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1 John 1

(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.



Learn the Bible with Friends

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 1.

INTRODUCTION: John says that he wrote so that people might come to believe in Christ. He was not as interested in the historical order of the events in the life of Christ or in his deeds. John's focus and interest was in the inner meaning of Jesus teaching. John emphasizes Jesus as the Son of God sent by God to be the Saviour of mankind. He reaffirmed the core of Christianity, saying that either we evidence the sound doctrine, obedience, and love that characterise all Christians, or else we are not true Christians. When all the basics of faith are in operation, we not only know joy, but can live a life that honours God and be reassured of salvation (3:19, 24) even though we are still far from perfect (1:9). This assurance comes especially as we find ourselves learning to love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ (4:7-8). John wrote this general letter to congregations across Asia Minor (now Turkey) in the late first century A.D.

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.

Topics.

- That which was from the beginning, we have heard, seen and touched.
- Peter's and the apostle's joy may be complete.
- The blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sin.
- If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar.
- God is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:1-4

That which was From the Beginning, we have Heard, Seen and Touched.

- **1 John 1:1-4:** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life ²the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us ³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Some use the words, "That which was from the beginning," to support the mistaken theory that Jesus was with God from the beginning of creation, but the focus of John is:

- The eternal life which was with the Father (v2).

Certainly, Jesus was in the eternal mind of God from before the foundations of the world and the centre of God's eternal plans, purposes and promises to be the Saviour of all mankind. Much like parents who mindfully plan the birth of their child long before their baby is born and even makes the necessary changes to prepare their home for the arrival of their new born child and decorate a room while the child is still growing in the womb. In the same way Jesus was in God's eternal mind and his eternal plan for mankind's salvation long before Mary gave birth to him.

It is in this sense that Jesus was with God in the beginning. Sadly many of those who believe Jesus is God, teach that those who only claim him to be the most glorified and beloved Son of God are not Christians yet there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states people must believe that Jesus is God to be saved, in contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of verses that state:

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

Added to this there is not one verse that says:

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

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God, Christ would have told the apostles at least once in his discourses with them and in his messages of salvation, but all we find in the Scriptures is Jesus and the apostles proclaiming that people must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved. Jesus said:

- This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

That which was from the beginning: that which was from the beginning refers to eternal life it was eternal life that was with God at the beginning not Jesus as many teach. Jesus was resurrected to eternal life from the dead and John and the apostles heard him talk, saw him with their own eyes, touched him with their own hands, and even ate with him. They saw the promised eternal life in Christ’s resurrected immortal and eternal body. The words:

- Concerning the word of life (v1).

Refers to God’s promise of eternal life from the beginning which Peter and the apostles have seen in Jesus resurrected body. It is this eternal life that Peter says was made manifest to him and the apostles and it this eternal life that was with God from the beginning that they have seen and testify of.

CONSIDER: the entire glory of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the promise of eternal life which was with God from before the foundations of the world. The message Jesus, the apostles and Peter proclaim to us is that we through faith and God’s grace can be partakers in the eternal life which was with the Father from the beginning and was made manifest in Christ to Peter and the apostles in the resurrected body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The words:

- That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you (v3).

Refer to the resurrected eternal body of the Lord Jesus Christ. This eternal life is the Spirit of God and clearly was with God from the beginning. God the Father is the source of all life he is eternal life and gave that life to the Lord Jesus Christ who gives it to all who belong to his family. Peter and the apostles proclaim the message of eternal life that was with God in the beginning and that was manifested to them in the resurrected body of the Lord Jesus Christ so that whoever believes in Christ may also have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

The words:

- We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete (v4).

Show us the following two things:

1. That Peter and the apostles joy is not produced by the things of this world, but by their fellowship with God the Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. As great as their joy is in being in a devotional relationship with God the Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ it is made fully complete when people who do not know of this devotional relationship with the Father and His Son discover it through their ministry.

Every faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ will relate to this statement of Peters, for all who belong to the family of Christ there is not greater joy in this world than the joy of another finding eternal life in Christ and being united to his heavenly Father because of their testimony.

The immortal and eternal Jesus appears to the disciples: the following verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus manifested in his human mortal body the eternal life that was with God his heavenly Father from the beginning:

- Jesus stood among the disciples and said, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit and he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." (Luke 24:36-39).

Eight days later:

- The disciples were together with Thomas and although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe" (John 20:26-27).

And on the shores of the sea Jesus said to the disciples:

- Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead (John 21:12-14).

