

I John

I. Introduction V. 1-4

1. The writer is the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21) with the human instrument believed to be John the apostle.
2. John wrote 5 books: John, I, II, III John, and Revelation.
3. The time of the writing is not known exactly but believed to be about 90 A.D., which is about 60 years after the resurrection of Jesus.
4. The epistle was not written to a specific church but is written to "professing Christians", thus this epistle is referred to as a General Epistle and is practical to us in our day.
5. Nine times he addresses his instruction to "little children" who are professing babes in Christ. The term "little children" is a word used as a kindly address by a teacher to his disciples.
6. There are 4 purposes recorded for this epistle being written:
 - A. That we might have joy. (1:4)
 - B. That we might not sin. (2:1)
 - C. That we might overcome error. (2:26)
 - D. That we might have assurance. (5:13)
7. All of these purposes are to help a professing Christian examine himself to see if he is just a "professing" Christian or a "possessing" Christian also.
8. From 2:19 it is evident that some "professors" were not "possessors" because they were now apostates from the faith. Even though they had been members of the church, they had become teachers of error.
9. Therefore, John's pen is not a philosopher's quill, but a surgeon's knife, which tells it like it is and cuts right down to the point of the root problem.
10. John is not a fence straddler or compromiser. He calls black, black and white, white and declares there is not a "grey" area.
11. This epistle complements the Gospel of John, which was also written by John.
 - A. The Gospel was written that men might have life; the epistle that believers might know they had life.

B. In the Gospel we have Divine life as revealed in Christ; in the epistle the same life as realized in the Christian.

C. The Gospel declares the way of life through the incarnate Son; the epistle unfolds the nature of that life as possessed by the children of God.

12. Gnosticism was already an existing problem in the day John wrote this epistle, and it is even a greater problem today.

13. What is Gnosticism?

A. The word comes from a Greek word which means knowledge.

B. It is a name given to those who believe that they possess a secret, mysterious, and superior knowledge given to them by "Divine Revelation" over and above that of the Bible. (I Cor. 13:8-10)

C. The lives of the Gnostics are self-centered and full of pride.

D. Their beliefs cause them to lower their standards of conduct.

E. They have the idea that the secret, super revelation possessed by the "elite" lifted them above obligation to the standards of conduct of the Word of God into a superior "liberty". (Gal. 5:1,13)

F. They believe that the flesh is evil, and the spirit is good; therefore, the spirit can't sin while the flesh can't help it and the outcome is that they sin all they want and live like the devil.

G. They say that the Christ entered Jesus at His water- baptism, but left Him just before His crucifixion, as it was impossible for the Christ-Spirit to undergo crucifixion in an evil material body. If this was so, then mere man was born and mere man died, thus having no virgin birth, no real atonement for sin, no resurrection, and no hope.

14. Gnosticism is still with us today but is not called by that name, and many Baptists are borderline gnostics in their beliefs and practices.

15. (II Tim. 4:3) We have turned from truth to error because:

A. Our schools are teaching that man evolved.

B. Man's wisdom with man's plans and programs, instead of God's are guiding our churches for the most part.

C. We have lost our zeal and joy.

D. We have believed error until we don't know what to believe, therefore, confusion reigns.

E. Our standards of conduct have been lowered until we are in a mess like the man who painted himself in a corner without a way out.

F. We have permissive attitudes because our minds have been captured. (Col. 2:8)

G. Therefore, we need I John to lay the line down where it needs to be laid so we may know, really know, (God's kind of knowledge) and have our hearts settled before God.

16. Because of all that was going on in John's day, he strikes back swiftly and powerfully at this false doctrine, without calling it by name, with this entire epistle, especially in the introduction.

V. 1

1. "That which" = a relative pronoun used in the neuter gender. 2. One would think that this should be translated "who" instead of "which" because it is speaking about the Lord Jesus who is the Word of life.

3. But the message here is not personal, it is referring to the attributes of the Lord Jesus.

4. The phrase, "of the Word of life" could also be "concerning the Word of life"; thus using the word "which".

5. "Was" = a verb meaning "to be" and the tense speaks of an abiding state in past time.

6. "From the beginning" = Here John could be saying that from the moment of creation Jesus Christ existed. In John 1:1, John goes a little further by saying, "In the beginning was the Word" = before all creation came into existence, Christ was.

7. It seems that John is speaking about the very commencement of his manifestation on earth, His incarnation (robed in flesh at virgin birth).

8. The Gnostics did not believe that Jesus was The Christ (Messiah) until His baptism and John is verifying the humanity of the eternal Word of life.

9. He does this by 4 proofs, building to a climax, making the meaning clearer with each step. For example: seeing is more than hearing, and handling more than seeing.

10. Note the use of "we" and "our" = John is doing the writing but refers to all of the apostles who walked with Jesus for 3 years.

11. "Heard" = to hear; to hearken; to listen. The tense of this verb is in the perfect and it tells us 3 things:

A. That his hearing the Lord speak was not confined to one single occasion, but that he heard Him speak at repeated intervals and at length.

B. That this process was completed in past time, in fact about 60 years before.

C. That the completed process of hearing the Lord Jesus speak had present results, meaning he could still hear His voice after 60 years.

12. "Seen" = refers to the physical act of seeing, giving prominence to the discerning mind, to mental perception, and to mental activity.

A. By using this word John assures his readers that he did not just see but he understood what he was looking at.

B. He again used the perfect tense thus saying that the things he saw concerning our Lord were indelibly retained in his mind's eye. "I saw Him and I can close my physical eyes and still see Him as He appeared to me 60 years ago."

13. "With our eyes" = This phrase is added in order to be absolutely sure that his readers understood him to be referring to actual sensory impressions from our Lord's actual human body and not some optical illusion or hallucination.

14. "Looked" = involves more than merely seeing; to look closely at; to gaze upon; indicates the sense of a wondering regard, involving a careful and deliberate vision which interprets the object; contemplation that was a mingling of wonder, awe, and admiration.

15. "Handled" = to examine closely; to handle with a view to investigation:

A. The word is used in the Greek translation of the O.T. when blind Isaac felt the hands of Jacob (Gen. 27:22). The old man, puzzled at the voice of Jacob, handled his hands with a view to investigating whether the speaker was really Esau.

B. The same word is used in Luke 24:39 by our Lord.

16. "Word" = refers to the sum total concept of something. Our Lord is the Word of God in the sense that He is the total concept of God in a human body. (Col. 2:9)

17. "Life" = has a definite article "the" in front, thus referring to the particular life that God is and which was revealed in the humanity of our Lord.

V. 2

1. "Manifested" = to make visible or known what had been hidden or unknown.

2. This life (verse 1) which was invisible, was made visible to the human race through the humanity of our Lord.

3. John 1:14 says "the Word was made flesh" which gives the historical fact of the incarnation but the phrase "The life was manifested", sets forth the unfolding of that fact in the various operations of life.
4. "We have seen it" = John repeats the fact that he has seen with discernment and still has in his mind's eye the image of that life in the humanity of the Lord Jesus.
5. "Bear witness" = testify; to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something.
6. "Shew" = report; declare; to announce; public proclamation of the great news.
7. "Eternal" = perpetual; without beginning or end.
8. John declares that the life he is referring to was eternal, implying that the Word of life who became flesh was eternal and had always been with the Father.
9. "With" = facing; implies fellowship. This means that the life here referred to is a Person, for it requires a person to have fellowship, thus John is stating that the Lord Jesus was in fellowship with the Father.
10. The verse ends as it began, but not with a mere repetition; the life was manifested, and in particular "unto us".

V. 3

1. John takes up the thought here of verse one which was interrupted by the contents of verse two.
2. One of John's traits is to repeat for emphasis. This he does here still using the tense to show completed action with existing results; seen and still see; heard and still hear.
- 3 "Declare" = to report; relate; make known; to announce; same word as "shew" in verse 2.
4. John is reporting (declare) that which he had seen and heard = that Jesus Christ was a real person that walked upon this earth in John's day. He was not some phantom as some Gnostics believed.
5. The reason for reporting what he has seen and heard was "That ye also may have fellowship with us."
6. "Ye" = refers to the professing Christians.
7. "Us" refers to the apostles.
8. "Ye also" = those who have not seen Jesus in the flesh as well as those like John who have seen Him = they can fellowship together.

9. "Fellowship" = belonging in common to. The idea in the word is that of one person having joint participation with another in something possessed in common by both.

10. Common definition of fellowship = two fellows in the same ship sharing what they have in common.

11. One cannot have very intelligent fellowship with a person whom he has never seen but John is declaring unto his readers, Jesus Christ who is real, and as the child of God ponders the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, he can see Him in his spiritual eye by the aid of the Holy Spirit so that an intelligent fellowship can be enjoyed by the saints.

12. "Have with us" = means partnership; a joint participation on the part of the Christian in John's first-hand knowledge of the Lord Jesus, which will issue in a real, practical, intelligent fellowship with the Father and with His Son.

13. "Truly" = indeed; indicates that true fellowship of which he is talking, is only possible when we share the common ground of real salvation = having a relationship with the Lord.

14. The second fellowship has a definite article in front of it, "the fellowship" thus specifying that this type fellowship can only be experienced if we have the right relationship with the Lord. There is a "worldly fellowship" in which those who know not God can share what they have in common.

15. The lost know nothing about this kind of fellowship because they have nothing in common with the child of God.

16. It is these things held in common (I'm in Him and Him in me; I'm His and He's mine) that form the basis of the fellowship and make it possible. (Jude 1:3)

V. 4

1. John states that the purpose he had in writing these things (things about Him who was manifested in the flesh and the result of fellowship which flows from that) is that "your joy may be full."

2. "Your" = refers not only to his readers but also to himself as well; therefore, this word could be "our", thus could be written "that our joy may be full."

3. "Joy" = cheerfulness; gladness of heart; cause of rejoicing.

4. Gnosticism, by denying the atonement, cuts off one great sphere of God's love; thus cutting off the believer's joy.

5. "May be full" = to fill up; to complete; to bestow abundantly. The word is in the perfect tense meaning a completed action past time with existing results.

6. The joy is that of knowing that, though in the world, they are not of the world, but are one with one another, and with the Father and with the Son.

II. Fellowship V. 1:5-2:29

V. 5

1. Chapters 1-2 emphasize fellowship and John gives three basic "tests" for us to take to see if we are in fellowship with God through Christ.

2. For one to be in fellowship, he must be saved; have a right relationship = sonship.

3. Far too many professing Christians never test their lives to see if they are really saved.

4. John asks us to apply these tests that we might enjoy the Christian life to the fullest.

A. The Test of Obedience V. 1:5-2:6

5. "Message" = announcement. Refers to what he communicated as the sum of the revelation which the Lord made to man.

6. "Heard" = tense is perfect; therefore, John says we have heard (past time) from (of) him and at present is ringing in our ears (existing results).

7. "Of" = means an ultimate source; thus, "from Him" what they received from His preaching and teaching, from all that He said; also this word implies that this message was not only heard by John but by others.

8. "Declare" = to announce in detail; disclose.

9. The message is "that God is light."

10. "Light" is without a definite article, and the rule of Greek grammar is that the absence of the definite article shows quality, nature, or essence.

11. John is saying that God, as to His nature, essence, and character, is light, not "the" light or "a" light, but light Himself. 12. He is the source and fountain of light in all heaven and earth.

13. Light is the emblem of purity, truth, knowledge, prosperity, and happiness:

A. He is perfectly pure, without any sin.

B. He is infinitely true, never stating error or giving even a look of approval of error.

C. He has all knowledge, with not one bit of ignorance on any subject.

D. He is prosperous in all His ways, never knowing the darkness of disappointment and adversity.

E. He is infinitely happy, with nothing to make Him miserable.

14. "God is light," and John adds "and in Him is no darkness at all", therefore guarding his language so that no mistake could possibly be made as to what he meant.

15. Darkness is the exact opposite of light and John says there is not one bit (at all) of darkness in God.

16. This expression is designed to state that God is absolutely perfect and there is nothing in Him which would dim or mar the pure splendor of His character, not even as much as the smallest speck would mar the sun.

V. 6

1. "If we " = John is making a hypothetical assumption and includes himself in this statement (we) and in so doing he deals gently and humbly with his readers.

2. If any of us, no matter who he is, at any time "say" = declare in words; profess to be saved, because being saved involves the idea of having fellowship with God.

3. "Fellowship" = to have joint participation with someone else in things possessed in common by both.

4. The person who professes to be saved is claiming to have things in common with God, common likes and dislikes, and a common nature (divine).

5. "Walk" = order one's behavior; conduct oneself; This verb speaks of habitual and continuous action.

6. "In darkness" = implies ignorance; error; sin; and misery; The case of this word means in the sphere of sin. (Eph. 2:1)

7. "We lie" = We utter an untruth; we speak falsely; we are false professors and are deceived if we think that we can have fellowship with God, and yet live in the practice of sin.

8. "Do not the truth" = do not practice naturally and habitually, the truth. The profession is a false one. We are false in word and deed.

