



# WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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## 1 John 5

(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.



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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 5.

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## Topics.

- Everyone who believes Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.
- This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.
- Everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.
- Jesus Christ came by water and by blood.
- If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater.
- If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.
- Sin that does not lead to death and sin that leads to death.
- The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

**The previous chapter:** in the previous chapter John warned Christians to test the spirits to see whether they are from God and said that every spirit that confesses Jesus came in the flesh is from God. He spoke of antichrist and antichrists and said anyone who does not love does not know God. John talked of God being made manifest among us; of us abiding in God and of God abiding in us. He said there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear and that we love God because God first loved us.

**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.

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## 1 JOHN 5:1-3

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### Everyone who Believes Jesus is the Christ has been Born of God.

- **1 John 5:1-3:** Everyone who believes that JESUS IS THE CHRIST has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. <sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup>For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

**NOTICE:** John does not say, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is God has been born of God" (v1) yet a great majority of Christianity today believe that Jesus is God, how can these majestic and glorious words of John "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God" be harmonized with such a mistaken theory?

It is interesting to notice that there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states we must believe that Jesus is God to be saved whereas in contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures that clearly state, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved," whereas 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).

For further information see the title:

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

**This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:** John tells us that if we love God and obey His commandments, we can be confident we love those who belong to his family. This is because all of God's commandments regarding mankind are summed up in the words, "Love your neighbour as Yourself."

- **Jesus said:** "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength and 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).
- **Paul said:** the whole law is fulfilled in the words, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Gal 5:14).
- **James wrote:** "If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well (James 2:8).

To love your neighbour as yourself means that we 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.

### **God's Commandments are Not Burdensome.**

- **Micah wrote:** "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- **Isaiah says:** "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- **Jeremiah said:** "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour. This is why John says "God commandments are not burdensome" (v3), meaning they are not oppressive, grievous or difficult since they all stem from love. Keeping God's commandments manifests the love of God's dwelling in the heart of the brother or sister who is keeping them.

**Jesus sermon on the Mount:** 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 in this sermon calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. Biblically a wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans, in contrast to this a good person is one who worships God and the Lord Jesus Christ and do all they can, to do what is right, and what is just (i.e., fair for all). To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ. For further information on Jesus famous sermon see:

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

When we endeavour to fulfil the royal law of love, we can be certain of the following two things:

1. God abides in us.
2. God's love is being perfected in us (1 John 4:16-17).

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## 1 JOHN 5:4-5

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### **Everyone who has been Born of God Overcomes the World.**

- **1 John 5:4-5:** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Overcoming the world does not mean overcoming everything in it or overcoming every sin and temptation nor does it mean we become perfect in righteousness. Christ did not lay down his life for us because we could conquer these things and attain a perfect state of sinlessness and righteousness, but because we couldn't. If we were able to attain to the perfect demands of the Law or attain to a state of sinlessness there would be no-need for Christ to have been crucified, his brutal, cruel and bloody death would have been pointless. This is why John says, "It is by our faith we overcome the world meaning it is by God's grace in Christ and Christ's righteousness that is imputed to us that we overcome the world in contrast to works of self-effort and adhering to ceremonial rites or the keeping of religious customs and traditions to attain to righteousness that leads to eternal life. The victory John talks about is our salvation it is in our salvation that we have the victory over the world, because in Christian salvation we are saved by grace that comes by faith in Jesus Christ. This is the glory of our faith and the wonder and splendour of the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. John is saying, for those who have been born of God nothing in this world and no-one in this the world have any power over their eternal destination. Paul wrote:

- If God is for us, who has any power to condemn us, if God who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with Christ graciously give us all things pertaining to eternal life? Christ Jesus is the one who died and was raised to the right hand of God and intercedes for us so how can anyone of this world condemn God's elect to eternal death when it is God who justifies and not man (Rom 8:31-34).

Added to this majestic glory Paul said:

- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:35-39).

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## 1 JOHN 5:6-8

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### **Jesus Christ came by Water and by Blood.**

- **1 John 5:6-8:** This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. <sup>7</sup>For there are three that testify <sup>8</sup>the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

**Came by water:** refers to Jesus Christ's water baptism.

**Came by blood:** refers to Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

**The Spirit is the one who testifies:** refers to God speaking from heaven at Jesus water baptism and the Mount of Transfiguration saying: -

- This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3:17) (Matt. 17:5) (Mark 9:7) (Luke 9:35).

