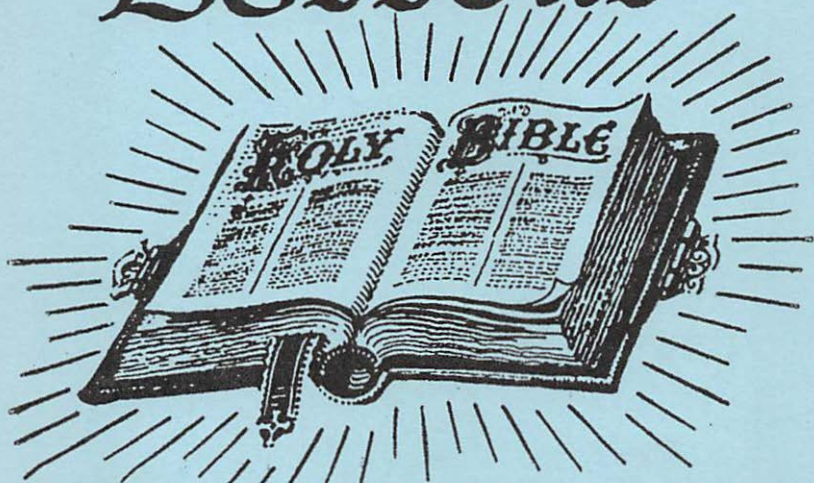


Bible Lessons



Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Table of Contents

DATE	LESSON TITLE	PAGE
Jan. 4	The Eternal Life Manifested Unto Us	1
11	Our Advocate with the Father	5
18	Overcoming the World and All Antichrist	10
25	Preserved from Deception by the Anointing	15
Feb. 1	Pure as He is Pure, Righteous as He is Righteous	19
8	Loving the Brethren in Deed and in Truth	24
15	The Peril of False Teachers	29
22	Being Made Perfect in Love	33
29	The Victory that Overcometh the World	38
Mar. 7	Eternal Life in Believing on the Son of God	43
14	The Great Love of the Father	47
21	The Blessedness of the Son	52
28	The Unspeakable Gift of the Holy Spirit	56

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THEME FOR FIRST QUARTER, 2004

For our Lessons this quarter we will take up the lovely and inspiring epistle of First John, written by the beloved disciple of Jesus. There is much inspiration and soul food in this epistle and we rejoice in the Lord for preserving it for us to feast upon and be blessed by. We pray God to bless our souls as we study this precious part of the Word of God. —Bro. Leslie Busbee



JANUARY 4, 2004

THE ETERNAL LIFE MANIFESTED UNTO US

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

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

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

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

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

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

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

John 12:35 Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light....

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Then spake Jesus again unto them saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: John, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, gives us his testimony of what he saw and experienced from Him who was the Light of the World, and re-echoes the warning of Christ that we should be diligent to obey and walk in the light of Christ lest we go into the darkness of sin and damnation.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(1 John 1:2), "*manifested*": made apparent, revealed and clearly seen.

(1 John 1:3), "*fellowship*": partnership, communion and being partakers with.

(1 John 1:10), "*we make him a liar*": One of the greatest errors that a man can make concerning the welfare of his eternity-bound soul is to be unaware of his sinful condition. This is a state that so many are in today. When a person denies that he has sinned against God and is in no need of justification he is saying, in fact, that God is wrong and he is right. This puts him in eternal jeopardy of forfeiting the only means of his salvation and hope of life because he rejects the Word of God and counts it false. He puts himself in a condition that God Himself cannot and will not correct. God has given us His law to enlighten us concerning our sinful state, but if we reject it, we will never have any consciousness of our sin and our need for His redemption.

(John 12:35-36), "*while ye have the light*": This is a dire warning that our Saviour is giving us here. God gives a man a chance to be enlightened concerning his sinful condition and the wonderful deliverance from it that he can have. But "yet a little while is the light with you." God expects a person to be concerned enough about his lost and undone condition to be anxious to do something about it when the opportunity is given. To be careless and slothful about responding to the divine call is to invite disaster and loss. When light shines upon our pathway we must hasten to obey the call and start moving with the light. Otherwise

the light will pass on and we will be left in the dark. This darkness describes a condition of ignorance, error and the absence of conviction. One in this state truly "knoweth not whither he goeth."

LESSON BACKGROUND

What a treasure we have before us in this precious writing of the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus! He states in his testimony that what he saw with his eyes, heard, and touched, he is declaring unto us. The Word of life was manifested, and he, along with his brother, James, and Simon Peter with the rest of the apostles, were commissioned to be witnesses of this wonderful Gift from the Creator of the heavens and earth.

We are called upon to receive his testimony so that we can enter into the blessed fellowship that he, John, had entered into. And John, as an eyewitness of the majesty of Christ, had not one doubt or question about what he was declaring. He had a fullness and completeness of deep inward joy and rejoicing because he knew that it was the truth and no lie. Think about what all John told us about in the blessed gospel he wrote. He was one of Christ's first followers, one of the two who heard the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Him, and started following Him. (John 1:35-40.) We need to get acquainted with the testimony of this beloved apostle of the Master, and let us be assured that it is all true just as he brings it out. Think of the various truths he brought out. There is the new birth, the spiritual well of the water of life, the spiritual resurrection from the dead state of sin, the coming resurrection of all that are in their graves, the bread of life and the food that endures forever, the knowledge of the truth and being made free from sin, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and the many wonderful miracles that Christ performed.

Christ, John declares, brought us the light of God. If we will take heed and obey the light that He brings to us, we will be brought into that blessed fellowship with God and all who are in Him, and thereby the blood that Jesus shed will take an effect to cleanse us from all sin. We only deceive ourselves to deny that we have any sin or that we have sinned and done wrong. Those souls are in gross darkness and ignorance before God. But if we will be honest and confess our sin to Him and acknowledge that we are in error and wrong, He will faithfully blot out our sins and

make us pure and clean in His holy sight. Praise the Lord for this blessed truth!
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was the apostle John so sure about what he had believed?
2. What did he believe this Word of life would afford for us?
3. Why is light such an important thing concerning God and us?
4. What is our responsibility concerning the light of God?
5. Why is it such a terrible error to deny that we have sinned?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

How important and serious is the subject of light and darkness! This is true concerning natural things, but it is so much more in spiritual matters. Spiritual darkness is what the scriptural message is mainly referring to. Darkness is the lack of light. Spiritual darkness is also the absence of light. This is ignorance, absence of perception and knowledge. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Eph. 5:8. All of us were at one time without the knowledge of the Lord and the light of His Word. We were groping in ignorance and error of judgment and thought. We needed to sense our darkness and be aware of our need of light. If we were not conscious of our darkness and need there would be no yearning desire for light. Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 9:41, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." This means that as long as we think we have light and fail to sense our darkness sin will remain lodged in our hearts. But if we will come to grips with our darkness and confess that we are lost and undone, we can get help for our souls.

In Christ light came into the world. Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. They hated the light, neither would come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. (John 3: 19-20.) "All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Eph. 5:13. We need to humble our hearts before God and be willing to acknowledge our darkness and need and welcome the light that brings reproof and correction to our lives. We need

to "take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts!" II Pet. 1:19.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This first epistle of John is not addressed to a person or church at a specific location. Notice who it is addressed to. "...declare we unto **you**, that **ye** also may have fellowship with us:..."; "And these things write we unto **you**, that **your** joy may be full."; "...and declare unto **you**, that God is light,..." I John 1:3-5. Yes, the Spirit of the Lord is speaking "...by the mouth of his holy prophets..." to you.

John felt a very close bond of love to Jesus. He identified himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" four times. He was with Jesus at the transfiguration, he was leaning on His bosom at the last supper, he entered in the tomb that Jesus had risen from when Peter stopped at the door and he was entrusted with the care of Jesus' mother, Mary. The same love that motivated him to be so close to Jesus is also reaching out to you. It is the pure love of the Father that wants you to also believe and be fully persuaded to closely follow the Lord. John endeavored to present a clear, true understanding about what he knew about Jesus and what a difference that knowledge will bring in your life.

John's burden is for you to share the same close fellowship that he has with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. That closeness comes when we turn from the works of darkness and through repentance bring our sin-stained heart to the Savior to be washed heavenly pure and then follow Him in the brilliant light of truth.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



JANUARY 11, 2004

OUR ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER

I John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous:

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

I Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all

acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners:...

Colossians 1:20 Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself:...

I John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

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

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.

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

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

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

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

MEMORY VERSE: We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. I John 3:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Being in Jesus Christ, the righteous atonement for our sins, calls for faithful obedience to His commandments and fervent love for our fellow man.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 2:1), "*advocate*": An intercessor, one who pleads and makes requests in the behalf of others. We as transgressors of God's sacred law were at variance with Him. It was a breach that separated us from God's fellowship. Jesus Christ, in His purity and yet being in the flesh, was the only One who could qualify to pay the price for our reconciliation with God, and this He did

by offering Himself to be crucified and die in our place. *"Jesus Christ the righteous"*: This means Jesus Christ, the One who was equitable in character and life, innocent, holy, just and without spot before God.

(1 John 2:2), *"propitiation"*: One who satisfies the just demands for reconciliation with God, atonement, making amends for wrongdoing and repairing the damage done.

(1 John 2:3-5), *"keep"*: This word in the Greek has a wide application, all of which can be applied to our attitude toward the Word of Christ. It is to watch, guard, to take note of and fulfill, to preserve and hold fast to. *"perfected"*: completed, accomplished and consummated.

(1 John 2:6), *"ought"*: We owe it to Him; we are duty bound, under obligation, should, must and dare not fail to obey.

(1 John 2:7), *"the beginning"*: The beginning of the world and the beginning of the gospel day in Christ.

(1 John 2:8), The Greek text says, "The darkness is passing away, and the true light already shines."

(1 John 2:10), *"none occasion of stumbling"*: The Greek says simply, "no offense."