9. Truth with John is not confined to language. It is exhibited in conduct also.

10. If we "say" and "do not" the truth, we fail the test of obedience.

V. 7

1. "But if" = a hypothetical contrast to verse 6 is made.
2. "Walk" = same word as verse 6 and tense also stresses habitual and continuous action; "walk and keep on walking."
3. "In the light" = in the sphere of light which God is and in which He dwells.
4. Walking in light could be expressed in one word = holiness and means:
 - A. Living a life "in sympathy with" holiness = the heart beating in harmony with the light.
 - B. Living a life "in the practice" of holiness which is the inward principle expressed in the outward conduct or the light of the heart shining in the life.
 - C. Living a life "progressing" in holiness = He who walks is not stationary but advancing.
5. "As He is in the light" = In the same kind of light that He has; the measure of light which we may have is not the same in degree, but it is of the same kind.
6. The change of verbs is significant: we "walk", God "is", in the light.
 - A. We move through time; He is in eternity.
 - B. Our activity involves change; His does not.
 - C. Like the sun, He both is Light and dwells in the light.
7. Result of walking in the light:
 - A. "We have fellowship one with another".
 - 1) John is speaking about the believer having fellowship with God.
 - 2) In verse 6 he identifies those who do not have fellowship with God, so here he is identifying those who do have fellowship with God.
 - 3) It is true that when saints order their behavior within the sphere of the light they do have fellowship with each other, but John is not teaching that here.
 - 4) "One another" = a reciprocal pronoun which means on both sides; not only do we have fellowship with God, but He reciprocates in having fellowship with us = not a one-sided affair.
 - B. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1) The blood of Jesus Christ is real blood and not a mere "phantom" or the mere example of Jesus that cleanses us from sin, as the Gnostics taught. Real blood = the atoning blood of the sinless Son of God shed for our sins. John was not ashamed to use this word. (Heb. 9:12-14,22)

2) "Cleanseth" = to make clean; to purify; to free from the defilement, faults, and guilt of sin. The tense of the verb means that His blood keeps continually cleansing us from all sin.

3) "All sin" = sins of omission, sins of commission, sins of ignorance, sins we know nothing about in our lives simply because we have not grown in grace enough to see that they are sin.

4) This is true only if we are habitually ordering our behavior in the light.

V. 8

1. Walking in the light involves being conscious of the old Adamic sin nature in us.

2. "Sin" is singular in number and is used without the definite article, thus pointing to the fact that the nature is referred to, not acts of sin.

3. Again we have the hypothetical statement = that of a denial of the indwelling, totally depraved nature passed down to us from Adam.

4. Some then believed as some do today, that when one is saved, he can live a perfect life because his old sin nature has been eradicated.

5. The only problem with that is, as John said, "that man deceives himself."

6. "Deceive" = to be misled; to err; to believe what is not true; means we have a wrong view about our character.

7. This does not mean that the self-deception is willful, but that it in fact, exists. (Jer. 17:9)

8. One does not deceive others because others can see sin evident from his attitude and life, and that sin must come from the indwelling sinful nature.

9. "The truth is not in us" = refers to freedom from error; a man who says he does not have a sin nature within him reveals that he is in utter error, thus the truth of this subject is not in him.

10. He may hold the truth on other subjects, but he does not on this subject.

11. And if that individual continues to hold to his belief, after being exposed to truth, then that individual does not have the Holy Spirit living inside him = he is not saved.

V. 9

1. Walking in the light also involves confession of our sins.

2. "If" = still giving a hypothetical condition, yet opposite of verse 8. Note: Not, if we confess "that we have sin", but if we confess "our sins".

3. "Confess" = to say the same thing as another; to agree with another. Means to admit the truth of an accusation, to own up to the fact that one is guilty of having committed the sin.

4. This verb tense speaks of continuous action. This teaches that the constant attitude of the saint toward sin should be one of a contrite heart, ever eager to have any sin in his life pointed out by the Holy Spirit and ever ready to confess that sin and put it out of his life by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Psa. 51:17)

5. We sin three ways:

A. Private.

B. Personal.

C. Public.

6. Therefore, we must confess as we sin, if we expect to have forgiveness and cleansing:

A. Confess only to God if our sin is private.

B. Confess first to the individual we sinned against personally and then confess to God.

C. Confess to the church and then to God if we have committed a public sin.

7. "Faithful" = trustworthy. Means fidelity to that nature of truth and light, related to His own essence, which rules in us as long as we confess our sin.

8. "Faithful" is applied to God as:

A. Fulfilling His own promises. (Heb. 10:23;11:11)

B. Fulfilling the purpose for which He called men. (I Thess. 5:24; I Cor. 1:9)

C. Not tempting (testing) us beyond our limits (I Cor. 10:13).

9. He abideth faithful and cannot deny Himself, (II Tim. 2:13); therefore, He is faithful to forgive and cleanse us when we confess our sins.

10. He is also "just" = righteous; right; impartial; rendering to each his due.
11. God who is absolute rightness must be faithful to His own nature.
12. His righteous dealing with men who partake of His nature and walk in fellowship with Him, is simply fulfilling His faithful devotion to His duty.
13. Not only is God's nature to be faithful and righteous but it is also His purpose to exhibit these attributes toward us.
14. "Forgive" = to send away; dismiss; to remit, as a debt; to put away.
15. The tense of the word "forgive" speaks of a single act = sins that are not habitual in the life of a believer; therefore speaking of a single act of forgiveness.
16. No child of God knowingly sins habitually (3:9).
17. When one is saved by faith, all sin is forgiven, past and future, as far as the law is concerned, because the Lord Jesus satisfied the law's demand when He died on the cross for our sins.
18. The forgiveness spoken of here does not primarily deal with the breaking of God's law, but the breaking of fellowship between a child and his Father.
19. It is not a matter between a lawbreaker and a judge, but a matter of grieving the Father's heart when a child of God sins.
20. The putting away of the believer's sin upon confession, is therefore a forgiveness granted by the Father and restoration to the fellowship that was broken by that sin.
21. Not only does God forgive the believer, but He cleanses him from defilement he contacted in committing that act of sin.
22. "Cleans" = to purify; to declare clean; to free from the defilement and guilt of sin.
23. The tense again refers to a single act, for known sin in the life of a saint is not habitual, but "an out of the ordinary thing".
24. He will forgive and cleanse us from all (any, every, the whole) unrighteousness when we are willing to confess.

V. 10

1. In verse 8, we have the denial of the indwelling sinful nature, while in this verse we have the denial of specific acts of sin. (A hypothetical statement, "if we say")

2. The verb is in the perfect tense (completed action in past time having present results). The denial here is of any acts of sin committed in past time with the implication that none are able to be committed at present.

3. This speaks of one who declares to have sinless perfection.

4. John says two things can cause one to come to this conclusion:

A. The stifling (suppress or check) of one's conscience = "We make Him a liar" = turn a deaf ear to His inward testimony (His voice in our soul); God will chasten this person and he will come to a point of understanding. (John 10:27,5)

B. Ignorance of His Word = "His word is not in us":

1) "Word" = the sum total of divine revelation.

2) Means we are cut off from all communication with Him, thus a "professor " and not a "possessor". (I Pet. 1:23; John 5:37-38;8:31)

5. Note the climax:

A. V. 6 = We lie.

B. V. 8 = We lead ourselves utterly astray.

C. V. 10 = We make God a liar.

Chapter 2

V. 1

1. John addresses his readers as an aged father would address his children, with tenderness and love.

2. He foresees the possibility of two false conclusions which could have been drawn from his teaching.

A. Some might say, "Why strive after holiness if we can't be perfect. Sin is an abiding necessity; therefore, I will get my quota of sin."

B. Others might say, "If all we have to do is confess and His blood will cleanse us, why dread falling into sin?"

3. So to combat these errors, he says, "I write these things unto you, that (in order that) ye sin not."

4. The mode and tense of this verb forbids the beginning of an action = don't start a certain sin.

5. John had no patience with professional perfectionists (V. 8-10), but he had still less with loose-livers like some of the Gnostics who went to all sorts of excess of sin without shame.

6. "And if any man sin" = as we are apt to do with hearts as corrupt as ours, and as much temptation as there is in this world we live in. Speaks not of habitual action, but of a single act.

7. We have an advocate = one called to your side; one who undertakes and pleads your cause.

8. "With" = facing, the Father. When saints sin, the Lord Jesus must face the Father with us and our sin.

9. The saint has been saved by His precious blood so that he may be able to keep from sinning, and when he does sin, he wounds the tender heart of the Saviour, and forces Him to face God the Father with that saint whom He has saved by His precious blood. This thought should keep us from committing acts of sin.

10. Our advocate is described as "Jesus Christ the righteous" = only the Righteous One, the guiltless, the One that is separate from sin, He is qualified to plead our case, and to enter the Father's presence. (Heb. 7:25)

11. He does not plead we are innocent, but acknowledges our guilt and presents His vicarious (taking the place of another) work as the grounds of our acquittal.

12. While Christ is man's Advocate with the Father, the Holy Spirit is God's Advocate (comforter) on earth with men. (John 14:16; Rom 8:26-27)

V. 2

1. John further describes Him as "the propitiation for our sins."

2. "Propitiation" = one who makes expiation (atones for; to make amends for); a means whereby sin is covered and forgiven; refers to Christ as the One who propitiates and offers Himself as the propitiation, therefore, He is both the sacrifice and the High Priest sacrificing Himself.

3. Basically this means that Jesus became our:

A. Sacrifice = the innocent One, the One who had no sin died on Calvary's cross. (Rom. 3:25)

B. Substitute = bore our sin and carried it away never to be found; thus fulfilling the picture of the scapegoat in Lev. 16:5-10.

C. Mercy Seat = by entering into the Holy of Holies in heaven and sprinkling His own blood upon the mercy seat (Heb. 9:11-12), He:

1) Fulfilled the type of the O.T. high priest entering the holiest in the temple on earth.

2) Provided a satisfaction for the demands of a broken law.

3) Caused, what would have been a judgment seat, become a Mercy Seat.

4. That satisfaction for the demands of the broken law is the "propitiation."

5. Christ was not only the propitiation for our sins only, but also for the whole world = all mankind (John 3:16)

6. "The sins of" is in italics, therefore not in the original, but is implied because the whole world (all of mankind) was placed in sin by one man, Adam. (Rom. 5:12)

7. And because of One, the Lord Jesus, and His finished work on Calvary, all mankind can find mercy. The choice is left up to them.

8. No man is outside the mercy of God unless he places himself there deliberately by choosing darkness instead of light. (John 3:19)

9. The propitiation by Christ provides for salvation for all (Heb. 2:9) if they will only be reconciled with God. (II Cor. 5:19-21)

10. Reconcile means to be in right relationship with God which requires one's attitude to change (repentance) and receive the provision God has made, (faith) whereby his sins can be forgiven and he himself be justified in His sight in Christ = Salvation (justification).

V. 3

1. John foresees two questions which could be asked:

A. How can I be assured that Christ is all this to me, = my propitiation, my advocate?

B. How can I be assured that I have an abiding interest in Him?

2. These questions are answered by applying the test of obedience.

A. We know Him if we keep his commandments. (V. 3-5a)

B. We know we are in Him and He in us if we follow in His steps. (V. 5b-6)

3. "Hereby" = in this; by this; the expression points to what follows "if we keep His commandments".

4. "Know" = to know by experience. This knowledge that we know Him is knowledge gained by experience day by day; experiential knowledge gained from the experience of keeping His commandments.

5. The tense of the first "know" is present, thus speaking of a continuous action, while the tense of the second "know" is perfect which means that somewhere in past time there was a completed act (come to know Him as Lord and Saviour = at a point, place, and time) with existing results (that the state of knowing Him is true of us in the present time).

6. The Gnostics boasted of their superior knowledge of Christ, and John here challenges their boast by an appeal to experimental knowledge of Christ which is shown by keeping His commandments.

7. "Keep" = to attend to carefully; to guard; observe. The word does not merely speak of the "act" of obeying His commands, but of an "anxious desire" not to disobey any of His commands.

A. It involves taking heed lest we fall. (I Cor. 10:12)

B. It involves a constant awareness of the deceitfulness of the heart, and of the craftiness and power of inward corruption. (Jer. 17:9)

C. It involves taking caution and avoiding everything that would offend and dishonor God and the Savior.

D. It causes the saint to love God's word and guard that word lest it be dishonored.

E. The verb tense shows continuous action, which means it is the habitual, moment by moment safeguarding of the Word by the saint lest he violate its precepts.

8. "Commandments" = an order; command; charge; precept. It is not the word used for law referring to the Mosaic law.

9. The precepts (commandments) are those given by our Lord either personally while on earth or through His apostles in the New Testament books.

10. This experiential knowledge is in contrast with and opposed to a mere intellectual knowledge of His Person.

V. 4

1. "He that saith" = he who keeps on saying, whether in the heart or with the lips.

2. Saying what? That I have come to know Him experientially with the present results that I am in that state. (In other words, saying that I have been saved and possess eternal life, thus still saved = eternal security.)

3. The Gnostics were guilty of this by standing up in testimony meetings and saying, "I know Him, I'm saved", and in so doing they were trying to convince themselves as well as others that they were saved.

4. John punctures their bubble with the sharp addition "keepeth not His commandments" = does not observe the commands and precepts of the Lord = "is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

5. "Liar" = a falsifier; just like Satan. (John 8:44) This means he not only speaks falsely, but he knows he speaks falsely.

6. "The truth is not in him" = no truth in him; not one true grace; not one true act of repentance and faith.

V. 5

1. "But whoso" = gives a contrast to verse 4 and means "whoever". This shows that a personal experiential knowledge of the Lord Jesus is open to all true believers, not just a select few Gnostics who thought they had a corner on God nobody else had.

2. "Keepeth" = to attend carefully; to guard; observe. The tense speaks of habitual, continuous action; thus, whoever keeps on continually keeping (having a careful, watchful care for the Word so as to guard it from being disobeyed, but on the other hand, obeyed) the Word, verily (of a truth, truly) in him (word used says "in this one") the love of God is perfected.

3. The obedient child of God is characterized, not by any representative trait or quality of his own personality, but merely as the subject of the work of divine love.

4. "Love of God" = the love which God has made known and which answers to His nature.

5. "Perfected" = completed. The tense reveals this was a past action with existing results, "has been perfected or completed and stands complete".

6. The love spoken of there is not the love with which God loves us, but the love by which we love God, and that is perfected in us.

7. When man loves perfectly, his love is the love of God shed abroad in his heart (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22-23) therefore, his love owes its origin and its nature to the love of God.

8. "Hereby" = by this (keeping His word) we know (experiential knowledge) that we are in Him.

9. This verse gives double comfort for all who keep the commandments of Christ Jesus:

A. God's love is perfect in them.

B. They know that they are in Him.

V. 6

1. "He that saith" = refers to "professors".

