

## Epistle of First John II

### The Spirit of Truth vs The Spirit of Error

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I don't think we really have understood or realized how important this epistle is for us today, because history is repeating itself right before our eyes, right in the Churches of God.

from *An Introduction to the New Testament* (no author cited):

The author is clearly intent upon refuting doctrinal errors, which are threatening. But the final aim of the writer is practical. Safety of the readers whose establishment in the faith, in the face of these errors is his chief aim and makes it necessary that these errors be refuted.

This is exactly what we are going through today. Let's understand something concerning John. Let's go to Rev. 2 for just a minute, and let's connect the writings of John with a very important function of the Church at Ephesus. The Church at Ephesus was where John finished his ministry. He died in Ephesus. He was temporarily exiled to the island of Patmos, just off the coast from Ephesus, when he was given the vision for the book of Revelation. But notice one of things that they did:

Revelation. 2:2: "I know your works, and your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear those who are evil..." We are going to see many contrasts:

- good and evil
- light and darkness
- righteousness and sin
- commandment-keeping and not commandment-keeping

—because the whole book of 1-John is a study in, what you might say, *radical contrasts*. One on one hand, one on the other hand.

"...and *that* you did test those who proclaim *themselves* to be apostles, but are not, and **did find them liars**" (v 2). We're also going to find in the book of 1-John many Scriptures which reference to *Truth, Light* and *liars*—because all of these things are coming in and attacking the brethren *from within*.

The problem of the exact nature and identity of the false teachings being controverted in the epistle...

*they're being discussed there*

...are actually the form or forms of Gnosticism.

The reason John went through and showed how many things we are *to know, comprehend* and *understand* is to combat Gnosticism, *one who knows, who has been enlightened by the divine illuminating one*. And that's exactly the same thing that is happening in the Church today.

Gnosticism was a philosophy of religion.

Doesn't that tie right in with what we went through in Col. 2 and philosophy and all those things? *Yes!*

Gnosticism professes not to be hostile to the Gospel.

That is a very key important thing to understand. Today, the changes, which are being made in the Truth of the Word of God, profess that they are not hostile to the Word of God.

They say this is *new enlightenment*, this is *new teaching*. But it is an attempt to interpret Christian doctrines from a higher **philosophical** standpoint.

*Think of that! That's exactly what we've been told.*

And in reality, it disintegrates and destroys them. Gnosticism has two guiding principles, which run through all their teaching. The first principle was the supremacy of the intellect and superiority of enlightenment and conduct. The Gnostics laid claim to a superior knowledge, which was the privilege of the few—they were the **knowing ones**.

Now, people are told today, that for your faith in God you don't need to understand theology, you leave that to the theologians. So, John is coming along, saying in the Epistle of 1-John that there are basic principles we need to follow:

- there's right
- there's wrong
- there's light
- there's darkness
- there's good
- there's evil
- there are lies
- there's truth
- there's the Spirit of Truth
- there's a spirit of error

And *the whole Epistle of 1-John is based upon the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error*. This is the same thing that led to the Catholic Church.

The superior insight to which they laid claim led naturally to a sense of pride in themselves as the elite of Christendom, which fostered an unbrotherly contempt for unenlightened members of the Church.

That's another way of saying that they just looked upon the members of the Church to be used, abused, tattooed and pray, pay, stay and obey.

For them, spiritual excellence consisted not in a Holy light, but in a superior knowledge, which enabled a man to rise above the earthbound chains of matter, into heavenly truth. John insisted on the innate relationship between **doctrine** and **conduct**.

I tell you, that's where we are today in the Church and that's what the Epistle of 1-John is all about—**doctrine** and **conduct! truth** and **light!**

A second guiding principle of the Gnostics was its view that *spirit is good...*[**any kind** of spirit] ...and matter is inherently evil. These two were regarded as the perpetual antagonism or hostility. And if matter is absolutely evil, it followed that there was no true incarnation of the Son of God.

Now you know why John wrote what he did.

