

Epistle of First John XA

Live in the Love of God
Fred R. Coulter

In going through the General Epistles, we have seen how that James starts out with *faith*; Peter's theme is developed into *hope*; and John develops into *love*. If you want to make a comparison between 1-Cor. 13, which is Paul's chapter on *love*, you can say that this is John's chapter on *love* in relationship to the things in the world and our standing before God.

We're going to briefly cover the first couple of verses here; because we have another series *Who was Jesus?* so, we will just input a few verses here on this one.

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

This is what we need to do all the time, especially in religion, because if you think there are liars in government, the slickest ones are in religion. Of course, this also tells us something very important, and this confirms what Jesus said: *'Many false prophets shall come in My name saying I am the Christ, and deceive many.'*

So, he gives us here another indication, because it says, 'believe not every spirit, but test the spirits,' which then tells us that there are satanic, demonic spirits behind those who are the false prophets. And even though they *appear* to really be good, and though they may *sound* very pleasing, we always have to take the admonition that was given to us in Isa. 8, 'to the law and the testimony if they speak not according to His word, it's because there is no Light in them.'

Here's one of the tests; this is not the only test, but this is the major test, because the thing that is important in understanding this, is that almost every false prophet or teacher does not teach the true nature of who Jesus Christ was.

This is the major test, v 2: "**By this test** you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the* flesh is from God. And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist, which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world" (vs 2-3).

When we understand that this was written, perhaps maybe as late as 80_{A.D.} (maybe somewhat

sooner) just think what has happened since then. That's why religion is such confusion. That's why so many people today, in our society, are turned off on religion because of many things; they do not understand that what God teaches is a *way of life*. He doesn't teach a religion. That's why we have the series: *Why God Hates Religion*. And so, here is the test.

Now let's look at a few of these Scriptures, that clearly define for us who and what Jesus was. And you know where those are. We've covered this many, many times in the past and we'll cover it again many, many times in the future; is central, heart and core to who and what Jesus was.

We'll just look at only a couple of Scriptures, and if you want a more in-depth study, write in, ask for our sermon series on *Who Was Jesus?* The way that John wrote and the Greek that he used, Koiné Greek, was very simple, and that disappoints a lot of philosophers and high scholarly mucky-mucks, because they like things complicated and hard to understand so they can maneuver around it. But here this doesn't give any maneuvering room in English or in the Greek. We see that John was talking about the true nature of God in many of the things that he wrote.

John 1:1: "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We'll get a definition of Who the Word was in just a minute, but obviously it is Christ.

When you read that, even in the English, what does this tell us? *In the beginning, when things were created, the Word existed!*. You have to have the Creator before the creation. If you watch any of these things on television where it talks about how the earth and universe came into being, it is almost ludicrous. When you understand the truth, it's foolish.

"...and the Word was with God..." What does this tell us? There are two that are called *God*. In the Old Testament, God is called 'Elohim' and the ending of that word 'im' *Elohim*—translated *God*—means more than one; it is a plural noun. So, this reveals that there was the one God Who became the Word and Jesus Christ, and the one Who became the Father, *when* Jesus divested Himself to become a human being and take on the flesh of what human beings have in order to become the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world.

God is just. Since He sentenced man to human nature, He also took it upon Himself to overcome it Himself, so that He could give hope to human beings and redeem them. That's really something! I would like to see a judge today to be so compassionate and understanding that in order to save someone, he would take that very sentence upon himself. That tells you what Christ did.

Notice that He emphasizes it, because all the false spirits come along and say, 'Well, no, no, no it wasn't like that. God is not a person. God is inanimate, meaning *He's everywhere*. He's in everything, every physical thing that there is, every living thing that there is, God is in it.' From whence then we get the Hindu philosophy of you go from different animals and insects and you progress up the line through re-incarnation if you do good. Then if you become a human and you don't do good, you don't work your own salvation. Then you revert back to maybe a rat or a spider or something like this, because God is in everything. The next conclusion of that is that since God is in everything, then God is in you.

We've also studied about the thing concerning what is called 'Docetism'—meaning that Jesus did not come in the flesh. Rather, Jesus Christ was actually two beings: Jesus was the man, Christ was the Spirit from heaven that possessed the man. This is where you get the thing now with the 'Gospel of Judas,' where it says that Judas was used by Christ to release Him from the flesh, to betray Him. So, when Jesus died it was only the man Jesus that died and Christ, the Savior, had nothing to do with it. That's why, what I'm doing, I'm pointing out the simplicity of what the Scriptures teach vs the complicated, philosophical theories and demonic theories that people present.

Verse 2: "He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him" (vs 2-3).

It's like the cartoon with the evolutionist had a fight about God, or with God, about creating and finally He told the evolutionist, because the evolutionist said, 'Well, we'll start with this dirt.' And God told him, 'No, you get your own dirt.'

