensitive to the hurt he causes her, but has no sense of sorrow and never asks forgiveness, this is the type of Christian John has in mind when he talks about those who confess to believe in Christ, but continue to live a lifestyle of sin.

Christ appeared to take away sin: since sin is clearly rampant in the world and John says:

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

And in a following verse:

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

The words, "You know that he appeared to take away sins" (v5) clearly do not mean that sin has actually been taken away in this world or in those who belong to Christ's family. If anyone of us could attain to a life totally free of sin Christ died for no purpose. The following presents three ideas of what John may have had in mind when he said, "Christ appeared to take away sins."

1. Through faith in Christ we are saved to eternal life in which there will be no sin, so in this sense, "Christ appeared to take away sin" (v5).
2. Christ appeared to destroy the power of the law of Sin and Death that all mankind is held bondage to. This law without compassion or mercy states, "Whoever does not perfectly keep all its commandments is condemned to death (2 Cor. 3:9). This ministry of death carved in letters on stone also declare that, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23) meaning whoevers sins must die. Christ through his death and resurrection destroyed the power of this law to condemn those imprisoned by it. Whoever belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ is set free from the law of Sin and Death. It is in this sense, "Christ appeared to take away sin" (v5) (i.e., the power sin gives the law legal right to condemnation us all guilty before God and judge us to eternal death), but since we are saved by grace the law has been robbed of this power.
3. When a sinner comes to God in humble and honest repentance and perceives that Christ the Son of God and laid his life down so that they could be saved from the law of Sin and Death and receive eternal life, their heart is filled with God's love and from this love they desire in the heart and mind to honour God and therefore endeavour to live a lifestyle free of wrong-doing, lawlessness and sin and it is in this sense that "Christ appeared to take away sins" (v5).

Since all three scenarios can be applied to John's statement "Christ appeared to take away sins" it gains little to debate, argue or attempt to prove which of them, is the exact thought John had in mind.

God's love manifested in Christ and Christ's love manifested toward us: the following is the most perfect example of love and the most splendid and humbling of all Scriptures since it clearly shows how much Christ loves us. The apostle Paul wrote the following awe-inspiring words to the brothers and sisters at Rome:

- While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).

This means though we were full of outward sinful behaviour and sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within our bodies (i.e., self, ego, pride, greed and lustful thoughts etc.,) Christ died for us, he laid down his life that we could be made righteous by faith apart from the law, self-effort and works. In spite of our corrupted fallen nature God counts our faith in Christ as our righteousness it is imputed to us as a pure and free gift. Consider the following words of Paul:

- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).
- While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life (Rom. 5:10).

These two verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that God loved us long before we loved Him. Though some of us might die for a friend or loved one, Christ died for us while we were ungodly and indifferent to God

and His ways and in many cases blasphemers, because of a lack of perceiving this great love God has toward us that these two verses (and others like them) shine a spotlight on some in the Christian faith tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes, they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this world. When anyone who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with a royal and majestic robe of righteous so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions.

1 JOHN 3:7

Whoever Practices Righteousness is Righteous, as He is Righteous.

- **1 John 3:7:** Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

Little children: refers to new converts or believers who are not fully secure in their Christian faith.

Whoever practices righteousness: not only carries the idea of avoiding wrong-doing and anything that would offend God, but also carries the idea of showing compassion, kindness, mercy, grace justice and forgiveness not only toward brothers and sisters in Christ, but also toward those who do not know the love of God. One of the primary focuses of this letter so far has been on antichrists, deceivers and false teachers so John to prevent those new in the faith is showing them how to discern who is of God and who is not. John is fully aware that just because a person says they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is not always evidence that they actually do.

1 JOHN 3:8-10

Whoever makes a Practice of Sinning is of the Devil.

