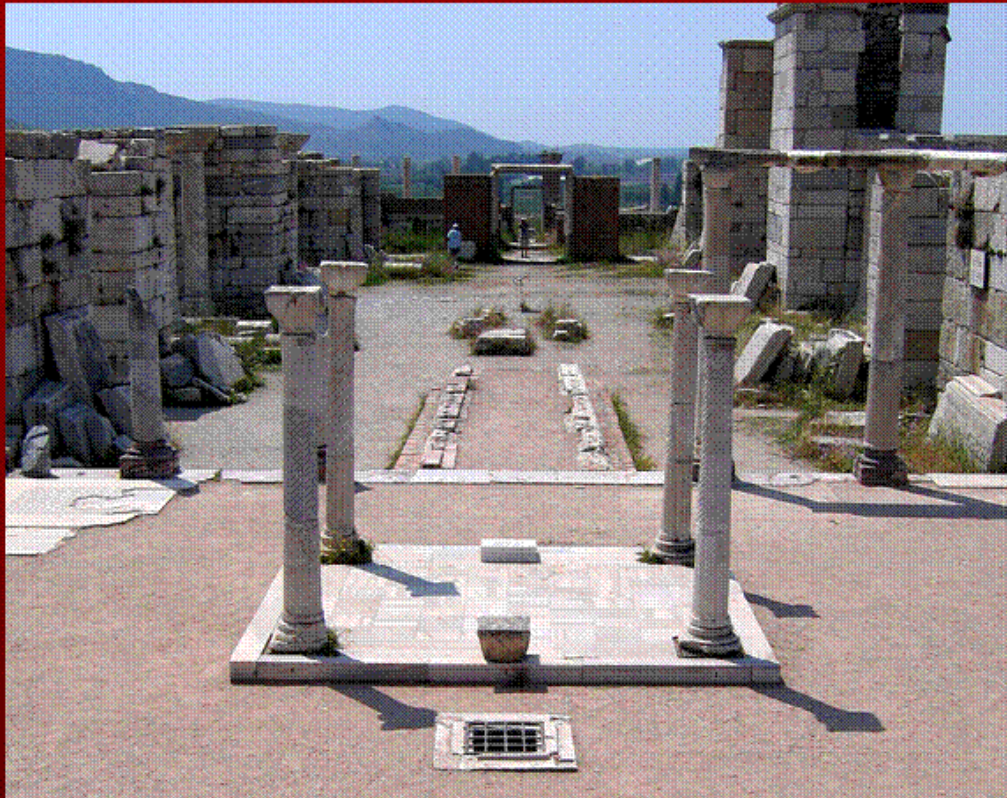


# ***1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John and Jude Notes and Commentary***



The traditional site of the tomb of John the Apostle -- one of Jesus' twelve apostles in the ancient city of Ephesus, an important religious centre of early Christianity. Ephesus is today located in Turkey.

***By Jim Wilsford***

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## John 1

### 1. John 1: A Study of the Letters of John and Jude

The style of language and thought is common in the three letters of John. Of the three, the early church widely accepted the first epistle of John. The letter is unique in that it contains few proper nouns, the most prominent one used being the name of the Lord. It is also unique in that it contains no allusions to people, places, or historical events. The only references are to what the scriptures and the Lord had taught. However, since John wrote the letter and since the false doctrines of the false teachers and the antichrist are the same as those that John dealt with in the Revelation, one might place the location of the recipients of this letter in those same seven churches of Asia. The false doctrines here (unnamed by John) would be those prevalent among the churches of Asia: the teaching of the Nicolaitans and the Gnostics, both of which rejected the word of God. The Nicolaitans rejected Christ's teaching by incorporating the sinful pleasures of idolatry into the church. The Gnostics rejected the teaching by substituting their own minds and philosophies for the teachings of the eternal Son of God.

John expresses love for those to whom he is writing, calling them *little children, my little children, and beloved*. On the other hand, he condemns the teachings of those, perhaps in Asia, who deny the Lord and who place personal knowledge above that of the Lord and the apostles. John begins the letter by stating the empirical truths that establish his knowledge of the divinity of Christ the Lord. He ends the letter in 1 John 5:18-20 with an elegant summary of what may be taken as the theme of the letter:

18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

#### ***The Word of Life***

*1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.*

John begins in verse 1 by establishing empirical evidence supporting the proclamation of Christ as the eternal Word of Life. John's knowledge is about that which was from the beginning, eternal with the father. The apostles heard, first hand, these truths about Jesus Christ the Son of God from Jesus Christ himself. Their eyes had seen him, and their hands had touched him. The Word of Life about whom John speaks was from the beginning and appeared to the world. John had reported in John 1:1-5:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been

made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

In John 1:14, John also had reported: “14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” These considerations become even more important later in the letter when John reveals the nature of the false teachers and the antichrist.

The Word of Life, which appeared, was eternal life proclaimed by John. This Word of Life which appeared in the flesh, is the word proclaimed by all apostles. The unifying principle for all Christians is the fellowship established by belief of the truth, the Word of Life. Thus, we have fellowship with the apostles, and they and we have fellowship with the Father and His son, Jesus Christ. The fellowship—mutual participation—with the Father and the Son makes our joy complete.

### ***Walking in the Light***

*5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

In verses 5-7, John sets down the first of several absolute dichotomies—light and darkness. There is no wiggle room, for this is the message from God to John and from John to us: “God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.” We cannot walk in darkness as Christians, but “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” The most blessed of all things follow to the Christians who walk in the light:

- We have fellowship with God and the Son.
- We have fellowship with one another.
- The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

### ***Confessing Our Sins***

*8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.*

That God has so blessed us with fellowship and the purification from all sin does not mean that we are sin free. To claim that we are without sin is deceitful for we are still human and subject to the temptations of the world. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful, will forgive our sins and once again purify us from all unrighteousness. Once again, John draws a contrast between two polar opposites: righteousness and unrighteousness. To enter the fellowship, we must obey the Lord when he said in Mark 16:16, “16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” If after having entered into the fellowship, we continue in sin, we are worse off than before we obeyed. Heb 6:4-6 teaches:

4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, 6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

In Heb 10:26-28, the Hebrew writer explained just how dire the situation is for those who keep

on sinning:

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Chapter 1 concludes, "10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." This strong teaching was against those of the day who thought they could dictate in the place of God such as the Gnostics who followed their own wisdom and emotions, or the Epicureans who thought pleasure was the alpha and the omega of all things. For 2,000 years, men have developed their own principles of faith and practice in creating churches and denominations, thinking that there is no sin in it. Today, we find these same false teachings confronted by John.

Now, New Age Religion emerges with the teaching that sin and evil do not exist. Peace and love are the ultimate realities. New Age finds its roots in the same blending of Christianity and human philosophies and religions that confronted the early Christians in Asia. One author has said, "It has some similarities to ancient Gnosticism adopting both its methods and its individual nature."