2. "Abideth" = to remain; to sojourn; tarry. This word is used of persons abiding in a home, which implies more than mere position, but rather fellowship.

3. Therefore to "abide" in Jesus implies not only position or relationship, but fellowship, friendship, dependence, harmony, and communion.

4. To abide means:

A. To have no known sin not judged and not confessed.

B. To have no interest into which He is not brought.

C. To have no part of one's life which He cannot share.

D. To take all our burdens to Him.

E. To draw all wisdom, life, and strength from Him.

F. To let nothing be allowed in one's life which separates us from Him.

5. "Ought" = be under an obligation; denotes personal and moral obligation.

6. "Walk" = to order ones behavior; to conduct oneself; speaks of the saint's manner of life; emphasizes habitual, continuous action.

7. "So" = in the manner spoken of; in the way described; in this manner; in such a manner. "So" used with "walk" gives a double emphasis of the saint's manner of life.

8. "Even as He walked" = just as that One conducted Himself; speaks of the whole life of Christ on earth.

9. The test of obedience allows us to see if we are "professors" or "possessors."

10. To know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to have a desire and willingness to keep His commandments. (John 14:15)

11. Some try to justify their failure to be obedient by saying:

A. "It is what is on the inside that counts." Mat. 23:25-26 puts a halt to that excuse.

B. "We are not under law but grace." True, but Gal. 5:13 clarifies that statement.

12. Even though we are not under law, we still have some commands the Lord gave us in this day of grace:

A. Still says "dress in modest apparel". (I Tim. 2:9)

B. Still says "forsake not the assembling of ourselves together". (Heb. 10:25)

C. Still says, "be not conformed to this world". (Rom. 12:2)

D. Also says, "present your bodies a living sacrifice". (Rom. 12:1)

E. Also says, "be ye holy". (I Peter 1:16)

F. Also says, "study to shew thyself approved". (II Tim. 2:15)

13. We know we know Him if we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous (burdensome). (I John 5:3)

B. The test of love V. 7-17

V. 7

1. This verse begins a section that contains the second test we need to take = the test of love.

2. When a person is in fellowship with God, he not only walks in light (obedience), he also walks in love.

3. "Brethren" = from the same womb. John addresses all professors according to their profession, while he "tells it like it is".

4. "New" = this is not the word which means new in time, but a word which means new as pertains to quality, the new as contrasted with that which has been in service, the worn, or that marred through age.

5. John assures his readers that the commandment or precept he is giving them is nothing new in quality but "old" = antique; that which has been in existence for a long time.

6. "Ye had" = the tense speaks of continuous state or action in past time which John called, "from the beginning" = the beginning of the Christian experience of the readers.

7. The commandment was old because it was part of the Mosaic law. (Lev. 19:18)

8. John states again that the old commandment was the word that they had heard from the beginning of their Christian experience.

V. 8

1. "Again" = indicates another point of view = what in one sense was not new (fresh), in another sense it was.

2. The commandment of love is both old and new. (John 13:34)

3. This is a paradox (a statement that seems contradictory) but truth.

A. "Old" because John's readers have had it from the beginning of their Christian experience.

B. "New" because, in the unfolding of the Christian experience, it has developed new power, meaning, and obligation.

C. Old in teaching (as old as the story of Cain and Abel, I John 3:11-12), but new in practice.

4. To walk as Christ walked is to put into practice the old commandment and so make it new (ever new and fresh) as love is as old as man and fresh in every experience.

5. "True" = true morally; faithful; truthful; truth.

6. This truth is contained in the revelation of Jesus Christ (in Him) and proved in the experience of believers (in you).

7. "Because" = explanation of the paradox.

8. "Darkness" = moral insensibility to divine light; moral blindness. God is "light" and whatever is not in fellowship with God is therefore darkness.

9. "Is past" = to pass by; go past. The tense speaks of action going on in present time = "the darkness is passing away".

10. The picture is that of the darkness of sin and unbelief as passing by as a parade goes by on the street.

11. All parades have an end, and some day the parade of Satan and all his host will end.

12. Second "true" = different word from the first "true" and means genuine; reliable; no false flicker. Used as an adjective to describe "light" thus saying that "light" is genuine, reliable, and is all that it says it is.

13. "Now shineth" = already shining; already conspicuous; already seen; dawn is very near. John may be referring to the second coming of Christ or of the victory of truth

over error, or of the slow but sure victory of Christ over Satan as shown in Revelation. All are true.

V. 9

1. "He that saith" = for the fifth time John points out an inconsistency which is possible between profession and fact.
2. Men fall into two classes: those who are in fellowship with God and therefore walk in light and love; and those who are not in fellowship with God and therefore walk in darkness and hatred.
3. "Hateth" = to detest; to pursue with hatred.
4. "Until now" = up till this moment. In spite of the increasing light and his own testifying (He that saith), he is in the dark.

V. 10

1. "Loveth" = agape; God kind of love. I Cor. 13:4-8a kind of love.
2. This is produced by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 5:5; Gal 5:22-23) 3. "Loveth his brother" = that of a self-sacrificial love that gives of itself for the happiness and well-being of the fellow Christian.
4. This kind of love is habitual and shows one's close fellowship with and dependence upon the Lord Jesus, for this supernaturally-produced love in his heart is present in an overflowing quantity only in the life of a believer who habitually abides in his Lord.
5. "Abide" = defined in verse 6. He has not just entered the light, but made it his home.
6. "Occasion of stumbling" = the movable stick or trigger of a trap; any obstruction placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall; a stumbling block. The meaning is not that he gives no occasion of stumbling to others, even though that is true, but that there is none in his own way. (II Peter 1:10b)

V. 11

1. John recognizes no neutral (middle ground) attitude between love and hatred.
2. Love is active kindness, and less than this is hatred, just as indifference to the gospel invitation amounts to rejection of it. (Mat. 12:30)
3. Notice the progressive climax of one that hateth:

A. Is in darkness.

B. Walketh in darkness.

C. Knoweth not whither he goeth.

4. "Knoweth" = absolute, immediate knowledge of a fact once for all.

5. Therefore, to "knoweth not" means that one has no understanding of the facts because "that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

6. "Blinded" = to make blind; obscure; dull of apprehension; tense indicates a past, definite act; same word in II Cor. 4:3-4.

7. The penalty of living in the darkness is not merely that one does not see, but that one goes blind.

8. An example of this is the fish in Echo River in Mammoth Cave of Kentucky which have eye sockets, but no eyes.

9. When darkness overtook, it blinded. (See the progression of Rom. 1:21-28)

10. This person (v. 11) is an unsaved person, professing Christianity. (Note "hateth his brother", so called).

11. Habitually conducting oneself in the sphere of darkness indicates an unsaved state = failing the test of love.

V. 12

1. "I write" = tense refers to the apostle's immediate act of writing. (This also applies to the first two times "I write" is mentioned in verse 13).

2. "Little children" = a little child; a term used as a kindly address by teachers to their disciples; this term emphasizes the birth relationship; this term includes: 1) fathers, 2) young men, 3) babes in Christ (little children). (verse 13 = different word than verse 12)

3. The reason John says he writes is because your sins "are forgiven" = to send from oneself; to send away; to bid go away or depart.

4. God's forgiveness includes the putting away of our sins, their guilt, defilement, and penalty, at the cross. (Psalms 103:12; Isa. 38:17;44:22; Micah 7:19, Heb. 10:17)

5. The tense of the verb "forgiven" speaks of a past completed action having present results and in this case, permanent results.

6. The permanent putting away of sin was "for His name's sake" = Christ. Refers to all that is true of Christ in His glory, majesty and might.

7. Because of what our Lord was in His Person as very God of very God, God the Father put away our sins, recognizing and accepting the atonement He offered on the Cross.

V. 13

1. "Fathers" = the older men; mature in the Christian life, having lived in fellowship with the Lord Jesus for many years, and thus having gained much personal knowledge of Him by experience.

2. "Because" = reason for writing = "Ye have known" Refers to experiential knowledge; knowledge gained by experience; the tense shows that this knowledge was a well-rounded, matured knowledge possessed at this present time which was a result of a past experience.

3. "Him that is from the beginning" = Refers to Jesus who was in the beginning. (John 1:1)

4. "Young men" = The younger Christian in contrast to the fathers, full of vigor and conflict and victory.

5. "Overcome" = to conquer; to subdue; to be victorious. Tense reveals a completed action past time with existing results. Refers to a permanent victory over conflict.

6. "The wicked one" = the hurtful one; the evil one; Satan.

7. They overcome when saved. (I John 5:4-5)

8. "Little children" = babes in Christ; this is a different word from verse 12.

9. Even babes in Christ know (to know by experience) God as their Father.

10. The third "I write" in this verse is a different tense than the first two. This tense reveals the writer as he looks at his present act of writing as the recipient of his letter will look at it when he receives it, as a past event. This is also true twice in verse 14 both of which are translated such.

V. 14

1. "I have written" = does not refer to a previous letter but has reference to the present letter he is writing (see V. 13, #10)

2. It is John's style to repeat himself with slight variations.

3. "Strong" = refers to power as an endowment; strength to overcome Satan is part of the salvation given the believer.

4. "Abide" = to dwell in as a home; The word of God, residing in their hearts in an unhindered welcome state, was that which, together with the power of the Holy Spirit, gave these young men victory over Satan, the wicked one, who sought to drag them down with himself into the ruin that some day will be his.

V. 15

1. "Love not" = is a prohibition; speaking of the act of forbidding the continuance of an action already going on. Some of John's readers were still loving the world system, out of which they had been saved.

2. "Love" = is same word used of God's love for a lost sinner (John 3:16), but here it is used merely in its classical (Greek) meaning = that of a love called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved; refers to a fondness, an affection, for an object because of its value.

3. "World" = refers to an ordered system. Here it is the ordered system of which Satan is the head, his fallen angels and demons are his emissaries (those sent on a special mission), and the unsaved of the human race are his subjects, together with those purposes, pursuits, pleasures, practices, and places where God is not wanted.

4. Much in this world system is religious, cultured, refined, and intellectual; but it is anti-God and anti-Christ.

5. "Things" = Refers to those things the love of which rivals and excludes the love of God, namely three listed in verse 16: 1) lust of the flesh; 2) lust of the eyes; 3) pride of life.

6. He is not saying:

A. That we are to feel no interest in flowers, streams, forests and fountains. (Mat. 6:28)

B. That we are to have no admiration for what God has done as the Creator of all things.

C. That we are not to have a love for any of the inhabitants of the world, our friends and kindred.

D. That we are not to pursue none of the objects of this life in making provisions for our families.

7. But we are not to love the things which are sought merely to pamper the appetite, to please the eye, or to promote pride in living. These are objects sought by the people of the world, not the objects to be sought by the Christian. (Mat. 6:33)

8. "If any man love the world" = A hypothetical condition with the tense stressing continuous habitual action.

9. "The love of the Father is not in him" = This marks a person (who loves the world as a habit of life to the exclusion of any love for God) as an unsaved person. In this person, the love of the Father does not exist. This means more than that he does not love God, but that the love of God does not dwell in him as the ruling principle of his life.

10. It is as impossible for love of the world to co-exist with love of God, as it is impossible for light and darkness to co-exist.

V. 16

1. "For" = because. Reveals reason why the "love of the Father is not in him." (V. 15) = because all that is in the world "is not of the Father, but is of the world," which means everything that is in the world has as its source the world and not the Father.

2. "All that" = refers to the three things listed in this verse. These three things could not only be examples but they also could cover all sin that is in the world.

3. "Lust" = an evil craving; an evil, passionate desire.

4. "Flesh" = Refers to the totally depraved nature as governing the individual's reason, will, and emotions. Here it does not refer to the physical body except as that body is controlled or energized by the evil nature.

5. Therefore, the lust of the flesh is the passionate desire or the craving that comes from the evil nature.

6. The physical body and its members in themselves have no evil desires except as controlled by the totally depraved nature.

7. "Lust of the eyes" = the passionate cravings of the eyes for satisfaction, these cravings finding their source in the evil nature.

8. "Pride" = vainglory; an insolent (disrespectful of authority) and empty assurance which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights.

9. "Life" = the outward life, or livelihood. Refers to that which sustains life; namely, food, clothing, and shelter.

10. The pride of life refers to whatever there is that tends to promote pride, or to that which is an index of pride, such as a showy display of dress, furniture, automobiles, houses, and etc.

11. This list of sins are the three channels Satan used to tempt Eve and through which he tried to tempt Jesus. (Gen. 3:6; Mat. 4:3-10)

12. All of this is out of the world as a source and not out of the Father as a source.

13. The problem for the believer is always, how to be in the world and not of it. (John 17:11,14; Titus 2:12)

V. 17

1. "Passeth away" = to pass alongside; to pass by; transient.

2. The world is being caused to pass by; that is, God is causing the world to come to its end. Even the lust which belongs to the world passes also.

3. "Doeth" = tense means to keep on habitually doing.

4. "Will of God" = the exact antithesis (opposite) of "all that is in the world."

5. "Abideth for ever" = continues unto the age amid the flux of transitory things. "Age" refers to the coming of Christ's eternal kingdom.

6. To love the world is to lose everything, including the thing loved. (Example = Lot)

7. To love God is to gain Him and His kingdom forever.

C. The Test of Truth V. 2:18-29

V. 18

1. "Little children" = babes in Christ; "professors".

2. "Time" = hour. The emphasis is not upon the fact of a particular, definite time, but upon the character of that particular, definite time.

3. "Last" = final.

4. "Last time" = refers to the closing period or dispensation; that dispensation in which the affairs of the world are ultimately to be wound up. That period might continue through many ages or centuries, and still be the last dispensation.

5. A dispensation is a period of time during which God deals in a particular way with man in respect to sin and man's responsibility. We are now in the last dispensation = that of "grace."

6. "As ye have heard" = when you were instructed in the faith that the Antichrist shall come.

7. Antichrist has a definite article, thus signifying a person whom Paul calls "man of sin" and "the son of perdition." (II Thess. 2:3)

8. "Shall come" = is destined to come; is about to come.