We know why—and we are told almost the same thing today—that what Moses saw was not God, but a physical manifestation of what He wanted Moses to see. So, it's the same thing here. Those who believe in that kind of 'glob' of a god in the sky, **do not believe that Christ came in the flesh**. Because God would have nothing to do, or spirit rather, would have nothing to do with something that is fleshly, **because the flesh is inherently evil**.

1-John 4:1: "Beloved, **do not believe every spirit...** [now you see why this is important] ...but test the spirits..."

Didn't we read what they were doing there in Rev. 2—trying and testing the prophets, the apostles, whether they were speaking the Truth or not.

"...whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (v 1)—which means also that then they are being inspired and led by false spirits.

Verse 2: "By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the* flesh is from God." This means:

- not just a special form of flesh

- not a different kind of flesh that we have
- *but that He came **exactly** in the flesh that we have*

Some of the false spirits will say, 'Oh, we believe Jesus came in the flesh, but He didn't have the same kind of flesh that you did, because God can't manifest Himself in the same kind of flesh that human beings have. He was just really a spirit who looked like flesh.' We're hearing the same doctrines today, even within the Church of God.

Verse 3: "And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And **this is the spirit of antichrist**, which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world." And by saying, not just in the world, he's meaning in the Church—**from within**.

Two solutions to this were proposed. One view was that Christ did not have a real human body, but only appeared to have one. This theory is known as the 'theory of Docetism,' which means *just to appear, appear to have flesh*. The other view is that Christ was a separate being from Jesus. And, it denied the virgin birth of Jesus but recognized that He was pre-eminent for righteousness, prudence and wisdom, and He taught that the Christ Spirit came upon Him following His baptism and empowered His ministry but left Him before He was crucified.

What is one of the things of the New Age religion today, in the world? *You can receive the Christ Spirit*—in any religion that you are in, because Christ merely means *Messiah*. And another variation of that is: since God is 'glob' in the sky, and God is everywhere at all places at all times and in everything that there is, therefore you now have God in you and your job is through mediation, transcendental meditation, to find the Christ in you, because you have Christ in you. *And this is all a part of the doctrine that is coming upon the churches today*.

Let's look at some contrasts here; here is the whole basis for the book of 1-John; Verse 6: "**We are of God...**" We have to know that, and *those who are of God do know that*.

"...the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (v 6).

That's the whole basis for writing this book so that you can see and understand the difference

between the Spirit of Truth, as inspired of God: the Truth of the Word of God vs spirit of deception, which has—as I coined the phrased here recently—‘the *tinkle* of Truth.’

Let’s look and see how all of these things are combined and how they work out. Here’s the foundation of true Christianity, which I’ll read for you. Based upon the Spirit of Truth and the children of God are these following things:

1. life
2. truth
3. love
4. Spirit of God, a begettal from the Father
5. commandment-keeping
6. true knowledge
7. living and abiding in God’s way
8. Jesus Christ spiritually dwelling in each Christian
9. eternal life

Here’s the *spirit of deception*—and we find that John talks about the children of the devil. The *spirit of deception* is based:

1. darkness
2. lies
3. hatred
4. spirit of the devil

—and I wonder what it means, *the spirit of the devil*? Let’s see that the counterfeit spirit of the devil can actually work within a person. I would have to say it’s a *counterfeit begettal*. So that’s why I have number four *spirit of the devil*.

Ephesians 2:2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, **the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience.**”

John contrasts this as the children of God vs the children of the devil. So therefore, *spirit of the devil; begettal of the devil!*

5. commandment-breaking or transgression

Did not John have to re-define sin? *Yes he did!* What’s the Scripture you can think of in 1-John which defines sin for us?

1-John 3:4 (KJV): “Sin is the transgression of the law.” What is so fantastic about this is that John is showing us that for long-time Christians to re-gather themselves out of the mist of this kind of deception, they’ve got to go back to the clear contrasts.

6. false knowledge—*gnosis*
7. living and abiding in the devil and deception

8. the devil spiritually motivating his children
9. eternal death

Those are the contrasts that we are going to see all the way through the book of John.

