

The Epistles Of John

Studies 1 - 10

Student Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Study

Title

Pages

1	God's Remedy For The Malady Of Sin	1
2	Family Privileges And Responsibilities	10
3	Clear Teaching About The Holy Spirit	18
4	Four Things About God's Children!	27
5	The Birth-Marks Of A Child Of God	35
6	Five Reasons Why Jesus Came	41
7	Eternal Life And How To Get It	49
8	God's Pledge To Hear And Answer Prayer	57
9	How To Qualify For A Full Reward	64
10	Two Good Examples And One Bad One	73

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

GOD'S REMEDY FOR THE MALADY OF SIN

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: 1 John 1:1-10

John's first epistle (written, we think, between A.D. 85 and 95), is a personal letter from the aged apostle. It was probably circulated to believers in a number of places.

Though not a doctrinal treatise, it is full of very important truths. In this series of studies, we shall select some of its leading themes.

The first of these is *God's Remedy for the Malady of Sin*. Sin is our great problem - the problem of all mankind.

In his first epistle, John tells us of the gracious provision God has made for us to be set free from the guilt, pollution and power of sin.

GOD IS LIGHT AND LOVE.

He is altogether holy and loving. He has fully declared Himself in His Son. We see this in -

1 John 1:1-6 -

We read that God is love in -

1 John 4:8 -

1 John 4:16 -

We read that God is light in -

1 John 1:5 -

Light is the symbol of His splendor, His omniscience, but above all, His holiness and absolute purity.

Compare -

Leviticus 19:2 -

Leviticus 20:7 -

Leviticus 20:26 -

This *loving* and *holy* God has fully declared Himself in His Son, who said -

John 14:9 -

Compare -

Hebrews 1:1-2 -

John tells us in -

1 John 1:1-3 -

that he saw, heard and touched Christ; that He was (and is) ‘the Word of life’, Who was ‘manifested’, and Who, prior to His manifestation, was ‘with the Father.

John 1:14 -

John 17:5 -

GOD LONGS TO BRING ALL MEN INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH HIMSELF
(FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT) AND WITH ONE ANOTHER.

“Fellowship” is a key word in this epistle. For example -

1 John 1:3 -

The word “fellowship”, (Greek: *koinonia*), conveys the idea of joint participation, of mutually sharing in a thing or an experience.

When God created man, His plan was to share His life with him, but sin entered and such fellowship was broken. Now, He longs to bring us back into fellowship with Himself and with one another.

Notice in **verse 3** that fellowship is ‘with the Father and with His Son’ - vertical - and ‘that ye also may have fellowship with us’- horizontal; Christians having fellowship with God and with one another.

WE ARE SINNERS BY NATURE AND BY PRACTICE.

How can we have fellowship with a holy God and He with us? Sin created a barrier between God and man -

1 John 1:5-6 -

He is light and we are in the darkness!

1 John 1:8 -

1 John 1:10 -

make plain that we are sinners by nature and by practice. That is, we have a sinful, fallen nature, **verse 8**, and commit acts of sin, **verse 10**.

No one is sinless in this life - these verses declare this and experience confirms it. Only One has ever lived without sin.

Hebrews 7:26 -

The rest of us are sinful.

1 Kings 8:46 -

Ecclesiastes 7:20 -

Romans 3:20 -

Romans 3:23 -

How can a holy God have fellowship with us who are so sinful?

4. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY.

That way is through the Person and work of God's Son, Who came to earth and shed His blood to provide salvation for all who would put their trust in Him.

In **1 John 3:5 -**

we are told why Jesus came from heaven to earth.

In **1 John 1:7 -**

we are told that, when we come into the light of God's presence, acknowledging our sin, He removes the barrier of sin and we have fellowship 'one with another'. That is, with God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), and with all believers.

But how is our sin dealt with and removed?

By 'the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son'.

His blood stands for His atoning, expiatory and substitutionary work and death upon the cross.

Isaiah 53:5-6 -

John 1:29 -

2 Corinthians 5:21 -

1 Peter 2:24 -

Thus, sin is removed by God on the grounds of the once-offered sacrifice of Christ.

5. WHEN WE BELIEVE ON CHRIST (COME INTO THE LIGHT AND PUT OUR TRUST IN HIM), THE BARRIER OF SIN IS AT ONCE REMOVED.

We are born into God's family. We receive His life (a new nature) which cannot sin and, henceforth, we no longer habitually commit sin.