Verse 4: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Let's stop and think about this for just a minute. Since God is Creator, no human being anywhere in the world can be free from God—though they reject it—because God has set before all human beings *choices*: life and death, good and evil. So, you reject God, now how's your life? *You suffer*

all the penalties for rejecting God! You're not free from God; you're still under His control from the point of view that God has set forth living laws. If you reject Him, there are sure consequences. If you love Him and do what God says, there are other sure consequences of blessings, and understanding why we're here and where we're going.

Verse 10 talks about Jesus: "He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, but the world did not know Him.... [perfect description of the world today] ...He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him; but as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become *the* children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name; who were not begotten by bloodlines, nor by *the* will of *the* flesh, nor by *the* will of man, but by *the* will of God" (vs 10-13).

God has a plan for everyone in His own due time. But God is so great that He can deal with people with His Spirit, and the rest of the world cannot detect it. How do you handle this?

Verse 14^[transcriber's correction] "And the Word became flesh..." Follow along with that '*the Word was God.*' What does this tell us, very simply? *God became a human being!* You don't need some complicated philosophy to figure that out.

"...and tabernacled..." (v 14). That means *dwelled temporarily with us*, and this is referring to how God dealt with Israel, originally was in a tabernacle and also relates to the Feast of Tabernacles. There are many other things that we have concerning that.

"...(and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth" (v 14).

Let's see what it says about Jesus Christ. This is the whole theme of the Bible when we really get down to understanding it.

1-Timothy 3:16 "And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness..." This is something! This is why God has to intervene and call people. This is why Jesus Christ did what He did.

"...God was manifested in *the* flesh..." (v 16). Can anything be more clear? The Word became flesh.

"...was justified in *the* Spirit..." (v 14). That is He lived perfectly before God to be able to bring justification to all men.

"...was seen by angels, was proclaimed among *the* Gentiles, was believed on in *the* world, was received up in glory" (v 14). So, when John

writes these things concerning the nature of God, it becomes very important that these things are wholly considered. That ties in with:

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.” Quite a thing!

Let’s look at another very basic Scripture. In the series that we have on *Who Was Jesus?* we go through this in quite a great length and depth in our word-by-word study there. We don’t want to have everything repeated over and over again, but we’re talking about the nature of God and what Jesus did. That’s why, when Jesus came, He said that He came to *reveal* the Father. And this also tells us that we know that the Father is a personal Being and personal God, because Jesus told Philip, ‘If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.’

Here’s the ultimate goal of what we need to keep in mind. We’re going to see that this is very, very important when we get back to 1-John 4. The whole purpose is to keep people’s minds focused on God, the Truth, the love of God, so that they can obtain eternal life.

Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus; Who, although He existed in *the* form of God... [the literal translation from the Greek] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God” (vs 5-6).

He had to do that in order to become a man—because God in His full glory cannot live in the flesh. He had to reduce Himself down to as much of God that He could retain, that He was of Himself, to become a human being.

Verse 7: “But emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; 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).

This is what John is talking about. And this is why there’s so many versions of Christianity in the world. *It gets back to this: it gets back to Satan’s original rebellion!* He wanted to become like God and tell God what to do. Well, human beings, with their human nature, like to come along and what do they like to do? *Same thing!*

- they like to tell God what to do
- they like to tell God who He is

What does that do in effect? *Puts them in the position of God;* same attitude that Satan had! We see that John says this is the spirit of antichrist and so forth.

1-John 4:4: “You are of God, little children...”

- What makes a person *of* God?
- What is it?
- They profess it?
- Does that make them of God?
- They agree with certain things of God?
- What makes them of God?
- That you know that you are of God?

Here’s how we know we are of God, and it’s not because we run up and align ourselves with God—because we are good, righteous people—because God has to *call* us. God makes a dividing line very clear, very important to understand.

Romans 8:5: “For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh...” That is what the Bible calls ‘carnal minded.’

- God has to call a person
- they have to answer the call
- they have to repent
- they have to be baptized
- they have to receive the Holy Spirit

“...but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit” (v 5). That is, you live God’s way. You strive to do the things of God. You love God, etc.

Verse 6: “For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.” All you have to do is just look out in the world and see how troubled everyone is. That’s why the Sabbath is so important; that we can, on the Sabbath, come and escape from the world.

I know here recently, just looking at the television, all the things that are on there—I felt like David said in the one Psalm. He said, ‘Oh, that I was like a bird. That I might fly into the wilderness, get away from all this.’

All the news was on murder, court cases, lying, cheating, stealing, war, famine, disease; it was like watching Matt. 24 unfold in the nightly news. I thought I’ll switch over to the History Channel—and what was that showing? *The History of WWII!* I thought I’ll switch over to the National Geographic channel, and guess what they were showing: instruments of torture down through the ages. *‘To be carnally minded is death!’* I thought to myself, all they’re doing is thinking on death, war, crime, killing. *Enough!* I turned it all off.

Here’s what happens, v 7: “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God...”—which means it’s an enemy of God. There are many people who are very nice and decent people, but God hasn’t

called them. When it gets down to, well, what do you think about obeying God, then you see the hostility come up. Try any good, hard-shelled Southern Baptist, and you'll see the carnality come up.