(1 John 2:11), *"brother"*: The Greek meaning is "one who is from the same womb." All men are our brothers. We all came from the same source of life and being. How sad that bitterness and hatred infests the human race. Hatred and ill will blinds the heart and renders one unaware of what he is doing and where he is going. Jesus brought the cure for all of earth's ills, the love of God living and working in the very heart of man, causing him to love everyone, even those who are contrary to him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our first lesson we observed that, by walking in the light of Christ, we will have fellowship with God and one another, and, in effect, the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, brings a complete cleansing of our hearts and lives from sin. Thus Jesus the Anointed of God becomes the "go between" and in a sense an "arbitrator" for the mending of the breach and separation between God and man on account of sin. Jesus was the only One in all time and eternity who was qualified to fill such a dire need. He was human and down on the level of pain and temptation with all humanity. But He was also divine and had His origin from Heaven. With this background and equipped with the

power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was able to make His passage through this sin-cursed world triumphantly without being tainted and defiled with its sin and evil.

It is to be especially noted in John's word here that strict observance and obedience to Christ's teachings is indispensable. Although we are made free from the law of Moses and the Old Testament ordinances, we are brought under the even more serious obligations of obeying the doctrines of our Lord and Saviour. No man can justly claim to partake of Christ's benefits without perfect submission and obedience to Him and His sacred commandments. And John stresses here that the commandments we have received from Christ are really the pleasure of the heavenly Father that He had in mind when He created the world in the beginning. Christ gave us what He called in John 13:34 a new commandment that we should love one another as He had loved us. But in Jer. 31:3 the LORD Jehovah declared that He loved us with an everlasting love. And Jesus spoke in John 17:24 that the Father loved Him (and He meant us, too) before the foundation of the world. So this new commandment was from the beginning, the very basic law that was in God's heart when He created the heavens and the earth.

We want to take John's counsel seriously concerning loving one another and our fellow creatures of earth. Everyone may not love us nor be pleasing in our sight, but that is not our responsibility. Our responsibility is rightly to love all men regardless of what they do. We must not let our displeasure, anger and disgust hinder us from loving our fellow man. We must look beyond their fault and see their need and be willing to do what needs to be done to help them. What a change would take place in our society and world if everyone would apply this principle of brotherly love!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus Christ do for us concerning our lost, sinful condition?
2. Why is He called Jesus Christ, the righteous?
3. What action must accompany our faith in Him as Lord and Saviour?
4. What must be in our hearts to prove that we are in the light?
5. What brings darkness and what does that darkness do to us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The beloved apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ makes clear the truth that we must sin not. It is not the will of God for us to do or say anything that would offend or transgress His law of holiness. But he also makes it clear that if we do sin there is a way to gain forgiveness and victory. We have Someone who is even at the right hand of God who is our Advocate and will make a way for us to get our sins and iniquities blotted out and off of our record before God. So there is no excuse for us coming up with sin trailing along behind us. We can have our sins open beforehand, going before to judgment. (1 Timothy 5:24.) We can stand before the great Judge now and confess our sins to Him and through His tender mercy and the atonement provided through Jesus, His beloved Son, we can find a refuge and an escape from the destruction sin brings. And this wonderful blessing is not for us only but for the sins of the whole world. As it says in Rev. 22:17, "...Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!"

It is only right and fair that whoever would take hold of the covenant of God in Christ ought to be perfectly willing to line up with any and all of the Lord's requirements found in His precious Word. We should be aware of the attitude that many seem to have, which is professing to have faith in Christ with no sense of responsibility to obey Him. Such is deception of the worst kind. If we love Him, we will keep His Words. It is just that simple. And to obey our dear loving Saviour is a pleasure, not a burden.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the book *Treasures of the Snow* by Patricia St. John, each of the characters in the story are transformed by the love of Jesus, from the darkness of bitterness, unforgiveness, hatred, fear and laziness, to the overwhelming light of love; love that is patient, kind, forgiving, courageous, industrious and sacrificial. In one scene, Annette awakened in her darkened room and "saw a light creeping through a chink in the shutter and falling in a bright patch on the floor."

"It's morning," thought Annette; 'I'll open the shutters and see if the sky is beautiful.' She jumped out of bed and flung them back and the light streamed in. The valley still lay in deep

shadow, but the sunlight, rising over a gap in the mountains opposite, had crept down as far as their house. The light glistening on the snow was dazzling and the peaks behind so bright that it hurt to look at them. It filled the little room that had been so dark with the sweet, cold freshness of early morning.

"It's as Grandmother said," thought Annette. "There's no way of getting the shadows out of the valley except by just waiting till the sun shines on them; then you couldn't keep them if you tried. Hating...is like shadows, and being afraid of owning up is like shadows; and letting Jesus in is like opening the shutters."

There is no darkness like the darkness of hatred and fear. But when we open our hearts to the Lord Jesus it is as the song says,

"I walk in the light with Jesus,
He shines in the narrow way.
The shadows of sin are vanished,
I walk in the light of day."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



JANUARY 18, 2004

OVERCOMING THE WORLD AND ALL ANTICHRIST

1 John 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

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

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

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

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

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

James 4:4 ...Know ye not that the friendship of the world is

enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Colossians 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard,...

I John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: ...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We live in a world dominated by pride and ungodly lusts that are contrary to God and His Son. We must resist and overcome this influence and attraction and be strong to yield to God and His perfect will if we would abide forever with Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 2:12), "*little children*": These are infants, or those newly converted to the Christian faith. "*for his name's sake*": The Greek expression is "through" or "because of His (Christ's) name."

(I John 2:13-14), "*fathers*": Adam Clarke defines these as elders and eye witnesses of the Lord Jesus, who were the longest standing in the Church, and well established in the truths of the gospel and in Christian experience. "*young men*": These Adam Clarke defines as confirmed disciples of Christ; persons who were well grounded in the truth, had been thoroughly exercised in the Christian warfare, were no longer agitated by doubts and

fears, but had arrived at the abiding testimony of the Spirit of God in their consciences. *"little children"*: These differ from those mentioned in verse 12. These are Christian converts, but not of long standing, yet immature, but having made a good start and are blessed with a clear knowledge of God. *"wicked one"*: This really is referring to the hurtful and evil influence and the effect that such has in the world. It is the spirit of the devil that is abroad in this earthly realm polluting, infecting, contaminating, ruining and destroying the spiritual part of man and making it unfit for the working and abiding presence of the Spirit of God. We can, through perfect submission and dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ, triumph over this awful influence and find sufficient grace to be more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

(I John 2:16), *"lust"*: uncontrolled, undisciplined longing, appetite and desire. *"pride"*: The bragging and boasting attitude and disposition of those who are self-confident; self-esteem and conceit.

(James 4:4), *"enmity"*: hostility, opposition and stubborn contrariness.

(Colossians 1:22), *"blameless"*: without blemish, fault or spot. *"unreproveable"*: without reproach, accusation or charge.

(I John 2:18), *"antichrist"*: All that opposes or is contrary to Jesus Christ and His Word. *"last time"*: The final age and the closing of this world's duration.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have the very words of the beloved apostle John in our lesson today giving us a serious warning that we would do well to take earnest heed to. He is warning us about this present, evil world. Paul spoke about Christ giving "Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world" in Galatians 1:4. In the born again experience Christ came to bring, there is grace and power to escape the circle of the worldly system so stained with sin and transgression. It means so much for us to give up the world and sever all endearments that we ever had with it. The ways of carnal man in this world's society is not of God and is not acceptable with Him. John mentions the three elements of the world that are not of the Father. They are the lust

of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These three match up with the three points of the temptation of Eve in the garden, according to Gen. 3:6. The forbidden tree was shown to be good for food. That was the temptation of the lust of the flesh. It was also pleasant to the eyes. There was the temptation of the lust of the eyes. And it was also a tree to be desired to make one wise. This was pride, the same pride that defiles this worldly society today. Our Lord Jesus met this three-fold temptation and conquered it. He was tempted after 40 days of doing without food to satisfy his hunger by commanding stones to turn into bread. Here was the lust of the flesh. The tempter suggested that He jump down from the pinnacle of the temple to give proof of His divinity. Here was pride. And the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, pledging to make them all His if Christ would but fall down and worship him. But our blessed Saviour triumphed over all the allurements of the devil. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15.) "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb. 2:18.

John also spoke about the antichrists that were already present back then in the world. Any contrary influence that refuses to line up with the Word and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is antichrist, or opposed to Christ. There are many religions and churches who profess to be of God today that are really antichrist. They profess, they decorate, they work diligently, they talk big about it. But their spirit is lacking in purity, humility, faith and perfect obedience to the will of God. Such cannot remain with those who are faithful and true, and many times through the years of this world's history such have forsaken the assembly of the pure and true and gone out to set up their own temple.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main thing John is warning us about in today's lesson?
2. What danger does this present, evil world present to us?
3. What is the tragic result of a life tainted by this sinful world?
4. What causes desires to become defiling lust?
5. In what various ways can the spirit of antichrist be seen?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Lord Jesus was a true and strong Soldier. He met the devil headlong and by the strength of His Father He was triumphant over all the powers of the enemy. He is counting on all who seek to follow Him to be strong and fight the good fight of faith. He needs young people and children to start out for Him, take up their cross and go with Him all the way. We must be brave and courageous. We cannot expect things to go easy with us. Jesus endured much contradiction of sinners against Himself. Mankind was very strong against the Saviour. We will also be tempted and pressured by people. They are ignorant of the real Christian life and its values. They are against holy discipline and Christ-like behavior. They do not think it is needful to be godly and careful with their lives. But we know that it pays to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:12.) Let us be strong and valiant for the truth and fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. This world is not worth losing our precious eternity-bound souls for. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are many enticements in this wicked world today. I am reminded of a mythology story of the songs of the sirens. Sirens were half bird, half human creatures that sat on a treacherous shoreline singing beautiful melodies. The beautiful music lured mariners to the shoreline where they met shipwreck and death. In order to pass safely, the seaman had to stop their ears with wax so that they could not hear the enticing songs and thus avoided certain destruction.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are all very powerful influences seeking to destroy us. We must stay away from these attractions and run for our spiritual lives. We must be as Christian in the *Pilgrim's Progress* who had to cover his ears and run towards the Celestial City crying, "Life, life, eternal life." —Sis. LaDawna Adams



JANUARY 25, 2004

PRESERVED FROM DECEPTION BY THE ANOINTING

I John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

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

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

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *[but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

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

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

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

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

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

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Psalms 20:6 Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.