Peter when speaking of this voice they heard on the Mount of Jesus Transfiguration wrote:

- When Jesus received honour and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased (2 Peter 1:17).

**These three are one:** since verse seven in the King James Bible, says, "These three are one" (v7) and it has been grossly misunderstood throughout the history of Christianity by those who have a preconceived mindset that Jesus is God we should take a little time to explain what John had in mind when he wrote, "These three are one" (v7). It does not mean that God the Father, the Holy Spirit and Jesus are one identity, this teaching totally distorts what John was saying since anyone who does not approach the words, "These three are one" with a preconceived mindset that Jesus is God would understand that John was saying, they are one in perfect love and perfect unity it means they have the same mind, plans purposes and goals and in this sense they are one. It is the same as an earthly father handing over the family business to his son who he loves and trusts because he knows his son has the same mind, character and ability to run the company equally as well as he has. This is why the modern Bible translations say, "three that testify" (v7) and "these three agree" (v8). The Bible in various contexts applies the term, "These three are one" to God, to Christ, to Christ and the global church (his body) and to an individual brother or sister in Christ. This is because it carries the idea that they are all one in mind, plans, goals, purpose, motivation, attitude and character they are the same in word, works, deeds, power, judgment and forgiveness, grace, mercy, love and are perfect in unity. This is what the Bible means when it uses the terms:

- One Spirit (when it embraces God, Christ and believers).
- They are one.
- These three are one.

**Jesus Christ and God the Father:** the continuing verses of this chapter repeatedly make reference to the Father and His Son as two separate individuals, should the Son actually be God surely it would mean that he has deceived us by allowing us to believe that he is the Son of God especially since he never told the apostles or any disciple nor is there a single Scripture anywhere in the entire Bible that states Jesus is God. It bewilders this author why sinful mortal men who confess to believe in God would give Jesus the title God the Son and refer to him as God, when Jesus himself never gives himself these titles, but only ever refers to himself as the Son of God or the Son of man.

**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. See also the notes following verses one to three.

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## 1 JOHN 5:9-13

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### **If we receive the Testimony of Men, the Testimony of God is Greater.**

- **1 John 5:9-13:** If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life (eternal) whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

### **The testimony of God has the following two aspects:**

1. In God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal life and whoever by faith is in Christ has eternal life.
2. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have eternal life.

John is saying that believing in God the Father alone is not enough to be given eternal life, to receive eternal life a person must believe in the Father and the Son. Those who believe in the God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ have eternal life. This is the glorious message of the Christian faith and the wonder of God's eternal plan of salvation eternal life is in God's Son and whoever has God's Son has eternal life. There is no-doubt many who John spoke to were Jews who had converted to Christ, but were still being influenced by the religious leaders of Israel who proclaimed no-one could enter the Kingdom of God except by keeping Moses laws of purification, ceremonial rites and the Jewish religious customs and traditions. John to oppose these teachings of religious works is telling those who have been born again in Christ that eternal life is in God's Son and whoever has Christ has eternal life so that they can be confident that they have eternal life not by their own self-effort, but by faith. No-one can be saved to eternal life by works or by performing ceremonial rites and keeping religious customs and traditions, we all must believe in the Father and the Son to be saved to eternal life. Preventing new Jewish converts from going back under the law was one of the greatest struggles Paul had in his ministry when visiting the Galatians, he said:

- I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting God who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ (Gal 1:6-7).

And in chapter three Paul in stunned surprise said:

- Foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified, did you receive salvation by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by faith, you are you now believing you can be made righteous by self-effort and religious works of the Law? (Gal. 3:1-29).

Trusting in self-effort and religious works to be saved does not only apply to the Jewish converts, it is one of the greatest dangers for all Christians even today. Going to a local church every Sunday, faithfully serving God, singing in a church choir, teaching Sunday school, preaching the word of

God, being the head oversight of a global religious organisation and such like things though all good in themselves have absolutely no power to save anyone to eternal life. Yet many worldwide consciously or unconsciously trust in these things. This is what John and Paul were struggling against (i.e., believers trusting in religious works). There is only one path to eternal life and it is not by self-effort, works of the law or religious works but by faith this is the message John is teaching, to be born again and saved to eternal life comes solely by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**NOTE: believing in the Son of God supposes the following:**

- Jesus is God's Son.
- Jesus came in the flesh (meaning he was born of a woman).
- Jesus died and rose again.
- The words Jesus spoke are truth.
- Eternal life is in the Lord Jesus Christ God's Son.
- The teachings of the apostles are the messages of God.
- Those who are born again love those in Christ's family.