Here's the reason: "...for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*." That's why the false religion has come along. And what's one of the first things they say? *Jesus did away with the law!* So there's a distinct dividing line that we find in the Bible that substantiates what John is telling us in 1-John 4.

Verse 8: "But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you...." (vs 8-9).

That's what we covered in 1-John 3—the begetting of the Spirit of God within us. How do you get the Spirit of God? We know that: *repent, be baptized, receive the Spirit of God!* And Peter said to the Sanhedrin, when they were questioned about their preaching, he said that *God gives His Spirit to those who obey Him*. "...**if** the Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you...."

"...But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (v 9). In this:

- Who is the controlling one?
- The person?

or

- God?
- **God is!**

God gives the Holy Spirit! That's why God has blinded the minds of people in the world so that later He can save them. Now He is working with the few that He is calling to be in the first resurrection. But here's a clear-cut line, there is no other way you can put it:

Verse 10: "But if Christ *be* within you, **the body is indeed dead because of sin...**"—which we read in Phil. 2:5, 'Let the mind of Christ be in you.'

"...the body *is* indeed **dead** because of sin..." (v 10)—because you've been baptized in a burial death.

"...however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness" (v 10). That's why you tend to the things of the Spirit, because you want to:

- love God
- serve God
- obey God
- have peace of mind
- have the relationship with God

- receive the blessings of God

And you need the blessings of God to endure the difficulties and trials that are in the world!

Verse 11: "Now, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you." That's how we *know*; that's what John is talking about here. That's why we have the comparison again. This is talking about, this is talking about those who are in the world.

1-John 4:4: "You are of God, little children... [we saw how we are of God] ... and have overcome them because greater is He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world." What happens when you receive the Spirit of God, then you're able to see the things that are right, according to the Word of God, and you are able to clearly see the way of the world. *You're not going to be taken in by Satan the devil!*

Verse 5: "**They are of the world**; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them."

Let's see how that when God calls us out of this world, though we live in the world, we're not part of the world. The difference has been the Spirit of God—which is the Spirit of Truth—and now he shows it's going to be the true love of God which then is the dividing line by which those who have the Spirit of God and know God can understand they're His and can understand the world and the way that it is.

Notice how v 6 ties in with v 4: "**You** are of God..."

Verse 6 "**We are of God...**" Who are the 'we'? This would have to refer to John as an apostle, and the other apostles.

"...the one who knows God listens to us... [as we're speaking, teaching and preaching] ...the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (v 6)—so that we really understand that God says the world is deceived.

Just living in the world, without understanding the Truth of God's Word, you'd never know that. Oh, you can see lies. You can see things like this take place. You can see hypocrisy in government and arguing back and forth, all those things, yeah, that's true. But if you watch some of these news presentations, all they do is argue back and forth opinions, and they're really not giving you

news. They argue back and forth on things that are of non-consequential, so no one learns anything.

Revelation 12:9 says, "...Satan, who is deceiving the whole world..." That's where all the deception comes, because 'no lie comes of the Truth' (1-John 2). So, the way that people, the false prophets, can take the Bible and use parts of the Bible instead of all of it—because Jesus said, 'Man shall live by every Word of God'—what do they do then? *They can create a deception that sounds blessedly true!* Here's 'know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the error' and the Holy Spirit is also called the 'Spirit of the Truth.'

Now we get into another key, which is beyond; 1-John 4:7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and **knows** God." That's how you are able to cut through all of the things of religions of this world.

- Do you really love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being?
- Do you really love your neighbor as yourself?
- Do you really love the brethren, as Christ has loved us?

I want you to see how this is:

- God's way exposes the false way
- the Spirit of God brings us the Truth
- the love of God gives us understanding

Verse 8 is a very clear-cut thing: "The one who does not love does not know God because **God is love.**" That's the very nature of God; also:

- God is righteous
- God is a judge
- God is merciful
- God is kind
- God is long-suffering

—and all of those things are involved.

In 1-John we find something that's very important. ***The love of God is what really gives us the relationship with God!*** It brings heart and love into your relationship with God so you can love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being, and with the brethren. If you have religion without love, you end up with hatred; prime example is *radical Jihadists*. They have a demonically dedicated spirit and attitude in *their* religion ***without the love of God.*** So, they have a religion, they have a wrong God. Now, on the other hand, here's what the love of God is to do for us. It starts out right here in 1-John 1. So, let's go back and review that just a little bit.

1-John 1:3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us..."

Here is what God wants. God is not interested in large numbers; we can just put in there 'the Gideon effect': 30-thousand soldiers came and God chose 300.

"...for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—... [this is what God wants—our relationship] ***...is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ***" (v 3). Here John is introducing what's going to come in the whole rest of the epistle.

Verse 4: "These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full. And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is Light, and there is no darkness at all in Him" (vs 4-5)—because the antichrists even believe in many different forms of gods and demigods and they're ranging from light to darkness. That's why he's bringing out that 'God is Light and there's no darkness in Him at all.'