Psalms 23:5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over.

Psalms 92:9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish: all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. Psalm 84:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God Almighty has promised and provided in His Son Jesus Christ a special endowment of the Holy Spirit to be given to all who believe in and wholly follow Christ. This indwelling Spirit from God preserves us from the evil and deceptions of this present, evil world and teaches us the real truth of God's Holy Word.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 2:20, 27), "*unction, anointing*": Both of these words are translated from the same Greek word "*chrisma*," which means the gift or endowment of the Holy Spirit.

(I John 2:26), "*seduce*": To cause to roam or stray from safety, truth or virtue.

(I John 2:27), "*abide*": to stay, continue, and remain (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy).

(I John 2:29), "*doeth*": practice, perform and carry out completely.

(Psalm 20:6), "*anointed*": The Hebrew word is "Messiah," which in the Greek is "Christ." Jesus Christ means Jesus, the Anointed One or The Anointed Saviour.

(Psalm 23:5), "*anointest*": This term in the Hebrew means to make fat, rich and fully satisfied.

(Psalm 92:10), "*horn*": This is referring to the peak of one's power and abilities; the force of one's strength for success and achievement. "*unicorn*": The meaning in the Hebrew is a wild bull or ox. Various beasts of the field have horns that are used as weapons of strength to subdue enemies and for defense. The spiritual life of Christ, with the indwelling Spirit of God, is the horn of the Christian. We can overcome our foes and master all obstacles and adversity through this heavenly anointing. "*anointed*": The Hebrew word means to be overflowed, which indicates super-abundance. "*fresh oil*": This is new and up to date anointing that is inspiring, bringing flourishing and prosperous achievement in the Christian life and service. This is in contrast with the old and rancid aroma of a lukewarm, empty profession.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a continuation of the study of the first epistle of John, the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus, the

Anointed of God. Let us notice that John stresses the importance and vital function of the anointing that we can have through the gift of the Holy Spirit that Christ has made available for us in His great salvation. It is through this holy anointing of richness, strength, power and inward illumination that we are able to overcome and have the victory over this present, evil world of darkness and deception. Notice that he makes statements such as, "ye know all things," and "ye need not that any man teach you," and that "the same anointing teacheth you of all things." This corresponds with what the Lord Jesus spoke concerning the promised Holy Spirit who would come after Christ had ascended up to the right hand of God: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you." And, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13.

This does not mean that we cannot be taught by our fellows in Christ or other Christians. There is a place for receiving counsel and spiritual guidance and understanding from one another. But he is referring to a personal and individual anointing of the Holy Spirit that we each one can and must have. This inward presence of the Holy Spirit in our souls will guide us in understanding the real truth of the Word of God and will safeguard us from being deceived and led away by false teachings or error and transgression. We must abide in this anointing and never grieve the blessed Spirit of God away from us. We are doomed to eternal loss and destruction if we grieve Him away from us. The Holy Spirit inspiration and personal guidance and inward strength is the only means by which we can succeed in the Christian warfare and be truly accepted of God in that last great day. There are many seducers and influences in the world that will lead us away from the one true way. But by keeping filled with the Spirit and meekly following the strait and narrow way Christ laid down for us we can be ready to meet Him when He appears the second time without sin unto salvation.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the anointing that we so greatly need from the Lord?
2. What all does the Holy Spirit do in His indwelling power?
3. What are some of the elements in the world that are foreign to the Spirit?

4. What must we do to maintain that fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit?

5. What are we going to need to not be ashamed before Him at His coming?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I am persuaded to believe that the greatest and richest blessing that one can possess in this life is this holy anointing that is in the indwelling Holy Spirit. Every child of God needs to be aware of this. We need to seek for it earnestly with all of our hearts. This sweet experience is not given to the unsaved. An unrighteous person cannot receive it. One must be delivered from the power of sin and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. It is then that we are eligible for this heavenly gift. But to obtain it we must humble ourselves in genuine humility and submission to God. We must consecrate our entire life and being to the will of God and His good pleasure. We must die to self and this world. We must seek Him earnestly in prayer and count Him faithful to give this precious Spirit of truth to us. If we will be complete in our devotion and consecration to God and believe with all of our heart that God gives it to us, we can have it. Perfect consecration and perfect faith will bring us a perfect experience. And then we must be very diligent to obey and follow the leading of this blessed Spirit. We have much to learn and many experiences to go through. We will not gain it all in a day. We must abide and remain in this spirit of supreme love and obedience to God. We will be tempted and the pressure of Satan and this wicked world of deception will come against us. But if we will keep humble, resist the devil, and be honest and obedient to God, we can be more than conquerors and the Holy Spirit will live and abide in our hearts forever. And someday, through the power of that indwelling Holy Spirit, we will rise in immortal bodies to meet the Lord in the air and ever be with Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The preserving power of the Holy Spirit in our lives is one of the many benefits found in the Christian life and a very important one. Possession of the Holy Spirit does not make us

infallible or mature in our understanding. Peter began to separate himself from the Gentiles after he had an understanding that God loved the Gentiles also. We also, through our humanity, can sin, fail or make mistakes in our walk with God; but as we honestly humble our hearts, the spirit will keep and continue to lead.

"For whom He loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." God may chasten us through people (as with Peter); he may use circumstances of life, perhaps affliction, or maybe just the still small voice of reproof in our conscience. Be not discouraged. It is all part of being anointed as one of His sons and it will work for our learning, profit and preservation. Through my own experience, I recognize that the Holy Spirit has a big job in teaching humanity. We don't get it at once or overnight; we are slow learners. It took the early morning church, which had been conditioned in the law, quite some time before it had a good grasp of God's truth along certain lines. We see the struggle in many New Testament epistles. They let us know that the Lord is patient to work with us as He was with them. We want to continue to focus and be responsible with what we do know of truth and commit the unknown into His hands.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



FEBRUARY 1, 2004

PURE AS HE IS PURE, RIGHTEOUS AS HE IS RIGHTEOUS

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

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

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

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

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

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

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

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

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Romans 6:22 Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

MEMORY VERSE: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. I John 3:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: He that committeth sin is of the devil and is the servant of sin. Jesus Christ, as Lord and Saviour, came to deliver us from the power and dominion of sin so that we can be just as pure and righteous as Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 3:1), "*called the sons of God*": By His great love and concern for us the Father has bidden or invited us to be redeemed from our sins which separated us from Him so that we can be His sons and daughters. "Oh, what grace and high promotion that in Jesus I should be, raised from sin to royal honour, even reigning, Lord, with Thee!"

(I John 3:3) "*purifieth*": Sanctifies, makes clean and holy. There is a part of being made pure and holy that only God can do. It is His grace and the cleansing of the blood of Jesus on His part. But there is also a part we must do. This is obedience and the cleansing of the water by the word. As Isaiah 1:16-17 says, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings

from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well;..." One can be deceived in supposing that God does all the cleansing without our obedience and cooperation. Christ could shed His precious blood a thousand times, but unless we take action to put away from our lives our evil ways and take a stand to seek to please God, Christ would have died in vain as far as getting rid of sin is concerned.

(1 John 3:5), "*take away*": To lift up and bear them away from us. We do not have to be under the dominion of sin any longer. As Romans 6:12 and 14 says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

(1 John 3:8), "*destroy*": To loosen, undo and dissolve.

(1 John 3:9), "*his seed*": The seed of God's Word and His Holy Spirit is living in the heart, remaining there through the keeping power of God and producing the fruits of the Spirit. "*cannot sin*": Not able nor is it possible to sin as long as the seed of the Word of God is abounding in the heart and life.

(John 8:35-36), "*servant*": A bondman or slave. Adam Clarke has some good comments on these two verses. "And the servant abideth not in the house. Or rather, Now the slave abideth not in the family. As if Jesus had said, 'A slave has no right to any part of the inheritance in the family to which he belongs; but the legitimate son has a right. He can make any servant of the family free, though no slave can. He can divide or bestow the inheritance as he pleases.' Our Lord seems here to be referring to the sending away of Ishmael, mentioned in Gen. 21:10-14. Only those who are genuine children can inherit the estate." Praise the Lord we can be true and genuine children of God through Christ and will abide in the house of the Lord forever and ever!

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we want to consider more of the plain teachings of John, the beloved apostle of our Lord and Saviour, who beheld Him, touched Him and heard His blessed voice. So plain and straight is the counsel He gives us here concerning the victory that Christ came to bring us over the power of sin and transgression against the holy law of God! He most positively

gives no allowance for sin in the heart and life of the born again child of God. How fitting and suitable are his words! Let us cherish them in our hearts. The love that the Father had toward us caused Him to make sonship with Him available and gave us the royal invitation to come and partake of it with Him.

