

# The First Epistle of John

## Chapter One

### I. The Word of Life

- A. The Word from the beginning (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Ps. 33:6, 9; 148:5; John 1:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:5; Rev. 4:11)
  - 1. The beginning of the manifestation of the life
    - a. The beginning in John 1:1 is the same as in Gen. 1:1
    - b. The beginning in 1 Jn. 1:1 refers to the time when Jesus started His ministry (John 15:27)
  - 2. The apostles of the Lord Jesus could hear Him, see Him, examine Him closely, and even touch Him (John 20:26-29)
  - 3. Yet John did not say concerning Jesus Christ, but concerning THE WORD OF LIFE – THE ETERNAL LIFE
- B. This eternal life must be manifested and not hidden
  - 1. It was fully manifested in the human life of Jesus
  - 2. It should also be fully manifested through the believers and through His churches in Zion
  - 3. That the Father will be glorified
- C. This eternal life was with the Father (who is the source) and was manifested to us through His Son, Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 1:1-2; John 1:1-4, 14, 16, 18; 10:30; 14:8-9)
  - 1. Jesus came as the light of the world (John 1:9-11; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; Mt. 4:16)
  - 2. He declares God the Father to the world
  - 3. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him (Col. 2:9)
  - 4. He is full of grace and truth, and of His fullness we all have received, grace upon grace
  - 5. To accomplish the will of the Father (Heb. 10:5, 7-9; John 4:34)
  - 6. To bring men to God (John 14:5-7)

D. To usher the saints into the fellowship of the apostles, whose fellowship is truly with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; this happens through the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 1:3; John 20:21-22)

## II. **God Is Light and in Him Is No Darkness at All** (1 Jn. 1:5-10)

A. Light is the nature of God

1. Light is the first thing that God called forth in Genesis 1:3-5
2. Then He called forth the 4<sup>th</sup> day lights (Gen. 1:14-19)
  - a. The sun to rule over the day
  - b. The moon to rule over the night
  - c. The stars for signs
3. The whole earth in Genesis 1:2 was under God's judgment and in utter darkness and chaos
4. Fallen mankind loves darkness more than light (John 3:19)

B. The **strict requirement** for our fellowship with God and with one another

1. Walking in the light as the children of light – evidence that we have life in us
2. Those who say that they have fellowship with Him, but walk in darkness are lying and are **not practicing the truth** (a negative evidence)
3. We should have no fellowship with darkness, nor the works of darkness (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:11)

C. The light of God exposes our inward, hidden, sinful nature

1. Those (believers) who say that they have no sin or have not sinned (1 Jn. 1:8; Rom. 3:23)
  - a. They are deceiving themselves and are in darkness
  - b. Making God a liar
  - c. **The truth is not in them**
2. If we walk in the light:
  - a. We will realize that we have sinned or done wrong

- b. And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son will cleanse us from all sin (1 Jn. 1:7; Rev. 1:5b; 7:14)
- D. The necessity to **confess our sins**
  - 1. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
  - 2. And will cleanse us from all unrighteousness

## Chapter Two

### III. Jesus Christ the Righteous – Our Advocate and the Propitiation for Our Sins

- A. The reason for John’s writing: that we may **not** sin
  - 1. This exposes the false teaching of sinless perfection
  - 2. Sin cuts off our fellowship with God
  - 3. It will also destroy our fellowship with one another
- B. If anyone sins
  - 1. Jesus Christ the righteous is our sin and trespass offering – He Who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21; John 8:46; Heb. 4:15; 7:26-27; 1 Pet. 2:22-24; 1 Jn. 3:5; Is. 53:3-12)
  - 2. He is our Advocate with the Father (see also John 14:16, 26) – always interceding and pleading for us before the Father (Heb. 7:25-27)
  - 3. He is the propitiation for our sins and the sins of the whole world – He paid our debt and bore our judgment on the cross to appease God the Father
  - 4. To restore our fellowship with God and with one another
- C. Keeping His commandments
  - 1. Keeping His commandments (His words) is the **evidence that we know Him** (1 Jn. 2:3-6; Jam. 1:22; Rom. 2:13)
    - a. Truly the love of God is fulfilled (being made perfect) in him (John 14:21)