9. "Antichrist" = means against Christ; adversary of Christ; one who denies that there is a Christ; not pretending to be Christ, but proposing to do the work of Christ.

10. John says that even in his time (even now) there are "many antichrists." The verb tense indicates that they have arisen and are on the scene (have established themselves in the midst of the church).

11. What will be true of the personal Antichrist when he comes is true of these men in a lesser sense, or in a lesser degree.

12. Those who proclaimed the Gnostic teaching were really Antichrist, just as many modern deceivers deserve that title today. The Gnostics didn't believe that Christ came in the flesh. (I John 4:2-3)

13. "Whereby" = for which reason; wherefore. Because there were many Antichrist in John's time, it stands to reason that it is the last hour (time).

14. "Know" = to know by experience.

V. 19

1. "They" = Refers to the antichrists of verse 18.

2. "They went out from us" = These antichrists went out from the true believers in the sense that they departed doctrinally from the position of the Church as to the Person of the Lord Jesus, a position which they had held only in an intellectual way. They had mental assent and not a heart commitment to the Lord Jesus.

3. "They were not of us" = They were merely members of the local church, but had never been saved.

4. John then states that if these antichrists really possessed divine life they would have remained (continued) with the true believers in matters of doctrine.

5. But, he says, they departed (went out) from the doctrinal position of the church so that it could be made manifest that they did not belong to the company of the saints.

6. "They were not of us" = means that "all the antichrists were not a part of the true saints." This statement does not imply that part of the antichrists were saved, instead all were not saved. (John 10:27-29; Mat. 24:24)

7. If they had been saved they would have remained.

8. We tend to think of the damage done when one professes to be saved and then falls away to error (this is what is called "apostasy" of which Paul said would come in the last days; II Thess. 2:3), but a far greater damage is done if such a person remains in the church. (I Cor. 5:6; One rotten apple will spoil the whole barrel if it remains in the barrel.)

V. 20

1. "But ye have" = compares the saints with the antichrists; The antichrists have the spirit of Antichrist, but the saints have an unction from the Holy One.

2. "Unction" = anointing; word refers to that with which the anointing is performed; means reception of the Spirit.

3. "Holy One" = refers to the Godhead.

4. The anointing with the Holy Spirit refers to the act of God the Father sending the Spirit in answer to the prayer of God the Son to take up His permanent residence in the believer. (John 14:16-17)

5. This happens at the instant one is saved, not at some later time, and the anointing is never repeated.

6. The Old Testament priests were anointed with oil just once, when they were inducted into their office.

7. In like manner, a believer, a New Testament priest, is anointed with the Spirit just once, when he is inducted into his office as a priest, which is when he is saved.

8. "Know" = to know absolutely and finally; not the same word in 2:3 which means to know by experience.

9. "Ye know all things" = is saying you all know. That is, as a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the saints (all) are given the ability to know God's truth.

10. This does not mean that the Christian is omniscient, but that he has the basis of all knowledge, (one of the ministries of the Spirit is that of enlightening the child of God regarding the meaning of the Word of God; John 16:13) and he can see things in their right proportions.

11. The antichrists, being unsaved thus having not the Holy Spirit, do not have the ability to know God's truth. (II Cor. 4:4; Jer. 17:9)

12. This ability to know the truth gives the saints the ability also to detect error, therefore, they will not be led astray. (John 10:27,5)

V. 21

1. John is referring to statements just made and states that his readers are not to regard his writing in the earnest manner that he was, as any evidence that he did not believe them to be acquainted with truth.

2. Instead, he said "but because you know it."

3. "Know" = Refers to an absolute, final, correct knowledge, here of God's Word as understood by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. (He is the author of the Word. II Peter 1:21)

4. John also states that every lie (error from truth) is not out of truth as its source, therefore, his readers will early recognize lies and liars, for they know the truth.

5. If we will study the "real" and let the Holy Spirit teach us all about the "real" then when lies (counterfeit, error) shows up, we automatically know that is not "real". (Example = Young men study real money in FBI school to learn how to detect counterfeit.)

V. 22

1. "Who is a liar" = who is false; who maintains an erroneous doctrine; who is an impostor.

2. John identifies a liar as one who "denieth that Jesus is the Christ."

3. "Denieth" = to renounce; disown; refuse; to reject.

4. "Jesus" = name given to the virgin-born son of Mary; refers to His humanity. When traced back through Greek and Hebrew, the name means "Jehovah

saves." (Mat. 1:21)

5. "Christ" = the anointed one. When traced through Greek and Hebrew we get the name "Messiah."

6. John is referring to those who may have admitted that Jesus lived, but they denied that He was the true Messiah. The Gnostics said that Christ entered Jesus at His water baptism and left Him before the crucifixion, thus John called them liars.

7. He further labeled them as "antichrists." They all have characteristics and attributes of the Antichrist and doctrines which practically involve the denial of both the Father and the Son.

8. The doctrine of the Father and the Son were so connected that one could not be held without holding the other, and one could not be denied without denying the other. (Mat. 11:27; John 5:23)

9. No man can have a right view of God the Father unless he has a right view of the Son.

10. John proceeds to restate and develop this truth in the next verses.

V. 23

1. John adds to verse 22 by saying that everyone who denies (renounce, disown, refuse, reject) the Son, they do not have the Father or God. (II John 9)

2. The reason being = the Son reveals the Father. (John 1:18;14:9)

3. Our only approach to the Father is by the Son. (John 14:6)

4. The translators added "[But] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." (in italics)

5. This is truth. Acknowledgeth means to "confess" = to agree with that person; refers to the act of a person agreeing with what the Bible teaches regarding the unique sonship of Jesus with respect to God as His Father. (John 5:18; "His" in this verse means one's own private, personal, unique possession.)

6. Confession of Christ before men is a prerequisite for confession by Christ before the Father. (Mat. 10:32-33)

V. 24

1. The Greek has the pronoun at the beginning of this verse for emphasis revealing a sharp contrast between those who were going to read this letter and the antichrists mentioned in previous verses.

2. "You let that which ye have heard from the beginning (when you first heard the gospel) abide in you."

3. "Abide" = to remain. Means more than allowing the basic teaching concerning the Person of our Lord to remain in one, but also that one should have the attitude towards that teaching that causes it to feel at home in him, and have ready access to every part of his life. In other words, it is the responsibility of the believer to nurture the stability and growth of those doctrines by a holy life and determination to cling to them and remain true to them.

4. The antichrists at one time "professed" to the true doctrine concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus, but they departed from it (2:19) therefore, it did not abide (remain) in them.

5. John says "if" that doctrine (teaching) remains in you, it is an indication that you are saved and will (as a saved person) continue to abide both in the Son and in the Father.

6. "Abide", "remain", and "continue" are all from the same base Greek word. "Let the good seed abide in your hearts, and not be snatched away by the evil one, then not only will it abide (remain), but you also will abide (continue) in the Son and in the Father".

V. 25

1. This verse is, no doubt, placed here to encourage John's readers to cling to the truths which they had embraced concerning the Son of God.

2. God is the one who promises, and His promises are made in Christ. (II Cor. 1:20; II Tim. 2:13)

3. The promise is explained to be "the life eternal." (There is a definite article in front of life so one cannot mistake what life he is talking about. John 5:24)

4. In verses 24-25, John gives two reasons for holding fast the truth originally delivered to them, because truth leads to (1) fellowship with God; (2) eternal life.

V. 26

1. "These things" = refers to preceding verses, (18-25).

2. "Seduce" = to lead astray; to cause to wander. The Greek grammar indicates the continual attempt of these false teachers to lead the "little children" astray.

3. John does not mean that they had already been lead astray, but refers to the fact that there was danger that they might be led into error.

4. John does his part to warn the sheep about the wolves, as Jesus did, (Mat. 7:15) and Paul did. (Acts 20:29)

V. 27

1. "Anointing" = same word as unction in verse 20; means reception of the Spirit; this is from "Him" (Christ Himself).
2. "Received" = tense indicates a definite experience at a point, place and time (when saved).
3. "Abideth" = remain. Means that the Holy Spirit, when received, remains in that person forever.
4. In Old Testament time, the Spirit came upon an individual for the period of that person's ministry, and left him when that ministry was over, without affecting his salvation. (Psa. 51:11) But in New Testament times, the Spirit is in the believer to stay.
5. Due to the fact of the indwelling Spirit, the saints do not have "need that any man teach" them.
6. "Teach" = the tense emphasizes continuous action; means when saved you don't need someone constantly teaching you.
7. This does not set aside the usefulness and necessity of God-appointed teachers in the Church (Eph. 4:11-12), but merely that the saints are not at the mercy of the Gnostic teachers that were trying to lead them astray.
8. No teacher, even a God-appointed one, is the only and ultimate source of the saint's instruction.
9. Every saint has the Holy Spirit who is the originator of the WORD and He ("same anointing") will teach the saints all things. (John 16:13-15)
10. The Holy Spirit is true and faithful (truth) and is not a falsehood (no lie).
11. "Even as it hath taught you" = John is reminding his readers of what they already knew.
12. "It" = refers to the anointing; therefore, the Greek was translated in the neuter gender, but the word could be translated in the masculine gender, "He" since the "anointing" is the Holy Spirit, who is a person, not an it.
13. "Ye shall abide in him" = a command to remain in Him (Christ) in the sense of:
 - A. Having no known sin not judged and not confessed.
 - B. Having no interest into which He is not brought.
 - C. Having no part of one's life which He cannot share.
 - D. Taking all burdens to Him.

E. Drawing all wisdom, life, and strength from Him.

F. Letting nothing be allowed in one's life which separates us from Him.

V. 28

1. "And now" = summing up the whole section. (V. 18-28)

2. "Little children" = term used as a kindly address by teachers to their disciples; refers to all saints young or old.

3. John tenderly repeats the phrase "abide in Him" = means to keep on constantly abiding in Him.

4. "When" = is translated from the word which is usually translated "if." "If" speaks of doubt and uncertainty, but there is no doubt as to the fact of our Lord's coming for His saints. He promised that (John 14:1-3), but the uncertainty expressed in this word is concerning the "time" of His coming. (Mat. 24:36)

5. The believer must live in close fellowship with the Lord that he may be ready for that coming, thus the command "abide in Him."

6. "Appear" = to be made manifest or visible. When the Lord comes He will be visible. (Rev. 1:7)

7. "Confidence" = freedom in speaking; unreservedness in speech, free and fearless confidence; cheerful courage; boldness; assurance. The word speaks of the heart attitudes of a saint who lives so close to the Lord Jesus that there is nothing between him and His Lord when He comes.

8. "May have" = tense speaks of instantaneous action. This means the saint at the time of the rapture should be living in such close fellowship with the Lord that the sudden appearance of the Saviour merely continues the fellowship that was in progress on earth. Like Enoch who walked with God on earth and suddenly was not, for God took him.

9. "Not be ashamed before him" = "not in shame shrink from Him"; the thought is that of separation and shrinking from God through the shame of conscious guilt. If we abide in Him we will not shrink from Him at His coming.

10. "Coming" = to be near; to be beside; speaks of the personal presence of Christ.

V. 29

1. "Know" = first word = absolute, immediate knowledge of a fact once for all; second word = to know by experience; perceive.

2. In other words, "if you know absolutely, for a fact that He (Christ) is righteous, you perceive or know from experience that everyone. . . ."
3. "Righteous" = just; right; upright; impartial. Refers to Christ because He is just, right upright and impartial.
4. "Doeth" = to practice naturally and habitually.
5. "Righteousness" = God's uprightness or standard; refers to the will of God.
6. One who practices habitually doing the will of God, is proof of the new birth. (One righteous act every now and then is not proof).
7. "Born of Him" = begotten of the Father. Tense speaks of a past, completed action, having present results. Thus, "having been born with the present result that you are a child of God by birth;" the relationship between God and the believer as Father and child is a permanent one (eternal security).
8. True doctrine produces righteous living just as false doctrine produces unholy lives.
9. If we believe the truth with our hearts, and commit ourselves to it, then we will live holy lives before men and not be ashamed before the Lord when He comes to catch us away in the rapture.

Chapter 3

III. Sonship V. 3:1-5:21

A. The Test of Obedience V. 3:1-24

V. 1

1. In chapter 3, John states that a true child of God will prove that he is born again by being obedient to God's word.
2. He gives 5 motives for obedience. Webster's defines motive as an inner drive, impulse, etc. that causes one to act in a certain way; incentive; goal. The Holy Spirit is the inner drive in every child of God that causes him to be obedient to God's word.

1. God's Wonderful Love V. 1

3. "Behold" = to see; to pay attention; observe. John is calling upon all the saints to wonder at the particular kind of love God has bestowed upon them.
4. "What manner of" = from what country, race or tribe. The word speaks of something foreign.
5. The love of God is foreign to the human race. It is not found naturally in humanity. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8)
6. "Hath bestowed" = to give something to someone. The tense indicates that the gift becomes a permanent possession of the receiver.
7. God has placed His love upon the saints in the sense that they have become the permanent objects of His love.
8. One of the results of this love in action is that we are called (named) sons of God (born ones, descendants of God, or children of God).
9. "Knoweth" & "knew" = same base word. Means to acquire knowledge through the medium of experience.
10. "World" = refers to the people of that system spoken of in 2:15-17, the people of the world system of evil.
11. Since the people of this world have nothing in common with the children of God, they have no fellowship with them, therefore they have no understanding of them.
12. The foreign kind of love produced in us by the Holy Spirit makes us a foreign kind of person (oddball) to this world. (I Peter 2:9 = peculiar)
13. We are really a people of a different race from them and could just as well have come to earth from a strange planet as far as the people of the world are concerned. We are strangers to them. (I Peter 2:11)
14. Love is the greatest motive in the world. Example: The love that Mom and Dad has for me will cause me to obey and love them in return. Also, the love my wife has for me will cause me to want to do more for her and love her in return.
15. The same is true with the Lord. (II Cor. 5:14; I John 4:19)

2. Christ's Promised Return V. 2-3

V. 2

1. "Beloved" = an expression revealing God's love for His own; also a title John used showing his love for the saints of God, those to whom he writes.

