

Epistle of First John IX

The Love of God and the Truth of God

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Here in 1-John 3 let's understand the whole way that this chapter has been written. It talks about:

- the love of God
- the righteousness of God
- what sin is in (v 4)
- why Christ came to take away our sins (v 5)
- everyone who's dwelling in Him is not practicing sin
- everyone who is sinning hasn't seen Him
- the one who is practicing sin is of the devil

So, there is a *counterfeit* spirit of God, which comes from the devil, which inspires people to behave as Satan wants them to behave. Now, let's just cover one verse concerning that.

Eph. 2 shows the counterfeit of God's Spirit, which comes from Satan the devil. Remember that when you are talking about Satan the devil and what he does, how does he come and appear? *He appears as an angel of light*. His ministers—and he has ministers—appear as ministers of *righteousness*. a *counterfeit* righteousness! Here's how he's done it:

Ephesians 2:2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [the way that the world is] ...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within..."

It's very interesting, there are two Greek words put together in the Greek: *in* is 'en'; *work* is 'ergon.' In the Greek they are put together as one word, emphasizing *inner working within*. That's the counterfeit! Please understand, *not all demon possession is lunacy*. Some demons are intellectual. Some demons like to try and do good works. Satan would love you to expend your life on doing good works and never come to the knowledge of salvation.

That's why Paul said, 'If I give all that have to the poor, and I give my body to be burned, and I don't have love, **I'm nothing**.' *You have accomplished nothing!* Because all of that is a counterfeit of the true righteousness of God, which is inner working in:

"...the children of **disobedience**... [which tells us God requires obedience] ...among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and **by the mind**... (vs 2-3).

How much do we have concerning mental abilities? Every Sunday you can turn on a couple of programs which have to do with how to use your mind, how to be positive, how to overcome. There are the desires of the mind. What are the desires of the mind and what did Satan appeal to Eve and to Adam? *To make you wise!*

- everyone wants to be smart.
- everyone wants to be wise.
- everyone wants to use the greatest amount of their inner powers.

How many times have you been told that you don't even use one-tenth of your mental capacity? Well, the truth is, if you used your entire mental capacity your brain would short-circuit. It would! That's why God doesn't expect us to use all of our mind all the time. That's why we sleep at night, to give the brain a rest.

"...the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of the world" (v 3). So, Satan has his counterfeits out there. We have that practicing sin is of the devil. Read John 8, that's profound!

1-John 3:9: "Everyone who has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His seed of *begettal* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God. By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. **Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God**..." (vs 9-10). *Think of that!*

They may have some of it. Just like any counterfeit needs to look as close to the real thing as possible. I read in the paper that they found the counterfeiting ring in the maximum-security prison in the print shop; which is amazing when you think of that. But their counterfeits weren't too good.

What is righteousness? *All the commandments of God are righteousness!* And those who are against it are against law, against God.

"...and neither is the one who does not love his brother" (v 10)—which is pretty profound. You think of that in relationship to your church experience. What happens when a lot of tares come into the Church and in the congregation? *You don't have the love of God!* You don't have the love brethren. You have a little group over here; a little

group over there; a little group over here; a little group over there. That's why it's combined together.

Verse 11—this is where we begin the new section here: “For this is the [commanded] message that you heard from *the* beginning, that **we should love one another**”—present tense. You are *loving!* Everything that God wants you to be doing, is present tense, *doing*. Why?

Not future, ‘I’m going to love him tomorrow’—which you need to. Not past: ‘I have loved.’ Why? *Because the only thing that counts is what you are doing!* What you’ve done in the past may or may not have been right; may or may not have been good, but that’s in the past. What does God say even of the wicked people? *If they will turn from their sins and turn to Me, all they’ve done will not be mentioned!* So, it’s in the present tense. That’s why it’s so profound, and all these things are in present tense, *that we should be loving one another*.

2-John is a very short epistle; as a matter of fact it’s only one page long. I think there are some pretty coded things that are being written, because John knew what was happening. By this time do you think that John knew what was happening? *Yes!*

2-John 1: “The elder to *the chosen lady* and her children...” Who is the ‘chosen lady’? *I think this is a coded message to the whole Church!* Showing what the whole Church should be doing.

