

# 1 John



## CHAPTER 1

**T**HAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we to you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in

the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

9 **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

10 **If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

## CHAPTER 2

**M**Y little children, these things write I to you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

3 **And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.**

4 **He that says, I know him, and keeps**

**1:9 The Christian who sins.** "The great foundational truth respecting the believer in relationship to his sins is the fact that his salvation comprehends the forgiveness of all his trespasses past, present and future so far as condemnation is concerned (see Romans 8:1, Colossians 2:13; John 3:18; John 5:24). Since Christ has vicariously borne all sin and since the believer's standing in Christ is complete, he is perfected forever in Christ. When a believer sins, he is subjected to chastisement from the Father, but never to condemnation with the world (see 1 Corinthians 11:31,32). By confession the Christian is forgiven and restored to fellowship (see 1 John 1:9). It needs to be remembered that were it not for Christ's finished work on the cross and His present intercession in heaven, the least sin would result in his banishment from God's presence and eternal ruin." *Unger's Bible Dictionary*

## THE FUNCTION OF THE LAW

1:7

"The Law also shows us our great need—our need of cleansing, cleansing with the water and the blood. It discovers to us our filthiness, and this naturally leads us to feel that we must be washed from it if we are ever to draw near to God. So the Law drives us to accept Christ as the only Person who can cleanse us, and make us fit to stand within the veil in the presence of the Most High.

"The Law is the surgeon's knife that cuts out the proud flesh that the wound may heal. The Law by itself only sweeps and raises the dust, but the gospel sprinkles clean water upon the dust, and all is well in the chamber of the soul. The Law kills, the gospel makes alive; the Law strips, and then Jesus Christ comes in and robes the soul in beauty and glory. All the commandments, and all the types direct us to Christ, if we will but heed their evident intent." *Charles Spurgeon*

**not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**

5 But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that said he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines.

9 He that said he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loves his brother abides in

the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

**11** But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write to you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.

14 I have written to you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

**15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

**16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

**19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

**2:11** "The Incarnation is the ultimate reason why the service of God cannot be divorced from the service of man. He who says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar." *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

**2:16** See Hebrews 4:15 footnote.

**2:19** "I have left my religious conversion behind and settled into a comfortable state of atheism. I have come to think that religion has caused more harm than any other idea since the beginning of time." *Larry Flynt* (publisher of *Hustler* magazine, in his autobiography *An Unseemly Man*)

## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

2:19

***“I was once a born-again Christian. Now I believe it’s all rubbish!”***

When a person maintains that he was once a Christian, but came to his senses, he is saying that he once knew the Lord (see John 17:3). Ask him, “Did you know the Lord?” He will then be forced to say, “I *thought* I did!” This gives you license to gently say, “If you don’t *know* so, then you probably didn’t.” If he didn’t know the Lord, he was therefore never a Christian (1 John 5:11–13,20). Explain to him that the Bible speaks of false conversion, in which a “stony ground” hearer receives the Word with joy and gladness. Then, in a time of tribulation, temptation, and persecution, falls away. If he is open to reason, take him through the Ten Commandments, into the message of the cross, and the necessity of repentance and faith in the Savior.



20 But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.

21 I have not written to you because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father: (but) he that acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

“The most terrible warning to impenitent men in all the world is the death of Christ. For if God spared not His only Son, on whom was only laid imputed sin, will He spare sinners whose sins are their own?”

**CHARLES SPURGEON**

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life.

26 These things have I written to you concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all

things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that does righteousness is born of him.

