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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

1 John 4.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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1 John 4.

Topics.

- Test the spirits to see whether they are from God.
- Every spirit that confesses that Jesus came in the flesh is from God.
- The spirit of the antichrist and antichrist is coming.
- He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
- God was made manifest among us and dwells in us.
- We abide in God and God in us.
- There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.
- We love because God first loved us.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter John spoke of the resurrected body; of the world not knowing Christians because it does not know God and of Christ appearing to take away sin. He said Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil; whosoever is born of God does not commit sin and not to be surprised if the world hates you. He talked of Cain being the seed of the serpent and said if our heart condemns us God is greater than our heart and told those abiding in Christ whatever they ask they will receive from him.

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.

This chapter is in two parts: -

1. John's focus upon antichrist's and false teachers (v1-6).
 2. John's focus upon love (v7-21).
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Part One: John's focus upon antichrist's and false teachers (v1-6).

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

Test the spirits to see whether they are from God: if we could see John today our eyes would see a man's man, a tough rugged man, but when we talked to him we would perceive a man with a tender spirit who is full of love. Throughout his writing he refers to the faithful in Christ as the beloved and this letter is overflowing with God's love.

The words, "Do not believe every spirit but test the spirits" (v1) refer to the following two types of people: -

1. Those in the world who teach and write books focused on spiritual paths that lead to God. These teachers and their books are often very seductive and deceptive because they not only appear very appealing, but also offer techniques that if practiced can mentally enhance the mind, our thinking and our perceptions. Sadly whoever receives these teachings as the path to God is not only robbed from the Good News of the Gospel the only true path to God and eternal life, but also robbed from the love and grace of God that comes by being in a devotional relationship with His Son.

NOTE: not all teachers and books that teach certain keys and techniques for enhancing the mind or teach on motivational and positive thinking are harmful in fact many offer very good principals that will benefit our mind and our lives, but once they teach these techniques as a path to God they then fit into this category of false teachers that John is warning brothers and sisters (especially new converts and those who are vulnerable) to be on guard against.

2. False religious teachers within the Kingdom of God, just because a minister has been to a Bible college and has a certificate of approval, or stands behind a pulpit is not a guarantee that they are not a false teacher.

- Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matt 7:15).
- Paul warned, “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).
- Peter warned, “In their greed they will exploit you with false words and make merchandise of you” (2 Peter 2:3).

Jesus, Paul and Peter warn against false teachers who will be in the ministry for their own selfish ambition and greed, they distort and twist the Scriptures to their advantage and use those who sit under their ministry as merchandise not only to gain worldly riches and wealth, but to exalt their own pride and ego by the importance and fame they receive. These are most dangerous because they use the Bible and the Scriptures howbeit out of context, distorted and twisted so that their messages appeal to self, pride and ego and in this manner they often become very successful in the world, but not before God.

NOTE: throughout this letter John gives us certain clues for recognising antichrist’s and false teachers which we will discover as we progress through the verses.

Every Spirit that Confesses that Jesus came in the Flesh is from God.

1 John 4:2-3 -----²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

The word spirit in the following verse, “Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and every spirit that denies this truth” refers to the human spirit of true believers and the human spirit of antichrists and false teachers.

Those who are of the Spirit of God: believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (1 John 4:2) meaning he came into the world through the birth of a woman and was born a human man.

Jesus is not God nor did he pre-exist with God from the foundations of the world as a Spirit Son and then become a foetus in the womb of Mary as many believe today. Certainly Jesus was in the eternal mind of God from the beginning in that he was the central focus of Gods foreordained eternal plan of salvation for all mankind.

Christ was with God from the beginning in the same way as a woman who begins to plan having a baby sees the baby in her mind long before it is even conceived. The baby is not only very real in the mothers mind long before the baby is born, but she will prepare a room and make plans for its arrival, its well-being and its future.

It is in this same sense that Jesus was with God from the beginning; he was the central focus of God’s eternal mind and of His plans, purposes and promises for mankind’s eternal salvation.