2. "Now" = at present time, without waiting for the second coming.
3. We do not have to wait until the judgment to find out if we will make it, as some teach. We can know "now" we are the sons of God. (I John 5:13 = key verse for these last three chapters)
4. "It doth not yet appear" = it has not yet been made manifest or visible. The force of the tense is "it was never manifested on any occasion."
5. "What we shall be" = suggests something unspeakable, contained in the likeness of God.
6. "When he shall appear" = when He shall be made manifest or visible.
7. "Know" = to have absolute, immediate knowledge of the facts.
8. "We shall be like him" = it matters not how He is or what He is like, we will be like Him and see Him face to face just as He is.
9. This is speaking of the change of the body. We are already changed on the inside by the Spirit which quickened us and made us alive in Christ.
10. Phil. 3:20-21 uses the words "change" and "be fashioned like" both of which refer to an outward, not an inward change.
11. I Cor. 15:35,42-44 says our bodies will be raised in:
 - A. Incorruption.
 - B. Glory.
 - C. Power.
 - D. A spiritual body.
12. "See" = to gaze, with wide open eyes; as at something remarkable. (Rev. 1:7)

V. 3.

1. "Every man who hath" = a characteristic form of expression with John, containing a reference to some who question the application of a general principle, in this case refers to those who had denied the practical obligation to a moral purity involved in their hope.
2. "Hope" = expectation. Refers to the Christian's hope of some day being like the Lord Jesus in respect to His glorified body. (verse 2)
3. "In Him" = upon Him. The idea is, "hope resting upon Him," or "hope set on Him," with "Him" referring to the Lord Jesus.

4. "Even as He is pure" = referring also to the Lord.
5. "Pure" = denotes purity maintained with effort and fearfulness in the midst of defilements and allurements. This refers to Christ because of His human experience. (Heb. 4:15)
6. "Purifieth" = to make clean; it is entire purification, not merely from unchastity, but from all defilement of flesh and spirit. (II Cor. 7:1)
7. "Purifieth himself" = implies a will to purify himself being always stirred up by the hope of being like Him. The will is not his own, not something springing out of his own nature, but the result of his Christian state, in which God also ministers to him the power to carry out that will in self-purification. (John 15:5b)
8. The hope of being like the Lord Jesus arouses the determination to be pure like Him, and this brings into play the will of the Christian to carry that will out into action.
9. This can only be done by dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and in so doing the saint can put sin out of his life and keep it out.

3. Christ Death on the Cross V. 4-8

V. 4

1. John shows that sin is incompatible with Christ's work of redemption on the cross. Also he shows the incompatibility of being a child of God and yet continuing in sin.
2. "Committeth" = doeth; habit of doing; to practice naturally and habitually.
3. "Sin" = is used here as a generic term embracing all that would be wrong.
4. "Law" = the word here means the law of God in the fullest sense, not the Mosaic Law.
5. "Transgression of the law" = one word in the Greek. Used twice in this sentence. The word's construction means "no law" or "lawlessness", which expresses the ignoring of the law rather than the absence of it.
6. The first part of this verse could read "everyone who habitually doeth sin, also habitually doeth lawlessness."
7. The Greek construction makes sin and lawlessness identical, "sin is the transgression of the law." In short, sin is defined as the transgression of God's will.

V. 5

1. "Know" = absolute, immediate knowledge of a fact once for all.

2. "He" = "that one", referring to Christ, thus translated "He".
3. "Was manifested" = to make an appearance past time; speaks of the Incarnation (Christ robed in flesh) not the second coming.
4. The purpose of Christ being robed in flesh was so He could "take away our sins" = to lift up and carry away. Gives the idea of expiation or atoning, of which both words mean to make amends for wrongdoing. Only Christ could do that. (Heb. 10:11; John 1:29)
5. John adds "and in him is no sin". Stating that the sin principle was not in Jesus as Jesus Himself stated in John 7:18.

V. 6

1. The words "abideth" and "sinneth" are used here to designate two classes of individuals.
2. Character is shown by one's habitual actions, not the extraordinary action.
3. The tense of these verbs reveals the kind of action as continuous and habitual. Therefore, "every one who habitually is abiding in Him", is a saved person, and, "every one who habitually is sinning," is an unsaved person.
4. A Christian as a habit of life is abiding in fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Sin may at times enter his life, but sin is the exception, not the rule.
5. The unsaved person as a habit of life sins continually.
6. John is not teaching that saints do not sin, but is speaking of a character, a habit, a lifestyle.
7. John denies that the life of a Christian is wholly turned towards sin as is the life of the unsaved person.
8. "Seen" = to see with discernment.
9. "Known" = to know by experience.
10. The tense of these two verbs are in the perfect, implying that he has neither seen nor known God in times past, with the present result that He is still invisible and unknown to him. This individual is an unsaved person.

V. 7

1. "Little children" = babes in Christ; little born again ones; repetition of a tender address.
2. "Deceive" = to lead astray. Same word as seduce in 2:26. Greek grammar says "stop allowing anyone to be leading you astray."
3. John is saying, "let no one ever seduce you into the belief that character and practice can be separated. (There had been a continual attempt of these false teachers to lead astray the "little children" 2:26) He that doeth righteousness is righteous; for a righteous man practices righteousness." (James 2:20)
4. John adds, "even as He is righteous" = "even as that One is righteous" = referring to Christ. (V. 2 = "we shall be like him")

V. 8

1. The tense of "committeth" means "he who is continually doing sin" or "he that makes sin his business or practice", that person is out of the devil as a source. This is speaking of spiritual parentage as Jesus said of the Pharisees in John 8:44.
2. When one acts like the devil, he shows that he is not a true child of God.
3. "Sinneth" = tense speaks of that which has begun in the past and continues into the present.
4. "The devil sinneth from the beginning" = tense reveals that he sinned in the beginning (refers to the beginning of his diabolic career) and has never ceased to sin from the beginning, and still sins.
5. The purpose of the Son of God being manifested (Christ being robed in flesh) was so He could destroy the works of the devil.
6. "Destroy" = to loosen; dissolve; unbind.
7. The works of the devil are represented as having a certain consistency and coherence. (A sticking together, thus needing to be loosed or destroyed.)
8. Our sins are the devil's works. What is sin in us is his natural occupation.
9. Christ's act in removing our sins from us loosens and unbinds us from sin thereby destroying the works of the devil.
10. By the blood of His cross He has paid for sin, made a way of escape from the arch enemy of men's souls, defeated the purposes of the devil, and will finally bring about his complete downfall.
11. This is the purpose that Christ had and has.

12. There is conflict with the devil today but final victory over him is certain.

4. The New Nature Within V. 9-18

V. 9

1. "Whosoever" = means everyone, or all who have been born of God.
2. "Is born" = the tense speaks of a past completed act with existing results; this refers to both times the words "is born" are used.
3. Therefore "is born" speaks of the past completed act of regeneration, which is the imparting of the divine nature of divine life, (II Pet. 1:4) and of the present result = the fact that the person who has received divine life is by nature a spiritually alive individual.
4. "Commit" = to practice naturally and habitually; the tense speaks of continuous action; the "not" negates the action. Thus, one who has been born of God does not habitually and naturally practice sin.
5. "For" = because; gives the reason why one born of God does not habitually practice sin = "his seed remaineth in him".
6. "Seed" = properly means seed sown, as of grain, plants, trees; then anything that resembles it, anything which germinates, or which springs up, or is produced; refers to the new nature.
7. The "seed" is the germ of divine life, that which has been produced in the heart by the word and the spirit of God, which may be regarded as having been implanted there by God himself, thus "his seed".
8. "Remaineth" = to stay; abide; continue; dwell; tense indicates a continuous action; the new principle (nature) which he has received; continues to operate in him.
9. "He cannot sin" = means "he is not able to sin" with the tense of "sin" speaking of a continuous, habitual action, thus "he is not able to habitually sin."
10. This is not teaching sinless perfection but saying one who has been born of God, life's style will not be characterized by sin, a state of sin. An act is different from a state of sin.
11. "Because he is born of God" = reveals the reason why that individual is not able to habitually sin.

12. God has given that person, by the new birth, real, spiritual life, and that life can never become extinct, it is eternal life.

V. 10

1. "In this" = may point to previous verse and also to what follows.
2. "The children of God" = refers to all who are born of God.
3. "Manifest" = to be plainly recognized or known.
4. "The children of the devil" = born ones of the devil in the sense that from Adam they inherit a totally depraved nature, the same as the devil has.
5. The word "manifest" applies both to the children of God and the children of the devil.
6. The children of God practices, naturally, righteousness and not sin, they also love their brother.
7. The children of the devil practice sin and not righteousness, and they love not their brother.
8. "Doeth" = to practice naturally and habitually.
9. "Righteousness" = God's uprightness or standard; refers to the will of God.
10. "Loveth" = refers to:
 - A. Divine love which is self-sacrificial in its essence.
 - B. The love produced in the heart of the yielded saint by the Holy Spirit.
 - C. The love defined by Paul in I Cor. 13.
 - D. The love shown by God at Calvary.
11. The tense of this love shows continuous action.

V. 11

1. "Message" = announcement; thing announced; a message brought.
2. "From the beginning" = not "in" but "from"; the readers had the message of love for one another when they first heard the gospel, but the message goes back to the time of Cain and Abel as verse 12 brings out.

3. "For this" = refers to the message which is "that we should love one another".
4. "That" (second one) = does not express a purpose but simply the substance of the message.

V. 12

1. "Not as Cain" = not manifesting the spirit Cain did. Cain's conduct typifies the attitude of the world towards Christians.
2. "Wicked" = evil in active opposition to the good.
3. "Wicked One" = Speaks of one who seeks to drag everyone else down with himself into the corruption and destruction that awaits him. This refers to the devil.
4. Cain was of the wicked one (devil) in the sense that he was under his influence, and acted from his instigation. (Eph. 2:2)
5. "Slew" = to slay; slaughter; butcher by cutting the throat. John did not use the word "to kill" but goes out of his way to use a specialized word to describe the murder of Abel by Cain. Cain cut his brother's throat.
6. "Wherefore" = why. "Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."
7. "Evil" = actively opposed to that which is good.
8. "Righteous" = upright; virtuous; keeping the commands of God.
9. Cain was dissatisfied that his offering was not accepted, and that his brother's was. He acted out of envy.
10. The wicked envy the righteous of their righteousness and try to destroy what they cannot share.

V. 13

1. "Marvel not" = Greek construction forbids the continuance of an action already going on. Stop wondering; cease wondering; do not think it so unusual as to excite astonishment.
2. John's readers were astounded at the fact that the people of the world should hate them because they were children of God. Jesus had warned of this in John 15:18-19.
3. "Brethren" = of the same womb. John addressed his readers as "little children" and "beloved" many times, but only here as "brethren", a term which suits the context, where he enforces love of the brethren.

4. "If" = expresses no doubt as to the fact, but states it gently and conditionally; "if, as is the case" = a fulfilled condition.

5. "Hate" = to detest, pursue with hatred.

6. Human nature is the same today as it was in Cain and Abel's day. There is still a Cain, the world, hating its Abel, the church.

V. 14

1. "We know" = Pronoun is in the emphatic position, thus saying, "Whatever the world may feel about us, we have certain knowledge, an absolute knowledge."

2. "Have passed" = to pass over from one place to another; to migrate. The tense of this verb speaks of a past completed act having in a case like this, permanent results. = "We have passed over permanently."

3. "From death" = out of the death; separated from the death. The preposition signifies a change, here of position and state.

4. "Unto life" = into the life. Both death and life have a definite article "the" before them which identifies them as the two spheres in which men must be, death or life.

5. "Because" = proof of this transition, not the ground of it. The ground is found in Eph. 2:8.

6. "Love" = agape; God kind of love. Described in verse 10.

7. Evidence of a saved condition is that the person is habitually loving Christians with a love that impels him to deny himself for the benefit of the fellow-Christian.

8. A Christian can no more live without love than a plant can live without growth.

9. "He that loveth not abideth in death" = He has not made the passage over. Absence of love implies an atmosphere of death.

10. "Abideth" = not to depart; not to leave; to continue to be present.

V. 15

1. John passes at once from not loving to hating, treating the two as equivalent.

2. He takes no account of the neutral ground of indifference. (compare Mat. 12:30)

3. As every one who does not love is potentially a hater, so every hater is potentially a murderer. He has the spirit of a murderer. He has that which, if it were acted out, would lead him to commit murder, as it did Cain.
4. The private malice, the secret grudge, the envy which is cherished in the heart, is murderous in its tendency, and were it not for the outward restraints of human laws, and the dread of punishment, it would often lead to the act of murder.
5. "Murderer" = man-slayer; man killer. Used only here and in John 8:44 of the devil.
6. "Know" = to know absolutely.
7. A person whose lifestyle is to hate does not have "eternal life abiding in him."
8. This does not mean he can't be saved but that his habitual fruit of hatred gives evidence that he is not saved at present. (I Cor. 6:9-11)

V. 16

1. "Hereby" = in this.
2. "Perceive" = know. Speaks of knowledge gained by experience. The tense expresses "we have come to know and still know."
3. "Of God" = in italics, thus not in the original.
4. "By this we know love" = Means we know what true love is; love itself (its real nature, its power, its sacrifices, its influences) was seen in its highest form, when the Son of God gave Himself to die on the cross.
5. Cain is the type of hate; Christ is love. Cain took his brother's life to benefit himself; Christ laid down His own life to benefit his enemies. (John 10:11,17-18)
6. "Life" = soul. Our Lord's death on the Cross involved not only His physical death, but also abandonment from God because of human sin laid on Him.
7. "For" = in behalf of; in the interest of; instead of; in place of; for the sake of.
8. "We ought" = Pronoun is emphatic, meaning "we on our part ought", speaking of a moral obligation.
9. "Lay down our lives for the brethren" = One's ego must be crucified and self must be denied for the benefit of one's brother.
10. Also, there may come a time we may have to die for our brethren.
11. The prophets, apostles, and martyrs laid down their lives for the cause of truth, which in essence was for the brethren.