Here is another test, all the way through, what John is doing through the Epistle of 1-John: ***He's giving us the knowledge and spirit and understanding on how to prove ourselves before God,*** through loving God. And ***how to understand the dividing line between those who are of the world and those who are of God!***

Notice how this takes place, v 6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth."

Very interesting! The worst kind of deception is to deceive yourself so thoroughly that you cannot allow Truth to enter in. And related to that is that, ***if you're walking in the Truth—practicing the Truth—that means you live by it.*** What is Truth?

- Your Word is the Truth
- Your commandments are the Truth
- Your laws are the Truth
- all your precepts are true from the beginning
 - ✓you practice that
 - ✓that's how you live
 - ✓that's how you think
 - ✓that's what your life is around

Your fellowship and relationship with God the Father—

- through prayer
- through study
- through living

- through loving each other
- through loving God

—*that's all practicing the Truth!* If you have the Spirit of Truth in you, what is that going to lead you to do? *To desire to practice the Truth!*

Verse 7: “However, if we walk in the Light... [the Light of God’s Word] ...as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.” *This is the whole operation of God!* That you can continually, through repentance and the Spirit of God in you, revealing to you the sin, how that is cleansed from our minds.

Verse 8: “However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of **Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.**”

John refers to the *Light* again, and shows something very, very important; John 3:18: “The one who believes in Him is not judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment...” (vs 18-19). It’s automatic. As I said before, you never get away from God.

“...that the Light has come into the world... [Who was Christ] ... but men loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (v 19).

Here’s another dividing line. You see how John gives us these dividing lines defining points of our behavior so that we can constantly yield to God.

Verse 20: “For everyone who practices evil hates the Light... [compare that with ‘practicing the Truth’ (1-John 1)] ...and does not come to the Light... [‘I don’t need religion. I don’t need God’] ...so that his works may not be exposed.”

He doesn’t want to take criticism. Try criticizing and atheist some time. Just think about this: What if we took this kind of operation and lined up all the politicians in congress? *They would run like rats!* They don’t want it exposed. This ties in with 1-John 1.

John 3:21: “But the one who practices the Truth comes to the Light...”

- What for?
- What is the purpose of that?
- Why do you keep coming to God?

“...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God*” (v 21). Christ in you doing the work. You’re constantly coming to God.

Now then, when people have been *living the way of God*, then allow themselves to be deceived and start going back into the world, *they start walking away from the Light!* The Light is still behind them, so they still have some semblance of knowledge and understanding. But just like if you were out in a pitched-black desert, no moon, and your car stalled and you got out of your car and you had to go find someone. You leave the lights on and you start walking away. Right at first you have light to see where you’re going, then it’s less and less and less and less and less. Then you come to a little rise in the road and you go on the other side and you’re in total darkness. *That’s what happens to people when they turn their backs on God!*

What this also does, in our fellowship and relationship with God, this puts us in a relationship with God that He is wanting to bless us, help us overcome, and that’s expressed right here in the last part of:

1-John 1:7: “...the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, **cleanses** us from all sin.” This is important for us to understand, because once we come to the knowledge of the Truth, there we are, full of sin and deception. We confess and repent of our sins, are baptize and receive the Holy Spirit of God, *now the cleansing begins!* This shows that it’s a process. That’s why it’s called *overcoming*. It’s a cleansing, *‘the washing of the water by the Word’* (Eph. 5).

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin...” I’m a good person. I haven’t done anything wrong. I haven’t killed anybody, I haven’t committed adultery, I haven’t stolen. Well, God requires all those things of *everyone*. But:

- Have you had other gods?
- Have you had wrong understanding of the Bible?
- Have you broken the Sabbath, rejected the Holy Days?

Verse 8: If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves...” That’s one of the things that people say: ‘Well, I’m a good person.’ Maybe in the world you are, but is that goodness enough for God? Or does God want to give you His goodness? *Yes, He wants to give you His goodness!*

“...and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins... [here’s the way to overcome that]: ...He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness.... [this shows that it is a process] ...If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 8-10).

This sets the stage for all the rest of the Epistle of 1-John; 1 John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin...” Is this double-talk? What are we talking about here?

John defines it for us. *If anyone does sin*, showing that there are going to be occasions when sin does take place, because in order to overcome human nature, we have to get the sin out. That’s the whole story of Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

1-John 5:16: “If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *that is not unto death* ...”—which Christ defined as that which is not blaspheming the Holy Spirit. *‘All sins and blasphemies whatsoever shall be forgiven men, except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.’* And any word spoken ‘against the Son of Man shall be forgiven him.’ So, this is what it’s talking about “...a sin *that is not unto death*...” In other words, *a sin that can be repented of!*

If you want to know about the unpardonable sin, then you’ll have to go to our series in the book of Hebrews where we define it very clearly.

“...he shall ask, and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death....” (v 16).