Then He speaks of the blessed hope this sonship with God gives to us, and what every man that has this hope does with respect to the attaining of this hope. This purification of one's self is not self-righteousness. It follows the cleansing of the blood of Jesus from guilt and condemnation before God. With respect to the cleansing of the atoning blood of Jesus we submit our wills to Him and gladly obey His precious Word, which is as a cleansing or putting into practice what He so graciously commanded us to do. In the Jewish tabernacle was the brazen altar where the blood was spilled, followed by the cleansing laver, which is a figure of the cleansing we do in obedience to the Word. These two cleansings together with the burning fire of the indwelling Spirit of God produce a perfect cleansing that will make us as pure and righteous as Jesus is pure and righteous.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God do to show what manner of love He had toward us?
2. How can we be assured that we will be like Him when He appears?
3. How can a man purify himself to be even as Christ is pure?
4. Is there any provision in our lesson for sin to continue in the redeemed soul?
5. What kind of fruit comes from the heart of a truly born again person?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Every time I think of what I John 3:9 says, I recall an experience I had several years ago in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Our car had broken down with a wheel bearing gone out and I was to have it repaired. It happened on a Labor Day and I was to spend the night and have it towed in the next day. A couple who lived nearby offered to let me stay at their house. It so happened that I had to spend more than one night there. On one of the

evenings their pastor came to visit them. I was visiting with them and the conversation got on Bible matters, one of which was sin. I remember casually referring to this scripture, quoting it to the minister. He immediately responded with, "Oh, that is not in the Bible!" I responded by asking for a Bible so I could show it to him. He required that I read it from the Revised Version. I agreed because I knew that it read practically the same as the King James Version. That preacher stood over me while I read the verse: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." When I finished, he turned back to his chair, saying, "Well, it is *there*! I am going to have to do some studying about this." The poor man was not aware that the Bible had this to say about sin. I have wondered through the years since that happened just how much studying about it he really did.

These plain teachings of the Scriptures ought to be enough to convince any open-minded person the truth about God and His will concerning us being totally delivered from the power of sin. Multiplied millions of people rest in the idea that we cannot be really free from sin but have to sin more or less every day. It is part of their prayers to ask God to forgive them of their many sins. Romans chapters 6, 7 and 8 from the apostle Paul openly shows the triumph we can have over sin. Jesus can set a man free from the power and dominion of sin for He came to undo and destroy the works of the devil. Thank God, we can in all practicality quit the sin business. —Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Surely all of us are convinced of the holiness of God. In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, he relates a vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. Isaiah also saw the seraphims above the throne and verse three says, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Man who was formed in the image of God, was also pure, but sin entered into the world and caused a horrible change and separation to take place. While God's judgment of death is passed on sin, He loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die in our place to take away our transgressions and He wants us to be called the sons of God and to abide in Him.

While we abide in Him, we cannot continue in sin—that would defile the holiness of God which He will not tolerate. But those who have been “transformed” and are “a new creature” and have been given a “right heart” strive to obtain and maintain that experience of purity before God and man and with the enabling grace of God are given the power to overcome sin.

What a wonderful blessing to be free from the shackles of sin and the bondage of satan. Now we have the liberty to address God as “Our Father which art in Heaven.”

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



FEBRUARY 8, 2004

LOVING THE BRETHREN IN DEED AND IN TRUTH

1 John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

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

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

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

MEMORY VERSE: Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. I John 3:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To love one another as brethren in the Lord and live righteously and godly in this world is the greatest proof of our sonship with God in Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 3:10), "*manifest*": shining forth and apparent for public display. "*doeth*": works and puts into practical behavior.

((I John 3:13), "*Marvel not*": Do not wonder, do not be surprised, and think it not strange if the world detests, scorns, ridicules, persecutes and despises you in your life for Christ. This antagonistic conflict between the godly and the ungodly first became apparent in the strife that arose between Cain and his brother Abel. Cain was angry because his offering to God was not accepted, and he allowed jealousy in his heart toward his brother Abel, who was shown to be accepted of God, and he took it out on his brother and killed him. Such has been the pattern ever since then. It is still that way and will be as long as the world lasts.

((I John 3:17), "*bowels*": pity, sympathy, tender mercy and inward affection.

((I John 3:19), "*assure*": convince, calm and conciliate, soothe and comfort, have and maintain peace and confidence.

((I John 3:20), "*condemn*": to note against, to find fault or defect, and to accuse. "*greater than our hearts*": God is able to help us to overcome the defects and failures we might have and give to us the needed victory. We must not give over to despair

and lose hope. We can go to the throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:16.) We have no excuse of staying down in defeat and rejection. Even Cain could have corrected himself if he had humbled down and confessed his failure and need. Satan gets people into trouble and then blinds their minds to the light of hope to come to the mercy seat and get help.

(Ver. 24). "*dwelleth, abideth*": Both of these words are translated from the same Greek word which means to stay, remain and dwell continually.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have stressed the commandment of our Lord and Saviour as recorded in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This special love and bond of tender fellowship and affection is directly from the mutual love that each individual soul has for the Lord Jesus. As we behold this mutual love being manifest in the life and conduct of our fellow man, it causes esteem, respect, honour and appreciation to be in our hearts for him. It is a tie that binds hearts into one. Jesus knew this would be, but He also knew that satan would seek to disrupt this sacred bond of unity by various means. Thus we are warned and counselled to guard earnestly this sacred tie of fellowship. In Ephesians 4:1-3 we have Paul's parallel word with Christ's commandment: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Notice the admonition of what should accompany our efforts in the Christian high and holy calling: "lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering." Doing what? "Forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Now the Greek expression translated "forbearing one another" is "putting up with one another." We need to recognize that to maintain our composure in one body of fellowship and love in Christ we must dutifully exercise great

and often times prolonged forbearance with our brother who is also believing in Christ and trying to follow Him. Our brother may not be as far advanced in the Christian life as we are and the love of Christ will cause us to bear with him, overlook his shortcomings and pray earnestly for him.

Many sad things have taken place through history because souls have failed to do this. Fellowship and unity in the Holy Spirit does not consist merely because we see everything alike. It takes time for the Lord to work and mold us into that perfect man and the measure of the fullness of Christ. As Heb. 13:1 says, "Let brotherly love continue." We are warned in our lesson today of how important and vital it is for us to maintain a brotherly love in our hearts and what can develop if we fail to do so.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the important Christian ingredient we have dealt with in our lesson?
2. Why is brotherly love so vital in our cause for unity in Christ?
3. What element can contribute to a lack of brotherly love among believers?
4. What are we to diligently do in an effort to maintain brotherly love?
5. What can faithfully loving our brother help us to have?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Brotherly love is translated from the Greek Word "Philadelphia." William Penn named his colony by that name because he believed in brotherly love. History tells us that, among all the colonies settled in the New World, William Penn and Roger Williams were two leaders who never had any problems with the Indians. It was because these two men believed in brotherly love and exercised it with their dealings with these native people who lived in America before they did.

I Peter 4:8 says, "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover a multitude of sins." Then we have more of Simon Peter's counsel in II Peter 1:5-7 where he lists the things that are indispensable for success and attainment in the Christian life. They are: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness (same

as philadelphia, brotherly love) and charity. This charity is from the Greek word "agape" which means divine love, the love of God that embraces all of our fellow human creatures of earth. To be fruitful in Christ and to make our calling and election sure, and to have ministered unto us abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must have these things abounding in us. Let us take heed to the words of these two apostles of our Lord and assure our hearts so that we be not ashamed before Him at His coming.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems easy for us to grasp the first part of verse ten, where it tells what clearly separates the children of God from the children of the devil: of course, those who are not doing righteousness are surely not of God. But we sometimes pass lightly over the second part, or at least we fail to understand its vital importance—"neither he that loveth not his brother."

I think where we fail is that we say to ourselves, "Oh, I love everybody. There's not a person I would want to see lost in hell. There's not a person I would hurt or injure...." And we stop there, not realizing that love is an active thing. Bro. Charles Elwell used to preach emphatically, "When you love somebody, you show them that you genuinely care for them. Not, you love their soul, but you love them, as a person."

The word love is not only a noun, but a verb. It does, it acts, it moves, it feels, it lives. And what are the deeds, the actions, the movements, the feelings, the life, of love?

"Charity (love) suffereth long." How long? As long as there is something to suffer, to bear with, to put up with. Jesus proves His love to us by how He bears with us, is patient with us. When we refuse to be patient with a person, we are showing hatred to that person. We are not loving.

"Charity...is kind." Can we love someone and be cruel at the same time? Can we love and say hurtful things to or about someone? Can we love and not do the gentle deed, supply the need, show the genuine care, speak the tender word?

These are only the beginning qualities of love mentioned in I Corinthians 13. We don't have time or space to go through them all. But maybe these two can get us thinking.... Do we really love?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

FEBRUARY 15, 2004

THE PERIL OF FALSE TEACHERS

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

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

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

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

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

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

II Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

MEMORY VERSE: Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. I John 4:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There is a true Gospel and a true Holy Spirit. But there are also deceptive spirits who profess to be the true. We must be on our guard against these false spirits and test them by the true Word and Spirit of Jesus Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 4:1), "*try*": To examine and put to the test by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. "*gone out*": issued forth.

(I John 4:2), "*confesseth*": It testifies that the same Spirit that was in Jesus is in the person who is professing Him. There is an unmistakable witness of the Spirit of Christ in a human being that comes forth. There is a blending and holy fellowship that exists with all the true saints of God.

(I John 4:4), "*overcome*": conquer, subdue, gain the victory over.

(II Pet. 2:1), "*false prophet*": One who is professing to be a prophet of God but is really untrue. Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Paul said in Phil. 3:2-3 to "beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision (the holding to circumcision in the flesh as a requirement). For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." "*false teacher*": One who promotes and sets forth erroneous teachings. "*damnable heresies*": Teachings that are at variance with the faithful Word of the true Gospel; teachings that disrupt the unity of the people of God and seek to cause them to be led off into the ways of error and destruction. "*denying the Lord that bought them*": This means, in the Greek, that they are contradicting the Master who purchased them, going right against what He taught and lived.

(II Pet. 2:2), "*pernicious*": ruinous and destructive.

(II Pet. 2:3), The Greek says, "And by the love of earthly gain with well turned words they will use you for gain, for whom the judgment long ago lingers not and their destruction does not fall asleep."

(II Pet. 2:10), The Greek says, "Most of all, ones going after

the flesh in the lust of defilement and despising dominion (lightly esteeming the godly leaders and holy ministers). Bold and daring they are, not restrained by a sense of shame and propriety, pleasers of self; they tremble not at those who have manifested the glory and beauty of God, speaking evil of them.

(II Pet. 2:14), The Greek says, "Having eyes full of an adulteress, and not ceasing from sin (teaching that we cannot live free from sin), alluring unsettled souls, a heart busied with covetousness, children of curse."