### CHAPTER 3

**B**EHOLD, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.

4 **Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**

5 And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

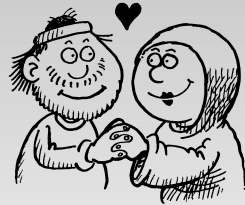
6 Whosoever abides in him sins not: whosoever sins has not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you:

## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

3:12

### “Where did Cain get his wife?”



Many ask this question thinking they've found a “mistake” in the Bible—that there must have been other people besides Adam and Eve. Scripture tells us that Adam is “the first man” (1 Corinthians 15:45); that there were no other humans when he was created, because God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18); and that Eve is “the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). Cain and Abel, then, must have married distant sisters. All of the first-generation siblings married each other in order to populate the earth. At that time there was no law against incest. But as the population grew large enough, and as the risk of genetic problems increased because of sin’s curse, God outlawed marriage between siblings.

he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.

11 For this is the message that you heard

from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death.

15 **Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God,

**3:12** “The cool impudence of Cain is an indication of the state of heart which led up to his murdering his brother; and it was also a part of the result of his having committed that terrible crime. He would not have proceeded to the cruel deed of bloodshed if he had not first cast off the fear of God and been ready to defy his Maker.” *Charles Spurgeon*

**3:13 Hypocrisy in the Church.** It’s interesting to note that the world hates hypocrisy in the Church. They detest the “pretender.” Does that mean that they *want* the Christian to be genuine? Do they *want* us to be true and faithful in our witness and therefore speak of sin, righteousness, and judgment? Do they want us to live in holiness rather than in compromise? Does the world really want us to speak up against pornography, greed, adultery, abortion, homosexuality, fornication, and other sins they so love? In their eyes we are damned if we do, and damned if we don’t.

**3:15** Always be ready to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). Learn how to prove God’s existence. Study the theory of evolution and the evidence for creation. Become proficient in presenting the spiritual nature of God’s Law. Say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” and thereby walk above the snare of the fear of man.

Note that this verse is not a prescription for what is commonly called “lifestyle evangelism.” We are not being told to wait until we are asked about our faith—we may be waiting for a long time. As soldiers of Christ we are not only to *defend* the faith, but we are to *advance* the cause of the gospel. The word “go” in the Great Commission, means just that—go.

because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso has this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.

#### CHAPTER 4

**B**ELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them.

6 *We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.

8 He that loves not knows not God; for God is love.

9 **In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.**

10 **Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us.

**3:16** "You are more sinful than you ever dared to believe, but you are more loved than you ever dared to hope." *Mark Liederbach*

**4:4 Confidence in witnessing.** "When you represent the Lord Jesus Christ as His disciple, you can be assured that you are representing the One who possesses all power, wisdom, and authority. You have everything when you have Him. Jesus said: 'I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father' (John 14:12). No power can resist you as you go in obedience and faith as His ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:19,20). You have the promise, 'The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world' (1 John 4:4). Also, you are assured that even the gates of hell will not prevail against you (Matthew 16:18). The more you understand who Christ is and all that He has done and will do for you and through you, the more completely you will want to trust, obey, and serve Him." *Dr. Bill Bright*

4:8

## The Firefighters

Imagine seeing a group of firefighters polishing their engine outside a burning building with people trapped at a top floor window. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with cleaning a fire-engine—but *not while people are trapped in a burning building!* Instead of ignoring their cries, the firefighters should have an overwhelming sense of urgency to rescue them. That's the spirit that should be behind the task of evangelism. But according to Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, "Only 2 percent of believers in America regularly share their faith with others." That means that 98 percent of the professing Body of Christ are "lukewarm" when it comes to obeying the Great Commission (Mark 16:15).

*Oswald J. Smith* said, "Oh my friends, we are loaded down with countless church activities, while the *real* work of the Church, that of evangelizing and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected." We have polished the engines of worship, prayer, and praise and neglected the sober task given to us by God. A firefighter who ignores his responsibilities and allows people to perish in flames is not a firefighter; he is an impostor. How could we ignore our responsibility and allow the world to walk blindly into the fires of hell? If God's love dwells in us, we must warn them. The Bible tells us to "have compassion . . . save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22,23). If we don't have love and compassion, then we don't know God—we are impostors (1 John 4:8).