- **1 John 3:8-10:** Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil (diabolos), for the devil (diabolos) has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil (diabolos). ⁹No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ¹⁰By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil (diabolos): whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Prior to these verses John said if Christians say they have not sinned they make the Lord a liar, and his word is not in them (1 John 1:10), but in these verses John appears to be contradicting that statement by saying, Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin and John even goes further by adding that they cannot sin (1 John 3:8-10). But John is not contradicting his previous statement or denying reality, in these verses. John is not saying that Christians will never sin, but that they will not live a lifestyle of sin or constantly practice sin because God's seed (referring to God's Spirit) is in them and living a worldly lifestyle of sin goes against the Spirit of God that is in them. John is telling the little children (v7) (new converts and those insecure in their faith) that this is how they can tell the difference between a person that is born of God and one that is not. The person that is born of God will be living a lifestyle that outwardly evidences their inward belief (howbeit not perfectly), whereas the lifestyle

of a person who is not born of God will outwardly show that they have absolutely no thought, consciousness, desire or passion to live in a manner that would bring honour to God, a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

He that commits sin is of the devil: the phrase, "He that commits sin is of the devil" (v8) does not mean that they are grossly and extremely wicked people controlled by some evil spirit god, but that they are living a lifestyle without any thought toward God and solely to satisfy the flesh, meaning they are controlled by the desires of self, ego and pride etc., without any thought toward God. The devil in this context is a personification of all that is opposed to God in the human heart. Jesus tells us that out of the human heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (Matt. 15:19) (Mark 7:21). James in his letter tells us that bitter jealousy and selfish ambition comes from the heart (James 3:14-16) and says, "They are earthly, unspiritual and demonic." Added to these Paul tells us:

- The works of the flesh are sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these (Gal. 5:19-21).

This is why it is perfectly safe to say that "The devil has been sinning from the beginning" (v8). Supporting this idea is the following verses in which John goes on to talk about the evil of jealousy and hate in Cains heart which resulted in him murdering his brother (v11-15) and therefore belongs to the evil one, meaning that spirit which is against God, his will, his character and his nature. All of these things stem from within the human body (i.e., from self, ego, pride, greed, lusts, envy and such like things). The word devil (diabolos) simply means slander, liar and a false accuser and is a perfect title that expresses everything in the human heart and within a group, organisation or government etc. that opposes God, his character, his nature and his will.

7

Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil: the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil (v8) this statement can apply to the following three ideas:

- 1 Jesus by not only teaching people how to live, but living the life he taught, is our perfect example. He lived a lifestyle of love, compassion, kindness mercy and grace and was always ready to forgive whoever came to him. He told all those who confess his name that they are to "Love their neighbour as themselves" (Mark 12:31). This means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land. To magnify this Jesus said, "Other than loving God with all our hearts and minds there is no-other greater commandment in the entire Bible than treating others with justice, decency and respect (i.e., love your neighbour as yourself). The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. It is in this sense that Christ the Son of God appeared and destroyed the works of the devil, meaning the works of sin by living his life according to the will, character and nature of God and teaching those who love him to live in the same manner. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

2 Jesus by manifesting through his life, his ministry and his death the breathtaking and majestic reality of the words, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). When a sinner perceive the love that God and the Lord Jesus Christ have toward them they are brought to humble repentance and by faith surrender their hearts and minds to trust in Christ for their eternal salvation and, "God delivers them from the domain of darkness and transfers them into the Kingdom of his beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). When a sinner is spiritually transferred into Christ's spiritual Kingdom their entire life is transformed, the passions of their mind and heart are changed from ignoring Christ to desiring to follow him, God's love, forgiveness and grace fills their heart and from this love they deeply desire to live a life that honours their eternal and perfect brother and his heavenly Father and it is in this sense that the appearing of the Christ the Son of God destroyed the works of the devil.

