

## SPARED FOR A MISSION

John was the only one of the 12 apostles who was spared a martyrs' death... but it was not because the Roman emperor, Domitian, didn't try to kill him. The emperor ordered John to be turned into a French fry. He had him boiled in oil.

Miraculously though, the Lord delivered John... and since Domitian couldn't kill him... he banished John to a rocky island off the coast of Turkey called "Patmos".

There John received the Revelation - the book we'll study in two weeks...

After Domitian's death John was freed, and he ended his years pastoring the church at Ephesus. As it turned out, God preserved John for an important job...

A dangerous heresy was spreading through the church, and God knew it would take a man of John's stature to successfully squelch it. The evil of Gnosticism had raised its ugly head, and John writes his first letter to stop it dead in its tracks...

## THE LOGOS OF LIFE

Verse 1 begins John's defense of true Christianity, "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, concerning the Word of life..."

John calls Jesus "the Word" - or as he puts it in the Greek, "*the Logos of life*".

The Greeks were convinced by the order and symmetry they observed in the universe that there had to be a *cause* behind the *cosmos*. Greek philosophers coined a term for

this unknown force. They called it the "Word", or "*Logos*".

John begins his letter by reporting that he has seen the Logos!

In fact he's *handled it, heard it, even hugged it!* What the Greeks thought was an unknown *force*, John knew as a close *friend*. The reason behind reality is not an "it", but a "He", and His name is Jesus. John writes this letter so we too can know Christ, and experience the joy and love found in hanging out with Him.

### Devotion Box - Knowing God

He says in 1:3, "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The reason John writes is also God's ultimate purpose for our lives - that we may have fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Once I was asked this multiple-choice question, "Which is most important? 1) To get to heaven. 2) To serve God. 3) To do God's will. 4) To know God more."

If I were to ask you the same question which answer would you choose?

Think about your choices... We all want to get to heaven, but what will we do once we arrive?... Serving God is good, but God doesn't need our service, and serving alone only causes burnout... And we always want to be in God's will, but once we're there, then what? The correct answer is... 4) To know God more.

I want to go to heaven. I love serving God. And walking in His will is way cool. But God's purpose for me is to have "fellowship with the Father and His Son."

And it's intimacy with God that yields our deepest fulfillment, and highest joy! John says in verse 4, "these things we write to you that your joy may be full."

### Devotion Box - A Spiritual Tan

According to 1:7 as we have fellowship with God we "walk in the light as He is in the light". And this is how a Christian grows spiritually as he walks in the light.

Plants grow by a process known as "*photosynthesis*". They have cells that transform light into energy. This is how a plant manufactures food and grows.

The Christian grows by a "*spiritual photosynthesis*". Our spirit is designed to absorb the light of God. The presence of Jesus in my life is the catalyst by which I become more godly and good, loving, kind and pure - more Christ-like.

It's not up to me to make myself grow. My job is to stay in the light, and get a spiritual tan... The more you spend time with God, the more He rubs off on you.

## Devotion Box - Confession Is Good For The Soul

When you sin don't deny it, ignore it, or excuse it – rather, confess it. 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Whenever you sin, ask God to forgive and cleanse you.

All our sins – past, present, and future - are forgiven the moment we embrace Jesus, but we still need to confess our sins when we commit them. Forgiveness is assured, but confession is still necessary to maintain a repentant attitude.

### JESUS CHRIST, ESQUIRE

John writes to encourage us not to sin, but if we do, he tells us in 2:1, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We have an attorney better than Perry Mason or Matlock... *Jesus Christ, Esquire!*

Jesus is our attorney, or advocate, in the court of God. On the other side of the courtroom sits Satan. Revelation 12:10 calls him "the accuser of the brethren". The Greek word "*devil*" means "*slanderer*". Satan is a prosecutor out to condemn us.

And understand, Satan has mounds of incriminating evidence against you – video tapes of your private sins, sound recordings of your evil thoughts. And just when he approaches the bar to present his evidence our attorney steps up and declares it all inadmissible. On the cross, Jesus paid its penalty. Because of the work of Jesus, our Advocate, our sin is *totally forgiven* and *completely forgotten*.

### Devotion Box - The Christian's Self-test Kit

John wants us *to know that we know* so he gives us a Christian self-test kit. If a woman wants to know if she's pregnant she can buy a pretty reliable test kit. And the same is true if you want to know if you're a Christian...

The test is two-fold...

First, *do you keep God's commandments?*

John says in 2:4, "He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Jesus is a powerful person. His presence captures your allegiance. You don't walk away from Him unchanged. If you know Him you'll follow Him.

Second, *do you love your brother?*

2:9-10, "He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him." God is love, and you can't know God and harbor hatred and bigotry in your heart.

How do you know you know God? *Do you obey God and love your brother?*

### THE ONLY PLACE OF MERCY

And Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." The word translated "*propitiation*" means "*place of mercy*".

Its Hebrew equivalent was the word "*kipporeth*", which in the Old Testament was translated "*mercyseat*". The mercyseat was the gold lid over the Ark where the priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice to atone for the people's sins.