Notice the word 'all' in -

1 John 1:7 -

and compare with -

Matthew 1:21 -

Then look at -

1 John 3:1-2 -

1 John 5:18 -

where we are told that, by the miracle of the new birth, we are born into God's family and become His children.

Now notice that -

1 John 3:9 -

tells us that the divine life, which cannot sin, is implanted into the child of God, thus enabling him to live a new life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 -

6. WE DO STUMBLE AND FALL, HOWEVER, BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH WE NOW HAVE A NEW NATURE WHICH CANNOT SIN, WE STILL POSSESS THE OLD NATURE WHICH CANNOT DO OTHER THAN SIN.

See from -

1 John 2:1 -

that John makes allowance for the fact that believers do sin.

What happens when Christians sin?

7. PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE!

Jesus Christ not only died as our Sinbearer, but now lives to be our Advocate. As such, He pleads the merits of His finished work before the Father.

We learn from -

1 John 2:1-2 -

that when we sin, our *relationship* with God is not affected. We are still His children. But, our *enjoyment of fellowship* with God is affected. Moreover, the devil accuses us before the throne of God.

Revelation 12:10 -

When this happens, we have an Advocate, a divine Barrister, in the court of heaven Who pleads our case before the throne of God, on the basis of His work upon Calvary, **verse 2**, and compare with -

Romans 8:33-34 -

3. WHEN, BECAUSE OF SIN, OUR COMMUNION WITH GOD IS TEMPORARILY BROKEN, WE NEED TO REPENT AND MAKE CONFESSION TO GOD.

When we do this, we are at once forgiven and cleansed, and communion is restored.

God can see our true state, and to confess is to admit our sin. How wonderful is the promise of -

1 John 1:9 -

9. THE WAY TO BE KEPT FREE FROM SIN AND TO LIVE VICTORIOUSLY IS TO ABIDE IN OUR VICTORIOUS LORD AND TO RELY UPON HIM TO KEEP US.

1 John 3:6 -

Now turn to -

1 John 5:18 -

Be sure to spell the word 'He' with a capital 'H'! The Lord keeps His children.

Psalm 37:23-24 -

2 Timothy 4:18 -

Jude 24 -

10. ALL SIN COMMITTED BY A CHILD OF GOD MAY BE FORGIVEN, ALTHOUGH, WHEN A SIN IS UNCONFESSED AND UNFORSAKEN, CHASTENING MAY FOLLOW, EVEN TO THE EXTREME OF PHYSICAL DEATH - BUT NEVER BY SPIRITUAL DEATH.

1 John 5:16-17 -

These are solemn words indeed and should be read in connection with -

Proverbs 28:18 -

1 Corinthians 11:29-30 -

James 5:19-20 -

NOTES

NOTES

FAMILY PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: 1 John 2:1-19

Several times in his first epistle, John addresses his words to his 'little children' - i.e. -

1 John 2:1 -

The reference is not the their *first* birthday but their *second*, when they were born again and became members of God's family.

John 3:3-7 -

Our first birthday did not make us children of God.

It is only when we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that we are born again, thus become members of the family of God.

Galatians 3:26 -

So John was writing to those new in the faith, who were (in the apostle Peter's words) -

1 Peter 2:2 -

John also writes to 'fathers' (those mature in the faith and in their knowledge of the Lord), and to 'young men' (those who were growing up into spiritual manhood).

Now, we all begin the Christian life as babes, so what the apostle says to 'little children' is applicable to all the members of God's family.

What does he say about their privileges and responsibilities?

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER.

1 John 2:1-2 -

We see here that God's plan and provision is that we should not sin. God has provided full deliverance from sin through the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:14 -

His plan is that we should 'sin not', or not sin! But what if we do sin as, of course, we do?

1 John 1:8 -

and as we infer from -

1 John 1:9 -

If, or when, we sin, -

1 John 2:1 -

What does this mean?

It means that in the presence of our Father we have a Representative, an Advocate. When the devil, who is -

Revelation 12:10 -

accuses us before God, the Lord Jesus pleads His own merits.

1 John 2:1 -

has made provision for our pardon and cleansing by His shed blood and finished work.

This provision is available for the whole world -

1 John 2:2 -

but it is enjoyed only by those who have put their trust in Christ.