12. Soldiers have sacrificed their lives for the good of their country, which in essence was for their fellow man.

13. Of course, our laying down our lives for the brethren has no atoning value in our cases as in that of Christ, but is a supreme proof of one's love. (Example = George Whitfield's death)

14. True Christians do not hate and murder; instead, they show love and try to help others. This is because of the new nature that is implanted at the new birth.

V. 17

1. "Good" = the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, and shelter.

2. "World" = here is not used in a bad ethical sense but refers to the sphere of life on earth.

3. The tense of "hath" speaks of habitual possession, thus referring to a person who regularly has the necessities of life.

4. "Seeth" = to look with interest and purpose; deliberately contemplates. The tense speaks of continuous action. This is not a hasty glance, but seeing a Christian (brother = from the same womb) in need of the necessities of life over a long period of time. (Gal. 6:10)

5. "Shutteth up" = to close; to shut up. The word could be used of the slamming of a door, or the snapping of a lock.

6. "Bowels of compassion" = metaphor of the seat of mercy, pity, and compassion. Refers to the heart, the seat of affections.

7. This speaks of a person who snaps shut (very graphic in the Greek) the door of his heart against any compassionate feelings toward his needy brother and against any merciful actions.

8. John asked the question, "How dwelleth the love or God in him?"

9. "Dwelleth" = abide; continue; be present; feel at home. (Rom. 5:5)

10. Love must be practical. It is easier to do great things where all can see than to do the "little things", facing day by day the petty sacrifices and self-denials which no one notices and no one applauds.

V. 18

1. "Little children" = a kindly address to all the saved.

2. What John means is, "we are not to express our love merely by word or by the tongue."

3. He does not condemn kind words which are comforting and cheering, but warm words should be accompanied by warm deeds (acts in which a man proves his genuineness).

4. Deeds are needed to complete the kind word and truth (sincerity) is needed to correct the insincere tongue.

5. True Christians do not hate and murder, instead they show love and try to help others because of the new nature that is implanted at the new birth.

5. The Witness of The Spirit V. 19-24

V. 19

1. "Hereby" = in this; that is, by the fact that we have true love to others, and that we manifest it by a readiness to make personal sacrifices to do good to others.

2. "We know" = to know by experience; the tense is future, indicating at any future time of examination of our profession (II Cor. 13:5) we shall know by experience that we are of the truth.

3. "Truth" = equivalent to Christ who is God (John 14:6; note the article "the"); also, refers to the fact that we are not deceived in what we profess to be, that is, that we are true Christians; to be of the truth stands opposite to cherishing false hope.

4. "Shall assure" = persuade; to tranquilize; means to pacify, win the confidence, and soothe the alarm, of our heart.

5. "Before him" = in the presence of God. This is very emphatic. It is in God's sight that the children of the truth are able to quiet their hearts, not merely in front of others or in their own eyes.

6. A true Christian does not attempt to conceal the fact that there is much that his heart and conscience might justly accuse him of, but when he examines, he finds evidence that he is a child of God, and he is persuaded (assured) that all is well and all will be well and that he has nothing to fear.

V. 20

1. "Condemn" = to accuse; to know something against one.

2. "For if" = in whatever.

3. In whatever our heart condemns us, we shall quiet it with the assurance that we are in the hands of God who is greater than our heart, who surpasses man in love and compassion.

4. "Knoweth all things" = readeth every secret. God's omniscience is linked with His love and compassion and He knows every secret of our hearts. He knows our sins, but He also knows our temptations, our struggles, our sorrow, and our love.

V. 21

1. "Beloved" = loved ones of God and of the writer.

2. "If our heart condemn us not" = does not mean sinless perfection, but represents the heart attitude of a saint that as far as he knows has no unconfessed sin in his life, has nothing between himself and the Lord Jesus; a saint who is yielded habitually to the Holy Spirit and living in close fellowship with his Lord.

3. This person will "then have confidence toward God."

4. "Confidence" = freedom in speaking; unreservedness in speech; free and fearless confidence; cheerful courage; boldness; assurance.

5. "Toward" = facing. Thus face to face with God or facing God; refers to God the Father.

V. 22

1. The confidence (boldness) toward God of verse 21 includes prayer as this verse brings out. (Heb. 4:16; 10:19)

2. "Ask" = to ask for. The tense speaks of continuous action. It is "whatever we keep on asking for", speaking of repeated and continuous praying, day after day.

3. "We receive of him" = a promise of answered prayer; the answer may not always be in the form that we expect, but it will be better. (Luke 11:9-10)

4. There are two reasons why we receive answers to our prayers regularly:

A. "We keep His commandments" = means to observe or obey His commandments, which are prescribed in accordance with His will for us in this day of grace.

B. "Do those things that are pleasing in His sight" = practice regularly (do) things that are pleasing (agreeable, fit) in His sight (before Him; means He is looking on and judging; a penetrating gaze).

5. When one obeys His commandments and practices regularly those things that are pleasing to Him, that person's heart will not condemn him (V. 21) thus he has confidence toward God.

V. 23

1. It seems that there are two commandments in this verse, yet John says "This is his commandment" = probably a restatement of what Jesus said in Mat. 22:36-40.

2. He is writing to saints, yet states, "that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ."

3. Saints had already believed on the name of Jesus Christ for their entrance into salvation, but now in their saved state they were to believe all that the Bible states is true of our Lord and this requires a heart submission to Him personally. (living faith)

4. This involves one to love Him with all their heart, mind, and soul and to love one another "as he gave us commandment." (John 13:34-35; 15:12,17)

V. 24

1. He that obeys (keepeth) His commandments, dwelleth (abides, remains, continues, feels at home) in Him (God) and He (God) in him.

2. We abide in God and God abides in us through the Holy Spirit; "Therefore let God be a home to thee, and be thou the home of God."

3. "Hereby" = in this. Refers to what follows. We know (to know by experience) that He (God) abideth in us by the Spirit (Holy Spirit) which (should be whom, because the Holy Spirit is a person not an "it") He hath given us, at the moment we got saved.

4. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our Spirit, (Rom 8:16) and this ought to motivate us to be obedient to the Lord.

5. The "Christian" who claims to be born of God, but who repeatedly disobeys the Word and has no desire to please God, ought to examine his heart to see if he is really a child of God.

Chapter 4

B. The Test of Love V. 4:1-21

V. 1

1. Chapter 4 states that if a person is born of God, he will prove it by his love.
2. There are 5 motives that will motivate one to love if they are a son.

1. We Have a New Nature V. 1-8

3. "Beloved" = one loved of God and the writer, thus a tender address.
4. "Believe not" = Greek grammar forbids the continuation of an action already going on; "Stop believing every spirit."
5. The fact is that some were believing the errors of the Gnostics because they had not been enlightened on that subject.
6. "Spirit" = refers to one in whom a spirit is manifested or embodied, or one who is urged to action by a spirit, whether divine or demonical; thus these spirits are human beings energized either by demons or the Holy Spirit. (I Tim. 4:1; Mat. 7:15; II Cor. 11:14)
7. "Try" = to put to the test for the purpose of approving, and finding that the person put to the test meets the specifications laid down; to put one's approval upon him.
8. The reason for putting visiting teachers to such a test was "because many false prophets are gone out into the world".
9. The tense of the verb denotes a past action with existing results; thus, they have gone out, at present they are with us and have established themselves among the people and they will always be present with us. Therefore, this verse is for us today and is as up to date as tomorrow's newspaper.

V. 2

1. "Hereby" = by this. Speaking of the following instructions on how to try the spirits.
2. "Know" = to know by experience.
3. "Confesseth" = to declare openly; speak out freely; to speak the same thing as another; to agree with another.
4. "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" = means that Deity was clothed in human flesh, a man, yet God; this speaks of the Incarnation (Christ robed in flesh through a virgin's womb; Gal. 4:4).

5. "Jesus" = means Jehovah saves. Name given to the Son of God when born. (Mat. 1:21)

6. "Christ" = the Anointed One; Messiah.

7. "Is come" = the tense speaks of a completed act past time with existing results; Jesus was born and even though He died on the cross, He arose and exists today.

8. John is exposing the error of the Gnostics who denied that Jesus was very God. They stated that Jesus came in the flesh but was not the Christ until His baptism by John.

9. John states plainly that one "is of God" if they confess (the tense means "keep on confessing") that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."

10. This statement speaks of the God of the Old Testament who in the Person of His Son became incarnate in human flesh, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to satisfy the just demands of His law which man broke, and raised Himself from the dead in the body in which He died, to become the living Saviour of any sinner who places his faith in Him in view of what He did for him on Calvary's cross, and He is coming back bodily to catch away all those who have believed, so that where He is there we may be also.

11. John says everyone (every spirit) who confesses this is energized by the Spirit of God and is "of God."

12. This does not mean that everyone who confesses this is personally a true Christian, for it is clear that a doctrine might be acknowledged to be true, and yet the heart might not be changed, but it means that it was essential that this truth should be admitted by everyone who truly "is of God." (Mat. 7:21-23)

V. 3

1. In contrast John says everyone who does not confess this truth "is not of God" = He is not a Christian, nor can he be recognized as a Christian teacher.

2. "Confesseth not" = to deny. When one denies this truth, they are in reality denying the doctrine of atonement of sin.

3. "This is that spirit of Antichrist" = referring not to one person (even though the Antichrist will come) but to a class of people.

4. These are energized by the spirit of Antichrist who denies and is against all that the Bible teaches regarding the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. "Have heard" = tense refers to a past hearing with an ever consciousness of the spirit of Antichrist (our real enemy) being present for it is already present; that has been 1900 years ago. This being the case, how much stronger does this spirit exist today?

V. 4

1. "Ye" = is in the emphatic position and means "as for you", contrasting his readers, whom he calls "little children" (born again ones) to those who possess the spirit of Antichrist.
2. "Have overcome" = to subdue; to be victorious; to conquer; the tense speaks of a past completed victory, with a present state of being a conqueror.
3. "Them" = refers to the false prophets. (4:1)
4. The saints were not taken in by the heresies of the false teachers, and were in a settled state of victory over them. They were confirmed in their attitude against heresy and had their eyes wide open to its source and nature.
5. "Because" = the reason for the victory is that God the Holy Spirit who indwelt them is greater than that fallen angel Satan who is in the world system of evil. (John 14:30; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2)
6. Just as God is in believers and they in God, so the world is in the evil one and the evil one in the world.

V. 5

1. "They are of the world" = speaks of the false prophets (4:1) whose source of their character and teaching is the world. They had its spirit, acted on its principles, and lived for the world.
2. As a result "therefore speak they of the world" = "out of the world as a source they speak" = they were wholly influenced by the love of the world, and not by the Spirit of God, in the doctrines which they taught. The general everyday conversation of a man will show what spirit is within him. (Mat. 12:34)
3. "The world heareth them" = refers to the people of the world, the gay, the rich, the proud, the ambitious, the sensual; they receive their instructions, and recognize them as teachers and guides for the world recognizes its own language. (John 15:19)

V. 6

1. "We are of God" = John refers to himself and to those who taught the same doctrines he did in sharp contrast to the false prophets and the world.
2. "Of God" = out of God as a source; we are in tune with the Infinite God.

3. "Knoweth" = Greek grammar reveals this as a progressive, experiential knowledge. It is the growing saint to whom reference is made.

4. "Heareth" = to attend to; listen; consider what is being said.

5. John makes it very clear that every one who has a true acquaintance with the character of God (been saved) will receive true doctrine, and anyone who will not receive true doctrine is not of God, not been saved.

6. Rejection of the truth may be due also to our not speaking the truth in love. (Eph. 4:14-15)

7. "Hereby" = from this; deduction drawn from the preceding; applies to the whole passage. (V. 1-6a)

8. "Know" = know by personal experience; belongs to all believers.

9. "Spirit of truth" = refers to Holy Spirit who teaches and guides us into all truth. (John 16:13)

10. "Spirit of error" = refers to the spirit that comes from the devil, teaching lies and seducing men into error (wandering, a straying about).

11. There is no reason for Christians to be duped (deceived; easily tricked) by "the spirit of error" even though misleading spirits are present even today. (I Tim. 4:1)

V. 7

1. "Beloved" = divinely-loved ones.

2. "Let us love" = refers to all saints (us) loving with the God kind of love (agape), the love which is produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the yielded saint; the tense speaks of a habitual continuous action.

3. "One another" = is a reciprocal pronoun in the Greek, thus speaking of mutual action.

4. "For love is of God" = real love shows that we have His Spirit, and that we belong to Him.

5. "Is born" = tense is such that states that "everyone that loveth (persistent in loving) has been begotten of God with the present result that he is a child of God." The new birth is a permanent thing.

6. "Knoweth" = to know by personal experience; tense reveals a continuous habitual action.

V. 8

1. John states the opposite of verse 7.
2. "Knoweth not" = never experienced God; the tense refers to not ever entering into a new condition; means the person who does not habitually love others or keeps on not loving, never knew God at any time.
3. "For God is love" = God as to His nature is love. This clause gives the reason why one who loves not, never knew God, "because God is love."
4. A stranger to love is a stranger to God. He who has no idea of love has no knowledge of God, because God is love.