Over the mercyseat hovered the presence of God - under the mercyseat sat the demands of the Law - but between the two, on that blood-stained lid, God's mercy and His justice were reconciled by the blood of a sacrifice. The mercyseat was the one place on earth where men and women could obtain God's mercy.

And today there is still only one place to find mercy - it's no longer a *lid*, it's the *Lord*. Jesus is our place of mercy. In Him, God's justice and mercy are reconciled. Jesus is the one place where all peoples - as John put it, "the whole world" - can obtain God's mercy. If you've sinned and need mercy... come to Jesus...

### Devotion Box - The Real Worldwide Web

2:15, "Do not love the world or the things in the world." The world system we live in is hostile toward God. Its values are opposed to God's values.

"For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh (or you can feel great), the lust of the eyes (you can look great), and the pride of life (you can be great) - is not of the Father but is of the world." Here's a three-fold web of worldliness: *the physical above the spiritual, the external over the internal, the temporal before the eternal.*

We need to be different from the rest of the world.

*Real satisfaction* doesn't come from titillating the flesh, but from a spiritual relationship with God. *Real beauty* is more than outward image. Inner character is what counts. And *real purpose* is found not in temporal pursuits, but in counting for eternity!

John says in 2:17, "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." After a term in prison Charles Dutton became a successful Broadway actor. When asked how he made the transition from prison he explained, "Unlike the other inmates, I never decorated my cell."

Charles Dutton believed his prison cell was a temporary situation, and he refused to allow himself to get comfortable.

This needs to be our attitude about living in this world. The world is *passing away*, and I'm just *passing through*. Don't get caught up in *worldliness*, rather pursue *godliness*.

## FALSE STARTS

The End Times and the coming of the Antichrist is preceded by a proliferation of false teachers who are anti-God and anti-Christ. And tragically many false teachings begin in the church. 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us..." So often a false teacher starts out in a sound, Bible-believing Church, yet begins to bend and stray and deviate.

If you're shooting a bow and arrow at a target 100 yards away, but you're a fraction off in your aim you can miss the target by 10 yards. A fraction off at the sight can cost you 10 yards at the target. The same is true spiritually. Just a little error in a foundational doctrine can cause an enormous deviation later on.

## RAPTURE READY

Skeptics often accuse the doctrine of the rapture as a form of escapism. They assume if you believe in the rapture you're twiddling your thumbs, biding your time, just waiting... Not so! John says the rapture is a powerful motivation to godliness!

3:3, "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." My belief that Jesus could return for me at any time keeps me on our toes. Wherever I go - whatever I do - I first ask myself if Jesus returned tonight is this where I would want Him to find me? We'll want to be *pure for sure!*

### Devotion Box - Abiding In Love

4:12 tells us, "No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us."

God is a spirit - invisible to the physical eye. The closest the world gets to seeing God is by observing His love in us.

Verse 16 adds, "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him." God loves to love. That's why He teams up with the person who loves others.

## THE ANOINTING

According to 2:20, we "have an anointing from the Holy One..." The believer's safeguard against deception is the Holy Spirit.

2:27, "the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him." John has great confidence in the Holy Spirit to help us discern truth from error, and grow in the knowledge of God's Word.

It's interesting - God entrusted the interpretation of truth not to a specific church, or denomination, or office, but to the *Spirit* - not to an institution controlled by a few people, but to a personal anointing available to all.

Over the centuries whenever orthodoxy has been threatened, Christianity has been saved - not by the faithfulness of one sect - but by a revival stirred by the Spirit to correct the problem and bring truth back into focus. When the message is distorted the author Himself restores the true interpretation. Good Bible teachers *can be helpful*, but human teachers *can also be wrong*. God doesn't want you to put your trust in a *human teacher*, but in the *Holy Spirit*.

## BORN OF GOD

3:6 is an important, but confusing verse, "Whoever abides in Him does not sin." Understand, John isn't teaching sinless perfection. He refuted that in 1:8. In the Greek language, the verb "sins" is in the present tense, and could be translated, "*whoever continues in sin*". The actual Greek word is "*harmatia*", which means "*to miss the mark*". It was a term used when an archer missed his target.

Man's problem is not that he occasionally misses God's glory - his eye mists up, he gets distracted, a hand slips - *no, his aim is bad*. The problem is internal. A sin nature keeps us off balance - and makes it impossible for us to aim correctly.

This is why Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus births a new center of gravity within us. He restores our bearings, and straightens out our aim.

When Jesus births His nature in you He gives you the ability to shoot straight. Of course, that doesn't mean you won't at times get distracted, or have an eye fog over, or a hand slip - it'll happen - but the problem is no longer internal to your spirit.

The problem is now the flesh, the devil, the world - and you have to learn to overcome their influences. But the natural in-

stinct of the believer is to love God.

As believers we know at times we'll miss the mark, but it's no longer because we can't aim correctly. As we learn to block out the distractions and maintain our faith and focus we begin to hit the target more and more consistently. It's been said, "The believer isn't *sinless*, but he does *sin less and less and less*."