Therefore, when God's children sin, their relationship is not disturbed. God is still their Father and they are still His children.

2. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE HAD THEIR SINS FORGIVEN.

1 John 2:12 -

What a glorious truth - every child of God is already completely forgiven! It does not say 'shall be' or 'may be', or we 'may be forgiven if.....'; it says we *are* forgiven!

God says it and He wants us to believe it.

We are also told that we have been forgiven -

1 John 2:12 -

that is because of all that Jesus is and has done for our salvation.

Who is He, and what has He done? The answer is in -

1 John 1:7 -

His blood goes on cleansing us from every sin and this all for His Name's sake, or because we are accepted in the Beloved.

Compare -

Romans 8:1 -

Ephesians 1:6 -

3. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN MUST ABIDE IN HIM.

1 John 2:28 -

What does this mean?

To abide in Him is to live in close fellowship, in harmony with Him.

Why?

The reason given is that the Lord Himself is soon coming . We need to be ready to meet Him with boldness and not shrink away from Him when He comes.

This is not suggesting that our salvation is in doubt. Nothing can alter the relationship of the child of God with his loving heavenly Father. It is talking about how we live.

If we are living carelessly when He comes, this matter will be settled at the Judgment Seat of Christ where all God's children will be rewarded, or will suffer loss.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 -

**4. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN NEED TO BE ON THEIR
GUARD AGAINST DECEPTION.**

1 John 3:7 -

It was very necessary for John to write these words because there were many false teachers around, teaching heresy.

Some were downright apostates.

But the same warning is needed today for, on every hand, there are those who are teaching things contrary to the Word of God.

See what the apostle Paul said in -

Acts 20:27-30 -

and compare with -

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 -

Solemn words of warning! How necessary it is for us to test everything by the Word of God!

Read and underline -

1 John 4:1 -

5. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN SHOULD GUARD AGAINST HYPOCRISY.

1 John 3:18 -

As children of God we must be sincere and see to it that our testimony is borne out in the way we live from day to day. Our words must correspond with our actions, and vice versa.

If we profess one thing and do another then we are downright hypocrites.

Any hypocrisy is obnoxious to our loving heavenly Father.

Compare -

2 Timothy 3:5 -

Titus 1:16 -

6. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN ARE INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1 John 4:4 -

We see that the Holy Spirit indwells every true child of God. For confirmation of this read -

John 14:16-17 -

Romans 5:5 -

Romans 8:9 -

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

Then read -

1 John 2:20 -

and notice the words 'ye have'.

Then read -

1 John 4:13 -

and notice the words 'He in us' and 'hath given'.

Thus, every child of God has two Advocates - One *above* in the person of the Saviour, and One *within* in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Several things happen at once when we become a child of God.

We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ -

1 Corinthians 12:13 -

b. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit as God's property -

Ephesians 1:13 -

3. We are immediately indwelt by the Holy Spirit -

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

7. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN MUST KEEP THEMSELVES FROM IDOLS.

1 John 5:21 -

Anything that comes between your soul and the path of obedience to God is an idol. God says -

Exodus 20:3 -

How possible it is for a child of God to be guilty of idolatry! It is significant that John's first epistle ends with the words -

1 John 5:21 -

and that the very first words in the scriptures are -

Genesis 1:1 -

*The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee.*

No matter how long we have been in God's family, these privileges and responsibilities never cease to be ours.

And, they are for *all* God's children.

NOTES

CLEAR TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: 1 John 2:20-29

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a major biblical doctrine. We read of His ministry throughout the Old Testament, in the gospels, Acts, the epistles and the book of the Revelation.

In recent times there has been a renewal of interest in, and emphasis upon, His work in the child of God. For this we should be profoundly thankful.

It must be said, however, that there is some unscriptural teaching abroad on this subject. Some are placing undue emphasis on certain aspects of His ministry, giving an unbalanced presentation of the teaching of God's Word.

What is needed is clear teaching that fully accords with scripture and -

2 Timothy 2:15 -

It is significant that the apostle John gives us a clear outline of such teaching in his first epistle. He does not set out to give a complete body of truth on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, but, having written so much about the Holy Spirit's work in his gospel, he now writes much basic truth on this subject for our learning in his first epistle.

To begin with, turn to the following references to the Holy Spirit -

1 John 2:20 -

1 John 2:27 -

1 John 3:24 -

1 John 4:2 -

1 John 4:4 -

1 John 4:13 -

1 John 5:6-8 -

1 John 5:10 -

What do we learn from them when we place them against the background of the teaching on this subject in the rest of God's Word?