When Jesus appeared to his disciples in his immortal, eternal resurrected body they did not believe it was him until after they had handled and touched him and seen him with their own eyes and eaten with him. Their doubt and lack of understanding was only natural since no one had ever seen or heard of anyone being raised from the dead to eternal life. Certainly, Jesus raised a certain few from the dead, but they were only raised to mortal life not eternal life. The disciples at that glorious time were looking at the manifestation of eternal life that was with Jesus heavenly Father from the beginning manifested in a body resurrected from the dead. It is this same eternal life that every faithful brother and sister in Christ will inherit when God raises those sleeping in Christ from the dead and the faithful who are alive to be with the Lord in eternal glory. After the disciples had handled and touched Jesus, seen his hands and side and eaten with Him, they finally understood the things that he had spoken to them before the resurrection concerning eternal life. Now everything Jesus had spoken about eternal life was manifested before their own eyes. The resurrection was not just words anymore, but became a visible reality as they handled him, touched him and saw his resurrected, immortal and eternal body. Had Jesus not appeared to them after the resurrection they would have been left as orphans and been like deserted children it would have been the end for them and for us we would have been left without hope. It was seeing the resurrected body of Jesus and the ascension into heaven that comforted the disciples and should comfort every faithful brother and sister in Christ today.

- This is the promise that he made to us—eternal life (1 John 2:25).

1 JOHN 1:5-7

The Blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all Sin.

- **1 John 1:5-7:** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

John has just told us, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (v5) so the he in the following verse, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light" (v7) refers to God, it is God who is John's focus, the light of God of course is Holiness God's pure Holiness is pure light. The following are the two most common theories regarding what the words, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another mean:

1. We have fellowship with God and God with us.
2. We have fellowship with others who have faith in Christ.

There is no need to debate or enter into a lengthy study to prove which of these two thoughts John had in mind since both statements are true and both can apply. The Holiness of God not only embraces all the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, mercy, grace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, forgiveness and justice in absolute perfection, but also has an absolute lack of any form of malice, resentment, bitterness and such like things. To sum God's Holiness up in three words they would be: pure perfect love.

Walking in the light therefore includes the following three things:

1. Living lives in the Spirit (i.e., kindness, grace, mercy and forgiveness etc.).
2. Wholly embracing Christ and the Gospel.
3. Fully enjoying the joy of our faith and our eternal hope.

Walking in the light means walking in the same kind of light that God dwells in which is Holiness though the measure of light which we may have is clearly not the same in degree that God dwells in, nevertheless it is of the same kind. The word as in the following verse, "Walk in the light, as he is in the light" does not denote equality, but likeness (i.e., as he is in the light). This is why the true character of a brother and sister in Christ should reflect God's character of Holiness.

To walk in God's light: the presence of God brings the consciousness of sin in our fallen and corrupted nature and of the outward sins, in our life. The blood of Christ is the divine provision for cleansing both, which means that to walk in the light is to live by faith in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Whereas sin interrupts our fellowship, confession restores it and immediate confession keeps the fellowship unbroken. All who walk near to God, as a reflection of his light and his holiness, are fully aware that even on their best days of duties and service they are mixed with sin. God by providing his own beloved Son as a sufficient and effectual sacrifice for sin needed in all ages has shown that he is not only fully aware of the sinfulness of the world, but also by requiring believers to continually confess their sins and to apply by faith the blood of Christ to them has shown that he is also fully aware of the sinfulness of those in Christ. Every brother and sister in Christ should always be humble and willing to acknowledge honestly even the worst of their sin before God and confess them to the full extent relying wholly on His mercy, His grace and His truth and being fully assured that by their faith in Christ they are counted righteousness and by God's grace given a free pardon, full forgiveness and free deliverance from sin because of the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When it is said that Jesus blood cleanses us from all sin, the expression can mean two things:

1. It is through Christ's blood that all past, present and future sin is forgiven.
2. Christ's blood will ultimately purify us from all transgression, and make us perfectly holy when the Lord returns.

The general meaning is plain, that in regard to any and every sin of which we may be conscious, there is efficacy in Christ's blood to remove it, and to make us wholly pure. There is no stain made by sin so deep that the blood of Christ cannot entirely cleanse the mind and heart. God has made provision for cleansing the mind and heart of every brother and sister in Christ from sin so that by faith they can share in his light and his holiness. No system of religion intended for mankind could be adapted to our human fallen condition that did not contain this provision since not even the world's most skilful surgeon can with his scalpel cut sin out of our nature; it is engrained into every cell of our body and like a cancerous virus infects our thoughts, motives and passions. If Christ blood did not cleanse from all sin past, present and future not one of us could fellowship with God or enter with boldness into his presence. Of course, this entry is made available in the same manner as our entry was into the Kingdom of God and the family of Christ (i.e., through faith in Christ, humble confession of our sin and heartfelt repentance). Whoever comes to God through these will receive a welcome through Christ and into the Most Holy Place of God. The blood of Christ does not stop cleansing us at salvation, but continues to cleanse us, (i.e., it continues to keep clean what it has made clean) and will continue to cleanse us until Christ returns, nevertheless it should always be remembered that it requires the same faith to preserve our righteous standing before God as the faith needed to enter the Kingdom of God. The faith required to enter Christ's family is not a different faith to the faith needed to remain in the Lord's Kingdom. The faith we entered Christ's household with is the same faith that will carry us through to his return. Faith in Christ not only justifies and cleanses the sinner, but continues to justify and cleanse those who are redeemed in the same way and by the same means. Every brother and sister in Christ should know that based on their faith, God's word and the fact he cannot lie that they can have full confidence that they will be counted righteous despite the sinful dysfunction and aberrations that dwell within their fallen corrupted body. It is because of this righteousness that comes by faith that they should have the assurance that when Christ returns, he will meet them with joy.