(II Pet. 2:19), The Greek says, "Promising them freedom, themselves being slaves of corruption, for by whom anyone has been defeated, to this one also he has been enslaved."

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we will study what John has to say about the false spirits that the true saints of God will encounter in this time world. And finding that the apostle Peter has some bold and striking things to say on this subject, we have included in our lesson some of his counsels from his second epistle.

This is the greatest and most formidable of all the foes that we will have to contend against as the true children of God. Many false spirits have issued forth from satan to seek to withstand, hinder and frustrate the work of the Lord. These are deceptive and cunning agents of the devil, with many plausible and humanly reasonable ideas and thoughts to promote. But John gives us the key to detect these traps of the enemy. Here is where we must be taught, inspired and skilled by the Holy Spirit. We must live close to God and be fully submissive to His will. Any rebellious or unwilling attitude on our part to go against the Word and the Spirit will render us liable for falling a prey to these deceiving spirits. Every false doctrine is backed by and accompanied by a spirit. We must try these spirits by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The Lord will help us. If such a spirit does not bear witness of the true Spirit of Christ in humility, purity, godliness, holiness, faith, peace, assurance, true wisdom, patience, longsuffering, goodness, meekness and all the other necessary traits of trueness, then we had best be on our guard against it. If such spirits make allowance for sin, and disregard the principles of holiness in manner, dress and deportment, then we can be assured that the spirit is not of God. Pride is

another mark of a false spirit. Is it with much talk and fleshly bearing of personality and forceful endeavor? False spirits and crooked preachers have been a great trouble to the work of the Lord through the years. Following their trail shows that their way is wrong for it leads to deeper and more radical ways of error.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is the conflict with false prophets a new thing?, Why?
2. By what means are we going to be able to detect a false spirit?
3. What are some of the manifestations that show up a false spirit?
4. What are some of the marks of the true Spirit of Christ we should look for?
5. What hope and assurance can we have that we can and will overcome them?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There are various experiences encountered in the work of the Lord with false teachers. Bro. Fred Pruitt related in his book *God's Gracious Dealings* about a preacher he met who was, as he called it, a "long time service man in religious work and could preach strong and make a big show, but we could not have fellowship with him." He also said, "He tried hard to win us over to him, and to get us under his power and influence, wanting to love us a lot." Different times along the way of life we have met with false doctrines and people who sought to persuade us to believe as they did. But we have always sought the Lord in prayer and the Holy Spirit has given us Scriptures that balanced us out and helped us to see the real truth. False spirits, as I have seen, are off balance. They stress things in the Scriptures and present ideas that seem to be Bible, but as we tarry before God in prayer, the Lord is faithful to bring other scriptures that will show a balanced doctrine. When Jesus was being tempted by satan with quotations from Scripture, He countered with, "It is written again." Keeping tender before the Lord and keen to the true Spirit of God will help us to detect these false spirits of deception.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A banker was questioned as to how his tellers could distinguish a counterfeit bill from a genuine bill. He explained that the tellers were trained only with real money so that in dealing with cash on a daily basis, they could easily detect a fake bill.

This can be applied spiritually. If we handle only the truth, then we will be able to distinguish a false or counterfeit teaching. It pays to be careful and prayerful in handling the truth. Look to Jesus in His Holy Word to help you discover the truth. His Holy Spirit can then guide you into all truths.

On the other hand, if we dabble in strange doctrines and teachings with our own human reasoning we can send ourselves to a devil's hell. The Word teaches us that we can believe a lie and be destroyed.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



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FEBRUARY 22, 2004

BEING MADE PERFECT IN LOVE

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. I John 4:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: He who truly loves the unseen heavenly Father will also have true love for his brother and fellow man. Our heavenly Father, the Almighty God, has confirmed His love to us in His Son, Jesus Christ, and through Him we can have our love brought to completeness wherein is no fear of meeting Him in judgment.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 4:7), "love": The Greek word is "agape," which means love, affection and benevolence. Webster defines love thus: "a strong affection for or attachment or devotion to a person or persons; a strong liking for or interest." A few more words we could add would include: care, concern, sympathetic understanding, inward compassionate feeling, warmth, desire,

ardent thoughts, kindness, friendliness and tenderness.

(I John 4:9-10, 14), "*sent*": set apart for the purpose of being sent on a mission.

(I John 4:10), "*propitiation*": being brought unto good favor; having wrath appeased and effecting reconciliation and fellowship. Through Christ obeying the will of the Father and submitting Himself to be crucified and to shed His precious blood, the wrath of God was appeased and God reaches out to us through Jesus and beckons us to come and be forgiven and reconciled to Him.

(I John 4:12, 14), "*seen*": This word is translated in both of these places from the Greek word which means to look closely, earnestly and inspect. We get the thought from these two expressions that, though no man ever has been nor yet is able to get a close up look and inspection of God, yet we can look, perceive, discern, be a spectator of, and inspect closely the blessed vision of the wonderful God sanctifying and sending His Holy Son into this sin-cursed world to rescue us from sin and bring about reconciliation and sweet communion with Him for ever. Blessed be His Holy Name!

(I John 4:14), "*saviour*": Deliverer, Rescuer, Redeemer, Protector, Preserver, Restorer, Healer, Guardian, Keeper, Helper, Friend and Healer. Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God is all of these. "*the world*": Humanity, the souls of mankind, people, kindreds, tongues and nations.

(I John 4:15), "*confess*": to assent, agree, give full consent, acknowledge and openly declare beyond all doubt. "*dwelleth*": abides, remains and stays.

(I John 4:16), "*believed*": We are persuaded and convicted of the truth that Jesus is positively, beyond all doubt, the only begotten Son of God, born of the virgin Mary and also raised to Immortality from the dead, and is at the right hand of God interceding for us.

(I John 4:17), "*boldness*": All outspokenness, without doubt or fear, confidence, assurance, hope and trust.

(I John 4:18), "*torment*": fear of reprisal or punishment.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have some more concerning the love of God which was advanced in chapter 3. The Almighty God,

Jehovah, the heavenly Father, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, in whom we live and move and have our being, WAS, IS and will be FOREVER a Supreme Being with a nature and disposition of love, good will, kindness and mercy. As our lesson bears out, all who will be in fellowship with Him will have this same kind of spirit and attitude of heart and life.

Love is the greatest power and force in the world today. It is beyond all physical and earthly force. Love, true and pure and genuine love and affection is of God. God is love. Such a simple statement this is, but how much better could it be said? In love and tender regard the earth and the heavens were framed and brought into being. In love God formed man from the dust of the ground and gave him life and being. This great God, however, was not satisfied to do all the loving. He wanted love in return from this man He created. Thus He placed a test tree in the garden to be there to tempt man and require some definite decision and action to show that he truly loved God. And when man yielded to the devil and partook of the forbidden fruit, it showed that he did not truly love God. But God had a plan to redeem man back to pure love and fellowship with Him. He was a long time bringing it about, but He whispered of His love to the generations and pointed them to the coming of the Saviour.

The greatest expression of love is sacrifice and giving. God brought about the birth of the Saviour through the womb of Mary and the conception of the Holy Spirit. He was well pleased with His Son, Jesus, and commissioned Him to go forth and proclaim His love for humanity and to sacrifice His life as a ransom for souls of men to be brought back to His embrace. This Jesus faithfully executed and carried out. Now we have Christ Jesus seated at the right hand of God ready to receive and reinstate all who come to Him back to the Father's embrace. We can have that same love in our hearts and have it to perfection. We can be free from bitterness, hatred and strife. Love in the heart answers to every need that we ever will have.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How was the love of God manifested toward us?
2. How can we manifest real love for God?
3. Why is brotherly love so important to our love for God?
4. What will perfect and complete love provide for us?
5. How can we have the love of God perfected in us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I heard a touching story once about a woman who was married to a man who, by his former wife now deceased, had one teenaged son. She desired greatly to win the love and affection of this boy and she tried in every way to be kind, good and helpful to him. But though he was submissive, cooperative and helpful to her in return, yet still he did not manifest the love and affection that she longed to see in him toward her. But opportunity came for her one day to manifest real love for this young son. It happened that he had gained permission from his Dad to use the car that day, and upon his return to the house he sadly told his stepmother his tale of woe. He had run into something with the car and had put a big dent in the fender. He was dreading to have his dad find out about it. This woman saw her chance. She asked for the keys to the car, and went out and drove around to a place where there was an obstruction, and ran the car against it on the side where the dent was and made a much greater dent that hid the first dent. Then she came back and showed the boy what she had done and told him that she would take the blame for it all. This act of sacrifice, for his sake, was the key to his affection. After that he satisfied with his love and affection what she had been seeking and longing for.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Years ago a religious man stopped and asked me about some carpet I had sitting on the front porch. Somehow we started discussing doctrines. Weeks later I was riding my bike by their church and I saw the same man that I had talked to. He and another man were hollering angrily from the church to some people that were standing outside of a car in the street. One of the men in the church grabbed a board and a bloody fight followed. This cleared my mind real quick where these men were coming from—it wasn't God.

John is reiterating what Christ had taught. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Jesus also in referring to those that were false—"you will know them by their fruit." The first category listed in the fruit of the spirit is love. This is God's standard.

Failing to follow Christ in forgiveness will dry us up spiritually and will be the beginning of a downward road to strife, variance, ill will, bitterness and hatred. We as Christians do not have the luxury of harboring malice without serious consequences. Our conduct speaks louder than our profession. May our conduct confess that Jesus Christ has come in our flesh.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



FEBRUARY 29, 2004

THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD

I John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

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

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

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

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

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

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

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

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. I John 5:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord God Almighty has given overwhelming witness of Jesus Christ being His Son, and there is no just reason or cause for us doubting and drawing back from full submission and allegiance to Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 5:1), "*the Christ*": The Anointed One. The Old Testament relates to us the thought of being anointed. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Psalms 23:5. "God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." Psalms 45:7. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." Psalms 92:10. "The spirit of the LORD God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." Isaiah 61:1. Anointing signifies special richness and blessing of God upon a consecrated, obedient and faithful soul. It is the oil of the Holy Spirit. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38. "Christ" is from the Greek, and "Messiah" is the Hebrew word. It means the Anointed of God. "*begat, begotten*": From the Greek word from which comes the word "generate." This means to procreate, that is, to bring forth or give birth to.