“...and her children, whom I love ^[#1]**in Truth...**” (v 1). What you may do for a separate, individual study, as you go through: I want you to study ^[#1]**love** and ^[#2]**Truth**. We’re going to do a little bit of it today, but there’s so much of it. *Love and Truth* go hand-in-hand, always go hand-in-hand. That’s why we have love and hate, Truth and error all the way through here.

“...and not I alone, but also all those who have known the ^[#3]**Truth**” (v 1)—with a reference back to the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel.

Notice how he uses this, v 2: “For *the* sake of the ^[#4]**Truth** that is dwelling in us, and shall be with us forever: Grace, mercy, *and* peace shall be with us from God *the* Father, and from *the* Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, ^[#5]**in Truth and** ^[#2]**love**” (vs 2-3).

Since God does not do anything in vain, and since in the Bible there are no vain repetitions... I remember when I was first coming into the Church and I heard the instructions on praying: ‘when you pray you should not be as the heathen who use vain repetitions’ over and over and over again. And then I

read Psa. 132, where you have about 40 verses: ‘*His mercy endures forever.*’ Gives a statement and then it says: ‘His mercy endures forever.’ I thought that sounded like a vain repetition to me. But it’s not! So, likewise here.

The number of times we see *love* and we see *Truth*, John is telling us something **very profound**. That, when in the Church, you are struggling to hold on to the true doctrines of God and the true love of God you have to have **Truth** and you have to have **love** together. *They always go together!*

Verse 4: “I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking ^[#5]**in Truth...** [the *Truth* is *the way of the Lord*—walking in it] ...exactly as we received commandment from the Father. And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I am writing a new commandment to you ...” (vs 4-5).

Let’s think of this in terms of prophecy to the Church of God down through time. When they’re coming down through time, how many times have they come across ‘new truth’ *that was not* ‘new truth’? Which left the love of God? Which left the Truth of God? *Many, many times!* So, this is part of the message.

“...but that which we have *observed* from *the* beginning, that ^[#3]**we love one another**” (v 5). There it is again. That is amazing!

Verse 6. “And this is ^[#4]**the love of God...**” You want to sum it up in ‘the love.’ What is ‘the love’ that God wants us to do? *Love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being!*

“...that we walk according to His commandments...” (v 6). If you connect:

- walking in Truth
- walking according to His
- walking in love

what do we have? *We have them all together.* They’re all part of **one thing** we need to do.

“...This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from *the* beginning, that you might walk in it, because... [now here’s the reason why he emphasized all that down there]: ...many deceivers... [now you know why he emphasized *Truth*, why he emphasized *love* all the way] ...have entered into the world; those who do not confess *that* Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is *the spirit of the deceiver and the antichrist*” (vs 6-7).

Quite a message there in that first part of 2 John. Do we find ourselves in the same situation today? *Yes, exactly the same situation today!*

Let's go to the Gospel of John—where we find this commandment, which is the new commandment. But after it was given it was no longer new, though it wasn't the old commandment. We've seen this misconstrued so many times, too, that it's unreal. Then we will see *how* this is to be done. Jesus gave this commandment, and of course, it was on the Passover night.

John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another. By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another" (vs 34-35).

Can a church get on a program to sort of 'play love' to impress other people in the world, yet, lose the Truth? *Yes!* We've seen that done. This is not the final commandment, but this is a *special* commandment within all the rest of them. Now here's how we are to apply it.

Philip. 2 is really very profound, and I tell you, this is something that I'm learning more and more, the more I study the Bible, the more I study the Word of God, the more profound I really see how these things truly, truly are. Philip. 2:1 tells us *how*.

- How are we to love each other as Christ has loved us?
- Where does this begin?
- Do you just do it because it's something that you do?
- How does it come about?

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any **fellowship of the Spirit**..."

Remember how Gen. 2 discussed the Sabbath as being required of God for all mankind? That was a special Sabbath. It had to be, because first of all, God created the time. He blessed it, He sanctified it, and He fellowshiped with Adam and Eve. What is the Sabbath called? *It is called the rest of God!* Combine this all together with 1-John.

Hebrews 4:1: "Therefore, we should fear, lest perhaps, a promise being open to enter into **His rest**"—*the rest of God*, which the Sabbath is a picture of. He wants us to enter into **His rest**. That goes clear back to the very first Sabbath, where the One Who became Jesus Christ, the Lord God of the Old Testament, on that *rest* day, fellowshiped directly, face-to-face with Adam and Eve. That is **the rest** that God says we are to enter into spiritually when the Kingdom of God comes. So, when we are keeping the Sabbath Day, not only are we remembering the creation, we need to look forward

to entering into **that rest** with God. Which today, we can have with the fellowship of the Spirit, where we find in 1-John 1, where it says: '...and truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son.'