**HERE IS THE GLORY WONDER AND BEAUTY OF CHRIST, HE IS
NOT A PARTIAL SAVIOUR, BUT SAVES AND CLEANSSES
FROM ALL SIN TO THE UTTERMOST, IF HE DID NOT,
WE WOULD ALL BE REJECTED FROM ENTERING
INTO HIS ETERNAL KINGDOM AT, THE
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**

There is a pollution on human nature, which is original, natural, universal, and internal, and is such that nothing can cleanse it, but the blood of Christ; not ceremonial rites, sacrifices, moral duties, evangelical performances or the practise of religious ordinances, none of these have any power to cleanse from sin or purge the conscience and cleanse the mind and the heart. The faith of those who dwell in the Most Holy Place is such that they know that as fast as the corruption of nature rises or sins appear the blood of Christ cleanses them as a rubber removes a mistake on paper.

They know that the cleansing power of Christ's blood reaches to all the following sins:

- Original and actual, secret and open sins.
- Sins of heart, of our thoughts, of our mouths and of our lives.
- Sins of omission and sins against God's statutes and commands.

- Greater or lesser sins, committed against light and knowledge, grace and mercy.
- Sins against the law, the Gospel and the Holy Spirit.

They know that the scape-goat for sin was the, foreshadow of Christ of which the Jews say:

- It atoned for all the transgressions of the law, whether small or great, sins of presumption, or of ignorance, known, or not known, which were against an affirmative or negative command, which deserved cutting off (by the hand of God), or death.

Christ's blood has been always cleansing from sin even before it was actually shed, to the Old Testament saints; whence Christ is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) and it has the same power and effectiveness now as when first shed, and will have to the return of Christ.

There is no stain made by sin so deep that the blood of Christ
cannot entirely cleanse it from the mind and the heart.

1 JOHN 1:8-10

If we say we have Not Sinned, we make God a Liar.

- **1 John 1:8-10:** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Every earthly baby born is born as a child of Adam the father of mankind and therefore we are all born in a fallen and corrupted body with sinful dysfunctions and aberrations which limit and hinder us all whether Christian or not from attaining to the perfect perfection the Law demands and the pure Holiness of God. If anyone of us could attain to this glorious standard of Holiness Christ died for no reason. This is why John says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (v8) and the reason he states, "The truth is not in us if we say we have no sin" because if the truth was in us we would clearly see our fallenness not only in our outward behaviour, but also within our minds, our thoughts, our imaginations and our hearts before God's Holiness and never for a moment think we were without sin. All of us have within our human nature a natural focus on self and inherited indwelling pride, ego, anger, jealousy, lustful thoughts, envy and such like things which prevent us from being sinless. Christ did not lay his life down for us because we could attain to God's Holiness but because we couldn't. This is why John says, "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in" (v10).

God is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness: the words, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v9). Confess; in this context carries the idea of acknowledging what is secret in the heart and the words, "Confess with your mouth" means that it won't be secret anymore. The idea is that of perceiving, recognising and acknowledging our sin.

This verse carries two ideas:

1. We are to acknowledge our sin before God, this does not only mean when we sin, but realising before the law and God's Holiness we are always sinners no matter how good we may appear before mankind, we are always in a state that falls far short of God's Glory and His Holiness and therefore we are not only always in a state that desperately needs God's grace and God's forgiveness but also always in a state that is in need of a Saviour who can rescue us from our fallenness.

**THERE IS NO MOMENT IN OUR LIVES THAT WE DO NOT NEED
SAVING FROM OUR SIN AND OUR FALLENNESS AND IN
NEED OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS**

2. The words, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v9) can also carry the idea of confessing our faults to our brothers and sisters in Christ. But this does not mean we are to confess to everyone who belongs to the Lord's family, but to those who we have trusting relationships with and especially to those who we have offended.

John in the next chapter says:

- My little children if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

All Christians are called to live a life of doing-good, treating people whether in Christ or outside of God's Kingdom with decency and respect and in a manner that brings honour to God and a good testimony to Christ and the Christian faith, but should they fall short they have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous meaning they have a supporter and a loving and compassionate activist campaigning for them.

A visual picture of God's grace in Christ (howbeit an imperfect one). This is not just about confessing individual wrongdoing, but living every moment before God with our minds and hearts always having an underlying awareness that even in our good moments we still fall far short of God's Holiness and therefore have an ongoing permanent mindful consciousness that we are always in faith and always in prayer in thought having a conscious awareness that sin dwells within and confessing and acknowledging it when it breaks out and manifest in wrongdoing. When God looks upon us he does not see our torn, ripped, patched and ragged clothing, but sees us dressed in the royal robes of Christ's righteousness and it is by these royal robes of Christ's without blemish that God counts us worthy of eternal salvation.

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.