(go to the next track)

John is showing that our Christian walk and repenting and growing in grace and knowledge and so forth *is a process*. Let’s carry this forward so that we can understand how John is setting the whole stage here for chapter four. So he says,

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the Righteous.*” *Christ will reveal our sins to us and convict us in conscience so that we may repent*—that’s the whole operation that will take place.

Verse 2: “And He is *the propitiation*...”—*continual source of mercy*. Now, stop and think a minute: what was the most sacred thing in the temple? *The Ark of the Covenant called the Mercy Seat!* That’s where sins were propitiated. And ‘propitiation’ means *to wipe away, do away with*—as we’ve seen ‘removed from us as far as the east is from the west and cast them to the depths of the sea.’ “...He is *the propitiation* for our sins...”

Here’s quite a statement that has yet to be fulfilled. You cannot understand this next statement unless you understand about the meaning of the Holy Days of God; that’s why it’s so very important.

“...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (v 2). How’s He going to do that since the world is under the deception of Satan the devil? Well, that’s why we have the Last Great Day and the whole meaning of that. You’ll have to go through that to get the rest of the story.

Here becomes the theme of the whole Epistle of 1-John—v 3: “And by this *standard*...” Greek: ‘en toutoo’—*by this*. You have to fill in the word in italic once you understand what he’s talking about. Because ‘by this’ what? *Standard!*

“...we know that we know Him...” (v 3). This is the whole thing that He wants us to understand so that we can love Him. If we love God, *we love Him*. And if we *know* Him, He wants us to *know* Him. But notice the conviction that we are to have. Not just say, ‘Do you know the Lord, brother?’ *Yes, I know the Lord*. He says: “...**we know that we know Him**...”—conviction, truth, faith, love altogether: you *know* that you *know*. And what does this result in? He said over here: ‘practice the Truth.’

So, he gives the qualification: “...**if** we are keeping His commandments” (v 3).

Here’s what people don’t like to hear—but since they consider the Apostle John the apostle of love, they’re kind of hard-pressed to reject it:

Verse 4: “The one who says, ‘I know Him’ and does not keep His commandments **is a liar**... [that’s pretty definite] ...and the Truth... [the Word of God] ...is not in him.”

You can take this one verse and you can judge righteous judgment concerning who’s of God and who’s not of God. Who is teaching the true Word of God and who is *using it* and *abusing it*—very simple. They don’t like to hear it.

Can you imagine how it would go over if you were down there in the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California—Robert Schuler and his son, who preach nothing but goodness and kindness on Sunday morning—and you stand up and say: **‘You are a liar; you are not of God!’** You can apply this to

- the pope
- any religious leader you want
- any Imam that you like with Islam
- any orthodox bishop
- most of the Protestants

—and the Protestants, as you will see, will be led further and further away from what they had, because Jesus said that *even what they have will be taken away from them*. So there it is. “...**is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.**”

Here is the key which sets the tone for the whole rest of the Epistle of John, v 5: “On the other hand, *if* anyone **is keeping His Word...**”

Notice this ties in with exactly what Jesus said; John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word... [the whole message of Christ, all of it] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.’” The dividing line. Isn’t it interesting how John has written to give us understanding and make a clear definition for us?

Verse 24: “The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.”

John makes it very clear in very simple English and it also is very simple in Greek. That’s quite something! You can take these as major things to gauge your own Christian walk, and to gauge the Truth from the error.

If you have a religious channel just pick some of these verses and sit down some Sunday morning and just listen to them and gauge and judge what they say by these Scriptures. I think it would prove very interesting. Life is a choice because the word ‘if’ is in the middle of the word *life*. ‘If you love Me keep My commandments.’

1-John 2:5: “On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is **being** perfected...” You grow in it. It is **being perfected!** And we will see how John brings this out in chapter four, here in just a minute.

“...By this *means*... [Greek: ‘en toutoo’ — of what we just covered here] ...we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked” (vs 5-6). That’s ‘the standard.’ God sets before us *a perfect standard to shoot for!* Would you want anything less than a perfect standard? *No!* This shows the whole, the whole bringing together of the Epistle of 1-John.

Let’s see how he emphasizes the love of God again. Your love is **being perfected** if you are walking in the commandments of God and loving God and practicing the Truth. If you go back and do a summary and kind of do an outline on it, then you will see

- the definition of who a true Christian is
- a definition of how you can understand Truth from error
- a definition of what is right and wrong

1 John 3:1—showing the love of God: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to

us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us **because it did not know Him.**”

How do you know Him? ‘*The one who says, ‘I know Him’ and keeps not His commandments is a liar! And we know that we know Him because we keep His commandments!*’

Verse 2: “Beloved, now we are the children of God...”—because being born again is at the resurrection, not when you have an emotional feeling of being convicted of sin.

It says right here, “...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.... [Amazing!] ...And everyone who has this hope in him... [because we have faith, hope and love; we’re talking about *love in connection with hope*] ...is purifying himself, **even as He is pure**” (vs 2-3)—because you’re meeting the standard that God has set—step-by-step, day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year.