The false doctrines that John will deal with are alive and well in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 2. 1 John 2:1-17: The Letters of John and Jude

The introduction to chapter 2 is in the last of chapter 1. 1 John 1:7 teaches, “7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” Walking in the light becomes the theme of the next several verses and carries into chapter 2. In chapter 1:8-10, John introduces the certainty of sin in our lives and the continuing nature of a faithful and just Christ who forgives those sins that Christians commit.

Chapter 2:1-17 teaches us to “walk in the light as he is in the light,” avoiding both sin and darkness.

### ***The Atoning Sacrifice of the Righteous One***

1 *John 2:1-17*

2 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

John begins chapter 2 by showing his affection to those to whom he is writing by addressing them as *my dear children*. John spreads such terms of love and affection throughout the letter. Having already established that we Christians sin and that Jesus is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, John writes the letter so that we will not sin. This statement is akin to Paul’s statement in Romans 6:1-2: “6 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”

Jesus Christ the righteous speaks to the Father in our defense. Some versions translate this as *we have an advocate*. Paul teaches that Christ is our one and only mediator in 1 Tim 2:5-7, “5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men – the testimony given in its proper time.” To become the atoning sacrifice for our sins, Christ became a ransom for all men. The sacrifice was for our sins and the sins of the whole world.

### ***Knowing the Lord***

3 *We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*

The key to knowing that we have come to know the Lord is if we are obeying his commandments. This idea of full and obedient knowledge appears in 2 Thess 1:8, “8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” Jesus affirmed the necessity of this full, obedient knowledge in 2 Thess 1:8: “8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” John 6:44-45 teaches that through this full knowledge, the Father draws us; and through it we come to the Lord: “44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.” Jesus taught that knowing him was not mere credence and good works, but knowing him and obeying him went hand in hand. Matt 7:21-23 teaches:

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Whoever is in Jesus and lives in him must walk as Jesus walked. Thus, we are back to the premise of chapter 1: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."

### ***The True Light Shining***

*7 Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. 8 Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*

Many have trouble in the contrast here between "I am not writing a new command but an old one." and "I am writing you a new command. The real contrast is between *light* and *darkness*. John represents them in the letter by the polar opposites that from the beginning have separated Man from God—love and hate. John will begin the next paragraph with hate and darkness and love and light. The commands are as old as Cain and Able are, as John will explain 1 John 3:11-12: "11 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous." The Lord spoke of the new command in John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." It is in the fulfillment of the new commandment that darkness passes and the true light is shining.

### ***Walking in Darkness***

*9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*

John extends the absolute difference in light and darkness to include love and hate. Remember John has said that if we walk in the light as he is in the light, his blood purifies us from all sins. However, hate makes all sin possible. When we love our brother, we live in the light and there is nothing to make us stumble. Hate puts us in darkness where we are lost and blind, stumbling on the sins that beset us. The core of sin is hate: adultery, murder, false witness, lies, envy, etc. The protection against sin is love.

The poetic inclusion of verses 12-14 summarizes the abstract subject matter of this introduction and addresses his dear children, fathers, and young men.

*12 I write to you, dear children,  
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.*

*13 I write to you, fathers,  
because you have known him who is from the beginning.*

*I write to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.*

*I write to you, dear children,*



*because you have known the Father.  
14 I write to you, fathers,  
because you have known him who is from the beginning.  
I write to you, young men,  
because you are strong,  
and the word of God lives in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one.*

These might be considered the truths of the gospel: our sins have been forgiven on account of his name; we have known him who is from the beginning; we have overcome the evil one; we have known the Father; we have known him [Jesus] who is from the beginning; we are strong, the word of God lives in us; and we have overcome the evil one.

### ***Loving the World***

*15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

The path from the light to darkness is through the world. Therefore, John tells us not to love the world or anything in the world. We cannot love the world and have the love of the Father. Nothing from the world comes from the Father. Everything of the world includes the craving of sinful man for things of the world, the lust of the eyes, and the boasting of what one has and does. Older versions say the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

Two famous examples illustrate these principles of worldliness—Adam and Eve and the Christ Jesus himself. The devil tempted Adam and Eve. The fruit was good to look upon; was good to eat, and would make them wise like God. The devil tempted Christ, using these same avenues. The devil tempted Christ with food, the power to command the angels of God to come to his aid, and the inheritance of all the kingdoms of the world (Matt 4:3-11).

Christians must understand that the world passes away along with its desires. If a man does the will of God, he will live forever.

### 3. 1 John 2:18-29: the Letters of John and Jude

The contrast of walking in the light to walking in darkness in the preceding verses concluded with the exhortation not to love the world. John taught that the world and its desires pass away in verses 15-17:

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

In 1 John 2:18-29, John will forecast the coming of the antichrist and the counterfeit truths attendant to the false doctrine.

#### ***The Last Hour and the Antichrist***

*18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.*

John begins this section by warning of what they had already heard; namely, that the antichrist is coming. There are several important points in this passage. This is the *last hour* speaks to the end of the revelation of the mystery of God. The antichrists who have gone out from among the Christians signal this. The last hour is synonymous with other expressions that show that we are in the last days—a time marked by the conclusion of God’s revelation and the rise of false teachers, called liars by John in verse 22: “22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son.” Peter identified these false teachers in 2 Peter 2:1:

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.

On several occasions, Paul related the last days to the rise of false teachers within the church. In Acts 20:28-30, he forecast:

28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

1 Tim 4:1-2, Paul identified these false teachers as coming from within the faith and following the things taught by demons. Paul, just as John, is certain these are liars: “4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.”

Paul describes a man of lawlessness in 2 Thess 2:3-4, who fits John’s description of the antichrist:

3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God

or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Paul, just like John, identifies the lawless one in the most unflattering words in 2 Thess 2:9-10:

9The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Both apostles use the words *counterfeit* and *liar* to describe the nature of the antichrist, the lawless one.

John's use of the word *antichrist* in the singular and plural forms depicts a spirit of antichrist broader than the individual practitioners who spread false teaching. Paul calls the antichrist the man of lawlessness; and in the Revelation, John records the story of the second beast, who is the false prophet in Rev 19:20:

20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

The fate of the antichrist—the false prophet, the man of lawlessness—is the same as the fate of the devil in Rev 20:10: “10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” One way to grasp the correspondence of light to darkness is to understand that light is the place of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and darkness is the place of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet—the antichrist.

### ***The Holy One and the Truth***

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us – even eternal life.

Our divine appointment—metaphorically, *anointing*—is from the Holy One. Used here and elsewhere in the New Testament, *Holy One* refers to Christ and not to the Holy Spirit as some would teach. Peter defined Jesus as the Holy One in John 6:68-69, “68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” Peter cited David to establish Jesus as the Holy One in Acts 2:27-28:

27 because you will not abandon me to the grave,  
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence.