3 Paul wrote the following majestic and glorious words to the brothers and sisters in the Corinthian church:

- I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed, because this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-56)

It is in this sense that Christ the Son of God appeared and destroyed the works of the devil, meaning the works of sin which gives the Law legal right and power to condemn us all too eternal death. Since all three scenarios can be rightly applied to John's statement "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" it gains little to debate, argue or attempt to prove which of them, is the exact thought John had in mind. For further information see the title:

- Devil in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin: the words as translated in the beautifully written King James Bible, "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin" (1 John 3:9). is a difficult verse to understand, since all faithful Christians, if they are honest know that they are never totally free of sin. This difficulty shines a spotlight on the truth that when we approach a verse that is difficult or seems unrealistic to our understanding today it is always good Bible practice to remember that the King James Bible was written in a language common to men and women hundreds of years ago so what may seem strange, unrealistic and difficult to us was not to them. This reality shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that when a verse appears to be difficult or unrealistic to our different and modern way of thinking it often helps to take a peek at some of the modern and globally well-known and accepted Bibles to get a clearer insight into a particular verse that on the surface seems unrealistic. This Scripture is a good example of this principal, the King James Bible says:

- Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin (1 John 3:9).

The English Standard Bible for the same verses says: -

- No one born of God makes a practice of sinning.

Clearly no Christian is able to live a life totally free from sin if we could there would be no-need for grace and no need for Christ to have died. Added to this John himself says in this same letter, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us and if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8, 10). Obviously, the words of the more modern Bible version "No one born

of God makes a practice of sinning” harmonise with all other Scriptures far better than do the words, “Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin.” John in this verse is saying the following two things: -

- 1 Whoever is born of God, does not live a lifestyle of sin.
- 2 Whoever is born of God, does not willfully continue to indulge in sin.

God's seed abides in him: the word seed in the following verse:

- God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God” (v9)

Comes from the Greek word (sperma) and carries the idea of something sown, (including the male “sperm”) in this context it refers to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God being sown in the heart. The concept of “Being born again” in Jewish culture meant a conversion of life from what a Jew had lived to another way of living it meant new responsibilities and new attitudes and carried the idea of changing who they had become to becoming someone different. It denotes the idea of taking on a new view of life and a new view of the world to what they had been taught and born into and totally embrace another heritage and another view entirely different. In the Bible the expression “Born again” is much the same it means a total change of heart, the entire focus and purpose of a person’s life is changed, but all of this change comes about not by self-effort, but when a person is humble enough to approach God with an honest and repentant heart and accept His eternal plan of salvation that comes to every sinner through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Christ the human heart is touched by God’s forgiveness and His grace and their life is turned around from the inside, not by force but through God’s love entering the human heart. When this spiritual event happens in a person’s life they experience Christ’s love and new purposes and new focuses begin to arise from the inside and their life and worldview is changed from chasing the things of this world to following God and the Lord Jesus Christ, thus they are in the biblical sense, “Born Again.” When a sinner is born of God the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God is planted in the heart of those who receive it and it continues to grow, as these grow in the heart it changes the life of the person that it is growing in and will continue to grow until the Lord returns or we are taken to be with him through death.

NOTE: the growth of the seed depends like any earthly seed does on the sunshine, water and amount of nourishment that seed gets, likewise the spiritual seed of God needs spiritual nourishment to grow.

Children of the devil and children of God: the words:

- It is evident who the children of God are, and who are the children of the devil (v10).

Show that there should be a distinct difference between the life of those who confess to believe in Christ and those who live in the world without Christ.

NOTE: this does not mean that every man and woman outside of God’s Kingdom is a wicked evil person, many have kind hearts and perform acts of charity that humble many of us, the difference is we should not only be shining in goodness and right behaviour, but also living as a light for the Lord Jesus Christ. This does not mean we have to impose or force our faith onto others, but it does mean that they should be aware of our faith and by our acceptance of them and our compassion, kindness and the love we show them we reflect the love and goodness of God toward them as Christ has toward us and not condemnation and judgment.