Combine that with Philippians 2:1: "...**any fellowship of the Spirit**..." Maybe this will help us keep the Sabbath better, as it were, because we do it in a more spiritual way by fellowshiping with Christ. But this is how we are to love one another:

"...if any *deep* inner affections and compassions" (v 1)—your feelings from your innermost part of your being. That's the way we need to feel for each other. We do need that on the Sabbath. We need it every day. What we're leading up to brethren is this: That we can understand that when we come to God to pray—which we need to—that you're going to desire to pray, you're going to desire to have this fellowship with God, you're going to desire to have the love one to another, because of the fellowship of the Spirit and because of the mind of Christ in you. Which does not do away with any of the commandments of God by the slightest stretch of anybody's imagination, but makes it far more meaningful.

Verse 2: "Fulfill my joy that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself" (vs 2-3).

That's a big-ticket item! Not like as I read in the book of Romans where these profess themselves to be the wise ones. 'And we're better than you.' That's the whole philosophy of theology. 'Why you're nothing but a bunch of dumb sheep out there, we're the smart ones.' No, we're to grow to have the mind of Christ. That's the whole purpose of why we study. That's the whole purpose of why we go diligently through the verses in the Bible, so we can grow to have this. Do you not want to grow to have the mind of Christ? *Yes!* Well, it doesn't come automatically.

Verse 3: "*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (vs 3-5).

We can have the mind of Christ. He says, 'let it be in you,' which means it's a possibility. Because once we are begotten of the Spirit of God, Christ is in us: *Christ in you, the Hope of glory.* (Col. 1:27).

Here's what God did, v 6: "Who, although He existed in *the* form of God... [*existing as God*] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself..." (vs 6-7)—divested Himself of His glory, His power, His Divinity, His name—and came to die!

Imagine that! God volunteering to die! God, Who cannot die, did the impossible by volunteering to die. That's why He had to become a human being. None of us have even come close to that kind of, of service to God at all, in any way.

"...and was made in *the* likeness of men, and took the form of a servant... [slave] ...and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (vs 7-8). That's something!

As we go down through time, we'll come back to this again and we will have more that we can understand about it, especially when we get around the Passover time. I'll have to give part of that credit to, to Roger Rusk, who wrote the book *The Other End of the World*. He made a comment concerning the cup that Jesus said, 'if You be willing, let this cup pass from Me.' His comment on what that cup was **really profound!**

I have been thinking on that and praying on it, and I think he's pretty much right. So, when you're studying that, if Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, what was the cup that He had to drink of? *You think on that!*

So, "...He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (v 8). What is this to do for us? *It is to inspire us!*

Verse 12: "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you..." (vs 12-13).

Notice the comparison, the same words of Satan, inner-working in the children of disobedience. Now, we have the same words where it is the Father inner-working within you. "...both to will and to do according to *His* good pleasure" (v 13).

Now we're going to talk about how our relationship improves with God if we do the things that are pleasing to Him. That improves the relationship with God tremendously.

As you go through and you study through 1-John 3 :

- you have righteousness/you have evil
- you have sin/you have good

- you have love/you have hate

1-John 3:11: "...we should love one another; not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*..." (vs 11-12). Note: Eph. 2:2-3. Did Satan obviously inspire Cain? *Yes!* The 'wicked one.'

"...and murdered his own brother. And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother's works were righteous" (v 12).

What did Cain think of his own works? *I'm sure he thought they were righteous! I'm sure he thought that they were works that God ought to accept!* We're talking about the difference between 'works were wicked and the works of his brother were righteous.' There are works we are to do.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship... [and, as we have noted, salvation is *creation*] ...being created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works... [very important] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them."

- Who determines what a good work is? *God does, yes! Obviously!*
- Do we do things that we think are good, but are not good? *Yes!*

especially if it gets you an advantage

- Based upon lust?

Yes, it's good, according to human nature!

Genesis 4:3: "It came to pass that Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground."