The anointing relates directly to knowing the truth. The major premise of the teaching is: ALL OF YOU ANOINTED KNOW THE TRUTH. The minor premise is: NO LIE COMES

FROM THE TRUTH. The conclusion is: THE ANTICHRIST IS A LIAR AND CANNOT BE ANOINTED BY THE HOLY ONE. Any one who denies Jesus as Christ is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. The truth is that one cannot deny the Son and acknowledge the Father.

In order to keep that which we have heard from the beginning we must believe and hold to John's declaration in 1 John 1:2-3:

2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

If we hold to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, we have eternal life.

### ***Remaining in Him***

*26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit – just as it has taught you, remain in him.*

*28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.*

*29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.*

John writes about those who are trying to lead the Christians away from the Lord. All Christians come to the Lord, believing that he is the Son of God and obeying him. Since Christians know and obey in order to receive the anointing, they do not need anyone to teach them this truth. The anointing goes beyond the fundamental belief in Christ as the Son of God and teaches us all things. Peter phrased this same idea in 2 Peter 1:3: "3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

Verse 27 concludes: "Remain in him." John gives remaining in him a permanent quality in verse 28 where he says, "Continue in him." The purpose is to be confident and unashamed before him when he appears.

John closes this chapter with another well-reasoned argument: he is righteous; everyone who does right is born of him. Being born of him brings immediately to mind John's record of the savior's own words in John 3:5-6, "5 Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.'" Paul also taught in 2 Cor 5:17-18, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" The water of the new birth is the water of baptism according to Paul in Rom 6:4, "4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." The Spirit of the new birth is the Holy Spirit through whom we are renewed in Titus 3:5-7:

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

The renewal by the Holy Spirit comes by the word according to Eph 5:25-28:

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

John closes the chapter with this same conclusion as that of these scriptures, "Everyone who does what is right has been born of him." Those who do not know the truth, or who knowing it, do not do it, are not born of him.

## 4. 1 John 3:1-10: the Letters of John and Jude

John closed chapter 2 by making the argument in verses 28-29 that the Lord is righteous and everyone who does right is born of him:

28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

Those born of Him can be nothing else but children of God. This sets up the contrast in chapter 3 between children of God and those of the devil.

### **Children of God**

*3 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

The wonder of wonders is that we may be children of God. That he lavished his love on us was evident from the beginning of Christ's teaching. Jesus taught in John 3:16: "16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The end of that love was that we should be children of God. The world does not know us and did not know Christ, for John has taught that all that is of the world is evil. In 1 John 2:16 he taught: "For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world."

The concept of our being children of God may be difficult for us to comprehend, since it has not been revealed, but we live in hope that we shall be like him. Since we have the entire revelation before us in the written word of God, we have some insight into what we will be like that early Christians did not have. Paul described this new nature in 1 Cor 15:50-53:

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal, with immortality.

Peter emphasizes the spiritual nature of what we will be in 2 Peter 1:3-4:

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

In the Revelation to John, Jesus, himself, built a metaphoric collage of what we, the children of God, will be like:

- Rev 2:7: "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

- Rev 2:11: “He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.”
- Rev 2:17: “To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.”
- Rev 2:26-29: “To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations –  
     27 'He will rule them with an iron scepter;  
     he will dash them to pieces like pottery' –  
 just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give him the morning star.”
- Rev 3:4-5: “Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white.”
- Rev 3:12: “12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.”
- Rev 3:21: “I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

For sure, we will be like him and see him just as he is. If we have this hope, we will purify ourselves, as Christ is pure.

John had asserted early in the letter this need of purification in 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” In this need for us to purify ourselves, John found agreement with Paul and James. Paul wrote in 2 Cor 7:1, “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us **purify ourselves** from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” James concurred in James 4:8, “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded.”

In the next section, John compares these purified children of God with the sinful children of the devil.

### **Sin Is Lawlessness**

*4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.*

This section contrasts the purified child of God to those who keep on sinning. John starts by defining sinners and sin. Everyone who breaks the law is a sinner, and sin is lawlessness. The word for lawlessness appears twice in the original text, illustrating the inseparable connection between sin and lawlessness. The original language is literally *without law*. The very purpose of the Lord’s coming was to take away lawlessness (sin). In John 1:29, John recorded John the Baptist saying: “29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

While in him was no sin, we, who cannot be completely free of sin, must not keep on sinning. If we continue in sin, we have neither seen nor known him. John will come back to this

prohibition against continuing in sin at the end of the letter in 1 John 5:16-17:

If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

The Hebrew writer wrote of the absolute danger in continuing in sin in Heb 10:26-28:

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

If we continue in sin, we have neither seen nor known him. Continuing in sin takes us back to a place where it is worse than had we never obeyed the gospel. We lose it all.

### ***Those of the Devil***

*7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

In verse 7, John continues with the contrast upon which his thesis rests. John places those who do right and righteousness with the Lord and those who do sin and sinfulness with the devil. The devil and sin go back to the beginning—even to Adam, Eve, and Cain. John had described the sinful nature of the devil in John 8:43-45:

43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

When Christ destroys sin, he is destroying the devil's work.

### ***Continuing in Sin***

*9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. 10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

Being born of God is doing what is righteous. It is a state of being in which one cannot continue in sin. The preventive treatment for sin is the word of God (God's seed). The definition of *seed*, as used here in given in the parable of the sower in Mark 4:13-15

13 Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer **sows the word**. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

In the conclusion to this section, John clearly defines who the children of the devil are: they are anyone who does not do what is right and anyone who does not love his brother. The next section—1 John 3:11-21—expands on the concept of brotherly love as a defining quality of the children of God.



## 5. 1 John 3:11-24: the Letters of John and Jude

The first section of 1 John 3 discussed how great God's love is toward us that we may be called children of God. The section continues to elaborate on how there are children of God and children of the devil. In 1 John 3:10, John concludes that section by saying:

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

To be a child of God, one must do what is right and love his brother. The stage is set for the next section, where John adds detail to this premise of doing what is right and loving our brothers.

### ***The Message from the Beginning: Love One Another***

*11 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

That we should love one another is a message that they had heard from the beginning. John had first learned this lesson of love from the Lord in John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." In John 15:12, Jesus had also taught, "12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." Loving our brothers is our very own litmus test to prove that we have passed from death into life. When, in Rom 6:3:5, we are raised from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life, we know that we have life if we love our brothers. "Anyone who does not love remains in death," John teaches in verse 14.

Hate such as Cain had led to the murder of Abel. That hate demonstrated that Cain belonged to the evil one. We must not be like Cain.