Now let’s look at some of these as we are to have the affecting us in Christian living. Here are the conditions of Christian living that we find and we’re still just doing the survey of 1-John. Let’s look at the conditions for Christian living. I think it’s something that he listed it the way he has listed it, because so many people today, in talking to some of them, their minds are just kind of—I don’t know how you would describe it—just kind of *fogged over*, the veil.

### Points of Christian Living

#### I. Walking in the Light

1-John 1:5—so he goes back and declares the message from the beginning: “And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that **God is Light...**” That’s defining

- God’s *glory*
- God’s *righteousness*
- God’s **Truth**

everything about God is contained in the word *Light*.

“...and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness...” (vs 5-6). Darkness personifies everything that Satan the devil stands for.

“...we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth” (v 6). Do we not have the same example of that today? *Yes!* What are some of those examples? *Well, other people who don’t keep the commandments of God as we do, they’re Christian and can be saved, too.* We’ll see a little bit later concerning commandment-keeping. And they also say, ‘Well, a person really does not have to be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit of God.’ So, what is happening, the darkness is coming in; **they are walking in darkness**. And the darkness is created by lies and they are not practicing the Truth.

Verse 7: “However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.” What do we have here?

The first point of Christian living is **walking in the light**. We’ll expound more on that when we go through verse-by-verse.

## II. Repentance

- What is the ‘tinkle of Truth’ to replace repentance?
- What is repentance? *To admit you’re wrong!*
- What else? *To change, to stop doing it!*

*Repentance* is also a **profound confession to God of the sinfulness of sin!** Repentance is a **total commitment** to go God’s way, rather than the way of the flesh. Now, the *tinkle of Truth* is: ‘Well, we have to turn from our human ways.’ That is not an incorrect statement, but it does not enunciate or tell us plainly *to repent*.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins...” (vs 8-9). Not only do you have to repent and turn from them, but you have to confess them; that’s part of the repentance, and sometimes that’s hard to do.

“...He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (v 9).

## III. Keep the Commandments

What do you do after you repent? What is it that you do? Once you find out that you’re a sinner—and sin is *the transgression of the Law*—what is it then you are to do after you’ve repented? *You get up and you walk in God’s way; you walk in the light and you keep the commandments!*

Notice what he says here concerning commandment-keeping. So yes, Christian living involves **commandment-keeping!**

1. walk in the light
2. repent of your sins
3. keep the commandments

1-John 2:3: “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: **if we are keeping His commandments.**” Then comes the contrast. John is saying, ‘Now, I want to make it absolutely, abundantly clear, because there are a lot of people going around here, claiming that you can know God and you don’t have to keep His commandments.’

Verse 4: “The one who says, ‘I know Him’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.”

So therefore, Christians today, when they have this muddled, fuzzy, blanked-over thinking—fogginess of mind—they have to get back to the absolute contrast. In other words, if anyone comes along and says that commandment-keeping or the

keeping of the Law does not affect your salvation, *you know he’s a liar!* Rev. 2 says:

- we are to **test** those lies
- we are to **prove** that they are wrong
- we are to **preach** the Truth
- we are to **expose** the error

—and that’s what John is doing here because the whole book, the whole Epistle of 1-John is based on the Spirit of Truth *vs* the spirit of error. So all the way through, we’re going to see these contrasts.

## IV. Come out of the World

After you walk in the light and repent and keep the commandments of God, then what are you to do? *You are to come out of the world!* {Note Rev. 18:4, which says: ‘come out of her My people’}—that is out of greater Babylon, *the worldly system*.

John is doing the same thing here in 1-John 2:15—the next requirement for Christian living, constant Christian living: after walking in the light, after repenting of your sins—on an ongoing basis—and keeping the commandments of God.

Verse 15 says: “**Do not love the world...** [come out of the world] ...nor the things *that are* in the world...” Then he gives the contrast. Notice how that everything that John writes is comparing the extreme contrast: *Light and darkness!*

“...If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (v 15).