- b. By this we know (have **the evidence**) that we are abiding (dwelling) in Him: if we walk just as He walked
- 2. Whoever says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 Jn. 2:4, 22; 1:6; 4:20)
- D. Love – a commandment which is both old and new
  - 1. The Lord sums up the ten commandments of the Old Testament (Mt. 22:36-40; Mk. 12:28-31)
    - a. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself
    - b. The new commandment given by the Lord to His disciples: love one another as I have loved you (John 13:34-35; 1 Jn. 3:16, 23; Gal. 6:2)
  - 2. A test, whether we, the Christians, are in darkness or in the light (1 Jn. 2:9-11)
    - a. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is still in darkness until now and walks in darkness because the darkness has blinded his eyes
    - b. Anyone who loves the brethren abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him
- E. The church is the household, the family of the living God (1 Jn. 2:12-14; Eph. 2:19; Gal. 3:26-28; 6:10)
  - 1. We are the children of God, born of God (1 Jn. 3:1)
  - 2. The most important factor in a family is love – the brotherly love and the divine love (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 2 Pet. 1:7)
  - 3. The need to love and care for all three categories in a family: the little children, the young men, the elderly
- F. Two warnings from the aged apostle John in 1 Jn. 2:15-19
  - 1. **Do not love the world** (1 Jn. 2:15-17) – another manifestation of eternal life

- a. Christians are not of the world, just as Jesus Christ is not of the world (John 15:19; 17:14-16; Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:1-2; Jam. 4:4)
  - b. Satan is the God of this age – the whole world lies in the wicked one (2 Cor. 4:4a; 1 Jn. 5:19; John 14:30) – under his control
  - c. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him – we can only choose one or the other
    - i. The world and the lust of it is passing away – the lust of the flesh and of the eyes, and the pride of life
    - ii. He who does the will of the Father abides forever
2. Warning concerning the many antichrists (1 Jn. 2:18-27) – a sign that it is the last hour
- a. Corresponds to the warning of the apostle Peter in 2 Peter Chapter 2
  - b. The Holy Anointing, which we have received from the Lord, is our safeguard. He will teach us all things (John 14:16-17, 26; 16:8-11, 13-14)
3. Two important exhortations from apostle John to the children of God (1 Jn. 2:28-29)
- a. Abide (dwell and remain) in Him – do not move away (John 15:4-8)
  - b. Practicing righteousness is an important evidence of those born of God because God is righteous (see also 1 Jn. 3:7)
  - c. Love and righteousness work together

### **Chapter Three**

#### **IV. The Manifestation of the Children of God – Being Transformed into the Glorious Image of Christ (1 Jn. 3:1-3; Heb. 7:25; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:51-54)**

- A. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (2 Cor. 3:17-18)
- B. The need to purify ourselves today, just as He is pure (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Pet. 3:14)

#### **V. The Difference Between the Children of God and the Children of the Devil (1 Jn. 3:4-10)**

- A. Whoever abides in Him does not sin; for in Jesus there is no sin (1 Jn. 2:6)
  - 1. John does not teach that believers cannot sin (see 1 Jn. 2:1-2; 1:8)
  - 2. Whoever abides in Him does not sin (1 Jn. 3:6)
  - 3. Whoever has been born of God cannot sin (1 Jn. 3:9) – for His seed remains in him
  - 4. Those who practice righteousness are righteous, just as God is righteous
- B. Whoever commits sin, living a life of sin, is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning (1 Jn. 3:8, 10)
  - a. Those who do not practice righteousness
  - b. Those who do not love the brethren.