When John says, "15 Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer," he could be referring to the Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 5:21-22:

21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

The conclusion to this section, "You know that no murderer has eternal life in him," repeats emphatically in the Revelation recorded by John in Rev 21:7-8:

7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

### ***God, Who Knows Our Hearts***

*16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down*

*our lives for our brothers. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 19 This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence 20 whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

Christ taught this relationship between love and laying down one's life in John 15:13, "13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Not only should we be willing to lay our lives down, but we must be willing to share with our needy brothers. It takes more than words to be a child of God; it takes actions and truth. Jesus had said in John 17:17, "17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." We know that we belong to the truth if we love with action and deeds, doing the Lord's commands. This is also how we set our hearts at rest before the presence of God. We search our hearts and know that we are fulfilling the truth of God, revealed by His Spirit. Whether or not we are right in our hearts, God knows, for he knows everything. We set our hearts at rest by doing his will and by loving the brothers. If we have sinned, we follow his teaching in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

### ***The Spirit by Whom We Know that God Lives in Us***

*21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

Since we have Jesus as the atoning sacrifice, our hearts need not condemn us before God. John has already told us this in 1 John 2:1-2:

But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Therefore, we have confidence before God; and we receive from him anything we ask, if we obey his commands and do what pleases him. John states two broad and all-inclusive commands: believe in the name of Jesus and love one another. These commands mark the obedient spirit of the child of God. When we follow these commands in all that we do, we live in the Lord and he lives in us. Paul had written in 2 Cor 5:17-18, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ."

We know that we are children of God, that the Lord is in us, and that neither he nor our hearts condemn us by the Spirit that he gave us. Peter announced the promise of this Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38-39: "38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit.**" Paul repeated this promise in Eph 1:13-14, adding that the Holy Spirit guaranteed our inheritance:

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.

In Eph 6:17-18, Paul taught that the word of God was the instrument by which the word acts,

"17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." In Rom 8:16, Paul teaches that the spirit testifies to our spirits, "16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." When John says, "We know it by the Spirit he gave us," he is speaking of this same testimony of the Spirit. It is important that we understand that the form of this testimony is the word of God. Two examples are important here: One from the Hebrew letter, and the other from the Revelation.

In Hebrews, the writer repeatedly states, "The Spirit says." In every case, what he quotes or refers to is the word of God, as in Heb 9:8: "8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing." Heb 3:7-8 reads:

7 So, as the Holy Spirit says:  
"Today, if you hear his voice,  
8 do not harden your hearts  
as you did in the rebellion,

In Heb 10:15-16, we read, "15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

16 "This is the covenant I will make with them  
after that time, says the Lord.  
I will put my laws in their hearts,  
and I will write them on their minds."

The way that the Lord speaks is through the word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. Heb 4:12-13 teaches:

12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

In the Revelation, we learn that Christ himself speaks through the Spirit. In Rev 2:7, Christ speaks but says that it is the Holy Spirit who speaks. He said, "7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." This same Spirit speaks to the churches today through the word of God in the New Testament. Christ holds the double-edged sword of the Holy Spirit in Rev 2:12, "These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword."

Do you want to know that Christ lives in you? You can know by the Spirit that he gave you who testifies to you in the word of God, recorded in the New Testament.

## 6. 1 John 4:1-6: the Letters of John and Jude

Chapter 3 concluded by telling us how we know the Spirit of God is in us. In 1 John 3:24, John said, "24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us." John compares the Spirit of God in this passage to the spirit of the antichrist in chapter 4, verse 3. John had introduced the idea of an antichrist in 1 John 2:18-19:

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

In chapter 4, John returns to the subject of the antichrist, relating the spirit of the antichrist to false prophets. The evil of the antichrists and false prophets is from the devil. According to John in 1 John 3:8-10, all evil is from the devil:

8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. 10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

In chapter 4, John returns to the subject of the antichrists.

### **Testing the Spirits**

**4** *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*

John warns the church to test every spirit to see if they are from God. We are not to believe every spirit for there are many false prophets gone out into the world. This is a repeated warning given by all the inspired writers to the church. Human nature is to believe the spirits of those who come to us. In our society, we have the common expression: "Take him in good faith." Because the false prophets are so many and so deceitful, we **must not believe every spirit but test every spirit**. The warnings to us are many:

2 Peter 2:2: "2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves."

2 Thess 2:8-10: "8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing."

Rev 19:20: "20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur."

Rev 20:14-15: "14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

That the false prophets have the same fate as the devil and the antichrist repeats itself throughout the New Testament.

In verse 2, John tells us how to distinguish between the Spirit of God and the spirit of the antichrist:

2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

We may identify those who have the Spirit of God by two unchanging principals. First, they must acknowledge Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Jesus related this acknowledgement to eternal life in John 17:3: "3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and **Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**" To deny that Jesus came in the flesh is to deny the very foundation of the gospel. John had written earlier in John 1:14: "14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Luke had recorded the words of the angels of heaven testifying of Jesus Christ who had come in the flesh in Luke 2:9-14

9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Second, they must acknowledge that Jesus Christ is from God. Here again, John goes back to the premise of the gospel as he had revealed it in John 1:1-5:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Not only did the Christ come from God, but also he came so that men might be born of God according to John 1:10-13:

10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

On the other hand, the spirit of the antichrist, who does not acknowledge Jesus come from God with all the power and might of a Christ, is **not from God**. He is the antichrist. He is manifest as anyone who rejects the word; for Jesus Christ is the word. At the time of John's writing, the spirit of the antichrist was already afoot in the world.

## **Recognizing the Spirit of Truth**

*4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5 They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.*

The one, who is in us, Christ, is greater than the one, who is in the world, the antichrist. As long as Christ is in us, we overcome the antichrist. The antichrists (plural), the false prophets, are from the world and speak the viewpoint of the world. The test is whether teachers and preachers speak the viewpoint of the world or the words of the inspired writers. Whoever knows us listens to us (the inspired writers of scripture). Whoever is not from God will not listen to the scriptures. This is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

John had begun his gospel by differentiating between truth and falsehood, emphatically teaching that the truth is from Jesus. John 1:17 teaches, "17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and **truth** came through Jesus Christ." Jesus taught that the truth was in him. In John 3:21, he teaches, "21 But whoever lives by the **truth** comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God." In John 8, Jesus separates truth and error; Christ and the devil. In John 8:32, he teaches, "32 Then you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free." In John 8:44, the Lord castigates them for belonging to the devil—a liar and the father of lies:

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, **not holding to the truth**, for there is no **truth** in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Jesus had said in his prayer to the Father that truth is the word of God in John 17:17: "17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." The truth then is the word of God, and the truth is the Gospel. Paul wrote in Eph 1:13, "13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."

The truth is the key to recognizing the spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Do you listen to God in his word of truth, the gospel of your salvation? Or do you listen to the views of the religious world not found in the scriptures?

## 7. 1 John 4:7-21: the Letters of John and Jude

The first part of chapter 4 establishes the Christian's obligation to resist the antichrist and the false prophets. In the rest of the chapter, he establishes the place of love in the Christian life. Verse 6 tells Christians how to recognize the difference in the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. In 1 John 4:6, John writes, "6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood." Under the general theme, God is love; John summarizes the Christian obligation to love.