(I John 5:3), "*grievous*": heavy, difficult or burdensome.

(I John 5:4), "*whatsoever is*": All who are. "*overcometh*": subdue, conquer, prevail and get the victory over.

(I John 5:6), "*came*": coming, approaching, appearing. Jesus drew near to us in this frail mortal life, approached us with gracious goodness in meekness and mercy with outstretched hand for our help. "...Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek,..." Matthew 21:5. "*by water and blood*": Water represents the Word of God which not only means life (as the living waters), but is also a means of cleansing through obedience to the same. But Jesus comes to us not only by the Word, but He comes with blood, His own precious, innocent blood shed to atone for the wrath of God against our sins, and to bring a cleansing from the guilt and condemnation of sin. "*the Spirit is truth*": The Spirit of God, accompanying the water and blood that Christ brings, verifies and confirms the truth of it all. The Holy Spirit is also a cleansing, through His holy fire, that fills the temple of the body and soul of man, burning in their innermost being and refining

them from all the effects of sin. This threefold cleansing will without fail fully purify, cleanse and deliver a man from ALL sin. (I John 1:7.)

(I John 5:7), "*three that bear record in heaven*": Although it is a proven fact that this verse is not in many of the versions and translations, being absent even from the original Greek text, still I cannot help but be persuaded that the Lord wanted this to be in this part of the Bible. To me, the three that bear record in heaven is not so much for heaven and the benefit of the Trinity and the holy beings there but for us in this world of doubt and error. It is a blessed truth that the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit are beaming from heaven in their glory and majesty and grace for the welfare of our souls.

(I John 5:8), "*three that bear witness in earth*": Here we have the three agents that work in the spirit of man down here in his mortal state. They are the Holy Spirit, the Word of the Father, and the Blood of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Some refer to the water as being our baptism, and it does have a direct relation to it. But, somehow, I see that water, in the scripture sense, is more shown as a type of the Word, and the cleansing we obtain by obedience and conformity to the Word. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Eph. 5:26 "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." I Pet. 1:22. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. 10:22. Without controversy we can clearly see that the Word effects a cleansing when we obey and follow it faithfully. It is a practical cleansing. While the blood of Jesus cleanses from guilt and condemnation, and the Holy Spirit burns and refines from the root and effects of sin upon our nature, we still are responsible to submit and be obedient to the truth in a practical and truthful manner.

(I John 5:10), "*believeth on the Son of God*": The real Greek expression is "believing into the Son of God." The word "into" denotes really getting on the inside of Christ, which is His life and all that He stands for. "*he that believeth not God hath made him a liar*": Perhaps it could be expressed, "He that believeth not God hath made him out to be a liar." But in a more practical sense,

whoever refuses to believe the witness and testimony that God has given in Christ, *makes himself a liar*, because he is discrediting all the unfailing proofs of miraculous workings that took place in the ministering of His Son to us. It is a stubborn and proud spirit who rejects the gracious extension of the Almighty to us in the ministration of Jesus Christ, His beloved Son.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Oh, how precious are the truths in the writings of John, the beloved apostle and eyewitness of the Lord Jesus Christ! We can see the clarity and undoubted assurance that he had! He bears witness so fervently! It is for us to receive his witness and be an overcomer as he was. The three witnesses that we can make a part of our very life has been so freely ministered to us. And these three, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood, are connecting us so beautifully with the Almighty Himself along with His Holy Son and the Holy Spirit that was sent through His Son. All of this is the witness and testimony of God to us. We can receive this witness and it can be written and impressed upon the tables of our heart and be within us as a kingdom eternal.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. By what means can we truly love the children of God?
2. What does it mean to overcome this world, and how can we do it?
3. What are the three agents that God has given to bear witness to us?
4. What are the three that bear record in heaven?
5. What does a man make of himself if he refuses to believe in God's Holy Son?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God has given every witness that is needed to assure us of His goodness and love. He has given us the gift of His Son, a treasure worth more than this entire world and ten thousand worlds like it. We can possess and own this wonderful Saviour for our welfare and happiness. There is no real cause for us to draw back in unbelief. We can have assurance beyond doubt,

and it is all worthy of us giving our all to Him and living solely to His honor and glory. We can have the witness in our self, and rise above all doubts and fears, enjoying the presence of the Lord all the days of our earthly life! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is God's will that we overcome in this sinful world in which we live. Our lesson today tells us that it is our faith in Jesus that gives us the ability to overcome the world. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Real faith is more than a head knowledge about Jesus but it is a deep experience that actually changes the heart of man and becomes a powerful, motivating force in his life.

We have been given a firm foundation to build our faith on. The Lord instructed Thomas to "...be not faithless, but believing." The three that bear witness in the earth are still active today. No doubt you have witnessed the changes that the blood of Jesus has made in your life and in the lives of others that have been truly saved and sanctified. When you read the Bible you know that what it says is from God. Its pages are filled with truth and you have felt the Holy Spirit moving on your heart with conviction of sin perhaps in the stillness of the night or maybe during the singing of a solemn song at meeting. Your tender conscience has been pricked with the need of God in your life and that witness has been revealed to you.

Too often people profess to be Christians yet no outward change can be detected in their lives. They do not have victory over anger and evil habits and they continue to indulge in the sinful pursuits of the world. They talk, dress and act like the world and have made their faith in the Son of God such a trivial matter. In reality they still are of the world and are only deceiving themselves by assuming the title of a Christian.

In Hebrews the eleventh chapter we read how real faith will manifest itself in true men and women of God. Great victories will be won, wonderful changes will occur and sin will be defeated by the power of God. Our life will become a burning light radiating the love of God and we will be kept faithful even unto death.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



MARCH 7, 2004

ETERNAL LIFE IN BELIEVING ON THE SON OF GOD

1 John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

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

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

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

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

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

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

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

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

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. I John 5:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Only through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Son of God, can we obtain everlasting life. We must believe in Him, obey Him and be faithful to Him, overcoming the world and keeping ourselves from its many idols.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I John 5:12), "*hath the Son*": As Paul said, "I have suffered the loss of all things,...that I may win (or gain) Christ." Phil. 3:8.

The word "hath" here means to hold or possess. We must lay hold of Christ and hold fast to Him, possessing everything He has to share with us.

(I John 5:13), *"unto you that believe... that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe...."*: The apostle's expression may seem somewhat strange here. He is writing to those who believe on the name of the Son of God and for a dual purpose. One, that they may know that they have eternal life, and the other, that they may believe on the name of the Son of God. As we weigh these words we see and feel the intense and earnest yearning of his heart for them. It had been reported to him and perhaps he had witnessed himself of their belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He wants them to be assured that their faith will be eternally rewarded. He knows that the devil will seek to outwit them and pull down their confidence. He seeks to reassure them that they are on the right track, and he wants to encourage their faith to press on and remain in that precious faith, the like precious faith that he and Peter had with all of the other apostles. When you stop to consider how many people have made shipwreck of their faith and given up the fight, we can understand why John was so fervent in this epistle to write of Christ Jesus and the eternal values that He offered.

(I John 5:16), *"a sin not unto death"*: There are several views on this text, but I want to make mention of the fact that there are some things that people do in error, of which they are unaware of the error involved. In other words, they sin ignorantly. When we who are more advanced and skilled in the Word of righteousness behold such straying from the holy way, our hearts go out to our brother and we pray for the Lord to have mercy upon them and help them to receive light and knowledge of that better way. It is true that people do things in error and lack of understanding that can and will be corrected as they advance in the Christian life. But when people who have light or have had a chance to see the light and rebel in their hearts and go right against the way of truth, such a sin cannot be excused or overlooked or borne with. It is a sin unto spiritual death, as James 1:14-15 says, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when the lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The lust conceived means that the temptation to sin is yielded to and

given consent in the heart. This is serious. We are going to be tried through the temptations of the devil, and blessed is the man who will endure and refuse to consent to sin's allurements. "ask": pray and make request for.

(I John 5:18), "*keepeth*": guards and watches carefully.

(I John 5:19), "*the whole world lieth in wickedness*": Jesus and the New Testament writers spoke often of this present, evil world that is ruled by satan and the powers of darkness and sin. It lieth in wickedness. That is, it is laid low and subdued by pride, lust, greed, strife, hatred and all the works of the flesh. How wonderful that through Christ we can be raised from the filth of sin and be reconciled to God to walk in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. The world goes right on in its wickedness until the judgment day, but we can be set free from sin and have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life!

(I John 5:21), "*keep yourselves from idols*": False gods and idols for men to worship other than the true God have been around a long time. Images and statues and various forms of idol worship have had their influence to the detriment of human society. Just about any physical or material thing can become an idol. Some people worship their wife or husband or children. Anything that we place our affection upon ahead of our Maker is idolatry.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will consider the final words of this first epistle of John, the beloved apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. We behold him in his stressing the truth about Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God. He wants us to be persuaded that Jesus is the Son of God beyond all doubt. He encourages us who believe in Christ to be assured that we have eternal life thereby and that we must continue to believe right on to the very end. This will bring us confidence that we have access to the throne of God and may bring our petitions before Him and will be granted an audience with Him. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! He also instructs us to be merciful and not quick to judge or condemn and what to do when we see our brother do wrong and know that it is through a lack of light and understanding. First

he exhorts us to pray for our brother and be willing to go to our brother and speak of his need as the Lord leads us to do. We must exercise great forbearance and patience with our brother in the Lord. This is love, pure holy love that must be in our hearts if we are to succeed. He makes it clear that it is not God's good pleasure for us to sin, but there are some sins done ignorantly and we must have patience and forbearance with those who are affected.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the express purpose of this epistle of John?
2. What does the confidence we have in Christ enable us to do?
3. What should we do if we see someone sin ignorantly?
4. Do we have to sin against God?
5. How are we to relate with this present, evil world?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We must believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Son of God and continue to believe unto the saving of our souls, not drawing back in unbelief unto perdition. We must be aware of the devices of satan and not allow our hearts to be influenced by this vain world of pride and lust. We are to love our fellow man and our brethren in Christ, forbearing with them in love and ever seek to be a help to them, looking beyond their fault and seeing their need. We must pray, pray, pray and live close to God. All this will pay off one day when we stand before Him and hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler of many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Well, what do you know?" is a question often lightly tossed around between friends, and the bantering continues as the answer "Oh, not too much" is given back. In the lesson today, what you know, and Who you know, are all-important items, not to tease about. It is your very life, your eternal life.