1 JOHN 3:11-12

Cain, was of the Evil One and Murdered His Brother.

- **1 John 3:11-12:** For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹²We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

The words, "This is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" refer to the LORD speaking to Moses from the tent of meeting (the Tabernacle of Moses) (Lev. 1:1) and saying, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:18). The LORD also told Moses to say to the people of Israel, "You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God (Lev. 19:34) showing that this commandment was not limited to their own people, but also applied to strangers. Clearly the people of Israel have had the command, "Love one another" from the very beginning. In the following verse John says, "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (v15) so we know Cain had jealousy and hatred in his heart toward his brother Abel. God when giving his laws to Israel said:

- You shall *not hate* the sons of your own people, in your heart, or bear a grudge or take vengeance, but you shall *reason frankly with your neighbour*, lest you incur sin because of him and you shall *love your neighbour as yourself* (Lev 19:17-18).

John is saying that Cain's deeds were evil because he lived a lifestyle totally contrary to the laws of God, while Abel his brother lived a life that honoured God and his laws. Abel's godly lifestyle aroused jealousy and hatred in Cain's heart (perhaps Abel was more favoured by his parents Adam and Eve, maybe Abel preached to Cain trying to get him to change his ungodly ways, but whatever the reason it is clear Cain's heart was filled with such jealousy and hatred that it led him murdering his own brother.

Cain was of the evil one: the evil one (v12) in this context refers to the devil, meaning the spirit of gross wickedness in Cain's heart (i.e., the jealousy and hatred was so strong that it led to murdering).

Ponder for a moment: today through T.V., movies and the global news we see and hear about people being murdered every day and have almost come to accept it as a normal part of the world we live in. I remember when I was a very young child living in New Zealand and while having dinner it came across the radio that someone had been murdered in the South Island. There was a very real moment of shock and silence amongst the whole family since this was not a common everyday occurrence. Consider now that this murder of Abel was the very first murder ever committed; imagine how Abel's blood would have reverberated in the corridors of heaven and God's horror at seeing such a murderous crime. This is why the evil that dwells within the human heart is given the title the devil it is the perfect word, because it embraces everything that is wicked in the human heart and every wicked action that is manifested outwardly from these evil indwelling attitudes. For further information on the devil see the title:

- Whoever makes a Practice of Sinning is of the Devil (following verses 8-10).

1 JOHN 3:13-15

Do not be Surprised, that the World Hates You.

- **1 John 3:13-15:** Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life (eternal) because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

John has just pointed out that Cain hated Abel, his brother, without cause, and now saying we should not think it strange if the world hates us in the same manner. Jesus said, "I command you, so that you will love one another" "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you" (John 15:17-18). While encouraging the disciples to love one another Jesus warns them that they should expect to be hated by the world. Jesus purpose here was to show more clearly the necessity of Christians showing each other mutual affection since they could hope for none from the world.

Cain the seed of the serpent: this hatred is not at all to be wondered at; so, it was from the beginning, and has been in all ages since; immediately upon the fall God said to the serpent:

- I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (Gen 3:14-15).

This enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, showed itself in:

- Cain who hated and murdered his righteous brother.
- Ishmael who was born after the flesh and persecuted Isaac who was born after the Spirit.
- The Jews who persecuted the prophets of old and hated Christ and his apostles.

As it was from the beginning so it is now, there has always been two groups of people the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked therefore it should not be considered a strange or unusual thing to be hated without a just cause. Cain's actions showed that he was as the first-born of the serpents' seed; even the eldest son of the first man, was of the wicked one. His ill-will had no restraint; it proceeded so far as to murder his own brother for religion's sake because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. This serpentine nature still continues in the world. This is because the great serpent dragon reigns as the god of this world so when the fangs appear and the serpent hisses at you who belong to that seed of the woman that is to bruise the serpent's head a second time when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords it should come as no surprise.