### **God Is Love**

1 John 4:7-12:

*7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

John uses the affectionate phrase, "Dear friends," in order to discuss the subject of love. The love of one another comes from God, for love comes from God. John remembered, perhaps, the words of the savior that he recorded in John 3:16-17:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Those that love have been born of God and know God. Both love and knowledge of God are important to the Christian's salvation. John had recorded Jesus in John 6:44-45 teaching:

44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

Paul made knowledge of God a condition of salvation in 2 Thess 1:7-8, "When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." God showed his love by sending his one and only son that we might live. This is the free gift of God to us, according to Paul in Rom 6:22-23:

22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins repeats itself from chapters 1 and 2. In 1 John 1:7, 9, he taught:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

In 1 John 2:2, he introduced the idea of an atoning sacrifice, "2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

The premise of this passage is that since God loved us, we ought to love one another. The corollary to this premise is that God lives in us, and his love is complete in us.

### ***Relying on the Love of God***

1 John 4:13-16a:

*13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.*

The conclusion in verse 12 is that God lives in us and his love is made complete. The way that we know we live in him and he in us is because of his Spirit that he has given us. John saw the Son of God, the Savior of the world and testified to that fact. Once again, John refers to the beginning of the letter where he establish the empirical evidence by which the apostles knew assuredly that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. In 1 John 1:1-2, John wrote:

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

To have God live in us and we in him requires us to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. Otherwise, why would we ever rely on the love of God?

### ***God Is Love and There Is No Fear***

1 John 4:16b-18

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

Since God is love, we do what we do because we live in God and God lives in us and not out of fear. The day of judgment is coming with the expectation of possible destruction by fire. The Revelation pronounces its certainty in Rev 14:7, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." According to the Hebrew letter, a raging fire will consume the enemies of God in Heb 10:26-27:

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Yet, because of the love of God in us and because we are like him, there is no fear. The perfect love of God drives out fear. Those who fear the judgment are not made perfect in love.

### ***Loving One's Brother***

1 John 4:19-21

*19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*



John concludes with the assertion that if anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. The next word, "For," draws a conclusion that is the gist of the entire passage: "For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." The most basic requirement in living the Christian life is to love our brothers.

He summarizes most succinctly, "Whoever loves God must also love his brother." This love of the brother must be in the same manner and degree with which God first loved us:

He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

## 8. 1 John 5:1-12: the Letters of John and Jude

In Chapter 5, John taught two main principles. The first principle is that we do not believe every spirit for false prophets and teachers go out among us. In 1 John 4:1-3, "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." The second principle is that we love one another. 1 John 4:7-9 teaches, "7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." Chapter 5 will extend these principles by instructing us to obey the commands of God.

### ***Victory That Overcomes the World***

1 John 5:1-5

*5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

In John 5:1-5, John extends the two principles of chapter 4 to a third principle: Love of the children of God and love of God both depend on our carrying out his commandments. The conclusion in verse 3 forever links true love of God and obeying his commandments: "This is love for God: to obey his commands." The chain of logic is clear: if we believe in Christ, we are born of God. If we are born of God, God loves us, we love the children of God, we obey his commands, and we overcome the world. His commands are not burdensome, for this is how we overcome the world. This is the victory in Jesus. Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God overcome the world. Sin and the world have no victory 1 Cor 15:54-57

54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### ***The Testimony of God***

*6 This is the one who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9 We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10 Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

## **The False Doctrine of the Trinity**

1 John 5:6-12 is one of the more abused passages in the New Testament. It is abused because of a faulty translation stemming from the KJV and NKJV, which forms the basis of false teaching on the widely held doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine bases its belief on a reading found in the Latin Vulgate—the basis of all Roman Catholic translations and the basis of the KJV and the NKJV translations of this passage. An estimated 150 prior translations exclude portions of verse 7. 1 John 5:7 translated from the Vulgate reads, “7 For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” Compare this reading to the one found in ancient manuscripts, which precede the Vulgate, “7 For there are three that testify” There is on mention of the Father and the Word. The three that agree are the spirit, the water, and the blood.

The version of the Latin Vulgate did not appear in permanent form until about 1000 AD. However, the Trinity doctrine had its origin in 325AD when the Council of Nicea accepted it as church doctrine. One might ask, “So what difference did it make?” Those who believe it to be true give the clear answer:

### **TRINITY**

1. The Term "Trinity": The term "Trinity" is not a Biblical term, and we are not using Biblical language when we define what is expressed by it as the doctrine that there is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence. A doctrine so defined can be spoken of as a Biblical doctrine only on the principle that the sense of Scripture is Scripture. And the definition of a Biblical doctrine in such un-Biblical language can be justified only on the principle that it is better to preserve the truth of Scripture than the words of Scripture.

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The danger of the doctrine is easy to illustrate in its most absurd form. If Jesus is God and Mary is the mother of Jesus, Mary can be the Mother of God, Queen of heaven.

## **The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit**

The Godhead including the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are central to Bible teaching. When Jesus instituted baptism, he called on all three in Matt 28:18-20:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

That the Godhead is plural in form is stated repeatedly in the Scriptures, taught so from the very beginning. In Gen 1:26-27, God so affirmed this truth

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

God repeats this truth in Gen 3:22, "22 And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil." And once again repeats it in Gen 11:7, "7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." Later, Isaiah quoted God affirming the same truth in Isa 6:8, "8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

The teaching is just as clear in the New Testament and laid out completely in Hebrews. In Heb 1:5-9, the writer teaches the separation of the person of God and His Son:

5 For to which of the angels did **God** ever say,

"You are my **Son**;

today I have become your **Father**"?

"I will be his **Father**, and he will be **my Son**"?

6 And again, when **God** brings his **firstborn** into the world, he says,

"Let all **God's** angels worship **him**."

7 In speaking of the angels he says,

"He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."

8 But about the **Son** he says,

"Your throne, O **God**, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of **your kingdom**. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore **God**, your **God**, has set **you** above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

[Emphasis Added]

In Hebrews beginning with chapter 2, the writer separates completely the person of Jesus from the person of the Holy Spirit. In Heb 2:11-13, the writer credits Jesus with a quotation from the Old Testament:

Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. 12 He says,

"I will declare your name to my brothers;

in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."

13 And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again he says,

"Here am I, and the children **God** has given **me**."

In Heb 3:7-11, the writer credits the Holy Spirit:

7 So, as the **Holy Spirit** says:

"Today, if you hear his voice,

8 do not harden your hearts

as you did in the rebellion,

during the time of testing in the desert,

9 where your fathers tested and tried **me**  
and for forty years saw what **I** did.

We must conclude that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are separate personalities, but one in purpose. Jesus was the fullness of the Godhead bodily as expressed by Paul in Col 2:9-11, "9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."