#### **VI. Further Manifestation of the Children of God and the Children of the Devil (1 Jn. 3:11-24)**

- A. The children of the devil are as Cain who hated and murdered his brother (1 Jn. 2:9, 11; 3:12, 15; 4:20; John 8:44) because his works were evil and his brother's works were righteous
  - 1. The same reason why the world hates us
  - 2. He who does not love his brother abides in death

- B. The children of God love one another – this is the message and His commandment from the very beginning
  - 1. Just as Jesus Christ Who loved us laid down His life for us, so we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren
  - 2. Not loving in words or in tongue, but in deeds and in truth
  - 3. Doing the things that are pleasing in the sight of the Father
  - 4. By the above we know that we are of the truth
  - 5. Having a conscience void of offense (vv. 20-24; Acts 23:1; 24:16; Rom. 9:1)

#### **Chapter Four**

#### **VII. Test the Spirits, Whether They are of God (1 Jn. 4:1-6)**

- A. Many false prophets have gone out into the world (2 Pet. 2)
- B. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (as a Son of Man) is of God
- C. Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. It is the spirit of the antichrist, which is now already in the world
  - 1. They are of the world and speak as of the world
  - 2. The world hears them
- D. We are of God and have overcome them
  - 1. Because He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world
  - 2. Those who are of God hear us
- E. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error

#### **VIII. God Is Love (1 Jn. 4:7-21)**

- A. Throughout the whole epistle, the apostle John always comes back to the emphasis of his epistle: “Love one another”; he also shows us many “tests” (1 Jn. 4:7-8)

1. Love is of God: everyone who loves is born of God and knows God (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:18-23)
2. He who does not love does not know God
- B. The evidence of God's love toward us (1 Jn. 4:9-12)
  1. Sending His Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins that we might live through Him (John 3:16)
  2. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another
  3. Loving one another is the proof that God abides in us and that ***His love is being perfected in us***
- C. By His Spirit we know that God abides in us and we in Him (our mutual abode) (1 Jn. 4:13-16)
  1. The evidence that His love has been perfected among us: we have boldness in the day of judgment (1 Jn. 4:17-18)
  2. As He is in the world, so must we be (Phil. 1:21a)
- D. John emphasized again Jesus Christ's commandment (1 Jn. 4:19-21): he who loves God must love his brother also
  1. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar (1 Jn. 4:20)
  2. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen

### **Chapter Five**

3. Everyone who loves Him who begot, also loves him who is begotten of Him (1 Jn. 5:1-3)
  4. If we love God, then His commandments are not burdensome to us. It will be a joy to keep His word.
- IX. Our Faith, by which We Are Born of God, Overcomes the World** (1 Jn 5:4-5)
- A. The precious faith that we received from God is the faith of God (Mk. 11:22; 2 Pet. 1:1)



1. It is the intrinsic nature and power of God that call things not being into being
2. It is within our spirit (2 Cor. 4:13)
- B. Through this faith we are born of God and the life of His Son Jesus Christ Who overcame Satan and the world, came into our spirit (John 3:6; 12:31; 16:33; 1 Jn. 4:4; Rom. 8:37; Heb. 2:14)
  1. He who believes (πιστεύω) that Jesus is the Son of God overcomes the world
  2. The word “believe” used in the Bible is not an intellectual belief that Jesus is the Son of God, but an inward conviction, trust, perception, and a commitment to Him resulting in a new birth, making us children of God
- C. We Christians walk and live by faith
- X. The Witness of God Concerning His Son Jesus Christ**  
(1 Jn. 5:6-13)
  - A. The water and blood and the Spirit (1 Jn. 5:6)
  - B. There are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one (1 Jn. 7) – *this verse is not in the older manuscript*
  - C. There are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one (1 Jn. 5:8)
    1. John the Baptist testified in John 1:29-34; Matt. 3:13-17
    2. John’s testimony (John 19:33-35; 20:20, 25, 27)
  - D. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater
    1. He who believes in the Son has the witness in himself
    2. He who does not believe God’s testimony has made Him a liar

E. This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who does not have the Son does not have life

**XI. Conclusion** (1 Jn. 5:14-21)

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”