The world in focus: when the term, the world is used in this context it refers to those who are enemies of God and to those who hate Christians without a just cause and because they do not join in the corrupt lifestyle that they practise. We know this because John uses Cain who hated Abel and murdered him because of his good works as the representative of the world he has in focus. John's statement:

- Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you (v13).

Does not embrace every man and woman of the world but rather carries the idea that we should not be surprised at those who do manifest the serpentine spirit toward us. Jesus said:

- These things I command you, so that you will love one another, if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you (John 15:17-18).

And Luke wrote:

- Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man (Luke 2:52).

So clearly not all the world hated Jesus if this was true none would be saved, added to this it is certain not everyone hated Abel or desired to murder him, which means that in the context of John's letter the world primarily refers to that enmity that is in the heart that is aggressively resistant to God, but it cannot be applied to all who live in the world

without God, since many of them respond to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and there have been many others throughout history who though being non-believers have helped and protected Christians who were suffering persecution and aided believers in times of great sorrow. The words, "the world" as John is using them refers to that seed of the serpent that is at enmity against the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:14-15) that dwells in the heart of those who are antagonistic against God. It is outwardly manifested by those who hate and persecute Christians for no just reason, but simply because of their faith. This aggressive anger evidences that they have the seed of the serpent dwelling in them, but it should be recognised that there are many in the world who do not respond to God's people with such aggression and hatred, but we should not be surprised when we do see the hissing and poison of the serpent rise up from certain ones we share our faith with.

It is interesting to notice:

- John uses Cain a religious man who hated and murdered his brother who God chose to reference the world he spoke of.
- Ishmael a man raised in religion hated and persecuted Isaac, God's chosen child.
- The Jews hated and persecuted God's chosen prophets of old.
- The chief priest, Pharisees and scribes hated and plotted Christ murder.
- After Christ's death the Jewish religious leaders aggressively set about to destroy the Christian faith and those who confessed Christ.
- Jesus when referring to the religious leaders of Israel (the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes) said, "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. (Matt. 23:33-34), clearly a reference to the serpents' seed of (Genesis 3:14-15).

12

It is interesting to also notice that Jesus said to the apostles:

- Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you (Luke 10:19).

Perhaps the world John had in mind refers more to the religious world (i.e. those who are in religion for worldly wealth and riches or their own selfish ambition, ego, pride and the fame and importance it brings them) much like the religious leaders of Jesus generation or simply in the ministry for an easy career path. For further information on the stunning, majestic and glorious prophecy of the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman see:

- Genesis 3:15 in Commentary OT. (ON WEBSITE MENU).

This verse is one of the most majestic prophecies of the entire Bible it begins at Genesis and its theme beautifully flows through every book of the Bible until it climaxes in the book of Revelation.

1 JOHN 3:16-19

Love is Sacrifice.

- **1 John 3:16-19:** By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him.

John tells all brothers and sisters in Christ that the best way to tell if a person who confesses to believe in Christ is to see if they are willing to sacrifice their life for their brothers and sisters in Christ as the Lord laid down his for us. This does not mean they have to die, but are they prepared to make sacrifices to help or benefit others in some manner.

A good example of this principal; when I was a young naïve Christian the oversight of the church, I attended had organised for a global and world-renowned preacher to visit our church. The congregation gave up their time to deliver flyers and the church did a massive advertising campaign because of the enormous excitement of this (so called) great man of God visiting). He came and went and, in my opinion, didn't do any more than our own ministers and local visitors did. Later as I progressed into leadership I discovered that this so called great man of God would not visit our church unless he stayed in the best hotel on the Gold Coast and was chauffeur driven in a limousine (a common car was obviously too lowly for him) This man may have had great skill in Scriptural knowledge and eloquence in speech-making and persuasiveness, but it is certainly clear he did not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling within, but the love for the world's goods (v17) and was still being driven by self, pride and ego.