- Can anyone get into the Kingdom of God without loving God?
- Can they get into the Kingdom of God without having the love of God *in* them?
- *No they cannot!*

Therefore, we can conclude that good sincere people in other religions do not have salvation, because their goodness and sincerity is of the world.

- Does the world have its goodness? *Yes!*
- Does the world have its standard? *Yes!*

The reason why the Apostle John is writing this way is because he is combating the degrees of subversion of the mind. That’s exactly what we see in the world; and that’s exactly what we see within the Church. We are being subverted in the world into a **one-world government** bit-by-bit-by; law-by-law, by statute, by enactment, by treaty. If they all of a sudden brought on the total one-world government we would reject it. So, it’s the same way with perverting the **Truth of God**. You pervert it a little here, a little there, a little change on emphasis, a rewording of something. John is saying, ‘Look, you gotta strip all of that aside and I want you to know that the one who does not have the love of the

Father, *the Father is not in Him*' if they're loving the world.

What is happened in one of the largest denominations of the Church of God? *They were trying to define themselves the way the world wants to label them!* A person said, 'Well, how would I tell someone not in the Church what we are as a church?' So, the answer was: 'Well, you can tell them we are not Catholic and we are not Jewish. However, most people would lump us in with Protestants.'

Have you ever heard the Church of God call itself Protestant? So, here's a little subversion bit-by-bit.

- to subvert a mind
- to subvert a person
- to pervert a mind
- to pervert a person

is done a little at a time. The only way this can be stripped away is to show the sharp, extreme contrasts—and that's exactly what John is doing.

#### **V. Keep the faith and teachings through the Holy Spirit**

1-John 2:20: "But you have *the* anointing from the Holy One, and you have knowledge of all things..." To know everything does not mean to know everything in the world, but these are long-time Christians who have known everything concerning the facts of salvation.

"...*pertaining to salvation*. I did not write to you because you do not know the Truth, but because you know it, and *you understand* that not one lie comes from the Truth" (vs 20-21). Then he compares that with the, with the liar and the antichrist.

#### **VI. We are to live as the children of God**

What I'm doing here, I'm going through and outlining the whole flow of the chapters.

1-John 3:1—we're to live as the children of God. John says: "Behold!..." This is a very interesting Greek word, which means *to comprehend and see and understand with the mind*.

"...What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!..." (v 3). That's how we are to live as the children of God! That's why John is stressing this so *profoundly*.

- God has called you *to be* His children
- God has called you *to be* in the first resurrection

- God has called you *to be* in His Family
- God has called you *to be* exactly as Christ is—so we're to live as the children of God.

Verse 4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness." In the *King James*, the word *lawlessness* is *transgression of the Law*. But it really means *against law*—'anomia' in the Greek. How can a person be against law? *By saying we don't have to keep the commandments*. Or by people saying, 'Well, this commandment is not important' or 'that commandment is not important.' But, what did Jesus say concerning the commandments of God? '***If you love Me, keep My commandments!***' That's true. What else did He say? Sinning is more than just breaking a law; *sin is against law*.

Isn't it absolutely amazing, you would never have believed it, that in the Church of God—but I do now after hearing what they're saying, and I believe it now after going through and really studying deeply into the Epistle of 1-John—how that when Christians have been in for a long time and they get relaxed and they get used to everything and then they get philosophical and they get knowledgeable, and they have all these great ideas. Now the greatest thing is the love of God—which it is—and then everything just comes all apart bit-by-bit and people just don't even know what sin is. The next thing you know *they're going against the commandments of God*. It starts out with simple things.

#### **VII. We are to reject the spirit of deception**

What is one of the first things that, that is dropped in obeying God's way? What is one of the first things that people do? *They start eating unclean meats!* Then the Sabbath doesn't become important. Then all of these other things just start falling in. Let's see what Jesus said concerning the commandments of God:

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill" And there are two things this verb means:

- 1) Jesus Himself was going to fulfill those things which pertain to Himself
- 2) Jesus was going to make the Law much more full, to fill the requirements of the commandments and laws of God *to a higher standard*.