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DIVINE PERSON WHO IS ONE WITH GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON IN THE HOLY TRINITY.

We need to be clear about three basic truths concerning the Holy Spirit, all of which are emphasized by the apostle John in this epistle.

The Holy Spirit is a Person.

He is not just an influence. Notice the word 'He' in -

1 John 4:4 -

not 'it'.

Compare the pronouns referring to the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the disciples in -

John 14:16-17 -

John 14:26 -

John 15:26-27 -

John 16:7-15 -

Now see from these verses what He does. He teaches, brings to remembrance, testifies, bears witness, reproves, guides, speaks, hears, shows, glorifies Christ. Only a person can do these things.

We read in -

1 John 2:20 -

1 John 2:27 -

that He is our Teacher.

1 John 5:6-8 -

that He 'beareth witness'.

1 John 5:10 -

that He is the 'Witness' within.

He is a divine Person.

That is, He is God the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from 'the Holy One' (Christ).

1 John 2:20 -

Who is called 'the Spirit of God' -

1 John 4:2 -

The Holy Ghost is also said to be 'God' -

Acts 5:3-4 -

c. He is one with the Father and the Son in the Trinity.

Several times in this epistle we read of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

1 John 1:2-3 -

1 John 2:1 -

The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son in the unity of the Godhead.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD'S GIFT TO EVERY ONE OF HIS CHILDREN.

John was writing to all believers, all born again ones, all who were in the family of God, and not just to a select few. See the force of the words 'ye have' in -

1 John 2:20 -

1 John 2:27 -

You cannot be a child of God and not have the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9 -

Compare -

John 14:16 -

Acts 2:37-39 -

So, if you are a child of God, He has given you the Holy Spirit. But where is He?

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLS EVERY ONE OF GOD'S CHILDREN.

He is not only *with* us - He is *in* us. It is important to emphasize this because some have taught that -

Acts 19:2 -

proves that one can be a Christian, a child of God, and not have the Holy Spirit.

It does nothing of the kind!

The twelve in **Acts 19** were not Christians at all, in the full sense of the word, until Paul explained the gospel to them. Then, when they believed, they received the Holy Spirit - as you did when you believed!

Again look at 'ye have' in -

1 John 2:20 -

and 'ye have.....*in you*' in -

1 John 2:27 -

Compare -

John 14:17 -

(especially the last two words 'in you').

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

So if you are a child of God, He is now *in you*!

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT PERMANENTLY INDWELLS EVERY CHILD OF GOD.

Does the Holy Spirit indwell the child of God and then leave him? In the old dispensation, David prayed -

Psalms 51:11 -

but we do not need to pray this prayer now, nor should we, for He Who indwells us has come to 'abide', that is to stay, in us -

1 John 2:27 -

Notice the words 'abideth in you'.

John 14:16 -

Notice the words 'abide with you for ever'.

That settles it! Of course, when we sin, we 'grieve' Him -

Ephesians 4:30 -

when we disobey Him we 'quench' Him -

1 Thessalonians 5:19 -

In both cases we restrict His operations in and through us. But we do not 'drive Him away'.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO DWELLS WITHIN US WHO ARE GOD'S CHILDREN, IS THE SOURCE AND SUPPLIER OF ALL THAT WE NEED FOR HOLY LIVING AND FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE.

Notice the three special ministries of the Holy Spirit referred to by John.

1. He assures us.

He gives us the absolute assurance that we are born again and are members of God's family.

He does this through the Word of God (outwardly) -

1 John 5:13 -

He also does this by His indwelling (inwardly) -

1 John 5:10 -

1 John 3:24 -

1 John 4:13 -

Compare -

Romans 8:16 -

Galatians 4:6 -

2. He teaches us.

Think about the wonderful truth revealed in -

1 John 2:20 -

1 John 2:27 -

Within us we have the fountain of all wisdom, the 'Spirit of truth' Himself.

Read **1 John 2:18-27** and compare with -

John 14:17 -

John 15:26 -

John 16:13 -

This is the explanation of such promises as -

Psalm 25:12 -

Psalm 32:8 -

Isaiah 28:26 -

Luke 12:12 -

Read the testimony of the psalmist in -

Psalm 119:99 -

How wonderful to have this great Teacher *with* and *in* us!