Does God command anywhere that we are to bring the fruit of the ground unto God? *Yes, He does!* We're to bring the 'firstfruits' and also the fruit of the ground from a tree. The first four years of a new sapling tree that you plant, you don't eat any of the fruit, you let it all fall to the ground, the fifth year it belongs to God and then from then on you have the rest, but you give the firstfruits to God. Everyone of the grain harvest, you have the first fruits that to go God. So, if Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, what had to be something that was not correct? *It was not according to God's command*, because God does command of the fruit of the ground; yes, He does.

Now, let's come here to v 4: "And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock..." This shows that the laws of sacrifice and offerings were there: 'the firstlings of his flock.'

"...and of the fat of it. And the LORD had regard unto Abel and his offering" (v 4). Why? *Because it was correct and it was righteous!* Who

defines 'righteousness'? *God defines righteousness!* Abel was walking in the good works, which God had created and ordained for them to walk in, with that sacrifice, which then pointed to Christ.

Verse 5: "But He did not have regard unto Cain and his offering...." Now, think of this in relationship to other people who are out here doing good works; and are saying, 'This is what God requires'; *but God hasn't required it of them.* And they're coming to God and saying, 'This is a good work, God.' Had not respect. What happens when you tell people? Let's just use Christmas: all your good works at Christmas **are not of God.** You may have attached His name to it. You may assert family reunions and family love and getting together and put that in there to make it right, to justify it. What happens? *They get mad!*

Verse 6: "And the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you so angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well...'" (vs 6-7). That is proper and right according to what? *The commandments of God, obviously.*

"...shall you not be accepted?... [Was it not something that Cain could have changed? *Yes!*] ... But if you do not do well..." (v 7). That is according to the commandments of God, because what is sin? *Sin is the transgression of the law or sin is lawlessness!* So, what was Cain doing here? *He was bringing something not according to the commandments of God!*

So, "...**sin lies at the door**..." (v 7). What did God do? *God gave Cain a choice!* God explained it to him. Yes, He did, very clearly. Just like the Word of God explains to us what is right and what is wrong.

"...Its desire *is* for you..." (v 7). In other words: sin is going to have its desire upon you if you don't get a hold of it and rule over it. And how do you rule over sin? *By using the commandments of God so you don't sin!* Then, Cain didn't like that a bit. What did he do? *'I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to get rid of this guy that makes me look bad in the eyes of God—my brother!'* So, he kills him. Sound like something that happens today? *Yes, indeed!* This that's why God uses this example.

So, Cain murdered Abel, 1-John 3:12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of the wicked *one*, and murdered his own brother..." Have you ever been around people who are duopolistic? Perfidious? Two-faced?

(go to the next track)

Have you ever had someone really close to you, like a close friend—someone who professed to be your *best* friend in the world—and he stabs you in

the back? That's why this is here. Because if you hate your brother in your heart, you're a murderer already. That's why it's here.

"...And what was the reason that he murdered him? Because his own works were wicked, but his brother's works were righteous. **My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you**" (vs 12-13).

Jesus warned us of it, and it's going to hate us. When they **truly know.** Now, there's a time with the Church, when we go public and lambaste everything, everything under the sun. And then when they hate us and chase us away, or come in an infiltrate and tear down, what does God do? *He scatters us and we disappear.* To do what? *To re-gather strength, to come out!* And there's going to come a time again when we are going lambaste everybody under the sun again.

How God is going to do it, I don't know. But, I know the day is coming. Just like with those who have been attending with us for a long time, where I said when we got down to—I think when there were different people who were sick and couldn't come—there were three or five of us here, and I said, 'You wait, there will be brethren that God is going to send who will come.' They have, and you're here, and there will be more. There's going to be the day when God is going to open the door. And it's going to be done in a way that's different than some people are trying to force the way through now. If you go on television, you're controlled, hands down. You won't get on unless you are—*period!*—same way with the radio.

It seems to me this, brethren: maybe because of the severity of the times which lie ahead—whether how far or how near, we don't know—but the time can be severe at any moment for any one of us under any given circumstances. Maybe that's why we're concentrating so much on the love of God, as we're going through this. {note sermon series: *Love of God*}

John 15:17: "These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you" (vs 17-18). Notice how we have the same thing: love, Truth, and then from the world: hatred and violence. Follows right along.

Verse 19: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own..." Apply that to Billy Graham. Apply that to the pope. Are they of the world? *Yes!*

"...However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the

world...” (v 19). Please notice that Christ is the One who does the choosing with God the Father.