Verse 18: "For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled. Therefore, whoever

shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven” (vs 18-19).

1-John 3:4: “Everyone who practices sin... [living in sin] ...is also practicing **lawlessness...**”—against law. What they do, they justify breaking God’s laws, and that is sin. We are to **reject** that.

Verse 5: “And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin...” (vs 5-6).

Now, we’ll see a little later there is a sin, which is not a sin unto death. But, you are not practicing and living in sin.

“...anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him” (v 6).

The next comparison is the comparison *between the children of God and the children of the devil*.

Verse 7: “Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His seed of *begettal* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God. By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. **Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God**, and neither is the one who does not love his brother” (vs 7-10).

1-John 4:1-6 we already covered earlier. All the rest of the way through it shows that we are to love God and love the begotten children of God.

1-John 4:7: “Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because **God is love**” (vs 7-8).

### VIII. To have eternal life!

What you might say another *purpose statement* for this epistle; 1-John 5:13 “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God.” So that’s the whole reason.

I’m going through and surveying first so you will get an overall foundation of going through the Epistle of 1-John; so we can take it step-by-step.

One of the things that the Epistle of 1-John is and helps us do is **to think**; because God wants us **to think** and God wants us **to know**. There are certain things that, as we go through, we will see very clearly that he summarizes a statement. In the *King James*, it is translated: *by this, here by or here in*. This comes from two Greek words, which literally translated are: *in this* or *by this*. The two Greek words are: ‘en toutoo.’

Again, we’re still surveying some of these verses so that we can understand more clearly. When we do start going through, then we’re going to find how really profound that this first epistle of John is.

1-John 2:3: “And by this **standard...**” By what standard? Let’s look at that just a little bit. What is a *standard*? *That we are knowing Him if we’re keeping His commandments!* “By this **standard...**”

Verse 5 (last part): “...By this *means* we know that we are in Him.” How?

Verse 5 (first part): “On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected.... [made complete] ... By this *means* **we know** that we are in Him.” So, we have a means, a way whereby we **know**.

Everyone of these places in the Greek it is ‘en toutoo.’

1-John 3:10 “By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother.”

So there’s a *standard*. Here’s a **thinking standard** with the Spirit of God that we are to make a judgment in our lives, knowing what we are to know and understand, and apply it in some practical knowledge in this manner.

(go the next track)

Note John 3:16—I think it’s interesting that both of these 3:16s match up very closely—don’t they?

1-John 3:16: “By this *very act* we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us... [the act of knowing the love of God] ...and we ourselves are... [obligated] ...to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

Verse 19: “And in this *way* we know that we are of the Truth... [now, that says a lot; that we are to **be knowing** that we are of the Truth] ... and shall

assure our hearts before Him, that if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things” (vs 19-20). And obviously ***we are to repent and He will forgive.***

Verse 24: “And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him... [and that means *remains* and *lives* in Him] ...and He [Christ] in him... [that person who’s keeping the commandments] ...and by this... [very thing] ...we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us.” All of these begin to tie in. I tell you I am absolutely amazed what this book of 1-John contains.

1-John 4:2: “By this *test*...” That is testing the spirits, as we’ve already covered—*we are knowing.*

Verse 9: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.” *In this way*—all of these remember are from the Greek ‘en toutoo.’

Verse 13: “By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us.”

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling*... [because what I did, I summed the other verses which were before it, of God’s Spirit] ...the love of *God* is perfected... [made complete] ...within us...” (v 17)—and should be continually perfected in us.

1-John 5:1: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and everyone who loves Him Who begat... [and the One Who begat was the Father] ...also loves him who has been begotten by Him. By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments” (vs 1-2). That helps summarize many of the things we covered last time about what we are to know.

I missed one, which is 1-John 4:10: “In this *act*... [that is in God manifesting Christ for us] ...is ***the love***...” So *in this* or *here by*.