3. He fortifies us.

The indwelling Holy Spirit is greater than the devil or anything 'outside' us -

1 John 4:4 -

The devil is certainly great in his power - a real, diabolical personality, the enemy of God and of God's children -

John 8:44 -

John 12:31 -

2 Corinthians 4:4 -

Compare -

2 Corinthians 11:14 -

1 Peter 5:8 -

But the Holy Spirit within us is greater!

The power to live a life of holiness, victory and service, which is glorifying to the Lord, lies not in us but in Him, the person of God the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 59:19 -

Compare -

Zechariah 4:6 -

NOTES

NOTES

FOUR THINGS ABOUT GOD'S CHILDREN!

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: 1 John 3:1-24

There are a great many people in heaven and upon earth whom God calls His children

-

1 John 3:1 -

We shall look at some of those things we are told in -

1 John 3:1-3 -

about these favored people. But are not all people the children of God?

No, not in the sense in which the apostle John writes.

In *a creative sense* we are all the children of God. We are His offspring -

Acts 17:28-29 -

but in *a spiritual and redemptive sense* we only become the children of God when, by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives, we are born into His family.

Compare -

John 1:11-13 -

1 John 3:1-2 -

John wrote this epistle to those who had become 'sons of God' -

Galatians 3:26 -

The moment we believe on Him and receive Him as our personal Saviour, we are born from above.

John 3:7 -

1 John 2:29 -

1 John 3:9 -

1 John 4:7 -

1 John 5:1 -

1 John 5:4 -

1 John 5:18 -

We are told four things about the children of God in -

1 John 3:1-3 -

1. OUR DIGNITY IS GREAT.

Do you catch the note of wonder in John's words in -

1 John 3:1 -

God loves everybody, as we are assured in -

John 3:16 -

But, He has a very special love for His own children. Do you ever think about the wonderful place and position of dignity, privilege and honor into which the Lord has brought you as His child? Think of it! You, who were a child of wrath -

Ephesians 2:3 -

and a child of disobedience -

Ephesians 5:6 -

He has lifted and made you a son of God, a member of the royal family of heaven -

Ephesians 3:15 -

You are not *going to be* His child later on. If you are a true believer in Him you *are* His child *now* -

1 John 3:2 -

What a royal, heavenly dignity the Father has bestowed upon us! Say to yourself, "I am a child of God!". Let the full glory of your high calling take possession of you.

This will enable you to cast off your fears and troubles and to rejoice, for your dignity is great.

2. OUR DISTINCTIVENESS IS MARKED.

Because we are the children of God -

1 John 3:1 -

It is perfectly true that, when Jesus was here, the world did not recognize Him, nor will it recognize us. We are a distinctive people. The world does not recognize or understand us.

Indeed, sometimes non-Christians think we are fanatical and foolish to be so religious. They are mystified when we do not share their pleasures -

1 John 2:15-17 -

1 Peter 4:4 -

because, when it would stumble our weaker brother, we are willing to deny ourselves certain things.

Romans 14:21 -

because we have a conscience that will not allow us to be untruthful -

Acts 24:16 -

because we seek to be honest before all men -

Romans 13:7 -

because we prefer a prayer meeting to some worldly entertainment -

Acts 4:23 -

or because we prefer to give up our well-paid job in order to serve the Lord in some needy part of Africa, India or South America -

Matthew 6:19-20 -

Yes, the world very quickly misunderstands us because we are a distinctive people.

Even as Jesus was ostracized we in measure, are always misunderstood and persecuted-

1 John 3:13 -

3. OUR DESTINY IS FIXED.

John tells us something of what the future holds in store for the child of God.

1 John 3:2 -

Notice how he progressively unfolds the truth.

1. The Lord Jesus is coming again.

John speaks of the time 'when He shall appear'. He refers to the Christian's 'blessed hope'.

1 John 3:2 -

Titus 2:13 -

If you read your Bible carefully, you will notice that all the signs of the times - religious, Jewish, commercial, etc. - point to the fact that the coming of the Lord must be very near indeed.

James 5:8 -

2. When He comes we shall see Him as He is.

John tells us this -

1 John 3:2 -

What a wonderful thing it will be to see the Man Christ Jesus, the One Who came and lived and died for us, Who rose again and is ascended now in the place of glory and of majesty at the right hand of the Father!