Much like an architect who designs a majestic building fit for a royal family, the entire structure and all its beauty and glory is fully completed in his mind long before the builders are even on the site upon which the structure is to be built. This is why the prophets of the Old Testament were able to speak of the coming of Israel’s Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world long before

he appeared, because God by his Spirit imparted to their minds the eternal plan he had purposed in his eternal mind from the beginning and inspired them to impart this eternal plan to the people of Israel.

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).

Those who are not of the Spirit of God; deny that Christ came into the world through a natural birth, this applies to two types of people: -

- 1 The Jews (but not all Jews since many received him) who never accepted that their promised Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God would be born of a woman (especially one they knew) they said of Jesus: -

- Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? (John 6:42).

They believed Jesus was born of Mary by Joseph and certainly did not believe he was their promised Messiah the Christ.

- We were not born of sexual immorality, we have one Father even God (John 8:41).

Here the Jews (mostly those in religious authority) are accusing Jesus of being born a bastard child (i.e., born out of marriage).

- 2 To pagan faiths, the mystics and to the New Age teachers of today, since many teach the coming of the Spirit of the Christ into the world, but deny that Christ was a real man who came into the world through the birth of a woman.

The Spirit of the Antichrist.

The words, "This is the spirit of the antichrist" (v3), refers to anyone who denies Jesus came through the birth of a woman, this is why John says, "Which you heard was coming and now is in the world already." The spirit of the antichrist (i.e. that spirit that denies Christ was born of a woman) could not possibly come until the promise Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world was born of a woman and appeared as a man.

Only then could the antichrist spirit come which it did in great fury from the Jews against Christ for proclaiming to be the Messiah, the Christ and Saviour sent by his heavenly Father the God of Israel.

NOTICE: in (v3) John says, "The antichrist" (singular) then in (v4-5) says, "They are in the world" John uses the word antichrist singular to begin with because it is the same singular spirit in all antichrists that deny Jesus came in the flesh.

The meaning of antichrist and antichrists: the word antichrists, only occurs in John's letters and he is the only biblical writer who uses the singular word antichrist. No other New Testament writer uses this term so the surest method of discovering what the word antichrist means is not to look in dictionaries or at the reasoning's of religious leaders, but explore the four other verses in which John uses the word antichrist.

John wrote: -

1. Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that *antichrist* is coming, so now many *antichrist* have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour (1 John 2:18).

It is the last hour because many antichrists have come and a particular antichrist is coming.

2. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist he who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22).

The antichrist is not only a person who denies the Father and the Son, but who also denies Jesus is the Christ.

3. Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the *antichrist* which you heard was coming and now is in the world already (1 John 4:3).

From the beginning it has been said that antichrist would come and everyone who denies Jesus came from God is an antichrist.

4. For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the *antichrist* (2 John 1:7).

Those who deny Jesus was born of a natural birth are deceivers.

NOTICE: John does not use the word antichrist in the sense of one who set themselves up as rival claim to Christ, or who came in the place of Christ, but in the sense of those who were opposed to him by denying essential doctrines in regard to his birth, nature and his return in majestic glory.

Jesus said: -

- Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray (Matt. 24:11).
- False christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect see, I have told you beforehand (Matt. 24:24-25).

The Spirit of an Antichrist.

John's states that the spirit and characteristic of an antichrist is denying the truth that Jesus is the Christ and came by the birth of a woman and denying that God is his heavenly Father. John earlier wrote, "No one who denies the Son has the Father" (1 John 2:23) clearly showing that denying Christ automatically means denying the Father, this is because by denying Jesus we are denying God of his only begotten Son, it's the same as saying, "God I'll believe in you, but not your most beloved Son."

What natural earthly father would accept the love of a friend who refuses to acknowledge his children? It is a most repugnant love indeed and certainly I have never met an earthy father who loves his children accepting the friendship of someone who does not even want to acknowledge his children exist.

Antichrist is Coming and Many have Come.

The title antichrist can apply to a great apostasy under one head or to an individual or a succession of individuals.

Throughout history it has been claimed that the antichrist was: -

- The Emperor Domitian, the Gnostics and the Nicolaitans.
- The Nazareans, the Cerinthians or the Romish pontiffs, etc., etc.