NOTE: it is not against scripture to be rewarded or paid for spiritual service, but to expect the best is. No one in Christ's service no matter how gifted needs designer clothes Rolex watches, the top of the range cars and the best hotels in the towns they visit to minister the glorious Gospel of Christ. It should never be forgotten to serve God and His most beloved Son is the highest honour and privilege any person can hold in this decaying world. There is no other greater privilege than to serve the Lord. Whoever does serve Christ with a right heart attitude is storing up eternal treasures in heaven that Christ himself will give with joy to them when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. The words:

- By this we know love that he laid down his life for us (v16)

13

Is not just a principal for Christians, but applies to all human relationships, the only way to test true love is to see if those who confess their love are still willing to love us in difficult times. True love puts the one we love before our own well-being. This is why John says, "We ought to lay down our lives for the brothers and sisters" (v16) meaning in our thinking, conversation and actions we should be doing what is best for them and not for ourselves.

Let us not love in word or talk, but in, deed: John's words:

- If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? (v17).

Show that we are not called to help if we do not have the means, God does not expect his children to put themselves in hardship to help others (clearly they will be storing treasures in heaven if they do), but the idea here is that if we are able to help and deny that help it evidences that our heart is still fixed on the love of this world and not the love of Christ and his Kingdom. This is the reason John says:

- Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth (v18).

The ones God loves are not those who simply have great knowledge of the Scriptures and are gifted with the skill and eloquence of making speeches, but those who actually put into practice what Christ teaches and actually make every endeavour to live what they teach.

NOTE: John's words "In truth" (v18) in this context are not implying that we have to have every doctrine or teaching of the Bible perfectly correct from Genesis to Revelation, but to living a true life of faith in contrast to being hypocritical and living a life of religious pretence as the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes were doing in the era of Jesus generation.

By this we can know we are of the truth: here is something that is stunningly glorious, John says, "By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him" (v19) one may wonder by what? It may come as a shock to some, but it's not knowledge that John has in focus, but being willing to make sacrifices in our lives for the benefit of others in the faith. It is by this willingness to sacrifice that we can be confident we are in the faith (v18). This is clearly because no-one is going to make a sacrifice for another brother or sister in Christ unless they have the love of Christ dwelling in their own heart. This love toward our brothers and sisters in Christ not only manifest Christ's love and grace dwelling in our hearts and the reality and fruit of our faith, but is also a certain sign of our being born again.

1 JOHN 3:20-21

Whenever our Heart condemns us, God is greater than our Heart

- **1 John 3:20-21:** for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.

The words, "God is greater than our heart" (v20) means God is superior in knowledge, insight, power and judgment of our heart and our conscience because he knows all things and therefore is a far better Judge of us than our conscience can ever be. This is because the judgment of our conscience can be influenced:

- By our desires and emotions.
- By how we view God and his will.
- By deception and hardness of heart.
- By wrong belief and self-justification.

14

The following are two examples of this principal:

1. Throughout the history of Christianity certain religious authorities and leaders believed it was God's will to have heretics (those who opposed what they believed) imprisoned, tortured and put to death. The conscience of these men who were murdering people on the grounds of their belief was free from condemnation because their minds were grossly deceived by their belief that destroying the enemy of Christ in this manner was the will of God.
2. While the conscience of other men believed it to be totally against God's will to treat any human in this manner (especially on the grounds of what they believe) and did all they could to rescue those who were being treated with such brutality. The conscience of these faithful believers who put their own lives at risk to protect those who were being put to death was also free of condemnation because they rightly believed that God is a God of love and not only desires that all should be saved but also that we are called to "Love our neighbour as we love ourselves" and not to slaughter them.