Then he starts talking about the very nature of God and His love toward us; 1-John 4:6: “We are of God... [he says that twice: vs 4 & 6 and is reconfirmed all the way through] ...the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.”

We are to know the right and wrong between the spiritual forces in this world. Who is the one who is deceiving the whole world but Satan the devil. He’s called, ‘the prince of the power of the air that’s now working in all the children of disobedience; appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the mind and the pride of life’ (Eph. 2).

Verse 7: “Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God...” Human beings have emotion and can have a carnal love. But true, deep love that goes beyond emotion and goes beyond just the allegiance to family and the allegiance to city and country and so forth. ***The true love of God, which transcends all of those, comes from God, and is a fruit of the Holy Spirit!*** We just read: ‘and this is the love of God that we keep His commandments.’

“...and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God” (v 7). This also tells us that you must have the begetting of the Holy Spirit of God (Rom. 8), ***and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God!***

- How do we know God? *By keeping His commandments!*

- How do we understand the plan of God?
By His Sabbath and Passover and Holy Days!

Verse 8: “The one who does not love does not know God because **God is love**.” Think of all of the killing of Christians down through time that was done in the name of religion, thinking they were doing service to God to kill. This tells us:

1. they’re not of God
2. they don’t know God
3. they don’t have the love of God
4. they are of the deception

Let’s see how John then expands this, beginning in v 9: “In this [act] **way the love...**” That’s as literal translation of the Greek as you can get. Now, this is talking about *the life of Jesus Christ ending in His death by crucifixion!*

Verse 10: “In this *act* is **the love**—not that we loved God...” In other words, what happens is not coming *from* us to God, **but coming from God to us**. That’s why John wrote: ‘no one can come to the Father except through Me’—referring to Jesus Christ. And ‘no one can come to Jesus except the Father draw him.’

“...rather, that He loved us... [loved His whole creation] ... and sent His Son *to be the propitiation for our sins*” (v 10).

Romans 5:6 tells us that God did this in pure love to save His greatest creation—that is mankind—from sin.

Romans 5:6: “For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us... [coming directly out from God to us] ...because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (vs 6-8).

He made the way possible. And for all of those of us, that is before we were ever born. Now notice the change that is to come because of what God has done—because God is love. And ‘in this act,’ of the very crucifixion of Christ, it’s quite a thing!

Verse 8: “But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies... [of God (Rom. 8)] ...we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then...*” (vs 8-10). God has a great plan, a great purpose—to be the children of God. That’s what

He’s talking about here.

“...having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life**” (v 10). That’s what John is talking about here. And that’s why he wrote it this way in 1-John 4:10.

If you want a full real in-depth understanding of the death of Christ you can find that in our books *A Harmony of the Gospels* and *The Day Jesus the Christ Died*. Now let’s see what this does for us. What is it supposed to do for us?

1-John 4:11: “Beloved, if God so loved us, **we also are duty-bound to love one another.**” There it is right there, ‘love one another.’ And, as we pointed out before, love is the greatest tool for overcoming. We are *duty-bound!*

Verse 12: “No one has seen God at any time. Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and **His own love is perfected in us.**”—made complete. There we have it again. That’s why we have to constantly overcome:

- overcome the pulls of the flesh
- overcome the pulls of the ‘law of sin and death’ within us
- overcome the carnal mind that we are growing out of through the power of God’s Holy Spirit

“...His own love is perfected in us.” That’s what God wants to do. Isn’t that something? Through everything that takes place. Let’s plug in another Scripture here, to bring this out.

Rom. 8:28, so that we have a good spiritual perspective on this, because life in the world, even though we love God, is not a pleasant thing in many cases because of the trials that we go through. But remember this: Think about all the trials that God has gone through. A lot of people like to say that God ‘doesn’t understand what I’ve gone through.’ Well, you need to think about that again.

Here’s a promise; so when you’re going through a difficult time. When you go through your own ‘valley of the shadow of death’—because everyone’s going to go through it—when you come to the point that you feel that you are alone, no one loves you, no one cares for you, no one wants you, and you don’t even know whether God loves you or not. That’s the precise point that you need to come to so that you’re going to cry out to God. Rather than complain, turn yourself to God. Ask Him to help you, cleanse you, give you His Spirit to help you overcome.

In spite of how bad things have been or are or may become, Romans 8:28: “And we know that

all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” Because, as you go through the trial, and afterward, He will reveal to you the reason and the need for that particular trial. That comes down to what? ***Faith, hope and love!***

I want you to just think about your past life, and think about how God has taken every problem and difficulty and has made it work for good in the long run. If you can't see that in some of the things that you have gone through, just remember this: *It's not over till it's over*. So, you need to understand that God is going to work it out that way.