Now the reason I’m doing so many verse-by-verse surveys is because I want us to have a grasp of how profound the Epistle of 1-John really is, and how much meaning is in it. This is for us today in the time and circumstances in which we are living, and I hope that it’s going to go a long way in helping some of the brethren who have gone through so much to recover themselves.

Next time we will do some more word-by-word studies, but let’s begin right at the first, the very first verse—1-John 1:1—and in this we will see quite a few things. As I am reading this, I want you

to think how much this parallels the Gospel of John, the first chapter—which we will go to the Gospel of John and do a little comparison. As a matter of fact, in a lot of things there are a lot of comparisons and carryovers from the Gospel of John to First John. And in many of the verses it’s clear that the readers already have in the Gospel of John, because he makes summary references to what he has written in the Gospel of John right here in the epistle.

1-John 1:1: “That which was from ***the beginning***, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of Life.”

Let’s go to the Gospel of John, chapter one, and we’ll be going back and forth quite a little bit. We’re going to see the ***tremendous*** parallels that are here.

f John 1:1 starts out almost the same: “*In the beginning* was the Word...” We have ***the beginning*** and in both cases John is referring back to *the beginning*.

“...*In the beginning* was the Word... [that Greek tense is such that it could actually mean ‘***before*** the beginning’] ...was the Word, and the Word was ***with*** God, and the Word ***was*** God.”

We’re going to see what it’s so important that only God could actually, by manifesting Himself in the flesh and becoming like we are, could only be the sacrifice that would cover the sins of all mankind, because:

- God is the One Who created everything
- God is the One Who made us
- God is the One Who gave us the nature we have

by sentencing Adam and Eve to ‘the law of sin and death,’ put us in a state of vanity, which is says there in Rom. 8 that the ‘creation was made subject to vanity.’

- only God can save us from that
- only God can save us from the devil
- only God can save us from our sins

That’s why John makes it very clear that ***the Word was God***. Here in the Epistle of 1-John it is called ***‘the Word of Life.’***

Let’s compare that with John 1:2: “He was in *the beginning* with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him. In Him was life... [he emphasizes it in the epistle: ‘Word of Life’] ...and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness ...” (vs 2-5). We’re

going to see the same parallel in the epistle of *light and darkness*.

Now let's look just little more closely at 1-John 1:1: "That which was from *the* beginning, that which **we** have heard..." Now he didn't say 'that which **I** have heard.' In the first chapter he uses **we**. Beginning in the second chapter he uses **I**. Who are the 'we'? What did the 'we' do? Let's see what they did.

"...that which **we** have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled..." (v 1).

Who are the ones that this applies to only? *The apostles!* So therefore, many people feel that the Epistle of 1-John 'in the beginning' was a writing by *all* of the elderly apostles. There may have been Matthew there; there may have been Andrew there; we don't know who was there. Also, how many people were there that saw Jesus Christ, after He was resurrected? It's a lot more than people think.

How many people could qualify, at the maximum number? We know the apostles did. Remember what Jesus said to Thomas? When Thomas first heard of the resurrection, he said, 'I won't believe it until I stick my hands in His wounds.' So, Jesus appeared and said, 'Thomas! Come over here, I want you to see, put your hand in My side.'

1-Corinthians 15:3: "For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, *and* then to the twelve. Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time, of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen asleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage" (vs 3-8).

So, the only ones that this could apply to—the 'we'—would be the apostles and the maximum number would be that group of a little over 500 people. It's amazing when you really get into studying the Scriptures, and you really think about it, the verses can tell you a whole lot more than we have understood.

1-John 1:2—all the way through this section, he is referring to **we**. "And the Life... [which was Christ—in Him was Life] ...was manifested, and we have seen, and are **bearing witness**, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was **manifested** to us..."

- manifested:
  - ✓ *revealed in the flesh*
  - ✓ *to be revealed spiritually and mentally*
  - ✓ *to have seen Him after He was resurrected*
- bearing witness—that *you are testifying as an eyewitness such as in a court case.*

You are officially 'bearing witness' and testifying that what you are saying is absolutely the truth.