2. Christ Died For Us V. 9-11

V. 9

1. "In this" = refers to what follows.
2. "Was manifested" = to make visible or known what has been hidden or unknown.
3. The Incarnation is a manifestation of the love of God because it is a manifestation of the divine nature, and the divine nature is love. This does not say the love of God is not manifested any other way, because there are many ways the love of God is manifested, but this is a unique way.
4. "Toward us" = in us; in our case; in our souls; denotes an inward experience.
5. "Sent" = to order one to go to a place appointed; to send on a commission as an envoy, with credentials (the miracles) to perform certain duties; the tense speaks of a past completed act having existing results. Therefore, the influence of the Incarnation is permanent.
6. "Only begotten" = used of Christ; denotes the only Son of God uniquely conceived. Speaks of the virgin birth; carries the idea of preciousness.
7. The reading is "God sent his Son, the only begotten Son into the world." All the saved are sons of God but Christ was God's only begotten Son.
8. "That" = the reason for the Incarnation, "that we might live through him," = that we might get life through him. (Eph. 2:1) Salvation has been provided for sinful man.
9. This life is eternal life and is not only future but present as well. This life begins here and now and has no end to it.

V. 10

1. "Herein" = in this; refers to what follows.
2. "Love" = agape. The definite article appears before love, thus "the love" = not just any kind of love, but the particular love that exists in God's nature = divine love.
3. "Not that we loved God" = tense indicates that the human race has not loved God with a present result that it does not possess any love for Him.
4. If we had loved and obeyed Him, we might have had reason to believe that He would be willing to show His love to us in a corresponding manner. But we were alienated from Him. We had no desire for His friendship and favor.
5. It was in this state that He showed the greatness of His love for us by giving His Son to die for even His enemies. (Rom. 5:6,8,10)
6. "But that he loved us" = the tense reveals that God has always loved sinners. Not that He approved of our character, but that He cared about our welfare.
7. "Sent" = same word as verse 9 but the tense is different. The tense in verse 9 expresses the permanent result of the mission while here it states the mission as an accomplished historical fact complete in itself.
8. "Propitiation" = one who makes expiation (atones for; to make amends for); a means whereby sin is covered and forgiven; refers to Christ as the One who propitiates and offers Himself as the propitiation, therefore, He is both the sacrifice and the High Priest sacrificing Himself. Basically, this means that Jesus became our:
 - A. Sacrifice = the innocent One, the One who had no sin, died on Calvary's cross. (Rom. 3:25)
 - B. Substitute = bore our sin and carried it away never to be found; thus fulfilling the picture of the scapegoat in Lev. 16:5-10.
 - C. Mercy Seat = by entering into the Holy of Holies in heaven and sprinkling His own blood upon the mercy seat (Heb. 9:11-12) He:
 - 1) Fulfilled the type of the OT high priest entering the holiest in the temple on earth.
 - 2) Provided a satisfaction for the demands of a broken law.
 - 3) Caused what could have been a judgment seat to become a Mercy Seat. That satisfaction for the demands of the broken law is the "propitiation" and that was "for our sins."

V. 11

1. "Beloved" = loved of God.
2. "If" = implies no uncertainty; means "since" or "in view of the fact", because God did love us.
3. "So" = refers back to the act of God sending His Son to become the atoning sacrifice for our sins; emphasizes the manifestation of God's love both in its manner and in its extent. It was an act of infinite love and infinite sacrifice, not only on the part of the Son on the Cross, but on the part of the Father who sent the Son. For the heart of the Father was pierced when sin was laid on the Son at the Cross and His holiness demanded that He abandon the Son. (Zech. 12:10)
4. In the same manner, and to the same extent, John says that saints have a moral obligation to be constantly loving one another.
5. "Ought" = to be under obligation; bound by duty or necessity; speaks of moral obligation.
6. "To love" = tense speaks of continuous action, not just every once in a while.
7. We should love each other in the same measure as God loves us.
8. If we are God's children we will have the spirit of our Father which is one of love.

3. The Spirit Witnesses To Us V. 12-16

V. 12

1. "God" = is in the emphatic position; thus meaning the Divine being, deity in the essence; does not refer to Christ who was God in flesh.
2. "Hath seen" = to behold; look upon; view attentively; gaze upon; contemplate; the tense indicates that no one has ever yet beheld Deity in its essence with the present results that no one has the capacity of beholding Him.
3. Seeing that God is invisible, His abiding in us (dwelleth) can be shown only by His essential characteristic being exhibited in us and that is by our showing similar self-sacrificing love.
4. "Perfected" = to complete; carried to its end; reaching maturity; the tense refers to a past completed act with existing results.
5. This love is not something we work up. It is the work of the Spirit within. (Rom. 5:5)
6. God's love flows from us as we yield to the Spirit.

V. 13

1. "Hereby" = by this; The Christian's consciousness of the fact of God dwelling in him is due to the Spirit of God whom God has given.
2. "Know" = to know by experience.
3. "Dwells" = abides; remains; continues. Used of one person dwelling in the home of another.
4. "Hath given" = tense refers to a past act with existing results. When we were saved we received the Spirit of God and His Spirit influences our souls by producing the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit, (Gal. 5:22-23) which is one of the clearest evidences that we can have that we are the children of God.

V. 14

1. "We" = refers to John and the apostles who were eye witnesses of the Incarnate Son.
2. "Have seen" = to steadfastly and deliberately contemplate; gaze upon; more than a casual glance or a mere momentary thing. Tense says, "We have seen and still see."
3. "Testify" = bear witness; to give a first-hand, detailed account.
4. John testified what he had seen = that the Father sent the Son as Saviour of the world (the unregenerate among the human race).

V. 15

1. "Confess" = to speak the same thing that another speaks; to agree with another.
2. "Dwelleth" = to abide; remain; feel at home.
3. The statement "God dwelleth in him, and he in God" implies fellowship.
4. John is saying that anyone (whosoever) who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God is in fellowship with God.
5. This implies that Jesus was Deity when He was born, (very God indeed) a statement the Gnostics denied.
6. This confession of the deity of Jesus implies surrender and obedience also, not mere lip service. (I Cor. 12:3b)

V. 16

1. "Have known" = to know by experience; the tense says "have come to know and still know."
2. "Believed" = to believe and embrace what God has made known through Christ. The tense says, "have come to believe and still believe."
3. "To us" = in us; in our sphere; in our case. Believers are the sphere in which the love of God operates.
4. "God is love" = a repetition of an important truth. (V. 8)
5. In the last part of this verse, John gathers up the whole argument that one who is abiding in love is abiding in God and that shows that God is abiding in him.
6. As we abide in His love, we have no problem loving other Christians.

4. Christ Is Coming For Us V. 17-18

V. 17

1. "Herein" = In this. Refers to verse 16.
2. "Our love" = love with us. Refers to the love which God is in His nature, produced in our hearts by the Holy Spirit; it does not refer to God's love for us or our love for Him.
3. God's love has been manifested "toward us" (4:9) "in us", (4:12) and now "with us."
4. "Made perfect" = to complete. Means to add what is yet lacking in order to render a thing full. Tense is perfect; therefore, means love has been made perfect and exists in its finished results. This represents a past act in a saint's life and a present reality.
5. Perfect love causes us to "have boldness in the day of judgment" = refers to Christ's coming for us.
6. "Boldness" = free and fearless confidence; cheerful courage; speaks of unreservedness of speech, with nothing to hide or be ashamed of. The idea is that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment.
7. "Because " = introduces the reason for this boldness = "as he is, so are we in this world." That is, we have the same traits of character which the Saviour had, and resembling Him, we need not be alarmed at the prospect of meeting Him.

8. Jesus is in the world unseen, and our office is to make Him visible. (II Cor. 5:20) He is in heaven representing me before the Father, and we are on earth representing Him before sinful men. We are to Him what He was to the Father in the days of His flesh.

V. 18

1. "Fear" = anxiety; terror; dread; fright. This is not the fear of God which is reverence and respect.

2. "No fear in love" = love is not an affection which produces fear. In the love which we have for a parent, a child or a friend, there is no fear.

3. "Casteth out" = to throw out; to dispel; to get rid of.

4. If a man has perfect (complete) love with Him, he would have no fear. It is guilt that makes man fear what is to come and if one has perfect love, he would have his sins confessed, thus having no guilt, therefore no fear.

5. "Torment" = punishment; penalty. Brings with it or has connected with it the thought of punishment; the thought here is that of slaves whose portion is punishment and their spirit one of fear; but the portion of sons is chastisement and their spirit is one of boldness.

6. God never intended for men to be afraid. There was no fear on earth until Satan and sin entered the scene. (Gen. 3:10;2:25)

7. "Feareth" = to be struck with fear; to be seized by alarm. Tense refers to a continuous, habitual lifestyle.

8. That person has not been made perfect in love. The tense indicates that he has never at any time in the past been made perfect and stands at present as not being made perfect in love. In other words, that person has never been saved.

9. The dread of punishment may cause men not to do certain sins, but it cannot lead them to righteousness. For that, one needs to recognize that God loves them. (Rom. 2:4)

5. God Loves Us V. 19-21

V. 19

1. This verse gives a contrast to verse 18. Christians do not fear, but love.

2. "He first loved us" = is a fact. (Rom. 5:6,8)

3. Our love is in response to His love for us. The thought is that the amazing love of God in Christ is the inspiration of all the love that stirs in our hearts.

V. 20

1. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother" = The sense is, that no man, whatever may be his professions and pretensions, can have any true love to God, unless he loves his brethren.

2. "Hateth" = detest; pursue with hatred; tense refers to a continuous habitual lifestyle.

3. John says that individual is a "liar" = This speaks of a false "professor" and does not necessarily mean that he intentionally lies but just reveals his blinded and deceived heart. (II Cor. 4:4; Jer. 17:9)

4. In the last part of this verse, John asks a question of which the implied answer is "you can't." 5. If a professed Christian does not love one who bears the Divine image (V. 17b) whom he sees and knows, how can he love God whom he has not seen and whose image he bears (does if saved)? Again, "he can't."

V. 21

1. This is speaking of the great commandment, on which hang all the law and the prophets (a phrase which designates all the scripture). (Mat. 22:36-40)

2. Keep in mind that Christian love does not mean we must agree with everything a brother thinks or does. We may not like some of his personal characteristics, but, because he is a brother in Christ, we are commanded to love him for Jesus' sake.

3. Jesus stated that we were even to love our enemies. (Mat. 5:43-44)

Chapter 5

A. The Test of Truth V. 5:1-21

V. 1

1. "Know" is the key word in this chapter and it is used 8 times. To know is the opposite of "doubt" and it means something that is certain and sure.

2. There are 6 certainties found in this chapter.

1. We Know What a Christian Is V. 1-5

3. "Believeth that Jesus is the Christ" = is not a mere intellectual assent to the fact of the incarnation, but a heart trust, reliance and acceptance of all that is implied in this phrase: 1) virgin birth, 2) sinless life, 3) sacrificial death, 4) substitutionary death, 5) resurrection, 6) ministry of intercession, and 7) bodily coming back again for the saints.

4. That person "is born" of God.

5. "Is born" = is begotten; tense indicates a past complete act with the present result that he is a child of God.

6. "Of God" = means out of God as a source; means that salvation is of the Lord. He is the one who initiates it, produces it and consummates it.

7. To be born of God involves loving God (Him that begat).

8. To love God involves loving His children (him also that is begotten of Him).

9. John says that the person who loves God as his Father also loves God's children because of the fact of the family relationship. (Repetition of what he had already said more than once in this short epistle.)

V. 2

1. "By this" = in this. Refers to loving God and keeping His commandments. The tense of both "love" and "keep" speaks of a continuous action.

2. "Keep" = to attend carefully; to take care of; to guard; observe. The word speaks of a watchful, careful guarding and care of God's commandments lest we disobey them, with the thought that we are concerned with His honor and glory and our Christian testimony as well.

3. "In this" we know that we love the children of God. If you love God and keep his commandments, you can't help but love others.

4. "Know" = to know by experience.

V. 3

1. The saints love for God is shown by keeping His commandments.

2. Our love for Him is a motivating factor in our keeping God's Word. Example: We do things for our mates, children, or parents because of our love for them.

3. "Not grievous" = not burdensome; not heavy. The word speaks of that which is not burdensome, severe, stern, violent, cruel, or unsparing.

4. This means that His laws are not unreasonable and the duties which He requires are not beyond our ability.

5. Love for God makes the keeping of His commandments a delight rather than a burden.

6. "Keep" = Tense refers to "keep on keeping"; a continuous, habitual lifestyle.

V. 4

1. "Whatsoever" = This word is used to express sharply the universality of the principle stated, and refers to persons, those persons born of God.

2. The tense of "is born" again refers to the past completed act of regeneration with the present result that the person is a child of God and will always be.

3. "Overcometh" = to carry off to victory; come off victorious; to conquer. The tense reveals a continuous victory because there is a continuous struggle; "keeps on conquering the world."

4. The second "overcometh" is same base word as the first but has a different tense which singles out an individual experience, when one believed or when one met temptation with victory. Jesus won the victory over the world, (John 16:33) and God in us gives us the victory. (I John 4:4)

5. Thus the victory that overcame was our faith. (God gave us faith also. Eph. 2:8; John 3:27)

6. The tense of the first "overcometh" means "is conquering" because the fight is in progress, while the second "overcometh" means "that conquered" because the triumph is assured.

7. One overcomes by faith, not by his own power or wisdom.

V. 5

1. John asks a question which is an appeal to experience and fact.

2. Where is there one who can pretend to have obtained a victory over the world except he who believes in the Saviour?

3. It is true that a man may gain a victory over one sin, and may turn over a new leaf, but the only one who can overcome (tense indicates a continuous, constant victory) the

world is one who has been saved which is believing "that Jesus is the Son of God," from the heart.

4. This verse should stop all Gnostics because here it clearly states that "Jesus" (humanity) and "the Son of God" (deity) are united in the one personality.

2. We Know Who Jesus Is V. 6-9

V. 6

1. "This is he" = the Son of God referred to in the previous verse.

2. "Came" = The tense refers to a definite fact in history, the first advent of the Son of God embracing human nature without its sin through the virgin birth; this is what is called the Incarnation.

3. "By" = a preposition of intermediate agency, speaking here of accompaniment and instrumentality. His coming to make atonement for sin was accompanied by and made effective through water and blood.