Just think about all the things that you've gone through. I'll think about all the things that I've gone through. Think about the times when you are down and low and discouraged and, and you didn't know what God was doing, how he was doing it and, at that point, you feel totally, absolutely alone and cut off. You think that this is terrible. ***No! It is good!*** Why? ***So that you understand that only God can help you! So that you can understand also what God went through!***

Since God is love, how did God react and respond when the world became so wicked in the days of Noah? *It repented God that He had made man!* He had to, because it was so terrible what men were doing under the influence and power of Satan and the demons, that He had to destroy all flesh—saving Noah, his wife and his sons and their wives and the animals that God sent to him to be in the ark. A total of eight people and eight is *a new beginning*.

- How many times has God suffered?
- How many times have the nations and peoples of this world—under the influence of Satan the devil, because that's what they want—reject God and they accept Satan?
- How much has God suffered?
- How much did Christ have to suffer because He had to bear in His one physical body, God manifested in the flesh, ***all the sins of all mankind?***
- What did He say when He was dying on the cross? ***Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing!***

That's why, when you suffer, that is a time—if you yield to God and trust Him in spite of the facts that may seem like the circumstances present themselves to be—that you are going to have the love of God perfected in you. The love of God being perfected in you is to *understand the*

difficulties and problems and sufferings that you are going through from the perspective of God.

That's why it says 1-John 4:12: “...and **His own love is perfected in us.**”

Let's understand something concerning what Jesus experienced and what that did for Him and to Him.

- Is God perfect? *Yes, God is perfect!*
- Does that mean that He cannot be perfected even more? *He can be perfected even more!*

Hebrews 5:5 talks about Christ, and it talks about His ministry toward us: “In this same manner also, Christ did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest, but He Who said to Him, ‘**You are My Son; today I have begotten You**’”—and that comes from Psa. 2. That very day that Jesus was begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary, to become God manifested in the flesh.

Verse 6: “Even as He also says in another place, ‘**You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec**’; Who, in the days of His flesh... [Jesus Christ] ...offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death...” (vs 6-7)—which means that ***Christ knew that if He sinned one time***—having sinful human nature within Him, which He had to carry within Him in order to be the sacrifice to cover the sins of all human beings—***that He would die for His own sins instead of for the sins of the world.***

That's why He cried out to Him “...with strong crying and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because *He* feared God.”

Remember ‘God manifested in the flesh’ as we're reading v 8: “Although He was a Son, *yet*, He learned obedience from the things that He suffered.”

Romans 8:28: “All things work together for good...”

Notice how that ties in with what we read in 1-John 4 and *having been perfected*; Hebrews 5:9: “**And having been perfected**, He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him.” So yes, ***God was perfected even greater*** by being manifested in the flesh. Isn't that something?

When you read things like this in 1-John 4:12: “...and His own love is perfected in us”—that's what God wants to do. God wants a ***perfected*** product, and God is dealing in eternal life.

Verse 13: “By this *standard*...”—we are to **know** and have no doubts or equivocation whatsoever.

“...we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us.” Isn’t that something? The Spirit of God, **He’s given to us!**

Verse 14: “And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world.”

So then, this magnifies everything that God has done. In reading and studying this and thinking about this recently, I thought: Since Christ suffered in the flesh—which He did, **greatly**. How many times down through the history of all mankind has God **suffered** and **grieved** because of His creation rebelling against Him? How many times that He would that they would come to Him and do right? What did Jesus say when He saw Jerusalem just in the days before He was arrested and led off to be crucified? He came in on the donkey into Jerusalem, coming off the top of the Mt. of Olives, and He looked down and He saw Jerusalem, **and He wept!** Jesus said: ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that killed the prophets. How many times would I have brought you to me like a mother hen does with her chicks—**and you would not!**’

Yes, God suffers because of the sins of human beings. Not just the crucifixion, but in heart and mind. And that’s why it also says that we’re ‘not to grieve the Holy Spirit’ (Eph. 4).

Verse 15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God...”—as the Bible reveals to us that He is the Son of God. You have to put it all together.

“...God dwells in him, and he in God” (v 15). You have the true relationship and the true fellowship and this is what God wants.

Verse 16: “And we have known...” This is through experience, now. John is writing after many years of being an apostle and preaching and teaching. Through our lives, many of us have gone through many years and experienced many things.

“...and have believed the love that God has toward us. **God is love**...” (v 16). That’s the *essential character of God*, and everything else flows from the love of God:

- the grace of God
 - the blessing of God
 - the faith that He gives to us
 - the hope that he gives to us
- and the fruits of the Holy Spirit:*
✓ kindness

- ✓ gentleness
- ✓ mercy
- ✓ temperance
- ✓ self-control

All of those things come from the love of God. That’s why the greatest commandment is: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being.’ **God is love!**

“...and **the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God**, and God in him” (v 16).

Now, hold your place here and come to John 15. Notice how the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John blend together. It gets down to where we are *living in the love of God*. In other words, **we receive the love of God toward us with His Spirit and we love God in return and our way of life becomes living in love!** That’s how you overcome human nature better than anything else. That’s greater than just the self-discipline of doing something, because it comes from the Spirit of God and the love of God to give you the desire to overcome and live in the love of God.