"...and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us" (v 2)

Again, this ties right in with 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was **with** God,' which was with the Father.

Verse 3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are **reporting** to you..." What is important about 'reporting'? I wish we had reporting in the news today. What is important about 'bearing witness' and 'reporting'? *That means you are conveying only what you've seen, heard and learned.* You are not creating fables, that's what's so very important. **You are reporting what God wants you to report!**

"...in order that you also may have fellowship with us..."—vs **them**, the antichrist and false teachers. He's saying, 'Brethren, we want you to have fellowship with us because:

- we have *handled* the Word of God
- we have *seen* the Word of God
- we've *observed* the Word of God
- we are bearing witness and testifying to the Truth of the Word of God
- we are *testifying* to you that He was with the Father
- and we want you to have "...**fellowship with us...**" (v 3).

Now notice the next most important thing concerning *fellowship*: "...for **the** fellowship... [that's important in the Greek because it's a particular kind of fellowship] ...—indeed, **our** fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ" (v 3). This tells us how important the Sabbath is. Let's ask a couple of questions here:

- Can people get together and fellowship and have a good time by just being together? *Yes!*
- Can people also fellowship in a church setting, but they are 'playing church'? *Yes!*
- What is so deceptive about that?
  - ✓ *They think that their fellowshiping is righteousness.*

✓ *They think that because they come to a certain church or a certain congregation or a certain building and they're fellowshiping with certain people that everything is all right!*

- But what is the basis of our fellowship? *The basis of our fellowship is **with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ!***

That is the **true** fellowship. That's why John says, "...—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ" (v 3).

How important is this fellowship to God? Most people have never realized it, but how important is this fellowship with God? Let's see how important this fellowship with God is. We will see that it is so important that God created and blessed and set aside and made the Sabbath Day Holy. That's how important it is.

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work, which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work, which God had created and made" (vs 1-3).

God's fellowship with us is so important that He created the seventh-day Sabbath for us. It's so important for people to understand that God has preserved—through all time—the Sabbath. When we understand that our fellowshiping is first with God the Father and Jesus Christ, and that this is the day that God has made as a **Holy assembly** so that we fellowship together and with God primarily, then we understand *the true fellowship*. That's how you understand the difference between going to church and playing church and going to church to be taught of God and fellowship with God and fellowship with the brethren, because the Spirit of God is in them. A massive complete difference.

Mark 2:27 should be a basic memory Scripture that we have all learned, that we have all memorized, that we all understand, that we put it in practice and realize the powerful message that Christ gives here.

Mark 2:27: "And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man...' That's why God made it, He made it **for man** so that

- he could **fellowship with Him**
- that mankind could **learn from God**
- that mankind could **learn of God's way**
- God's laws
- God's commandments

- God's love
- learn how to change their lives
- to direct their lives
- repent
- grow
- change and overcome.

—all of those are a function of fellowshiping with God!

"...and not man for the Sabbath" (v 27). I mean, man cannot come along and say, 'Well God, one day in seven is good enough.' or 'I'll be righteous on Sunday.' *God is not there on Sunday!* That's just a plain fact. In His mercy, because some people are not against Him on Sunday... But how can you say that? How can you say you're not against God, and yet, keep Sunday when God says the Sabbath is His and the Sabbath was created for man? You see the conflict that this brings up? You see how this becomes *against law* or *lawlessness*? *Because God is the One Who's created and made and decided which day is the Sabbath!* That's why it says it was 'made for man.' That's why it says, 'and not man for the Sabbath.' For man to decided what he would do.

Verse 28: "Therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath is so important because God puts His presence in it. Isa. 56 is a prophecy of the end-time; and this is a prophecy of when the salvation of God is going to come. As we are reading this, let's also understand that the judgment of God is also upon the house of God. That's why this becomes very important.

Isaiah 56:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'Keep justice and do righteousness; for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.'" Are we not living in those days? *Oh, yes, absolutely we are!*

Verse 2: "Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps the Sabbath... [one day in seven] ...from profaning it..." That comes to church on Sunday if it's his hearts desire. That the blood-brother, Ishmael, can come to his mosque on Friday; or the Jews can come on the Sabbath and totally pollute it by not fellowshiping with God and Christ.