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**1 JOHN 5:14-15**

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**If we, ask anything according to His will, He hears us.**

- **1 John 5:14-15:** And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

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Whoever has been in the Christian faith for some-time soon learns that we do not receive everything that we ask for, so what did John have in mind when he wrote the words, "Whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him" (V15)? To discover the answer, it helps to consider the following two things:

1. The following words of Jesus when he was talking to his disciples about asking for things in prayer. Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13).
2. The focus of John through this chapter has been set on, being born again; loving God and loving brothers and sisters in Christ; overcoming the world; believing Jesus is the Son of God and being confident whoever has the Son has eternal life. Then immediately after saying "Whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him" (V15)? John says, "If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life (v16) and spends the rest of the chapter explaining this statement.

Though God does at certain times grant us our requests for certain comforts of this world and personal and heartfelt prayers of all kinds, the primarily focus of what John is saying in the context of this chapter about being motivated to ask for things that:

- Would glorify his heavenly Father.
- Concern salvation and eternal life.
- That aid and help our brothers and sisters in their faith.
- Give life.

**These facts shine a brilliant light upon the truth that the things that are according to God's will and that we should pray for are:**

- Praying for wisdom in counselling an erring brother or sister.
- Praying for all things in accordance with what God has promised.
- Praying for repentance for those who do not know the love of Christ.
- Praying that the faith of brothers and sisters in Christ would be enriched.
- Praying that the Lord would pardon and recover a fallen brother or sister.
- Praying for the victory of those being tempted.
- Praying for comfort and strength for ourselves and those who are suffering troubles, hardships and sorrows.
- Praying that those lost may be enlightened, converted, and saved.
- Praying that the sins of the backsliding may be pardoned and that they would be restored into Christ's fellowship.
- Praying for God's mercy, grace and love to be deepened in ourselves and those who belong to Christ's family.
- Praying that the faith of those in the Kingdom of God would be sincere.
- Praying for the forgiveness of sins and comfort in trial.
- Praying for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to magnify the glory of God's word to our minds and the love of God to our hearts and to others in the family of Christ.
- Praying for the needful supply of our needs and the needs of others.
- Praying for grace that we may do our duty and for God to direct and guide us with wisdom.
- Praying for deliverance from the evils which tempt us and others.
- Praying for boldness, wisdom and grace to testify of our faith and spread the Good News of the Gospel in the world.
- Praying that we and others will be kept in God's mercy and grace until Christ returns.

Despite the reality that there are sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that war against spiritual life in the heart and mind of every brother and sister of the Lord, God invites us to come to him in faith being confident that we are crowned and clothed in the royal robes of Christ's righteousness and covered in God's boundless grace. No matter what the circumstances all who are in Christ are invited into the Most Holy Place of God with their prayer and their requests and should not allow the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that war within separate them from the love and grace of God that is in Christ Jesus. Our prayers must always be offered in submission to the will of God, meaning our minds and hearts are always ready to accept whatever the answer maybe. In some things they maybe speedily answered in the manner that we have desired, while in others though they have been heard in heaven what we have prayed for has not come to pass. Here is a test of true Christian faith (i.e., is our will surrendered to God's will in that we trust in His goodness) and that in His divine mind God has His good reasons and eternal purposes for withholding our petition or do we turn bitter in resentment and forsake our faith as some do. Prayer is the language of dependence on God; there is neither eternal life nor faith



where the mind and heart is without Christ. One of the great blessings of believing in the Lord Jesus is that if we ask any thing according to God's will which he has promised in his word (the revelation of his will) concerning the things which pertain to eternal salvation we can have full confidence and assurance that our prayers will be heard in heaven and that all that God has promised concerning our security in Christ, our forgiveness, our righteousness, our eternal future will be granted. Prayer is union with God whoever is born of God and filled with the love of God speaks this language of prayer. They call God Abba, Father, in the true spirit of surrender to His will.