Before I came to Christ I occasionally slipped up and did good, but the general flow of my life was toward sin and selfishness. Now that I'm in Christ I slip up and sin, but now my baseline - my natural desire - is to love God and please Him.

Verse 9 adds, "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin (or literally sin continually), because he has been born of God." JB Philips translates 3:9, "The man who is really God's son does not practice sin, for God's nature is in him, for good, and such a heredity is incapable of sin."

If you're born of God you inherit His nature. Innate within you is the willingness to live for God and love His family - and these desires will be seen in our conduct.

### Devotion Box - "Cross - Think"

3:16, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." This is "*cross-think*". If Jesus went to the cross for me - then what can I do for the people around me? It's no coincidence that while John 3:16 tells us that God loves us - 1 John 3:16 says that since God loves us, we ought to love each other.

# Bible Scan - 1 John 1-5

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - [sandyadams@calvarychapel.org](mailto:sandyadams@calvarychapel.org)  
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: [www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm](http://www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm)

Calvary Chapel Announcements - "Every Man's Battle" Discipleship Group begins Wednesday, 2/12 @ 7:30 pm - Sign up at the Info Counter...  
....."Fabulous Friday" - Moms and tots age 2-4 walk-thru safari at the Yellow River Game Ranch, 2/21 @ 9:30 am ; cost: \$7 adults, \$6 children....."Equipping Women to Serve Conference" - February 28-March 1; Guest Speaker Kelly Bell of CC Murrieta-Register Sunday am in either foyer.....Mssion Trip to Ireland, April 7-14; Info Meeting on 2/16 at 1 pm in the Upper Room.....Next Bible Scan - February 16, 2003 - 2 John, 3 John, Jude

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." - 1 John 4:4

Bible Scan  
Memory Verse

## WWJD

Chapter 4 begins, "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." Every believer is given the inner witness of the Spirit, but reading the Spirit's inner testimony is subjective. My spirit is like a satellite dish - it picks up *all kinds of signals from all kinds of sources*. God speaks to me... the devil plants thoughts... my emotions influence me... my own conscience and sub-conscience are active... even a late night pizza can produce disturbing impressions...

This is why John cautions us to "test the spirits, whether they are of God". And in these next few verses John tells us how to conduct a spiritual ID check...

Verse 2, "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God."

Simple enough - to peel off the façade of any impression discover how it treats Jesus. If it does not affirm, honor, exalt, and bow to who Jesus is - it's not of God.

A single young lady walks in and says, "Well, I feel God wants me to sleep with my boyfriend. We're in love. It seems like the right thing to do." Hey, test the spirits? Would Jesus have agreed? Is that what He taught? Of course not! You test the spirits by asking - WWJD, "*what would Jesus do?*"

## Devotion Box - Overcomers

4:4 tells us, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them..." Hey, we face a trifecta of evil - *the world will beat you up, the devil will rip you off, and the flesh will drag you down* - but God makes you and I overcomers!

The Christian life is not a sheltered life. We take some hits - but we overcome. We fight through, and rise above. A child of God doesn't just *undergo* hardship - we *overcome* hardship! We're like a Timex - *we take a lickin', but keep on tickin'.*

And how do we overcome?... "because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." Always remember... *one plus God equals a majority!* At times it may appear as if the deck is stacked against you. But remember you hold the trump card. Jesus trumps Aces and Kings! Greater is He!

## FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

John was dealing with a deception known as "*Gnosticism*" - a heresy that denied the humanity of Jesus. The Gnostics made wild claims - that though Jesus appeared He didn't come in the flesh - He was a phantom. They concocted fanciful tales of Jesus walking the beach without leaving any footprints. Others believed the Spirit of Messiah rested on the man Jesus until just before He was crucified - at that point the divine spirit departed the human Jesus. The Gnostics rejected the clear truth that Jesus was fully man, and fully God.

This is why John is so specific in verse 2, "every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God." A direct assault on the Gnostics.

Today heresy has flip-flopped the issues. JW's, Mormons, and other cults affirm Jesus' humanity, but they deny His deity. But John's point still applies... if you're not *right on* about Jesus you're *all wrong* about God!

## Devotion Box - Love Flows Downward

4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us..." So often we hear folks boast of their great love for God - but our love is zilch compared to God's love for us. My love for God is a drop from an eyedropper. His love for me is the ocean! Here's a quote, "Love flows downward. A parent's love for his kid is always far more powerful than the love of the kid for his parent. Likewise, who among men ever loved God with a thousandth of the love with which He loves us?"

## Devotion Box - Our Nike

5:4, "this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith..." The Greek word translated "*victory*" is the word "*nike*" - which before it became the name of a brand of shoes it was the name of the Greek goddess of victory.

If Nike shoes were writing verse 4 it would read, "This is the *nike* that has overcome the world - *just do it.*" But as believers it's not for us to *just do it*. John writes, "This is the *nike* that has overcome the world - our faith." The way to victory is not through our energies or willpower - but by faith in God.