*Charles Spurgeon* said, "Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that." Please, examine yourself to see if you are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Don't be part of the great multitude who called Jesus "Lord," but refused to obey Him. It will be professing *believers* who will hear those fearful words, "I never knew you: depart from me" (Matthew 7:21–23).

### Backward Christian Soldiers

Backward Christian soldiers, fleeing from the fight  
With the cross of Jesus nearly out of sight.  
Christ, our rightful master, stands against the foe  
But forward into battle, we are loathe to go.

Like a mighty tortoise moves the Church of God  
Brothers we are treading where we've always trod.  
We are much divided, many bodies we  
Having many doctrines, not much charity.

Crowns and thorns may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,  
But the Church of Jesus hidden does remain.  
Gates of hell should never 'gainst the Church prevail  
We have Christ's own promise, but think that it will fail.

Sit here then ye people, join our useless throng  
Blend with ours your voices in a feeble song.  
Blessings, ease and comfort, ask from Christ the King  
With our modern thinking, we don't do a thing.

*(Anonymous)*



If God is speaking to you about your lack of evangelistic concern, pray something like this now:

*Father, please forgive me for my lack of love for this dying world. From this day forward I will strive to be a "true and faithful witness." Please give me the wisdom to know what to say to reach the lost. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

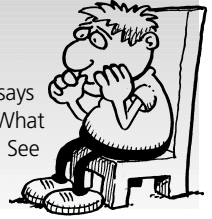
14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

5:10

**“I find it difficult to have faith in God.”**

If you don't believe someone, it means you think that he is a liar. The Bible says that those who don't believe God accuse Him of lying. Martin Luther said, “What greater insult... can there be to God, than to not believe His promises.” See Hebrews 11:6 footnote.



15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.*

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loves God love his brother also.

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*For two forms of the “Sinner’s Prayer,” see page 540.*

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### CHAPTER 5

**W**HOSOEVER believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loves him that begat loves

him also that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

5 Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Church has developed a theology that doesn't require much repentance. We have a theology that is uncomfortable with the very term 'Jesus is Lord.'"

**DR. PAUL A. CEDAR**

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of

**4:20** “I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least.” *Dorothy Day*

“I shall allow no man to belittle my soul by making me hate him.” *Booker T. Washington*

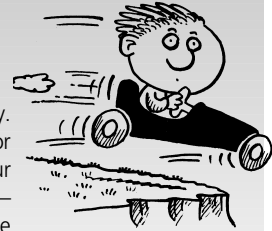
**5:1** **New birth—its necessity for salvation.** See John 1:13.

## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

5:12,13

**“I hope I’m going to heaven when I die.”**

Of all the things that you should be sure of, it’s your eternal destiny. To say “I hope I’m going to heaven” is like standing at the open door of a plane 25,000 feet in the air and, when asked “Have you got your parachute on?” answering with “I hope so.” You want to *know* so—and you can, simply by obeying the gospel. If you repent and place your faith in Jesus Christ, He will give you eternal life and you can *know* that your eternity is secure. These verses also make clear that those who refuse to trust in the Son of God can likewise *know* that they do not have eternal life—they will remain dead in their sins.



his Son.

**10 He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believes not God has made him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son.**

**11 And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**

**12 He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.**

**13 These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.**

**14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us:**

**15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.**

**16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not to death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not to death. There is a sin to death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.**

**17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not to death.**

**18 We know that whosoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.**

**19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness.**

**20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.**

**21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.**

**5:14 Prayer begins with God.** “God prompts His people to pray and then acts in response to their prayers. Things happen or don’t happen because of prayer. This does not mean God can be manipulated through prayer to do what we want if what we want is contrary to His will. Instead, God reveals His will to us by His Word and works in us by His Spirit so that we know His will and pray in accord with it. Then, in responding to our prayers, He accomplishes both His will and ours, and, in the process, involves us.” *Alvin J. Vander Griend, “Your Prayers Matter,” Discipleship Journal*