God searches the heart, and tries the reins, and sees every hypocritical action and pretence of the heart and every deceptive thought and wrong belief of the mind whereas our own fallen conscience is not only prone to self-justification but also to self-deception and certainly does not see all that is sinful as clearly as God's piercing eyes do and therefore God knows more perfectly, more exactly more sharply all the actions that our conscience condemns or excuses us of and nothing can be hidden so what does John mean in these verses? The following are the two most common theories as to what John is saying:

1. That they are words of judgment to condemnation.
2. That they are words of comfort and consoling.

We will look at both theories since each one contains merit and value:

1. **Judgment to condemnation:** this scenario would apply to those who confess to believe in Christ, but live in hypocrisy and pretence of their faith in Christ and who deliberately indulge in sin or who have secret hatred, bitterness, envy, jealousy, resentment and such like things toward a brother or sister in Christ. The general idea is that if a person confesses to be something they are not and lives in such a manner that their own hearts condemn them because of inward insincerity, hypocrisy and pretence, or because of their inward lack of love they should not expect to have a mind free of condemnation when they are living in such a manner. Nor should those who live in this manner ever expect that they can persuade, soothe or quiet the conscience by external acts of religious duty and service. Though our conscience is as good as a thousand witnesses because it sees all we do inwardly and outwardly and therefore knows when we have not kept the law of love and that we are living a life of hypocrisy and judges us according to what it sees nevertheless it is a flawed judge since it can be deceived, hardened, seared and influenced by our emotions, self-justification and by what we believe. Therefore it must be reasoned that if our fallen conscience condemns us because we live in hypocrisy and pretence; or deliberately live a lifestyle of sin; or have secret hatred, bitterness, envy, jealousy, resentment and such like things toward a brother or sister in Christ then how much more will God who is much greater than our conscience and sees and knows all things and is therefore a far greater Judge of us than our own fallen conscience can ever be condemn us with his righteous judgment?
2. **Comfort and consoling:** prior to the words, "If our heart condemns us" (v20) are the words, "We shall assure our hearts" (v19) which are words of comfort and consolation and imply that there was a previous state of self-condemnation by the heart. Many faithful and devoted Christians are robbed of mental peace because of the condemning testimony of their conscience upon their mind due to the sinful aberrations and dysfunctions that dwell within the corrupted fallen body we live in sometimes this condemnation is so great that they are almost mentally intolerable and unbearable. This is especially true of those who are faithfully devoted to the Lord and whose conscience seeks to please God, but because they lack an understanding of God's grace their mind is bombarded with the condemning voice of the law without mercy resounding in harsh judgment against them. John is comforting those who suffer under such condemnation by telling them that God's grace and mercy is greater than the condemnation of the law. John is beautifully highlighting the truth that, God is greater than our conscience which condemns us, since He knows all things and therefore, knows our love and desire to serve Him, and knows our frame so He is able to forgive us in our weakness of faith. If our conscience accuses and condemns us because of a lack of faith in God's love and grace or a lack of having clear view of God's forgiveness and righteousness that comes not by our own self-effort, but by faith in Christ and God's grace we should not fear, because, God's love is greater than the condemning voice of the law in our conscience and He not only sees our love and devotion toward His Son, but also hears our deep cries of hopelessness and despair. In this context John is saying, "Whenever our heart condemns us (v20) we can assure our minds before God" (v19) because He already knows all things and His love, grace and mercy is far greater than the condemning voice of the law upon the mind. Gaining mental peace over the condemning voice of the conscience is not about being free of sin, but having confidence towards God and that his heart is flowing toward us in love and not condemnation, not because we are without sin, but because God grace and mercy in Christ is greater than our sin when we come to the Lord and acknowledge it before him.

John in the first chapter of this letter wrote:

- If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin, but if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:7-10).