The first thing you can know is that you have eternal life. Think about it, and answer honestly: Do you know, this moment, that you have eternal life? If you died right now, would you

meet God with your sins under the blood and your name written in the Book of Life? Drop everything and make this sure, right now!

With that question settled, there is something else you can know. You can know that He hears you when you pray. Condition: you must always ask in accordance to His will. When that is met, oh, the confidence with which you can pray! Is it His will that you receive the Holy Spirit? Yes! Then ask with the certainty that it will be done! Is it God's will that people be saved? Then ask for souls in confidence and perseverance.

You can know that you have the petition that you desired of God. How sweet to know, even before the symptom vanished, before the physical need is met, before the victory is felt, that it is done. You can praise Him, rejoice in it and stand on it in the face of opposition.

You can know—experientially, not just in theory—a life free from all sin. You can see God giving you victory over the things that used to trip you up.

You can know that you are of God. In a world where people think there are a million “ways” to “get to heaven,” you can know that you are pleasing God, communing with Him and going the right way. You can know that you are not deceived.

You can know Him that is true and that you are in Him that is true. There are many things that I do not understand, but one thing is crystal clear to me and can be to all of us, and that is, I know Jesus. I know His voice, His presence, His law written in my Heart and His approval. What do you know?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



MARCH 14, 2004

THE GREAT LOVE OF THE FATHER

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

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

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

Ephesians 2:2 In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;)

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Isaiah 63:7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

Deuteronomy 7:7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

MEMORY VERSE: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that are in them, is a God of great love. His love is unfailing, warm and tender. He reaches out to us to come to His loving embrace. We need to have an understanding of the greatness of the love of God to us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(1 John 3:1), "*Behold*": to see, know, be aware, consider, perceive, understand.

(1 John 4:9), "*manifested*": made apparent; declared, shown, brought to full view.

(1 John 4:10), "*propitiation*": atonement; making amendment for wrong doing.

(1 John 4:16), "*known and believed*": been made aware of, perceived and have accepted it as unfailing proof.

(Ephesians 2:4), "*great*": large, abundant, plenteous.

(Ephesians 2:5), "*quickened*": made alive, resurrected from the spiritually dead state of sin and transgression to a living experience of righteousness, godliness and holiness.

(Jeremiah 31:3), "*lovingkindness*": kindness, mercy, pity, good will and favour. "*love*": affection, concern, interest, delight, tenderness, sympathetic understanding.

(John 3:16), "*so*": in this way; after this manner or fashion. "*gave*": ventured to bestow, grant, deliver up, offer and administer.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today we want to draw on the thought expressed in this first epistle of the beloved disciple John of the great love that the heavenly Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has manifested and bestowed upon us. We have brought in various other scriptures that go along with this precious thought. It is wonderful to know that the great Almighty God who created the heavens and the earth in such majesty and beauty is such a loving and gracious Being. He is Almighty, All-Knowing, Ever Present and All-Loving. He is good, kind, merciful, compassionate, tender, helpful and every other wise and beneficial thing we could mention.

When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem us who were under the curse of the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal. 4:4-5. This was the peak of His love and concern for us. He sacrificed the very best that He had on our behalf. In so doing, He not only rescued us from our woeful plight, but He

received His Son back to Him in a much more glorious state, that is, at His right hand in power and grace for His creation.

Ephesians 2:2-5 describes our wretched and horrible state in sin and the works of the flesh. We were spiritually dead and separated from Him, and we needed to be made alive again. I also like the way the apostle Paul described it in Titus 3:3-6: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

We have also brought in from the Old Testament several sayings concerning the love of the Father as expressed to Israel through the law and the prophets. It surely shows the love He had for them back in those ages long ago. Think of how God worked in such a marvelous manner in delivering the Israelites from their sore bondage in Egypt! It was His love that accomplished it so greatly. That same love endures and is so rich and real to us today.

And then we summed it all up in the great saying of Jesus in John 3:16. Oh, we should never doubt the great love of God, but have courage and faith to come to His great throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What would you say is God's greatest attribute or characteristic?
2. What was the greatest thing God did to manifest His love to us?
3. What should be our rightful response to such great love?
4. In what way is the love of God a help to our faith and confidence?
5. What is our relationship with God that He has made possible through Christ?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I am reminded of what Bro. C. E. Orr wrote concerning John 3:16. He brought out that in this text is found the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of God. "For God so loved the world," expresses the *breadth* of the the love of God to us. The whole wide world takes in the great scope of humanity. There is no person, no matter how remote and hard to reach is their station, that the love of God does not reach and encircle. The barren regions of the north, the burning sands of the desert, the swamps, the islands, and all the crowded cities of the nations, yes, all of these are taken in by God's loving care. "That He gave His only begotten Son," shows the *height* of His love. He sacrificed His Holy and Beloved Son, the Word of Life through Whom He created the world for our salvation. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish," expresses the *depth* of the love of God. This goes into the very depths of sin and ungodliness, wretchedness and woe, the horrible pit. No matter how wicked and deep in shame and ignorance a person is, the love of God can reach down and lift him out. "But have everlasting life." Here is the *length* of the love of God: everlasting life. The love of God will endure forever. If we can receive His love in the salvation of our souls and keep in that love until death, we can be assured that we will have eternal life with Him. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Just imagine for a moment where we would be without God's love. There would be no sunshine, no rain, no trees, no flowers, no beauty and no life. There would be no salvation, no joy, no happiness, no peace and no hope.

This sounds like a pretty hopeless, desolate, and frightening place to be in and yet this describes hell. Eternal torment with no sunshine, no rain, no trees, no flowers, no beauty, no life, no salvation, no joy, no happiness, no peace, no hope because there is no love of God. —Sis. LaDawna Adams

MARCH 21, 2004

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE SON

I John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

I John 1:7 If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

I John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

I John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Philippians 2:8 (Christ Jesus) being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth:

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Psalms 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Psalms 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him

MEMORY VERSE: Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Hebrews 4:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because Jesus was obedient and faithful to God, His Father, He was given the highest and most Blessed position of power, honour, judgment and dominion ever awarded to any person in time and eternity.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(1 John 1:3), "*fellowship*": partnership and participation together.

(1 John 1:7), "*walk*": to follow after, to conduct one's self and to live according to. "*as he is in the light*": As God is in the light. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. He has shone His light upon us in Christ Jesus and He wants us to get a move on to obey and live according to the light that He dwells in. This brings us into fellowship with Him and with all other souls who are walking and obeying that same Light.

(1 John 3:8), "*destroy the works of the devil*": To loosen and undo the damage and bondage of sin and vanity that the devil got us tangled up in.

(1 John 4:14), "*we have seen and do testify*": We have beheld with our own eyes and understood with our hearts, and bear witness with our mouth beyond a doubt.

(Hebrews 1:1-3), Let us notice this rendering in the Greek interlinear translation: "In many times and in many ways God spoke of old to the fathers by the prophets. In these last days (He) spoke to us in the Son, whom He hath appointed possessor of all, through whom indeed He set in motion the ages, who being the radiance of the glory and the exact copy of His essence, and upholding all things by the word of His power, through Himself having made a cleansing of our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

(Philippians 2:8), "*in fashion*": in like circumstance and condition.

(Philippians 2:11), "*Lord*": One who is supreme in authority and power; the controller.

(Psalm 2:7), The Hebrew rendering of this is: "I will declare the statute of Jehovah: He said to me: You are my Son, today I have brought You forth"

(Psalm 2:12), "*Kiss the Son*": The Hebrew expression is

"embrace, worship purely and attach yourself to the Son. The Septuagint says, "Receive His discipline and instruction." "*angry*": displeased. "*ye perish from the way*": lest you stray from the way of life. "*when his wrath is kindled but a little*": The Hebrew says, "For in a little is His anger kindled." After all that Christ, as the eternal Son of God, has accomplished for our salvation and victory, any little bit of rebellion or dishonor from us is worthy of the fierceness of His wrath.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we enlarged on the heavenly Father and His great love for us, especially expressed in the gift of His beloved Son for our redemption. Today we want to consider the blessedness of this holy Son of God, Jesus Christ. We have chosen to begin with several quotes from this First Epistle of John that we have been studying in this quarter. Let us survey, with open hearts, the blessed truth of the inheritance that Christ has received of His Father because of His obedience and faithfulness to Him.

We see the fellowship that we have with Him and His Father. We behold the fountain of His blood, that was opened for sin and for uncleanness, wherein we are cleansed from all sin. We see that Christ undid the woeful damage that Satan accomplished upon humanity. He brings about a perfect redemption and deliverance from the power of sin. He did this by humbling Himself to the death of the cross, and God rewarded Him for doing this by raising Him from death and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion and every name that is named. Eph. 1:20-21.

We have also drawn on the second Psalm for a scene of the blessedness of the Son. The apostle Paul in his message at Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13:33 quotes from Psalm 2:7 and applies it directly to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Christ was given power and glory from God above all other mortals because He obeyed His Father's will. Our scripture from Psalm 2:12 is a serious and far reaching command that every living soul would do well to take heed to. "Kiss the Son." receive

Him, yield to Him, embrace Him, worship Him, obey Him, follow Him, trust in Him, hold fast to Him and never, never let Him go!
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What blessings can Jesus Christ, the Son of God, make available to us?
2. Where is Jesus now and what is His position?
3. What did Jesus do to qualify for this royal honour and majesty?
4. What glories will Jesus receive in the future?
5. What does it mean to really "Kiss The Son?"