### **What Does 1 John 5:6:12 Teach?**

That Jesus came by water and blood comes as a reiteration of what the Lord taught in the first few chapters of the Gospel of John, beginning in John 1:14 when Jesus came by the flesh,"14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." The flesh and blood of the Lord were one in John 6:54-57:

54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

A divine Jesus come in the flesh and blood was central to power of God and the basis for our redemption, according to 1 John 4:2-3:

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

Indeed, without the coming of Jesus in the flesh to shed his blood, we would have no salvation. Heb 9:14 is explicit:

14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Heb 9:22 requires the shedding of the savior's blood for forgiveness: "22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

The spirit's testimony is two-fold. First, he dwelt in the flesh and blood man, called Jesus. Second, he empowers each of us through the word and though dwelling within us. He dwelt in Jesus according to John 1:32-34:

32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

Just as the flesh and blood combined to give us the living savior, Jesus, water and the spirit combine to give us a spiritual man like Jesus – people in whom the Spirit of God dwells: John recorder in John 3:5-7

5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

John 3:33-35 describes Jesus as having the Spirit without limit, " 34 For the one whom God has

sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.”

As we are born again of water and the Spirit, we receive living water from the Lord. In John 4:10-14 Jesus speaks of this living water:

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

It was with water that he cleansed the church in Eph 5:25-27, “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.”

It was with water that he cleansed each of us in 1 Peter 3:21-22,

and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

The three that testify are the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these three are in agreement that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh and that we are born of God through the Spirit. If we believe the testimony of man, how much more so should we believe the testimony of God?

11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

## 9. 1 John 5:13-21: the Letters of John and Jude

In 1 John 5:9-12, John establishes that God's testimony is greater than the testimony of man because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. The testimony of God is in the heart of the believer. To reject the testimony of God about his Son is to make God a liar. The Hebrew writer wrote in Heb 6:18 that it is impossible for God to lie. The sum of God's testimony and the argument made by John in this letter is that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. If we have the Son, held truly in our hearts, we have eternal life. If we do not have the Son, we do not have eternal life. This is the summary argument of the letter. What follows are practical admonitions flowing from this summation:

### ***Confidence in Approaching God***

1 John 5:13-15:

*13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.*

This passage covers two of the greatest blessings of the child of God: We know that we have eternal life, and that God our Father answers our prayers. Jesus affirmed our eternal life in many places. In Luke 18:29-30, he taught that our blessings are here and now and in eternal life:

29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30 will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

It was that we might have eternal life that God gave his Son, according to John 3:16, "16For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Paul describes eternal life as the gift of God in Rom 6:22-23:

22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The other great blessing is that God will answer our requests. Jesus established that his house would be a house of prayer in Matt 21:12-13:

12 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13 "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

James spoke of the power of prayer in James 5:16, "16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." In 1 Peter 3:10-12, Peter quotes a prophetic passage and applies it to Christians:

"Whoever would love life  
and see good days  
must keep his tongue from evil  
and his lips from deceitful speech.

11 He must turn from evil and do good;  
he must seek peace and pursue it.  
12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous  
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,  
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

In Rev 8:3-5, the Revelation shows us how our prayers go up before God and how that answers of the most powerful kind follow

3 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

**If we ask, according to his will, he hears us, and we know that we have what we asked of him.**

### ***Sins Not unto Death***

1 John 5:16-17

*16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.*

The key to understanding this passage is that we differentiate between sinning, which we all do as human beings, and continuing in sin, which we must not do. John started this letter by saying that we all sin in 1 John 1:8-9:

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

However, when we sin, we have God-given remedy in his Son. John teaches in 1 John 2:1-2:

1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Hebrew writer warns against backsliding in the strongest terms in Heb 6:4-6:

4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, 6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

He also warns against deliberate sins in Heb 10:25-27:

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.



26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

When we see a brother sinning, but not backsliding, we should pray for that brother, and God will forgive him. When we see a brother sinning, but not deliberately, we should pray for that brother, and God will forgive him. However, when a brother continues in sin and backslides into the world, he is sinning a sin unto death, and there is no forgiveness.

### **Sins unto Death**

When we see a brother sinning a sin unto death by continuing in the sin or by sinning willfully, individuals and the church must act. If the sin is against us, we are to follow the teaching of Matt 18:15-17:

15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

If a brother becomes immoral and continues in that immorality, we must follow the teaching of 1 Cor 5:1-5, 11:

5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? . . . 4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

11 But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

The church must also deal with those who continue to be rebellious and teach false doctrine, according to Titus 1:10-14:

10 For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. 11 They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach — and that for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith 14 and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.

### **Safe from the Evil One**

1 John 5:18-20

18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given

*us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.*

Therefore, anyone born of God does not continue in sin. This is how God keeps us safe. The evil one, who controls the whole world, cannot harm us. Not only does the evil one control the world, but he lurks seeking to destroy us, according to 1 Peter 5:8-9:

8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Paul described this world of the devil in Eph 2:1-5:

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.

Our struggle is against this ruler of the kingdom of the air. Paul also wrote in Eph 6:12:

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Rev 12:9 teaches that the devil leads the whole world astray, “9 The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.”

### ***Freedom from Idols***

1 John 5:21

*21 Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.*

Col 3:5 teaches that greed is idolatry. Is this not the great sin of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The great idol is named by Christ in Matt 6:24, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

## 2 John

### 10. 2 John: the Letters of John and Jude

The short letters of John—2 John and 3 John—were not as widely known in the early church as the 1 John. Their inclusion in the canon of scriptures rests mainly on the similarities between the language of 1 John and 2 John, especially in its discussion of love in 2 John 5-6:

5 And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. 6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

Compare this passage with 1 John 5:2-3:

2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

The similarity of these and other verses clearly indicates that John was the author. Some scholars conclude that if 2 John were not written by John, it is a “purposeless piece of plagiarism.” (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

### **Introduction**

2 John 1-3

*1 The elder,*

*To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth – and not I only, but also all who know the truth – 2 because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:*

*3 Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.*

John presents himself as *the elder*. This could mean either an older man or a man who holds the office of an elder in the church. Since John so designated himself in both 2 and 3 John, it would seem to mean an elder in the church. Peter called himself an elder in 1 Peter 5:1, “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.”

The *chosen lady* must be a local church which is implied in the word *chosen*. That he sends greetings from a chosen sister solidifies this interpretation in 2 John 13, “The children of your chosen sister send their greetings.” This church was loved by all those who knew the truth. The truth lives and abides in us—individuals and churches—forever.

Verse 3 connects grace, mercy, and peace from God and Jesus to the truth and love.

### **Echoes of 1 John**

2 John 4-6

*4 It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. 5 And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. 6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.*

2 John 4-6 presents a clear echo of 1 John and its teaching on love and truth. The chosen lady's children walked in truth. John made clear how Christians are to walk in 1 John 1:6-7 and 2:6

6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

When John says here that he is not writing a new commandment, the language and structure repeat that first written in 1 John 2:7-8:

7 Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. 8 Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

This commandment is that we love one another – that we walk in love. We must take this love to be a continuous way of life in which we walk with one another. Plato said, “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” ...