John 15:7: “If you dwell in Me... [which we’re talking about in 1-John 4] ...and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples” (vs 7-8).

- Does God love you?
- Does Jesus love you?

Christ answers the question right here, v 9: “As the Father has loved Me...” Do you think that there was any greater love between any beings than between God the Father and Jesus Christ? **NO!**

“...I also have loved you...” (v 9). That’s how God loves us. So remember this: whenever you start walking through the ‘valley of the shadow of death’—and we go through many of those in our life time—the Father loves you and Christ loves you.

“...**live in My love**... [then He tells you how to do it]: ...If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, **as I have loved you**. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you” (vs 9-14). See how that ties in with:

1-John 4:16: “And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us.... [He

gave His life for us] ...**God is love**, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God **is perfected [made complete] within us...**" (vs 16-17). It's a process as we grow in grace and knowledge and grow in the love of God.

"...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment..." (v 17). We don't dread. We don't say: 'I wonder if I'm going to make it.' Jesus says, 'Yes, you're going to make it. Live in Me and live in My love and you will make it.' You have confidence. This gives you confidence in your prayers. That 'whatsoever you ask you may receive.'

"...because even as He is, so also are we in this world.... [v 18 is the pinnacle of **love being perfected**]: ...There is **no fear** in the love of God..."(vs 17-18).

That's the pinnacle of perfection! That doesn't mean that if danger is lurking, you don't get afraid so you can take corrective action. It has nothing to do with that. This means, in your spiritual relationship with God, you love God so that you don't **fear** Him. We have to fear God in the sense that we don't want to sin. But we come to the point that we are loving God so we are not concerned about **being fearful**.

"...rather, **perfect love casts out fear...**" (v 18). There again, it's a process, step-by-step. It is the way of overcoming.

"...because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God" (v 18).

Now think about this for a minute: How many churches, who profess Christ—in the world and in the Churches of God—who run things based upon *fear*. We know that terrible things are going to come at the end-time. Yes, there are fearful things. But, Jesus said, 'Look up, lift up your eyes, because your salvation draws near.' **Because 'perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.'** So, if you have a lot of fear, then gradually overcome these with the love of God. Ask God to help you. *He will!*

Verse 19: "We love Him... [a result of our love to God] ...because **He loved us first.**" There we have it. You could go back and say, 'He created us first' whatever it may be.

Verse 20: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar...." If you have a problem with hating someone or despising someone because they've done something to you, then what

you need to do is take it to God and ask God to handle the whole matter Himself—and take it out of your hands and let you be relieved of that fear and of that hatred. Because people do hateful things to you, and it's easy to hate back. Take it to God and say, 'God, I've got hate in my heart for this, this person, and we know that you hate sin, but help me to overcome the hatred. I don't want to hate this person. Help me with it, that I may overcome it and I put it in Your hands and you work it out through me.' God can do that.

"...For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen?... [John puts it in very simple, practical terms] ...And this *is* the commandment *that* we have from Him: that **the one who loves God should also love his brother**" (vs 20-21).

We'll see that part of the thing that happens here in the Epistle of 1-John is this: When false prophets come in, what do they bring? **Commandment-breaking, sin, fear and hatred!** So, commandment-keeping, loving God, walking in the way that Christ walked, your love is perfected because **God is love** and **He loved you first** and **that's how you dwell in the love of God!**

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1-John 4:1-3
- 2) John 1:1-4, 10-14
- 3) 1-Timothy 3:16
- 4) John 3:16
- 5) Philippians 2:5-8
- 6) 1-John 4:4
- 7) Romans 8:5-11
- 8) 1-John 4:4-5, 4, 6
- 9) Revelation 12:9
- 10) 1-John 4:7-8
- 11) 1-John 1:3-7
- 12) John 3:18-21
- 13) 1-John 1:7-10
- 14) 1-John 2:1
- 15) 1-John 5:16
- 16) John 2:1-5
- 17) John 14:23-24
- 18) 1-John 2:5-6
- 19) 1-John 3:1-3
- 20) 1-John 4:6-10
- 21) Romans 5:6-10
- 22) 1-John 4:11-12
- 23) Romans 8:28
- 24) 1-John 4:12

- 25) Hebrews 5:5-8
- 26) Romans 8:28
- 27) Hebrews 5:9
- 28) 1-John 4:12-16
- 29) John 15:7-14
- 30) 1-John 4:16-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 13
- Isaiah 8
- Matthew 24
- Ephesians 5
- Psalm 2
- Ephesians 4

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *The Holy Spirit*
- *Who was Jesus?*
- *Why God Hates Religion*
- *Hebrews (#29 The Unpardonable Sin)*

Books:

- *A Harmony of the Gospel* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Day Jesus the Christ Died* by Fred R. Coulter

FRC:bo

Transcribed: 4-16-07

Reformatted/Corrected: August/2016