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## 1 JOHN 5:16-18

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### **Sin that does Not Lead to Death and Sin that Leads to Death.**

- **1 John 5:16-18:** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. <sup>17</sup>All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. <sup>18</sup>We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

During John's era the Jewish nation viewed a Jewish man or woman as a brother this is because it was an ancient expression that signified a person belonged to the same nation, the same family, the same faith, or the same group of people etc. The Roman Empire also referred to woman (especially those who had authority) as brothers this is because during the Roman and New Testament era the word, brothers, was not used to differentiate between male and females unless the context specifically states it.

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### **BROTHERS WAS A PERFECT EXPRESSION FOR THOSE IN CHRIST SINCE, BROTHERLY LOVE IS LOVE THAT PROTECTS, DEFENDS, GUARDS AND SHELTERS, AND IS FREE FROM ANY ROMANTIC THOUGHT**

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The entire context of John's letter is upon loving brothers and sisters in Christ so in the context of the letter the word brother here would refer to a man or woman who is confessing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and has some part in God's Kingdom. Some may wonder how are we to know if a certain brother or sister's sin is unto death when all sin is of the same nature and kind with our own sin? And how are we to know if those confessing to believe in Christ are true brothers or pretenders (i.e., involved in Christ's Kingdom for their own advantage and gain). John throughout this letter has repeatedly said those who are the children of God are those who endeavour to live a lifestyle that honours God and those who love their brothers and sisters in Christ. Whereas those who are of the devil are those whose lifestyle shows they are indifferent to God's honour and who have no love for those in Christ's family (1 John 3:10-15).

**A Sin unto death:** since there has been great diversity of opinion in regard to "The sin that is not unto death" and "The sin that is unto death" We will consider the three most common since they all contain a different, but valuable aspect of truth. These three are:

1. The Law of Moses.
2. Civil death.
3. The unpardonable sin.

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## 1 THE LAW OF MOSES

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Moses said to the people of Israel:

- If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree” his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. (Deut. 21:22-23).

Some say that when John said, “If a man has committed a sin worthy of death do not pray for him” he was referring to the Laws of Moses which demanded that certain sins that were so wickedly corrupt the sinner was to be put to death. Under Moses law murder, kidnapping, purchasing a kidnapped person, adultery, incest, rape, sex with animals, worshipping other gods, false prophets, blasphemy of God's name and such like things all brought the death penalty. It may seem strange to consider that those confessing Christ could be involved in any sin that would warrant the death penalty, but consider the following. Peter said:

- Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer (1 Peter 4:15).

John wrote:

- Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:15).

Added to this throughout the history of Christianity certain religions confessing Christ have murdered those they considered heretics and tortured and burned alive those who would not surrender to their particular doctrines and all this in the name of God. This is the reason some conclude that John was saying do not pray for those who practise such gross and wicked sins that will result in a judgment to eternal death. Since though they are confessing Christ, they are full of hypocrisy and pretence and bringing a most terrible testimony to God, to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Christian faith.

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## 2 CIVIL DEATH

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Others say it refers to crimes committed against the legal laws of the country or nation for which the offender was sentenced to death. They teach that brothers and sisters in Christ should pray for a person who has been judged and condemned to death if the alleged accusation against them was false and therefore the verdict of condemnation to death was unjust so it would be perfectly right for them to pray that the condemned would be spared of the sentence of death. But if the alleged accusation proved to be true and the offender under the law of justice deserved to die, they should not pray that the offender who had been sentenced to death would be spared of the penalty that the legal justice system and court had pronounced upon them, which means that in this context the, “Sin not unto death” would refer to offences which might be pardoned under civil law and of which the punishment should be rightly altered. While the, “Sin unto death” refers to offences against the civil law which are proven to be true and therefore the magistrate has no power to pardon, nor under the law of justice should the punishment be altered.

**NOTE:** those who hold to this theory are not saying that we should not pray that an offending criminal should not find repentance and God’s grace that leads to eternal life, but that they should not pray that they would escape justice.