### ***Dealing with Deceivers***

2 John 7-11

*7 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. 11 Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.*

Verse 7 also, looks back to 1 John where John also identified those who denied Christ as the antichrist in 1 John 2:22-23:

22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist – he denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

In verse 9, John instructs us how we are to deal with false teachers. First, we must recognize that they do not have God unless they have the teaching of Christ. Second, those who continue in the teaching have both the Father and the Son. Third, if someone comes without this teaching, do not ask them into your house or even welcome them. Fourth, if we welcome them, we share in their evil work. How, then, should we respond to those we bring error before us? Paul answers that question in 2 Tim 2:23-26:

23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

### ***Conclusion***

2 John 12-13

*12 I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.*

*13 The children of your chosen sister send their greetings.*

John closes this letter by saying that he hopes to visit them and talk face to face. Verse 13 offers a greeting from a sister church.

## Jude

### 12. Jude 1-7: the Letters of John and Jude

Jude is a short but powerful letter. The letter centers on the need to contend for the faith, the certainty of eternal destruction by fire, and the need to fortify the church against scoffers. Many of the illustrations refer to angels, making Jude a source of more information about these celestial beings than other scriptures.

#### ***Introduction***

Jude 1-2

*1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,*

*To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:*

*2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.*

Jude, also called Judas, may be that Judas of John 14:22, “22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, ‘But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?’” That he is here called the brother of James may make him the brother of Jesus also, if he is talking about that James, the brother of Jesus. Matt 13:55 reads, “55 Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?”

Many claim that Jude and Thaddeaus of Matt 10:2-4 are one and the same:

2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeaus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Jude’s self-styled description is simply “a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.” He addresses the letter to “those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ.” The calling of Christians as the process by which they are made finds its explanation in 2 Thess 2:13-15, where Paul said:

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

All Christians are called through the gospel and saved through belief of the truth. Where Jude says that we are loved by God, Paul says that we are loved by the Lord. Paul also further explained what it means to be kept (blameless) by Jesus in 1 Thess 5:23-24:

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

The introduction concludes with a prayer for mercy, peace, and love in abundance.

#### ***Contend for the Faith Once for All Entrusted to the Saints***

Jude 3-4a

3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. 4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you.

### Contend for the Faith

Jude 3, more than any verse in the New Testament, affirms the complete and unchanging revelation of God to man. The expression, *the faith*, means the revealed will of God to man. In writing about our common salvation in the face of ungodly men who have slipped into the church, Jude immediately goes to the fact that Christians must contend for the faith. Paul spoke of the one faith, side by side with one Lord and one God in Eph 4:5, “5 one Lord, **one faith**, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” [Emphasis added] Paul further asserted that the church should be built up until we reach unity in the faith. In Eph 4:12-13, Paul wrote:

12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in **the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Paul, just as Jude, urges the contending for the faith in Phil 1:27: “Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, **contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.**”

The faith consists of the deep truths, according to 1 Tim 3:9, “9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.” Paul teaches that those holding to the faith may abandon it in 1 Tim 4:1, “4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.” Paul describes our contending for the faith as a fight in 1 Tim 6:12, “Fight the good fight of the faith.” Paul returns to this idea of the good fight of faith in 2 Tim 4:7, “7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

### Once for All Entrusted to the Saints

*Once for all entrusted to the saints* establishes without a doubt that God's revelation was complete and final. The key to this verse is the phrase *once for all*. Is it certain that this is the complete faith delivered *once for all* time? The scriptures answer this question by using the exact wording in reference to the finality and certainty of Christ's death—*once for all* in Heb 9:26-28:

But now he has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 Just as man is destined to die **once**, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed **once** to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. [Emphasis added].

Just as Christ appeared *once for all*, the faith was delivered (entrusted) *once for all*. Nothing remains to be revealed.

In addition to the scriptural proof of this reading, the Greek words testify to the certainty of the New Testament as the revelation for all people and for all time. *Hapax* used here means one or a single time conclusively. It derives from *hapas* which means absolutely all.

There was, after the New Testament, no further revelation—neither a voice within, nor a latter day revelation as held by some modern sectarians, nor any theory of development in religion, such as that held by many denominations. The faith was once for all delivered. Paul speaks

of the complete revelation of God's mystery in Rom 16:25-26:

25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him.

Paul also taught in Eph 1:9-10 that God brought all things together when he made known the mystery of his will which he purposed in Christ:

9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Paul teaches clearly that the manifold wisdom of God would be universally made known through the church in Eph 3:8-11:

His grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John records how God's mystery was accomplished in Rev 10:6-7:

There will be no more delay! 7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

Then in Rev 11:15-18, the seventh trumpet not only sounds, but God fulfills the revelation of his mystery:

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,  
and he will reign for ever and ever."

16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying:

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,  
the One who is and who was,  
because you have taken your great power  
and have begun to reign.

18 The nations were angry;  
and your wrath has come.

The time has come for judging the dead,  
and for rewarding your servants the prophets  
and your saints and those who reverence your name,  
both small and great –  
and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

After the Revelation by John in 96 AD, nothing more was ever added or will be added. The faith was delivered once for all.



## License to Sin

Jude 4b

*4b They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.*

It was not uncommon for those who rejected the truth in New Testament times to appeal to the grace of God to justify sin. Paul wrote in Rom 6:1-2, "6 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" In verse 8, Jude will call them *dreamers*. Jesus called them *ferocious wolves* in Matt 7:15-16, "15 Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them." Paul called these same deceivers *savage wolves* in Acts 20:29-31: "29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard!" Note the secret and deceptive nature of these false teachers. In the next section, Jude will spell out their certain punishment

## God's Punishment of Eternal Fire

Jude 5-7

*5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. 7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.*

In this section, Jude seizes three examples to illustrate the certainty of God's punishment with eternal fire. God destroyed the first group—the children of Israel—for unbelief; he punished the second—the angels who did not keep their positions of authority—for daring to challenge God; the third—Sodom and Gomorrah—for sexual immorality and perversion.

The fate of the children of Israel was spelled out by Moses as he forecast their certain judgment in Deut 31:29:

*"29 For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall upon you because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord and provoke him to anger by what your hands have made."*

Job's writings in the Patriarchal Age describe the fate of angels in error. Job 4:18-20 tells of this error and extends like treatment to mankind:

18 If God places no trust in his servants,  
if he charges his angels with error,  
19 how much more those who live in houses of clay,  
whose foundations are in the dust,  
who are crushed more readily than a moth!  
20 Between dawn and dusk they are broken to pieces;  
unnoticed, they perish forever.