**NO!** He says, v 2: "Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil."

That's the whole purpose of it: So that every week we're going to **learn of God's way**; we're going to be **refreshed in God's way**; we're going to

be able, with God's Spirit, to let Him *lead us and guide us and bring us into the greater understanding and truth and righteousness.*

Verse 3: "And do not let the son of the stranger, who has joined himself to the LORD..." Who is the 'son of the stranger'? Who is the 'stranger' in terms of the Old Testament in relationship to Israel? *Stranger* is what they call a Gentile. Are Gentiles to keep the Sabbath? It's what he says.

"...speak, saying, 'The LORD has utterly separated me from His people.'..." (v 3). God doesn't want the Gentiles separated from His people. That's the whole basis of the New Testament Church.

"...And do not let the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree.' For thus says the LORD, 'To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose things that please Me...'" (vs 3-4).

Let's see how the Word of God is living and powerful and, it says and means exactly the same thing.

1-John 3:21: "Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us..." Isn't that what he's saying in Isa. 56? 'Don't say this in condemnation of yourself that you're a dry tree. Don't say this in condemnation of yourself that I'm a Gentile and cut off from the people of God. Don't be saying that. Don't be condemning yourself.'

"...then we have confidence toward God. And whatever we may ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight" (vs 21-22).

Isn't that exactly what he's saying back here in Isa. 56:4: "...who keep My Sabbaths, and choose things that please Me and take hold of My covenant." Right here is a whole prophecy of the New Testament. Right here is a summary of what God wants us to do in the New Testament—contained in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 56:5: "Even to them will I give within My house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off."

Could we not go through and show that Jesus said, 'In My Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you.' And didn't He say to the churches, 'I will give you a new name. I will give you the name of the Father and of My name and of the city New Jerusalem, which

comes down out of heaven.' There it is prophesied right here.

Verse 6: "Also the sons of the stranger, who join themselves to the LORD... [notice what they are to do]: ...to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant..."

For the New Covenant, brethren, Sabbath-keeping is vital for the covenant because *God fellowships with us in the New Covenant on the Sabbath Day.* Yet, the Churches of God that we have known in the past are casting it aside. Some are even saying that there is salvation in other religions. So, you see how profound this is.

Here's a little remembrance of Sabbath-keeping again, so that we can have the fellowship with God.

Isaiah 58:13 "If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My Holy day..."—because:

- God wants to *fellowship* with you
- God wants to *visit* with you.
- God wants to  *dwell*  in you

—so therefore, we have to do His pleasure.

"...and call the Sabbath a delight... [not a burden] ... the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking *your own words*" (v 13). Hasn't Sabbath fellowship, without fellowshiping with God, degenerated into this kind of thing? *Yes, it has!*

You know and I know that when you fudge and don't keep the Sabbath the way that you do and you get in the habit of doing many things of your own pleasure, your own way on the Sabbath, what happens? Well, God is not fellowshiping with you the way that He wants to, so the Sabbath doesn't mean as much to you. When God does not immediately come down and do some sort of correcting—like lightening out of the sky to give you a bolt of lightening to zap you, to wake you up—it just becomes foggy and thin and less important. That's what's happening to too many of God's people.

But, He says, "Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD..." One of the whole purposes of 1-John was to bring the *joy of the Lord*, the *joy of conversion*. You can't *joy in God* unless you fellowship with Him and do so on the Sabbath Day.

"...and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance

of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it” (v 14).

Again, another guarantee of salvation and all this goes right back to the true fellowship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ.

Now, it’s the same way with the Holy Days. I think it’s very interesting with the Holy Days, that what God has done, He has buried all the Holy Days in Lev. 23—and I think it’s a test to find out which of the commandments we think are the least. Because many times out of the least and the lowest and the smallest and the most neglected of the world, **God does the greatest work!**

*Introduction to the New Testament* (no author cited)

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

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