No Christian should hope to find mental peace while they are hiding anything from God's view. He knows all the sins of which we are conscious, and sees all our guilt and aggravation far clearer than we do. Added to this He knows all the sins which we have forgotten; all those acts which we deceive ourselves are not sinful or do not even recognise as sin. No-one can hope to calm their mind by presuming they can hide certain sins. God does not need a magnifying glass to search out our sin since even the smallest of them stands out in brilliant light before his holiness. We may deceive ourselves, but it is impossible to deceive God or hide anything from him. This is why John says, if we confess out sin God is faithful and just to forgive us. When our conscience condemns us we shall only quieten it by having the assurance that we are in the hands of God whose love and compassion is toward us for good and not harm and either doing something to correct whatever it maybe or if we are unable then confess and acknowledging that which is condemning us before God in contrast to thinking we can keep it hidden. One of the reason God calls us to confess our sin before Him is that we always live in awareness that we are a fallen creature as is every other man and woman on planet earth. The instant we think we are sinless and worthy of God's favour because of our own righteousness is the instant we become self-righteous, dogmatic, legalistic and worse still begin to judge others who do not attain to our (pathetic) standard or righteousness as lessor. This idea of confessing our sin is not only about going to God every time we maybe convicted of gross sin, but living with awareness that we are always sinners before God. This is why Christ laid down his life, he understood that not one of us are ever able to attain to his perfect standard of life or to the perfect demands of the law or to God's most holy perfection every brother and sister in Christ should always be conscious that they are made righteous not by their own self-effort, but by their faith in Christ and God's great love. This truth shines a brilliant spotlight upon the importance of confessing and acknowledging our sins. (1 John 1:7-10).

1 JOHN 3:22

Whatever We Ask We Receive from Him.

- **1 John 3:22:** and whatever we ask we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

John to indicate the privilege of those who are faithful to Christ and trust in God's love and grace tells them that whatever they ask for they will receive. It is of course supposed that those doing the asking are not, desiring anything that is contrary to the honour and glory of God, the Lord Jesus Christ or to their own spiritual well-being. When these things are absent from our prayers John says, "We may depend upon receiving the good things we ask for." Does this mean that God will give us everything we desire and pray for or does it refer to something more specific? Certainly God is well able and does answers prayer, but is clear to those who have earnestly prayed that not all the things we ask for in prayer are granted to us, yet here John emphatically says, "Whatever we ask for will be given" so what did John have in mind when he made this statement? To find out it helps to put it in the context it is written in which is about being condemned by our heart and conscience, it is about being robbed of mental peace and having a troubled mind. It is about fearing we are not abiding in Christ because of the condemning voice of the law upon our conscience (v24). The context is one of John reassuring those in the faith of their salvation and encouraging them to have confidence in God's love

and grace. We know this because John ends the chapter by telling us how we can be confident we are abiding in Christ and therefore saved to eternal life. So the focus of John's words, "Whatever we ask we receive from him" (v22) are about obtaining mental peace and absolute confidence that we are abiding in Christ and saved to eternal life despite the condemning voice of the law upon our conscience due to the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that dwell within our fallen and corrupted body. Therefore, the things we can pray for and that God will certainly not deny to those who are abiding in Christ are, peace of mind, contentment and all things pertaining to and needed for eternal salvation in contrast to mental condemnation and God's severe and harsh judgment.

How we can know, we are abiding in Christ: John gives us two ways in which we can know that we are abiding in Christ. John tells us if we:

1. Believe in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Love all those who belong to the family of Christ.

Then we can be sure we are abiding in Christ and Christ is abiding in us by the Spirit he has given us. But some might say, what is the Spirit he has given us? Simply this love it is by the Spirit of love that:

- Jesus dwells in God and God dwells Jesus.
- God dwells in us and we dwell in God.
- We dwell in Jesus and Jesus dwells in us.

God is love and it is by the Spirit of love that God the Father, Christ the Son and Believers are all united in each other and it is by love that we know we are abiding in Christ and in God. John tells us:

- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:8).
- So, we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16).

These words of John shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that we abide in God by love and God abides in us by love and that it is by this love being manifested through us toward our brothers and sisters in Christ that we know we are abiding in Christ and Christ is abiding in us.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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