**An example of this principle:** years ago, I heard a testimony that for me showed true faith. A minister who took the Good News of the gospel into prisons shared how a man who had brutally murdered and was on death row was brought to repentance by the love and goodness of God and found forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ. This man’s life was transformed in such a manner that the prison minister wanted to use his testimony to lessen his death sentence. The new convert said, “No I will not use my new found love for Christ as an excuse to escape the justice I

am due." The man didn't and he was put to death to enter the eternal world of God's glory and everlasting peace. Had this man used his testimony in Christ as an excuse to escape the sentence of justice the remaining victims of the one he had brutally murdered would not have sensed the healing balm of justice calming the overwhelming suffering and pain of the loss in their hearts. In this context John's expression, "I do not say, he shall pray for it", may perhaps mean no more than, "I have no promise for the guilty; no foundation for the prayer of faith if a man has committed a sin worthy of the death penalty." This is because the laws of punishing justice must be executed, for the common safety and benefit of mankind: and even an offending brother in such a case must be resigned to God's eternal mercy and to public justice (which in the foundation of it is divine).

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### 3 THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

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Most have supposed that the "Sin leading to death" refers to the sin against the Holy Spirit the unpardonable sin which is never forgiven in this world nor in the eternal world to come, and therefore must be unto death. Sinning against the Holy Spirit means sinning wilfully, not in a practical manner, but a doctrinal way after having received the knowledge of the Gospel that leads to eternal life. It is a wilful denial of Christ and of the Good News of the Gospel that offers pardon of sin, righteousness, and eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ. The unpardonable sin is that mental and heartfelt aggression toward the grace of God in Christ so that in their own malice and obstinacy toward the Lord they are unforgiveable because they are denying the only sacrifice for their sin and the only one who has the power to pardon their sin and save them to eternal life. The scribes and Pharisees (the chief religious' leaders of Israel) are a perfect an example of this type of sin. They accused Jesus of having an unclean spirit and being of the spirit of Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus said to them:

- Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven and whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come because they are guilty of an eternal sin (Matt. 12:31-32).

The scribes and Pharisees were the builders of God's Kingdom they had the authority, the covenant, the law, the prophets, the Scriptures the promises, the Temple and the priesthood and all the evidence any could ever wish for that Jesus was their Messiah, the Christ, and the Son of God and yet they still opposed him and plotted his murder. Jesus finished this conversation with the scribes and Pharisees by saying:

- Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister (Matt. 12:50) (See also Mark 3:22-29).

Added to this the author of Hebrews states:

- It is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt (Heb. 6:4-6).

John in the second chapter wrote:

- They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us (1 John 2:19)

Demonstrating they were not truly a brother or sister. So how can we presume to pray God would withhold His righteous judgments? Especially when Jesus himself intercedes, not for the world which hardens itself in unbelief, but for those given to him out of the world.

**Hypocrisy and wickedness in the Kingdom of God:** some may find it difficult to comprehend that such hypocrisy and wickedness would exist in the Kingdom of God, but the Bible teaches that within the global Kingdom of God there are:

- Good and faithful servants (Matt. 25:21).
- Wicked and slothful servants (Matt. 25:26).
- Evil and the righteous servants that at the close of this age angels will come and separate (Matt. 13:47-50).

Added to these Jesus says:

- Many will say, 'Lord, Lord, did we not do many mighty works in your name?' And he will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness (Matt 7:21-23).

**NOTE:** the unpardonable sin does not apply to a brother or sister in Christ who like the Prodigal Son left his father's household to experience the world, since his heart was obviously still toward his father, evidenced by the fact he later returned. Those John had in mind who wilfully commits this gross sin that leads to death not only have no love in their heart at all toward Christ, but are also aggressively opposed in their hearts toward him, which means that in this context John's statement, "I do not say, he shall pray for it", means do not pray for those who after being fully enlightened to the Good News of the Gospel and the love and grace of God and then not only consciously and wilfully deny Christ, but turn aggressively against him. Throughout this letter John talks of antichrists, false prophets and false teachers being amongst those in the Kingdom of Christ, and begins this chapter with the words:

- Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God (v1).

John then proceeds verse by verse proving Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

Added to this he says:

- Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son (v10).

And in verse eleven he writes:

- Whoever has the Son has life (eternal) whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life and tells us he is writing these things so that we can know that we have eternal life (v13).

Based on these verses it would seem that the most likely groups that John had in mind when he was speaking about "Not praying for those committing sin leading to death" would be those who fit the description of the unpardonable sin.