“...the world hates you for this. Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they kept My word, they will keep your *word* also” (vs 19-20). Why? *Because the Spirit of Truth, with God the Father and Jesus Christ, will call them and they will keep it!* That’s what we are trying to do here.

Verse 21: “But they will do all these things to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin...” (vs 21-22). That means they would have no excuse for their sins.

“...but now they have nothing to cover their sin. The one who hates Me hates My Father also” (vs 22-23). This ties right back with the second chapter of the Epistle of 1-John.

Verse 24: “If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have had sin...” It makes you wonder. They hated Christ so much that outside of the Bible, the New Testament, there is no written history of what went on that they can find. That’s how much they hated Him.

Yet, what did Paul say when he was talking to Festus? He says, ‘Oh king, **you** as the king **know** that this was not done in a corner.’ John wrote and said that ‘if everything were written in a book that Jesus did there would not be the books to contain all that was done.’ What Christ really did was just absolutely turn that whole society absolutely upside down, and their hatred and their vehemence against Him was so rabid that they didn’t want to preserve one shred of secular history that Christ existed as a person. That’s why we’ve got the New Testament. That’s why it’s so profound.

Verse 25: “But this has happened so that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’ But when the Comforter has come, which I will send to you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, which proceeds from the Father, that one shall bear witness of Me” (vs 25-26).

John 16:1: “I have spoken these things to you so that you will not be offended. They shall cast you out of the synagogues... [and recall what Paul was doing, before he was called] ...furthermore, the time is coming that everyone who kills you will think that he is rendering service to God. And they shall do these things to you because they do not

know the Father, nor Me” (vs 1-3).

When it talks about the world hating us, isn’t it profound that whenever it talks about it, we have it preceded by love and followed by love so that we know that in those circumstances God still loves us, Christ loves us and that’s why we need to love each other.

1-John 3:14: “We **know**... [something you have constantly be knowing] ...that we have passed from death into life...” That’s pretty profound. Definite article is there in the Greek. If you are dead in your sins and your trespasses, wherein you are held—that is *the death*—you have been transformed into *the life*, which is Christ.

“...because we love the brethren. The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer... [all of this is in the present tense] ...and you **know** that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him” (vs 14-15). This must have been a pretty profound thing even within the Church at that time.

- What is this telling us? *He’s emphasizing loving one another, and hating!*
- What was the Church experiencing? *Hatred within the Church!*
- Have you experienced that? *Yes!*

When John was writing this, you are dealing with a congregational situation that there was hatred within the Church and people didn’t know whom to trust.

1-John 2:8: “Again, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. Anyone who claims *that* he is in the light, but hates his brother, is in **the darkness** until now” (vs 8-9).

Go through and study *hatred* and *love* in 1-John and you’re going to see that must have been a **profound** problem. Now, as someone who is an apostle and trying to correct the problem, how do you do it? *You don’t!* The problem was so far out of hand that what John had to do was say, ‘This is the way it is, folks! You’re going to have to choose:

- Do you want God the Father and Christ?
- or**
- Do you want the wicked one?
 - Are you going to walk in God’s way and love Him?
- or**
- Are you going to walk in darkness?’

This first Epistle of John is **profound!** And it’s so simple; it’s only five little chapters. You read and it sounds so simple, and it’s easy to read. There

are not complicated words in it. *But the message is really deep!*

Walking "...in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother is dwelling in the light, and there is no cause of offense in him" (vs 9-10). This is the perfect state of fellowshiping with the brethren that we want to come to.

Verse 11: "But the one who hates his brother is in darkness, and is walking in darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

Then he goes on, explaining it further—the last sentence there: 1-John 3:14 "...The one who does not love *his* brother is dwelling in [the] death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling with him" (vs 14-15).

What he's saying is this: if you have this attitude of hatred toward the brethren, you are *the same as Cain!* That's what he's saying.

Remember, the book of Jude was the of the General Epistles.

Jude 10: "As for these, whatever things they do not understand, they blaspheme; but whatever things they understand by instinct, as irrational brute beasts, they are corrupting themselves in these things. **Woe to them! For they have walked in the way of Cain...**" (vs 10-11). There is *the way of Cain!* This is what John is also talking about. What is *the way of Cain?*

- anger
- hatred
- murder
- accusing God
- going around establishing his own righteousness and anger because God does not accept his righteousness

We could turn that around and say, 'I wonder what's going to happen with some of these Sunday-keepers.' We need to get around to labeling it very clearly, brethren, that Sunday-keeping it their own righteousness by which they are trying to compel God to give them salvation. It's going to have to be stated that way sooner or later, and publicly, sooner or later. But when it does, you better all have a little place for me to come.