1 Peter 3:22 -

He first came in weakness, but when He comes the second time He will come in power and great glory! We shall see Him -

Revelation 1:7 -

c. When we see Him we shall be like Him.

John tells us -

1 John 3:2 -

Paul tells us -

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 -

Compare -

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 -

What a glorious prospect we have!

Psalm 17:15 -

We are so unlike Him now, but we 'know' - what?

1 John 3:2 -

Yes, our destiny is fixed. All earth's trials and tribulations as well as our personal sorrows and testings are only 'till He come', and when the Lord comes, what a great change there will be in a moment!

But notice that, because of our Dignity, Distinctiveness and Destiny, we have a Duty to perform.

4. OUR DUTY IS CLEAR.

1 John 3:3 -

(that is, the assurance that the Lord Jesus is coming back again, and that, when He comes, we shall be like Him),

1 John 3:3 -

If we are living in the light of the coming of the Lord, we shall live very carefully, We shall purify ourselves -

2 Corinthians 7:1 -

We shall have a tender conscience about sinful and doubtful things in our lives, our homes and our business -

Psalm 139:23-24 -

We shall want to live in ways that are well-pleasing to the Lord so that, should He come suddenly, we should not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

1 John 2:28 -

Is there any adjustment you should make in connection with your private life, your home, your daily work or business, or in relation to your service for the Lord?

If you knew He would be returning tonight, is there some urgent matter you would attend to so that you would be ready to meet Him and be unashamed before Him at His coming?

He may be here tonight! See to that matter now for -

1 John 3:3 -

*God loved the world of sinners lost
And ruined by the fall;
Salvation full, at highest cost,
He offers free to all.*

*Believing souls, rejoicing go;
There shall to you be given
A glorious foretaste, here below,
Of endless life in heaven.*

NOTES

THE BIRTH-MARKS OF A CHILD OF GOD

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: 1 John 4:1-10

Several times in John's first epistle, we read of those who are born of God, or born of Him, born into God's family. In his gospel, John emphasized the absolute necessity of the new birth. No one is saved, no one will enter heaven, except by the new birth.

John 3:3 -

The only way to enter the kingdom of God, the family of God, is by being born into that family - a spiritual birth.

In his first epistle, John tells us what born again people should be like. He mentions what we might call their birth-marks, evidences that they really are genuine members of the family of God.

As we look at some of these evidences, let us notice -

#1 - what the Bible says.

#2 - how we stand in regard to what it says.

In other words, whether these evidences are true of us.

A TRUE CHILD OF GOD IS ONE WHO BELIEVES ON, HAS RECEIVED AND HAS PUT HIS WHOLE TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST AS HIS SAVIOUR AND LORD.

1 John 5:1 -

The way to be born again is to believe the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, then to act upon what we believe, then to put our trust in Him and receive Him as our personal Saviour.

John 1:12-13 -

When we thus receive Him, we become a child of God. This is the first mark, or evidence, of the new birth.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

A TRUE CHILD OF GOD IS ONE WHO WILL WANT TO DO, AND WILL DO,
WHAT IS RIGHT IN GOD'S SIGHT.

1 John 2:29 -

God Himself is righteous.

Those who are born again are also righteous because they receive His nature. 'Like father, like son!' 'A child exhibits the parents' character because he shares his parents' nature.'

If we share the life and nature of our heavenly Father, because He is righteous we shall be righteous in our ways.

This does not mean that our lives will be perfect. It means that they will be lived in harmony with our heavenly Father Who is altogether righteous. We shall want to do that which is right.

By way of illustration, read -

Luke 19:8 -

Zacchaeus made this decision because he had been born into God's family, had received His nature and now wanted to do that which was right.

Read -

Acts 16:33-34 -

The jailer showed love and compassion towards Paul and Silas after he had been born again. This is what God's Word teaches.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

3. A TRUE CHILD OF GOD IS ONE WHO DOES NOT HABITUALLY PRACTICE SIN.

1 John 3:9 -

John is not saying that the child of God cannot sin or that he never sins. To say this would contradict -

1 John 1:8-10 -

1 John 2:1 -

Although we are God's children we do fail, but we have an Advocate -

1 John 2:1 -

When we fail, our conscience stings us for we have a new nature within us which -

1 John 3:9 -

1 John 3:9 -

Read -

2 Corinthians 5:17 -

This is what God's Word teaches.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

4. A TRUE CHILD OF GOD LOVES EVERY OTHER CHILD OF GOD.

1 John 4:7 -

As His children, we have received the very nature of God. This has been imparted to us.