But it is foolish to speculate since any person, doctrine, system of religion, polity, etc., which is opposed to Christ, and to the Spirit and spread of his message of salvation is an antichrist. Everyone who opposes the Spirit of the Gospel, and every teacher and writer, who endeavours to lower the Gospel standard to the spirit and taste of the world, is a genuine antichrist, no-matter where or among whom they are found.

The heresies which sprang up in the days of John were the antichrist of that time. As there has been a succession of oppositions to Christianity in its spirit and spread through every age since its spread throughout the world, so there has been a succession of antichrists.

The answer to the question, "Who is the antichrist?" Can be made even simpler; every individual person, group, community, government who deliberately opposes Christ's reign in the world and in others is an enemy of Christ and therefore can be given the title antichrist.

Antichrists went out from Us.

John in the second chapter wrote, antichrist went out from us (1 John 2:19) meaning they went out from their company and communion. At the time of John it most likely refers to the Jews (though not limited to them) who at some level accepted Christ, but then not only turned back to strictly adhering to Moses law, ceremonial rites holy days and keeping religious Jewish customs and traditions to earn righteousness rather than trust in God's grace in Christ, but also began enticing other believers in the church at Jerusalem and in the land of Judea to do the same.

When people confessing to believe in Christ turn from the Good News of the Gospel of grace it shows that they were not inwardly transformed as true brothers and sisters in Christ and that they had not surrendered their lives to the love of Christ or made him the King of their heart and mind. Had they done so they could not turn against the LORD with such hostility and aggression, it shows they were hypocrites and pretenders of their faith since had they been rooted in the heart by Christ's love and God's grace they would not have turned antichrists.

The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote: -

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value.

Equally as horrific as this Paul states: -

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that: -

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life.

This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith,
are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be
saved to eternal life without any one of them.

This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life. By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life.

He who is in you is Greater than He who is in the World.

1 John 4:4-6 -----⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

John is telling new converts and those vulnerable to deception (the little children) that by the following four things they have overcome the antichrists: -

1. By the Spirit of God dwelling in them (referring to God's love and grace).
2. By their belief in the teachings of the apostles.
3. By their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. By Christ's Spirit of love dwelling in them.

John is encouraging those who might be doubtful of their faith by telling them that these four truths are far greater than the spirit and teachings of the antichrist's that are amongst them, meaning they are far more powerful than any message a false prophet, teacher or antichrist that is in the world can possibly proclaim. This is because their messages no matter how much they may enhance the mind or benefit a person life or how good they may sound they have absolutely no power to save a sinner to eternal life, thus the reason John is saying that the Spirit dwelling in every brother and sister in Christ is far more powerful than any other message on planet earth. The words, "They are from the world" (v5), means they have the spirit of the world this is why, "The world listens to them" (v5) because they speak messages that appeal to the flesh (i.e., self, ego and pride) and messages that tickle our ears.

Those with an antichrist spirit: -

- Deny Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (been born of a woman) (v2).
- Do not listen to the teachings of the apostles (v6).
- Do not love those who believe in Jesus (v8).
- Do not confess that Jesus is the Son of God (v15).
- Do not love those in Christ's family (v20).

Part Two: John's focus now shifts to God's Love.

1 John 4:7-8 ----- 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

If anyone has ever wondered what is the Spirit of God is John in absolute clarity tells us, God is love this means anything that is contrary to love is contrary to the will and Spirit of God and anything done in love is not only pleasing to God, but also in perfect harmony with the Spirit of God.

Jesus said: -

- 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).
- Love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:31).

James in his letter 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).

These verses show that God's love should not only be shown to our brothers and sisters in Christ, but also toward those who do not yet know God's love and that whoever walks in love and speaks from love will radiate the Spirit of God and of Christ to everyone they come in contact with.

Anyone who does Not Love Does Not Know God.

John is saying we cannot know that a person has the indwelling Spirit of God: -

- By gifted oratory and speech making.
- By tremendous Scriptural knowledge.
- By special gifts or exceptional talents and such like things.