4. To understand what "water and blood" means, we must begin at the beginning.

5. In John 1:11-13 it is clearly stated that the believer is "born of God."

6. In John 3:5, Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be "born of water and of the Spirit." God is a Spirit, (John 4:24) and symbolically speaking, God is "water."

7. Look at these scriptures and note the emphasis:

A. John 15:3 = "clean through the Word."

B. I Pet. 1:23 = "born again...by the word of God."

C. Eph. 5:25-26 = "cleansed it with the washing of water by the word."

D. Titus 3:5 = "saved us, by the washing of regeneration."

E. Therefore, we are born, cleansed, redeemed, and sanctified by "washing by water" = referring to the Word.

8. The Samaritan woman at the well asked Jesus for the living water (water that would permanently quench her thirst) of which He had told her. (John 4:14-15) When He gave her the water, He gave her the Word. (John 4:26)

9. The "blood" is the blood of God. Note the scripture and the emphasis:

A. Acts 20:28 = "purchased with His own blood."

B. Luke 1:35 = begotten of God, therefore, He had God's blood flowing through His veins. (Heb. 2:14)

C. Lev. 17:11 = "the life of the flesh is in the blood", and it was through His blood shed for the remission of sins that God purchased His church.

10. This symbolism speaks of the brazen altar (blood) and the laver (water of the Word) in the O.T. tabernacle. Jesus fulfilled both these types.

11. Jesus came by water (by the Word, right on time as prophesied; Gal. 4:4) but not by water only, but by water and blood.

12. John used a different word for the second and third "by", a word that indicates the sphere or element in which Jesus Christ came to offer Himself as the atonement for sin.

13. The Greek construction gives reason for two separate events spoken of in this verse:

A. One being, His coming as a babe in the manger.

B. Second, His life and ministry upon the earth.

14. Jesus came speaking words, wonderful words of life, (John 6:63,68) but He not only spoke words, He gave His blood. He did not come and simply announce that "God so loved," but He proved God's love by laying down His life for us.

15. The Spirit bears witness to these statements. This is to stop the mouths of the Gnostics who denied that Jesus was born the Christ.

16. "Beareth witness" = to give testimony to; to give a first-hand, detailed account of what one has seen or heard or experienced. The tense speaks of a continuous action, not a one-time thing.

17. The Holy Spirit bore witness that Jesus Christ was the Son of God at His baptism, by all the miracles that He performed, by His resurrection, and continues to do so in our hearts today through the written word. (Mat. 3:16-17; Luke 4:14; Rom. 15:19; I Peter 3:18)

18. The Holy Spirit's witness is true. You can depend on what He testifies, thus John calls Him "truth."

V. 7

1. "Bear record" = bear witness; same word in V. 6.

2. "The Word" = Jesus; the Son of God.

3. Here we see the trinity in heaven.

4. "These three are one" = the doctrine of the trinity states, "Three co-eternal, co-equal, co-existent persons in the Godhead." Three, but one.

V. 8

1. John now says there are three that also bear witness in earth.
2. The law required two or three witnesses for a thing to be established as truth; therefore, these verses meet the qualifications of the law. (Deut. 19:15)
3. We see the trinity also in this verse. The Spirit, the water (word; applies to the Son) and the blood (speaks of the cross where God's blood was shed, thus identifying the Father).
4. "These three agree in one" = "these three are the one thing" = namely, they come together upon one truth, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came in the flesh; the reason they come together upon one truth is to bring us to faith in Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God.

V. 9

1. "If we receive" = a fulfilled condition. Therefore, it means "since we receive"; because we do receive the witness of men. For instance, we believe the witness of those who wrote our history books when they told us that George Washington was the first president of the United States; in fact, we have "no doubts" about that.
2. "Receive" = to take; appropriate. The reception of testimony is the act of appropriating (to take for one's own) it to ourselves as something to be depended upon as the truth.
3. John's thought is "Since we are in the habit of receiving the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, and therefore, should be received."
4. The witness of God is that which He testified concerning (of) His Son.
5. "Hath testified" = same word as "bear witness" in verse 8 and "bear record" in verse 7. The tense speaks of a past act of bearing testimony with the result that the testimony is on record at the present time. That record is His word.

3. We Know When We Have Eternal Life V. 10-13

V. 10

1. "Believeth = to have a faith directed unto; believing on in faith; to give one's self up to.
2. "On" indicates the point reached or entered, of place, time and/or purpose.
3. To believe on the Son of God means to believe with all your heart the testimony concerning the Son of God and a total surrender of self, receiving the Son of God as your Lord and Saviour. (This can only be done as the Holy Spirit testifies to you concerning the Son of God.)
4. At the point of believing, one receives "the witness in himself" = This is the reception of the Spirit who is responsible for one being cleansed by the blood. Also, your experience will agree with the Word. Therefore, verse 8 is a reality in you (in himself).
5. "Witness" = one who testifies to what he has seen or heard and can give a first-hand, detailed account. (Rom. 8:16)
6. This is the way one can really know they have eternal life.
7. John contrasts the believer to the unbeliever by saying that he (unbeliever) "hath made God a liar." The reason, "because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son."
8. The unbeliever, though he has no internal witness in himself, is without excuse because God has given enough external evidence, which is sufficient and true that one may believe. (Rom.1:19-20) To not believe the evidence (record) that God gave is to make Him a liar.
9. "Hath made," "believeth not", and "gave" = are in the perfect tense which states a past, completed act with existing results, thus:
 - A. "Hath made" = Means at some point in the past, there was a rejection of the evidence at hand which made God a liar and He stands at present as a liar because the unbeliever is in an existing state of rejecting.
 - B. "Believeth not" = Means at some point in past, there was a disbelieving of the evidence at hand and at present, that one remains in a state of unbelief.
 - C. "Gave" = same word and tense as "hath testified" of verse 9. Speaks of a past act of bearing testimony (testifying) with the result that the testimony is on record at this present time.
10. "Record" = same word as "witness" in this verse, and three times in verse 9.

V. 11

1. "Record" = same word as "witness" in verse 10.

2. "This is the record" = summed up in a very short sentence = "That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

3. "Hath given" = tense refers to the great historic fact of the Incarnation. Jesus was robed in flesh so that He could die on the cross for our sins. (I John 3:5)

4. "Eternal life" = life that has no end. Eternal life, Jesus, was born and laid in a manger.

5. "This life" can only be had in His Son (Jesus Christ). It is that life in Christ which includes all blessedness, and which is not broken by physical death. It is the opposite of exclusion from God (lost) and can be had now.

V. 12

1. "Life" = has a definite article before it in the Greek; thus saying, "the life", referring to eternal life, that life which God is and which He gives to sinners who believe on the Son.

2. "Hath" = has. Used 4 times in this verse. The tense speaks of continuous action.

3. To have "the life" one must have "the Son."

4. This verse has two clauses. In the first, "of God" is not added because believers know "the Son" and have no need to be told. In the second, "of God" is added, that unbelievers may know at length how serious it is not to have Him.

V. 13

1. "These things have I written unto you" = is not referring to a former epistle but this one; sums up the epistle as a whole. At the beginning (1:4) of the epistle, he said "these things write we unto you" writing to believers.

2. "Name" = used to denote the person. Names in Jewish history were often significant, being sometimes given by God Himself. They served not merely to distinguish one man from another, but to indicate his character. The Divine name suggests the Divine attributes.

3. The purpose of John's writing this epistle is "that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

4. "Know" = absolute knowledge; beyond the chance of doubt knowledge; a positive knowledge.

5. "Have" = to possess. Tense indicates at present; now.

6. "That you may believe" = that you may continue to believe, or may persevere in believing.

7. This is not speaking of losing our salvation in any way, but even after we are saved our human heart is prone to unbelief in certain areas of our life. Therefore, John was desirous that they would continue to exercise faith "on the name of the Son of God."

8. This is what is called living faith. (Rom. 1:17; 14:23)

9. It is as important to keep a garden from being overrun with weeds in the summer as it was to plant it in the spring.

10. In like manner, it is as important to the cause of Christ to walk by faith as it is to believe unto salvation.

4. We Know How to Pray With Confidence V. 14-17

V. 14

1. "Confidence" = free and fearless confidence; cheerful courage; boldness; assurance.
2. "In Him" = towards Him. Speaks of the saints attitude towards a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God.
3. "Have" = possess. Tense speaks of a continuous process, "have and keep on having."
4. "Ask" = to ask for something to be given oneself. The tense speaks of continuous action, thus, "if we keep on asking for something for ourselves."
5. "According to his will" = this is the secret in all prayer. This is the proper and the necessary limitation in all prayer. God has not promised to grant anything that would be contrary to His will, and it would not be right for Him to do so. This phrase does not mean that we should first always make sure of His will and then pray, but that we should pray with this expression, "If it be Thy will." Jesus even prayed that way in Mat. 26:39.
6. "This is the confidence " = "He heareth us" = listens to; the promise is not "He granteth it" but "He heareth us." He answers in His own way and in His time.

V. 15

1. "If" = since. Not hypothetical. We know that He hears us.
2. "Know" = absolute knowledge.
3. "Petitions" = What is or has been asked for; requests.

4. "Desired" = same word as ask.

5. Since we know He hears us, then we can be assured, if we are praying according to His will, that God will answer our prayer in the way and at the time when He shall see it best for our good.

6. The specific thing that we asked may not be granted, but the prayer will not be disregarded, and He will give us what we really need.

7. Someone has said, He answers all our prayers, either "yes", "no" or "wait." He knows best.

8. Shakespeare said, "We, ignorant of ourselves, beg often our own harms, which the wise powers deny us for our good; so find we profit by losing of our prayers."

V. 16

1. After the assurance that prayer is always heard, never unanswered, John specifies one kind of prayer, intercession, for a "brother" = from the same womb.

2. The topic of this verse is "a sin unto death."

3. A saved man can commit a sin unto death when he closes his ears to the voice of the Holy Spirit (inner witness) and closes his eyes to light of truth. (I Cor. 11:30)

4. This is no certain sin, but when one continues in sin and refuses to repent after God has chastened him and lovingly dealt with him, then the Lord has no choice but to snuff out that one's life and carry him to heaven, "so as by fire." (Heb. 10:26-31; I Cor. 3:11-15)

5. When you see a brother in sin and he hasn't crossed God's line, then pray for him that he may get right with God. (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20)

6. John says it's no use to pray for an individual who has sinned a sin unto death.

7. Examples of those who committed this sin: Moses, King Saul, Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10).

8. This verse could be applied to the lost concerning the sin of blasphemy which is attributing to the devil the manifest work of the Holy Spirit. (II Tim. 3:16; Mat. 12:31-32)

V. 17

1. "Unrighteousness" = a deed violating law and justice.

2. Whatever is contrary to God's law is sin, but not all sins are sins unto death.

5. We Know How A Christian Acts V. 18-19

V. 18

1. "Know" = to have positive, absolute knowledge.
2. "Is born" = tense speaks of a past complete act of regeneration with the present result that the believer is a born one of God.
3. "Sinneth" = tense speaks of continuous action, a habitual lifestyle.
4. The one born of God does not keep on habitually sinning.
5. "He that is begotten of God" = there are two thoughts on this. (The principle of both are in the scripture.)
 - A. Refers to Christ the only begotten Son who "keepeth him" = the one who is born of God.
 - B. Refers to the Christian who does not keep himself saved, but he does keep himself out of the snares of the devil by the aid of the Holy Spirit.
6. The tense of "is begotten" seems to imply that this refers to Christ the only begotten Son who keeps the believer safe from Satan. (John 10:27-29)
7. "Keepeth" = to take care of; guard; the word expresses watchful care. Our security is not in our grip on Christ, but His grip on us.
8. "Wicked one" = evil in active opposition to the good. The word refers to Satan who is not content to perish in his own corruption, but seeks to drag everyone else down with him to his final doom.
9. "Toucheth" = to grasp; to lay hold of. The devil cannot lay hold of or grasp anyone who is born of God because Christ keeps us, guards us.
10. The Christian does not fight "for" victory, he fights "from" victory, the victory of Christ on the cross.

V. 19

1. We have positive, absolute knowledge that we are "of God" (implying a birth, a proceeding forth, and a change of state).

2. "The world" = means the people who dwell on the earth including all idolaters, and all sinners of every kind. Does not refer to the material world.
3. "Lieth" = to be set; appointed.
4. "Wickedness" = same word as "wicked one" in verse 18. Refers to the devil.
5. Here is a contrast between the saved who are out of God as a source and the lost who are appointed to the wicked one, therefore, out of the devil as a source. (John 8:44)

6. We Know The Truth V. 20-21

V. 20

1. First "know" = to have positive, absolute knowledge.
2. "Is come" = to have come; have arrived; be present. This word includes the idea of coming, the fact of arrival, and personal presence. The Son of God has come, (in incarnation) has arrived, and is here.
3. Even though He departed in His glorified body to Heaven, He is here because He remains in His followers on earth.
4. "Hath given" = tense says, "has given with the result that the gift is in the permanent possession of the believers."
5. "Understanding" = Refers to the fact that He has so instructed us that we do understand the great truths referred to so "that we may know him that is true."
6. This "know" means to experience Him that is the true God.
7. "We are in him" = we are united to Him; we belong to Him; we are His friends; denotes an intimate union.
8. "True" = genuine; true, as opposed to the false and counterfeit. Here, the genuine God as opposed to the false god of the heretics.
9. Jesus Christ is identified as being the true God and eternal life. This statement should stop the Gnostics who denied the deity of Jesus.

V. 21

1. Knowing the True One will cause you to obey this verse.

2. "Little children" = little born again ones; a tender address by John to his readers.
3. "Keep" = to guard; to watch; to keep watch. It is used of the garrison of a city guarding it against attack from without.
4. "Idols" = an image; likeness.
5. Idolatry was everywhere and the peril was great.
6. John was not speaking of the heathen worship of some statue, but of the heretical substitutes for the Christian concept of God.
7. We need to guard against everything which occupies the place of God.
8. John ends this epistle with "Amen" = so be it.

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