**Praying for brothers and sisters who are not sinning unto death:**

John tells us, "When we see a brother or sister committing a sin that does not lead to death, we should ask God in prayer and that God will give them life" (v16). In chapter three John said to the disciples "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? Let us not love in word or talk but in, deed and in truth (1 John 3:16-18). John's entire focus in chapter three is about loving brothers and sisters in Christ and even being prepared to lay our lives down for them. In John's mind the concept of praying for a sinning brother or sister was not only about kneeling with bended knees in prayer, but also involved doing whatever action we are able to deliver the sinning brother or sister from their wrong behaviour (i.e., rebuking, correcting in love, encouraging, comforting and such like things).

John is saying, "If someone sees a brother or sister committing a sin (providing it is not a sin that fits the description of the unpardonable sin a brother or sister in Christ should pray for them and God will forgive the sinning offender upon their repentance since the idea of praying for a person also suppose we do what we can to help in whatever way we are able. In this context it refers to praying a prayer of repentance with an offending brother and sister. John is reassuring those who pray this prayer with the knowledge that God will forgive since there is no sin that cannot be forgiven when an offending brother or sister comes to God in honest repentance and by faith and surrenders their life, heart and mind into the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are words of comfort to those who see a brother or sister in Christ acting in the same manner as the Prodigal Son and are wondering if God can forgive them. John is saying that any brother or sister can be confident that God will hear their prayer and forgive the brother or sister they are praying for if they are repentant. No Christian who truly loves the Lord would deny that there are sins, that war against spiritual life not only in the heart and mind, but also outwardly, but these do not lead to death. Paul in his letter to the Galatians wrote:

- Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness, but keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted" (meaning to join with them in their transgression) (Gal 6:1).

Since even the best of God's children are not free in thought, word, or deed of sin and there are multitude of sins which people commit that do not come under the title of being unpardonable. Those who enter the throne of God's grace and have boldness and freedom there should while dwelling in such majestic grace intercede for their erring brothers and sisters that they maybe may be pardoned and saved.

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## **1 JOHN 5:19-21**

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### **The Whole World Lies in the Power of the Evil One.**

- **1 John 5:19-21:** We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. <sup>20</sup>And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. <sup>21</sup>Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

The expression the evil one embraces everything that would not only hinder those in the world coming to know the love and grace of God, but also hinder a brother or sisters' faith in the Lord. At the time of John it would most likely refer to the Jewish chief priests, the Pharisees and scribes and the Romans who aggressively set about to destroy the Christian faith.

### **Today the title, the evil one would include:**

- Religious teachers who lead people away from Christ and into ungodly behaviour.
- Whoever is aggressively against Christ and his teachings.
- Those who entice brothers and sisters in Christ to indulge in the sinful temptations of the world and its luxuries and pleasures.
- Any person that acts against God, against His will and against the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The whole world lies in sin:** John is saying that the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ has come into the whole world that lies in sin to give us understanding of the true God and eternal life. John's focus in these verses is that Jesus the Son of God came so that believers may know God the Father who is the one true God. Knowing God, the Father is the focus of these verses. John is saying that Jesus came so that those who believe in him would know the true God and have eternal life. To magnify this majestic and glorious truth John repeats his statement, "God the Father is the true God and eternal life (v20)." Verse twenty could read:

- We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know God the Father who is true and we are in God the Father who is true, and in his Son Jesus Christ. God the Father is the true God and eternal life.

**NOTE:** John is not teaching (as many believe) that Jesus is God rather John is saying that by being in the Lord Jesus Christ God's Son believers are in the Father who is the true God and eternal life. The whole purpose of God the Father sending His Son was so that whoever believed in Christ would by faith and God's grace be united in love with God. It is only through faith in God's Son that believers are able to stand before God the Father and receive His divine favour. It should be observed that John in verse-twenty shows that the theme of these Scriptures is not that believers may know that Jesus is the true God but that the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ came so that believers through faith in him may know God the Father who is the true God. This is not only in total harmony with the entire teaching of the Bible, but also in harmony with the following words of the Lord Jesus Christ who said:

- This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, And Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).

Jesus with these words shines a brilliant floodlight on the truth that Jesus is not God, but as the entire Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation the most beloved Son of God the promised Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world. The whole purpose of God the Father sending His Son was that we once again would have a right standing before the Immortal, Invisible, and Almighty Holy Father, the creator of all things and source of all life. It is only through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ that we are able to stand before Him and receive His divine favour.

**For further information see:** the notes following the title, "Everyone who Believes Jesus is the Christ has been Born of God (following verses one and two above).

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*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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