"...and for gain, they have wholly given themselves up to Balaam's delusion, and have perished in the rebellion of Korah" (v 11).

Take the *three worst people* in the Bible and put them together in one verse. That's pretty profound! Now, the doctrine of Balaam is being

foisted upon us today. What you do under the guise of goodness is you get people to sin. Then when they sin—because God must judge—you come under the condemnation of God because you sin. Maybe that's why the hand of God has been held back. Because when *the way of Cain, the way of Balaam* and the *way of Korah* all come together, believe me, in this country all hell is going to break loose. When it does, if we don't have the love of God, we're going to be standing there with an empty vessel.

We're going to compare this with some other verses that are chapter three and verse sixteen, also. It doesn't work in every book of the Bible because I've gone through every book of the Bible and it doesn't fit every book of the Bible—it fits *some* books of the Bible.

1-John 3:16: "By this *very act* we have known the love *of God* because He laid down His life for us: and we... [are obligating] ...ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren." All right, that tells us a whole lot, too.

Let's first of all compare that with John 3:16, which is the first comparison that you're going to go to because that is written by John. But, we're going to see that there are some other very interesting things in chapter three and verse sixteen, as we're going through, and how some of them tie directly to the same topic. We know that men divided the verses, but maybe somehow there was some inspiration in it, because some of these things fit together so nicely.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." I don't think we really comprehend that yet, brethren. How much it is that God did in loving the world and mankind.

"...so that everyone..." (v 16). That angers some people, because that means anybody—that means anybody.

"...who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (vs 16-17). We're condemned because of sin. ***But God lifts that condemnation!***

Now, let's look at another one. We'll just sort of tie these together and let the Scriptures tell the story. Sometimes that's very interesting.

Matthew 3:16: "And after He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him." Having to do with salvation. We're going to see that many of these have to do with a

facet of salvation for us that either Christ was doing, or that He did for us.

There's nothing in Mark 3:16. I already checked it out, so we can bypass Mark. Luke 3:16 is pretty much in the same account, but just a little bit differently.

Luke 3:16: "John answered all *of them*, saying, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but He is coming Who *is* mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to loose the thong of His sandals. He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire.'" Again, having to do with *repentance, baptism and salvation!*

I could fudge because in a couple of places I could say let's target this study within a two-verse margin—two verses before or after—but I didn't, I wanted to keep exactly the 3:16.

1 Corinthians 3:16: "Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?" Again, having to do with Christ, with salvation, with the Spirit of God.

Galatians 3:16: "Now, to Abraham and to his Seed were the promises spoken. He does not say, 'and to *your* seeds,' as of many; but as of one, 'and to your Seed,' which is Christ." Again, having to do with Christ and salvation.

Ephesians 3:16: "That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man... [conversion, being strengthened, receiving God's Spirit] ...That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (vs 16-17)—and so forth. But, I said I wouldn't fudge, so I won't.

2-Thessalonians 3:16: "Now, may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all." Again, having to do with your status and condition before God.

1-Timothy 3:16—which is really one of the profound ones: "And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness... [God so loved the world, gave His only begotten Son] ...God was manifested in *the* flesh, was justified in *the* Spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among *the* Gentiles, was believed on in *the* world, was received up in glory."

There's a tremendous summary of the whole Gospel! That is a summary, which covers the whole Bible!

I think 2-Tim. 3:16 is quite fitting when you put all of this together, this makes an interesting story. So, if you would like to, sometimes it's good to do this: to take and print them all out one after the other, so that then you can see it in a direct column.

2-Timothy 3:16—it ends this way: "All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" (vs 16-17). I couldn't find any others that matched up with it. But those are sufficient to tell a very interesting story.

1-John 3:16: "By this *very act* we have known the love *of God*..." When we put it all together and we really understand the love of God and what God has done; how the Father has loved the world and how Christ has loved us.

"...because He laid down His life for us..." (v 16). He gave up everything, brethren. He gave up ***literally everything!*** And risked it, because Christ could have sinned, when you know the Truth—but He didn't. So because of that:

"...we... [are obligating] ...ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren" (v 16).