Even antichrists and false teachers can have these qualities the only true way to know if someone has God's Spirit dwelling within is by the love they show toward others. This does not mean we are always going to feel emotional love toward everyone, but rather that we show compassion, kindness, grace forgiveness toward others and help when we are able.

Gossiping, slandering, degrading, demeaning and harbouring resentments, anger and any form of hatred and malice or considering others to be lessor and such like things are not acts of love and therefore not from the Spirit of God, this is the way we can tell if we have God's Spirit dwelling in us; simply measure what we do and say against love.'

NOTE: not one of us has the perfect love of God, our love is tainted by self, ego, pride jealousy, envy, and such like things, but if we desire to grow spiritually we must grow in love.

Paul when speaking to the Corinthian brothers and sisters said: -

- He could not address them as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ and therefore fed them with milk, not solid food because they were still of the flesh, because there was jealousy and strife among them since they were behaving only in a merely human way (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Milk in this context is not doctrine, but putting away all attitudes that are contrary to love. It is about growing up in the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiving one another etc.). Milk is a perfect picture of those who lack love since the opposite spirit to love is me first and the screams and cries of all babies until they get the milk they crave clearly show that they have a "me first" attitude.

If they never grow out of this attitude as they grow in age and height they remain immature humans as we remain infants in Christ if we do not grow past behaving in a human manner and needing to be feed on milk.

God was made Manifest among Us.

1 John 4:9-10 ----- ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Some religious teachers use the words, "God was made manifest among us (v9) to support the mistaken theory that Jesus is God. This is a perfect example of lifting a verse out of context and forcing it to fit a preconceived mindset. When the words of John are put into the context of what John is saying it is clear that God's love was made manifest to us all through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus perfectly manifest God's word, God's character God's nature, God's power and God's love in the same manner as a twin brother manifest wherever he goes the character and nature of his brother. This is what Paul means when he wrote, "Christ is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4) Jesus is not God, but he is certainly the perfect mirror image of God his heavenly Father in every manner.

- For further information, see the notes following the title; 'Every Spirit that Confesses that Jesus came in the Flesh is from God' (after v2-3).

The Glory, the Majesty and Wonder of God's LOVE.

God loved us long before we loved him, John states, "God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (v9) whoever places their trust and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness that leads to eternal life is crowned and clothed in the royal robes of Christ's righteousness. Everyone who belongs to the family of Christ is made righteous not because they are, but because they have faith in God's beloved Son and are therefore clothed in his eternal garments of righteousness.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Jesus not only laid down his life for us while we were sinners, but also calls us his friends. This is the heart of the Christian faith God gave his Son for us and His Son willing laid down his life not for himself, but that we might have eternal life, can any greater love be manifested on earth? Many false prophets and teachers have gone out into the world with all sorts of spiritual messages and many of them offer some form of mental or spiritual benefit, but there are none that proclaim such great love toward sinners or that have the power to save to eternal life.

God Abides in Us and His Love, is Perfected in Us.

1 John 4:11-15 ----- ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

Since God loves with such humbling and unconditional love those in the family of Christ should love one another. Here is a key to having God's Spirit dwell in us; simply love each other. When we show compassion, kindness, grace, forgiveness and help we can be certain of two things: -

1. God abides in us.
2. God's love is being perfected in us.

Here is the glory the splendour and wonder of the Christian faith, it is not only spiritual, eternal and reconciles a believer to the very heart of God, but is also very practical in that it calls us to love not only those in in the family of Christ, but also those outside of it.

Sadly instead of turning a brilliant floodlight on love certain religious ministers and teachers throughout the history of Christianity have turned the floodlight in the opposite direction so that instead of its light shining on love it has shone upon dogmatic and legalistic doctrines or the strict adherence to pompous ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions.

In pointing the light in this direction those sitting under their ministry have been robbed from the majestic beauty and glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love and grace of God. Added to this sadness those who have turned the floodlight upon legalistic doctrines and pompous ceremonial rites and traditions have instilled in those who sat under their ministry and many of those outside of God's Kingdom a mindset that Christianity is all about going to a majestically built cathedral every week and adhering to religious rules, customs and traditions rather than about love (i.e. loving' God and his Son, loving each other and loving our neighbour as ourselves).