In Matt 25:41-42, Jesus related the punishment of the wicked servants to that of wicked angels,

“41 Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Peter taught in 2 Peter 2:4-5 that these angels were in gloomy dungeons,”4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.” Rev 12:7-9 tells of the cause to these dire circumstances and manner in which these angels exceeded their authority:

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah was just as certain and terrible. Gen 19:23-26 describes the punishment as rain of burning sulfur:

23 By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. 24 Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah – from the Lord out of the heavens. 25 Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities – and also the vegetation in the land. 26 But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Peter retold what had happened to Sodom and Gomorrah and related that event directly to what is going to happen to the ungodly. 2 Peter 2:6 teaches, “6 if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.”

We must always remember that these serve as examples of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

### 13. Jude 8-25 of a Verse by Verse Study of the Letters of John and Jude

In Jude 1-4, Jude establishes the need to contend for the faith *once for all entrusted to the saints*. This phrase states without a doubt that God's revelation was complete and final. The key to this verse is the phrase *once for all*. It is certain that this is a complete faith delivered *once for all* time. The scriptures answer this question by using the exact wording in reference to the finality and certainty of Christ's death—*once for all* in Heb 9:26-28:

But now he has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 Just as man is destined to die **once**, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed **once** to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. [Emphasis added].

Just as Christ appeared once for all, the faith was delivered (entrusted) *once for all*. Nothing remains to be revealed.

Verse 7 seized on three examples to illustrate the certainty of God's punishment with eternal fire. God destroyed the first group—the children of Israel—for unbelief; he punished the second—the angels who did not keep their positions of authority—for daring to challenge God; the third—Sodom and Gomorrah—for sexual immorality and perversion.

Now Jude turns to the horrible nature and certain fate of these dreamers, and the security of those who follow the holy faith and have the Holy Spirit.

#### ***The Nature of Dreamers and Their Sin***

Jude 8-25

*8 In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals – these are the very things that destroy them.*

These dreamers, as Jude calls them, fulfilled their sinful dreams by polluting their own bodies, rejecting authority—the faith—and slandering celestial beings. When archangel Michael was disputing over the body of Moses, he did not dare bring a slanderous accusation against the devil. However it is important to see that Christ could rebuke the devil in Mark 8:33, "33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.'" The Lord also rebuked Satan in Zech 3:1-2, "3 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you!'"

These dreamers were men who spoke abusively about what they **did not** understand and about what they **did** understand. These very things destroyed them. It has always been the same; for no matter how wonderful we think our imaginings to be, if they are not from the faith revealed *once for all*, they destroy us.

The archangel Michael in all his might knew no exception to the rule that all must follow the revelation of God's will. An angel appearing to Daniel called the revelation of God the Book of Truth in Dan 10:20-11:1:

20 So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight

against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; 21 but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. 11:1 And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)”

Michael has the power to protect God’s people to the very end. Dan 12:1-3 teaches

12 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

The power of Michael is great enough to overpower Satan. Rev 12:7-9 records:

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Jude 11

*11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.*

Jude illustrates the woe upon these dreamers with three examples: Cain, Balaam’s error, and Korah’s rebellion. Each illustration teaches a way by which man exceeds his authority and defies the revelation of God’s will. By murdering Abel, Cain illustrates that denial of the faith in worship (he offered a sacrifice that was not commanded by God) leads to the gross sin of immorality – murder. The Lord explained the situation to Cain in Gen 4:6-7:

6 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

The Lord concluded in Gen 4:10, “10 The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.” John also explained Cain’s situation in 1 John 3:12-13: “12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.”

**Jude brings the lesson – sins in worship lead to immorality.**

The lesson of Balaam illustrates the blind and downward path of wickedness. 2 Peter 2:15-16, explains:

15 They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. 16 But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey – a beast without speech – who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

Balak promised Balaam a reward to come and to curse the Israelites. The Lord was displeased. The continual efforts of the Lord to point out the righteous path—even the denouncement by a donkey and the appearance of the angel of God—had no effect on

Balaam's persistence. The end of Balaam's sin was the enticement of Israel to worship Baal and practice his immorality as recorded in Num 25:1-3:

25 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, 2 who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. 3 So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the Lord's anger burned against them.

The Lord warns the church in Rev 2:14, " Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality."

### **Jude brings the lesson: sins of greed lead to great immorality.**

Korah's rebellion illustrates that God not only will punish those who challenge his authority, but also he will extend his wrath to their followers. Num 16:1-3 describes Korah's rebellion:

16 Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites – Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth – became insolent 2 and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. 3 They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly?"

Num 16:31-35 describes their punishment and the extension of that punishment to the 250 Levites:

31 As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's men and all their possessions. 33 They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. 34 At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!"

35 And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

### **Jude brings the lessons: punishment of the wicked extends to their followers.**

### ***The Nature of the Dreamer's Punishment***

Jude 12-13

12 *These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm – shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted – twice dead. 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.*

The wicked men and their followers know the worst of fates. *Blemishes at your love feasts* where they eat without the slightest qualm and *shepherds who feed only themselves* describe the depravity of their human condition. Even when compared to nature, their situation is extremely dire – clouds without rain and trees without fruit. Their shame foams up like wild waves. Like wandering stars they are reserved for the blackest darkness forever.

Jude 14-16

14 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with*

*thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." 16 These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.*

This quotation from Enoch, which is the judgment of God pronounced on all false teachers, appears only here in the Bible. This quotation and Michael's *Book of Truth* show that God's mystery was complete before the foundation of the world and the fate of the ungodly was certain even then. This scripture from Enoch, just seven generations from Adam, is almost word for word that given by Paul in the New Testament in 2 Thess 1:7-9:

. . . when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with **His mighty angels in flaming fire**, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power . . . [Emphasis added].

In Gen 5:23-24, we learn that Enoch walked with God and that God took him away. Heb 11:5-6 further explains:

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Jude concludes his description of these dreamers with the most unflattering words in verse 16, "These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage."

### ***Christians to Remain Firm in the Most Holy Faith***

Jude 17-20

*17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." 19 These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.*

*20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. 21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

The situation with these dreamers and false teachers was nothing new. The New Testament is full of such warnings as this one of which 2 Peter 2 and 1 Tim 4:1-5 serve as good examples. The point in verse 17 is that these men do not have the Spirit and follow their ungodly desires and natural instincts. This is in contrast to Christians who have the holy faith—once for all delivered—and the Holy Spirit. If we remain firm in the faith and the Spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ will bring us eternal life.

### ***Final Admonitions and Praise to the Lord***

Jude 22-25

*22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.*

*24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.*

Jude 22 is a most elegant and straight forward statement of the Christian's responsibility to the lost. For those who are weak in faith or have no faith, be merciful. For those who are entrapped in the heat of trials and temptations, snatch them from the fire. To all the rest, show mercy, mixed with fear. Hating even the clothing stained by flesh is a negative parallel to Christians' white garments of the Revelation. Finally Jude closes with words of praise offered to God.