Just one caveat that I want to mention here. It is absolutely true that we need to do what it says, without a doubt. But it is also true, one word of caution: *Do not let anyone, for their own purposes, leverage that to themselves to accomplish their own ends and means so that they take advantage of you!* That's why Jesus said of the poor, when Judas said, 'Well, we could have given this to the poor'; He said, 'You always have the poor with you. But Me you won't have with you always.'

So, we need to do that. And we are. We have been doing that here for each other and we've been doing that for all the brethren wherever they are; the very things that we are doing is that. One of the best ways that you can really lay your life down for the brethren is that ***you always remain true to God, have the love of God, serve God and be true to His Word!*** That's the greatest service that you can do to help the brethren, besides just going out and doing physical things as this refers to here in verse seventeen. Because you can give them everything that they need; ***if you don't have the love of God it will not do what God wants!***

Verse 17: "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?" *We all have to make a judgment on that concerning ourselves.*

We could tie it around the other way, too, and say, 'which one of us having the Word of God, as we know it, and we see our brethren over here languishing and suffering and being taken advantage of and throwing the Truth away, should we not reach

out to them also?' *Yes!* That's how the Christian Biblical Church of God has grown. That's why we send the Care Packages. When they get the Care Packages and they begin to listen, then they say, 'Oh boy, I know someone, I know someone...' So, we are, we are doing what this says in a spiritual way. And when we have need, we will, for those who have need in a physical sense, too, without a doubt.

This could also be on an individual basis. I'll just have to say that there are times when you see them, you drive up, you're going to go into a mall, you're going to come to a stop sign and there's someone there you know is just 'shucking' you. Like if you go to San Francisco and you go up there and hear people pandering. Then you look down at their shoes and they're all brand new. You know that this is someone who's working in the daytime and pandering at night.

But there are occasions when you may need someone who's truly in need. In those occasions we, we can reach out and help them, because our neighbor is anyone who is near to us that we can help. There have been times when I've gone up and I've been touched to give people, just standing there out of work, need food, will work, do anything. And you look at them and you know that they're really not 'shucking' you. If you can help them, help them. That's perfectly fine, and we should.

So much so with the brethren, too. Because the last thing you want to do is misapply that verse where Jesus said, 'you always have the poor with you' and say, 'well, you know, don't give them anything.' What did Jesus do? He gave them food in abundance beyond when He fed the four thousand and the five thousand, and did the healing. We are to be what we are and we are to act the way we say that we want to be.

Verse 18: "My little children, we should not love in word... [just by mouthing it or that is in message—'word' can mean message] ...nor with *our* tongues... [that is by the words that you say] ...rather, *we should love* in deed and in Truth. And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him" (vs 18-19).

I have learned over the years that if you pray because you have to pray, your prayers are really not what they ought to be. We have been trained in the past, start out pray by the clock, but, we're going to find out that if you really love God, and God's Spirit is in you, and you desire what God wants you to have and you are truly coming to the attitude that is exemplified here as we're studying in the Epistles of John, that *you're going to want to pray*. That your desire in prayer is going to be wholehearted and the

most important thing in praying is that you love God ***and believe!***

So we'll cover that and show how it ties in here in doing the things that please God.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 2:2-3
- 2) 1-John 3:9-11
- 3) 2-John 1-7
- 4) John 13:34-35
- 5) Philippians 2:1
- 6) Hebrews 4:1
- 7) Philippians 2:1-8, 12-13
- 8) 1-John 3:11-12
- 9) Ephesians 2:10
- 10) Genesis 4:3-7
- 11) 1-John 3:12-13
- 12) John 15:17-26
- 13) John 16:1-3
- 14) 1-John 3:14-15
- 15) 1-John 2:8-11
- 16) 1-John 3:14-15
- 17) Jude 10-11
- 18) 1-John 3:16
- 19) John 3:16-17
- 20) Matthew 3:16
- 21) Luke 3:16
- 22) 1-Corinthians 3:16
- 23) Galatians 3:16
- 24) Ephesians 3:16
- 25) 2-Thessalonians 3:16
- 26) 1-Timothy 3:16
- 27) 2-Timothy 3:16-17
- 28) 1-John 3:16-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 132
- Colossians 1:27
- Ephesians 2:2-3

Also referenced:

Book: *The Other End of the World* by Roger Rusk
Sermon Series: *Love of God*

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