James calls this the Royal law (James 2:8), this is because it 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, 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. Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves.

- 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.

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 two things, firstly that God abides in us and secondly that God's love is being perfected in us.

We Abide in God and God in Us.

Twice John says, "We abide in God and God abides in us" firstly with the words, "We can know we abide in God and God in us, because God has given us His Spirit" (v13) and secondly by saying, "God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God and they dwell in God" (v15). God has given us of His Spirit means God has given us His love. It is by love that we abide in God and it is by love that God abides in us. John is giving us tremendous insight into God. This is the Almighty, Most Holy God who is not only the creator of the entire universe we live in and under, but the source of all Life, and for us to have Him abiding in our hearts all we have to learn to do is love and keep increasing and growing in love.

For further information regarding the indwelling Spirit, see the titles: -

- You May Know the Love of Christ that Surpasses Knowledge (Eph. 3:14-21).
- To set the Mind on the Flesh is Death, but to set the Mind on the Spirit is Life (Romans 8:5-11).
- In Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the World.

Sadly some Bible teachers use the following glorious words of John, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14) to support the claim that Jesus is God. They mistakenly reason that since God the Father and Jesus are both referred to in Scripture as the Savior they must be the same person. The following will show the foolishness of such reasoning.

God the Father is the author of salvation, because it was His foreordained plan before time began to send His Son as the ultimate sacrifice for our sin. Christ became the way to salvation, because it is only through faith in the Son of God that believers are made right with the Father, so in this sense Jesus is the Savior of the world, because there is no other way a person can stand righteous and saved before God the Father.

Before the foundations of the world began God planned and purposed in his eternal mind mankind's salvation and Christ fulfilled God's eternal plan. Without Christ God's eternal plan would be left bankrupt, but without God's eternal plan Christ would not have come into being therefore both God the Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ can both be given the title, the Savior without having to be the same person.

Whoever Confesses Jesus is the Son of God, God Abides in God.

John (the most beloved disciple of Jesus) tells those he is writing to and by extension all of us that he and the apostles have seen Jesus with their own eyes and are therefore fully qualified to testify that God the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of mankind (v14). He then goes on to make the following stunning statement: -

- Whoever confesses that Jesus is the *Son of God*, God abides in him, and he in God (v15).

Notice John does not say: -

- Whoever believes *Jesus is God*, God abides in him.

Yet a great majority of Christianity today believe that Jesus is God, but if that is so how can the following majestic and glorious words of John: -

- Whoever confesses that *Jesus is the Son of God*, God abides in him (v15).

Be harmonized with such a mistaken theory? To make this theory that Jesus is God even more confusing are the following words of John: -

- No one has ever seen God (v12).

This statement must surely make one wonder how a certain group of Christian's can not only aggressively claim that Jesus is God, but also condemn those Christians who claim Jesus is God's beloved Son and not God the Father, since it is clear a generation not only saw Jesus they touched him and ate with him, yet John says "No-one has seen God. For further information see the title, "Words of Comfort and Encouragement" following verses two and three above.

Know and Believe that God 'LOVES' You.

1 John 4:16-18 ----- ¹⁶So 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. ¹⁷By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

John's hope is that every brother and sister in Christ should arrive at a place of heartfelt assurance and confidence in their faith that God loves them. Paul bowed his knees in earnest prayer before God the heavenly Father and prayed that according to God's riches and glory every family member of Christ would have the strength to comprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth so they would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge so that they would be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephes. 3:14-19).

Paul in this prayer is shining a brilliant floodlight upon what it means to be filled with all the fullness of God and that is to be filled; with love. Paul also wrote, "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).

What does this mean today? Simply this the heart of Christ's message concerning behaviour and the heart of God is love if love is lacking in faith so too is God.

There is No Fear in Love, but Perfect Love Casts out Fear.

The words, "By this is love perfected" (v17) could be stated, "By this God is perfected in us" since God is love and love is God. When we not only understand and fully comprehend with our hearts and minds that God is love but also show the same love toward others especially our brothers and sisters in Christ then the love of God is perfected in us.