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, the blessed Son of God and the many wonderful things that the Holy Scriptures have spoken about Him! God has made Him most blessed forever! He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, His God, has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. He is the Sun of righteousness, the heavenly Bridegroom coming forth out of His heavenly chambers, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. He did run the race well and obtained the glorious crown of glory and honour. God put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the Head of the Church which He purchased with His own blood. This Holy Church, made up of all who are washed in His blood and sanctified without a spot or blemish, is His loving Bride adorned with the jewels of purity and holiness and humility and meekness. He rejected the riches and honor of this present, vain world and chose to obey His Father's will and allow those evil men to nail Him to the cross. This He did as a redemptive ransom price to free us from the tyranny of the devil. But He did not stay dead nor remain in the grave. He came forth as the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the King who judges the poor, saves the needy and breaks in pieces the oppressor. He redeems the souls of men from deceit and violence, for they are His peculiar treasure and are very precious in His sight. He lives forever. Death can never take hold of Him again. Oh, let us embrace Him in our hearts in the Spirit of His Father! He is coming again to destroy this earth and to take all of His ransomed Bride to live with Him in that blessed world to

come forever. At all cost let us unite our hearts to Him and follow Him all the way!
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to Isaiah there was no natural beauty of Christ to attract people "...he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." His inner beauty, however, has illuminated the world. The life of Christ has positively affected the world more than all money, kings, wars, militaries, charitable organizations, etc.

I admire His ability to see beyond the sin and love the sinner. We, as people, sometimes get stranded upon the negative things we see. His love went deeper still. His willingness to die on the cross innocently; paying the penalty for my sin and yours. The wages of sin is death. God's justice demanded payment; Christ paid it in full, a debt that you and I could never pay.

The truth He lived and taught has been for our good and happiness. What would we do without the Scriptures? This world would be very dark or perhaps non-existent if He hadn't come and shown us the truth in flesh form. When I was younger in school, directions would sometimes confuse and baffle me. However, if the teacher worked out a problem on the board in an example, I could grasp it much easier. That is what He has done for us. He gave us an example that we should follow in His steps. The song says, "So many reasons why I love the Lord; so many reasons I can't count them." To Him belongs glory and honor forever!
—Bro. Bob Wilson

MARCH 28, 2004

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

I John 4: 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

I John 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

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

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

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

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 16:7 ...it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

II Corinthians 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

MEMORY VERSE: For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. I John 5:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The heavenly Father has sent, through His Son Jesus Christ, the unspeakable gift of the Holy Spirit to live within the hearts of all who will love and obey Him. The Holy Spirit, in conjunction with the virtue of the blood and the Holy

Word, sanctifies and purges the soul to perfection, and abides in the heart of man to inspire, comfort, guide and teach us the whole truth.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(1 John 2:27), "*anointing*": to rub with oil. This word comes back from Moses and Aaron. In Exodus 30, God specified the ingredients to be put into the composition of the oil that Moses was to pour upon Aaron and his sons for the priesthood. This was a type of the Holy Spirit anointing that was upon Christ. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38. God wills that this Holy Spirit anointing be upon all who follow Him. John speaks of this anointing on the saints he was writing this epistle to. This indwelling Holy Spirit teaches us all things that are a benefit to our spiritual well-being. It is a must for every child of God to have the Holy Spirit living within. We cannot be victorious and successful in the Christian life without this unspeakable gift of the Father. This richness, inspiration, strength and blessing of the Holy Spirit is the anointing that works in the soul of man.

(1 John 5:6), "*water and blood*": The water is referring to the cleansing of the Word by our obedience to its commandments and precepts. The blood is the ransom price that purges the soul from condemnation and guilt by God's forgiveness. It takes both the water and the blood to effect a cleansing of the soul. Without our obedience to the Word of Christ, the blood of Christ cannot be effective. And without the blood to atone from guilt as a ransom for us, all of our obedience, too, is vain. And then we have the third agent that supplies further cleansing. And that is the Holy Spirit, whose burning fire purges the soul from the root and essence of sin. The Holy Spirit, according to Malachi 3:2-3 was to be "like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." John the Baptist said that Jesus "shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the

chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3:11-12. With this three-fold cleansing, the soul and heart of man can be pure and holy indeed. "*the Spirit is truth*": It is through the testimony and revelation of the indwelling Spirit of God that the soul of man is enlightened, assured, instructed and moved to know and understand the real meaning of the Word of God. Without Holy Spirit anointing and inspiration, we as human beings cannot effectually take in the Word of God.

(I John 5:8), "*the Spirit, the water, and the blood*": These three agents bear witness in earth, that is, in us mortals. They bear the blessings and powerful influence of the Almighty God right down in our innermost being. The Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the blood of Jesus Christ bring the wholesome and healing effect of salvation to us.

(John 14:16), "*I will pray the Father*": I will petition the Father. The Holy Spirit comes to us through the intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father. Christ came in the flesh to accomplish His redemptive work, and when it was finished, He went back to the heavens to be our High Priest. Through Him the Father sends the sweet, loving, gentle, powerful, gracious, comforting, strengthening, guiding, uplifting and faithful Holy Spirit to blend with the humble, obedient heart of the child of God. Oh, what a wonderful Gift! "*Comforter*": Intercessor and Consoler.

(John 16:12), "*bear*": receive, understand, comprehend.

(II Cor. 9:15), "*unspeakable*": indescribable, beyond expression or description as it is so wonderful and precious.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our final lesson in this series from I John we take up the truth of the Holy Spirit, the anointing that Christ made available to us in His plan of salvation. Along with the scriptures from I John we have included some of the words of Jesus in His last few hours with His disciples before He was taken from them. In this final discourse with them before His crucifixion, Christ stressed much on what God had in store for them in the future. He beautifully foretold the Comforter whom God would send in Christ's place. This is the anointing that Christ had Himself and that every child of God needs so greatly. Later, after He was resurrected from the dead, He counseled them again of the

coming Holy Spirit, commanding them to tarry and wait for the Holy Spirit. These disciples obeyed His command and for about ten days they tarried in prayer and supplication with all the others who believed, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and His brethren. There were about 120 in that number upon whom the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What unspeakable Gift does God bestow upon us through His Son?
2. What can the Holy Spirit do in us that Christ, in the flesh, could not do?
3. What are some of the functions of the indwelling Holy Spirit?
4. What are the three that bear record in heaven for us?
5. What are the three that bear record in us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Holy Spirit is not given to a person when he or she is saved. Many people believe and teach that when you believe in Christ the Holy Spirit comes into your heart. True, the born again experience is the work of the Holy Spirit, but the fulness of the Holy Spirit is not received at that time. As a child of God we must seek for the infilling of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. We must seek earnestly in prayer for it. We must present our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God. We must put everything we are and everything we have on the altar for God. We must die out to every earthly and selfish ambition and desire. We must seek in faith, believing that God has the blessing for us. The Holy Spirit does not work in the same manner with everyone. We must seek for the blessing in our individual heart, and not give up seeking for it until He fills our soul and gives us the witness that we are sanctified wholly and filled with His blessed presence.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The anointing of the Holy Spirit will make a complete difference in our lives and in our influence of others. At least three things are observable about the working of the Holy Spirit.

The timing is right, the witness is true and it accomplishes its purpose.

When God deals with man, He realizes the importance of timing. God is an eternal Spirit and He never sleeps nor tires. He is not subject to the day and night and seasonal changes of this earth. However, He understands, in His dealings with man, that all of these factors influence them and by His Spirit He brings things to pass at the right time. "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust. As *for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth." Psalm 103:14-15.

The Holy Spirit works in truth. It is sent from God and its operation can be confirmed by the Word of God also. The Spirit of God does not lead one way while the Word of God teaches another way. They are in perfect harmony with truth and that characteristic is very observable to the honest, inquiring heart.

The Holy Spirit will accomplish the purpose God sent it to fulfill. When the Spirit of God moves, things begin to happen according to the will of the Lord. Whether it is the creation of the world or dry bones coming together into their respective places or new life springing forth in the heart of a penitent soul, these things will happen at the voice of the Lord through the mighty working power of His Holy Spirit. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it." Isaiah 55:11.

It is the will of the Father that the Holy Spirit would dwell in the heart of every saved child of God. If you will present your body as a living sacrifice to the Lord and allow Him to have full control of your life, He will be pleased to dwell in your earthen temple and make your service to Him a blessing for all mankind.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

As the glorious sun disperses
Gloomy shades of night away,
So the fullness of the Spirit
Turns our lamp-light into day.

Sun of Heaven! shine forever,
In this happy soul of mine;
I will walk beneath thy beaming;
Lost in all thy love divine.

—Bro. D. S. Warner

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11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box

Full Name	(1) Name	Complete Mailing Address
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12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail a nonprofit rate) (Check one)
☐ The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes.
☐ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, October 1999

(See instructions on Reverse)

13. Publication Title BIBLE LESSONS		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below OCT., NOV., DEC. 2003	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		1792	1852
(1) Paid and/or Requested Circulation		1641	1701
(2) Paid and/or Requested Circulation		1	1
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution		10	3
(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		19	9
b. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b(1), (2), (3), and (4))		1671	1714
c. Free Distribution by Mail (Postpaid, subscription, etc., and other mail)		0	0
(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541		0	0
(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541		0	0
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		0	0
d. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		0	0
e. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15d)		0	0
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15b and 15e)		1671	1714
g. Copies not Distributed		121	138
h. Total (Sum of 15a and f)		1792	1852
1. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15b divided by 15a, times 100)		100%	100%
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership		17. Publication not required.	
a. Publication required: Yes or No YES		Date 9-30-03	
b. Publication required: Yes or No NO			

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including fines and penalties).

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