There is no fear in perfect love means two things: -

1. There is no law against love whatever is done in love harmonises with God's will and therefore whoever has lived their life with love toward others need have no-fear at the judgment seat of Christ since whatever is done in love stores up treasure in heaven not judgment.
2. Only those who act outside of love need fear judgment (i.e. those who use others for their own gain) (especially religious leaders) those who deliberately hurt or harm others physically, financially, verbally, emotionally or spiritually should fear judgment since hurting and harming others are clearly not acts of love.

Whoever Fears has Not Been Perfected in Love.

The words, "Whoever fears has not been perfected in love" (v18) means that they have not learned to live in love they are either still focused on self, ego, pride and greed and such like things or they harbour hatred, bitterness and resentment in their hearts toward others and in this manner they are grossly imperfect in love and therefore have every reason to fear judgment since they will be judged not against doctrine, but against the law of love.

John in this chapter has highlighted that those who keep love in their heart abide in God and God abides in them, evidence of love in the heart is outwardly manifested by good-deeds or kind and compassionate actions toward others.

Loving others: means we speak kindly of them, we encourage them, we do-good toward them and treat them with respect. It means we are not only prepared to be patient with them but also that we do not envy the success of others, but rather rejoice with them in it and that we do not arrogantly, put our own interest before others by insisting on our own way, but honestly consider with an open heart their desire, goals and dreams.

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters magnified the enormous royalty and eternal majesty of love with the following words, "At the moment faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these three is love (1 Cor. 13:4-7) (1 Cor. 13:13). The glory of love is not only that it is eternal, but that against it there is no law, judgment or punishment, because if we live by love we can only bring life and good to others.

John in this letter is proclaiming the same message as the apostle Paul, since the entire heart of John's message concerning behaviour is love in that those who do-good to others and show love toward their brothers and sisters in Christ need have no fear on the Day of Judgment, because there is no law against love neither is there any punishment for those who walk in love.

Paul wrote, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Gal 5:22-23).

We Love because God First Loved Us.

1 John 4:19-21 ----- ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Here is the glory the majesty the wonder the splendour of the Christian faith, "We love because he first loved us" (v19). How can there be any more glorious and comforting words than these.

Ponder for a moment; God loved you long before you loved him, so how much more will He now love you, now that you love Him. Many Christians as they grow spiritually in God's love begin to perceive the enormity of sin dwelling within the utter most depth of their own heart, mind and thoughts and upon perceiving this ugliness dwelling within begin to feel that God cannot possibly love them, but this ugliness has nothing to do with God's love toward us.

Paul wrote, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). God not only accepted us with a loving heart full of grace and mercy, but Christ his beloved Son willing laid down his life for us even though he and his heavenly Father clearly understood all our ugly sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that dwell within long before we came to the heavenly Father in love through our faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Perceiving the ugliness and depth of indwelling sin, (i.e., selfishness, pride, ego, lustful thoughts, jealousies, envy and such like things) is not only a sign of spiritual growth, but also a sign that we are spiritually moving toward God, since the further we enter into His pure and holy light the clearer we will see the ugliness that we have been saved from.

John in this chapter has shone a glorious spotlight on: -

- Love and highlighted that mature inward faith will be outwardly evidence by behaviour of love.
- The dominant spirit between brothers and sisters in Christ who have been born again should be love.

- Whoever does not love those who belong to the family of Christ do not know God.
- God is manifested in the lives of Christians by works, deeds and acts of love.
- God abides in brothers and sisters in Christ who love one another.

Paul stated, "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).

John has shown that those with an antichrist spirit: -

- Deny Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (been born of a woman) (v2).
- Do not listen to the teachings of the apostles (v6).
- Do not love those who believe in Jesus (v8).
- Do not confess that Jesus is the Son of God (v15).
- Do not love those in Christ's family (v20).

From this chapter we learn that there is one thing all Christians can do that will guarantee they need have no fear of judgment and that one thing is to show love toward others. This will guarantee freedom from any form of loss or shame at judgment for the simple reason, God is love therefore whatever is done in love gloriously and majestically harmonizes with God, His will, His commands and His Spirit.

End.