2 Peter 1:4 -

As God is love, we now have a 'love nature'.

We especially love the other members of God's family.

The same truth is brought out in -

1 John 3:14 -

A born again man will love all in the family of God, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, young and old, irrespective of their color.

Compare -

1 John 3:11-12 -

1 John 3:16-18 -

This is what God's Word teaches.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

5. THE TRUE CHILD OF GOD OVERCOMES THE WORLD.

1 John 5:4 -

This means that the true child of God finds within himself a complete lack of harmony and sympathy with the world, for, living in the world, he is out of his right element - like a 'fish out of water'.

Children of God belong to another world. They begin here and now to live for that other world. Jesus Himself said -

John 16:33 -

Through faith in Him we share His victory and thus do not accept the world's standards, engage in the world's pursuits, enjoy many of the world's pleasures, copy the world's habits, speak the world's language or rely upon and conform to the world's wisdom.

This is what the Bible teaches.

Which world are you living for?

In concluding this study, please notice -

1 John 5:18 -

In the first part of the verse, the apostle is repeating what he said in -

1 John 3:9 -

but the second part literally reads:

'But the One Who was begotten of God (that is, Jesus) carefully watches over and protects him - Christ's divine presence within him preserves him against the evil - and the wicked one does not lay hold (get a grip) on him or touch [him].' (Amplified Bible.)

Now notice -

3. The verb 'born' (in all the instances we have noticed) is in the perfect tense denoting that the original verse has permanent effects. It has taken place once and for all. It cannot be undone.

There is no such thing as excommunication from the family of God. Once we are a child of God, we are always a child of God.

- b. This is so because we are kept by the Saviour; kept by the power of God.

1 Peter 1:5 -

and preserved by Him.

Jude 24-25 -

which, in the Amplified Bible, reads like this:

*24 'Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling, or slipping, or falling and to present you unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory - with unspeakable, ecstatic delight - in triumphant joy and exultation,
25 To the one only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory (splendor), majesty, might and dominion, and power and authority, before all time and now and forever - unto all the ages of eternity. Amen - so be it.'*

FIVE REASONS WHY JESUS CAME

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: 1 John 4:11-21

No less than five times in his first epistle, John emphasizes the fact and the purpose of our Lord's incarnation. Sometimes the question is asked: How do we know that Jesus came?

There are two main lines of evidence for the fact of our Lord's birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation.

#1 - His coming was prophetically anticipated.

Frequently, in the Old Testament scriptures, we find predictions of the first advent of our Lord. The fact and purpose of His coming are presented to us in pictures, types and promises.

Compare -

Genesis 3:15 -

Genesis 3:21 -

Genesis 4:1-5 -

Exodus 12:13 -

Isaiah 7:14 -

Isaiah 9:6-7 -

Isaiah 53:5-6 -

Lamentations 1:12 -

#2 - His coming was historically authenticated.

In the four gospels and in the epistles we have the historical record of the Saviour's birth and life. Added to this, of course, we have the independent testimony of secular historians. Thus, we can join the writer of this epistle and say, "We know that the Son of God is (or has) come."

1 John 5:20 -

We can be absolutely sure about the *fact* that our Lord came into the world.

Can we be equally sure of the *purpose* of His coming?

Yes, for John gives us five simple reasons why Jesus came, which we shall consider in the order in which they appear.

HE CAME TO BE OUR SIN-BEARER.

1 John 3:5 -

The word 'manifested' is significant. It infers our Lord's pre-existence. When He was born at Bethlehem, that was not His beginning.

Compare -

John 1:1-3 -

2 Corinthians 8:9 -

Galatians 4:4 -

1 John 1:1-2 -

Why was He 'manifested'?

The answer is: *to take away our sins!*

So the essential purpose of the incarnation was not that our Lord might become our Example or our Teacher, but that He might be our Sin-bearer. He came to die, for only by dying could He atone for our sins.

Isaiah 53:5 -

John 1:29 -

2 Corinthians 5:21 -

Hebrews 9:26 -

1 Peter 2:24 -

Notice that in -

1 John 3:5 -

the writer is careful to say that 'in Him is no sin'. Why is this?

It was only as the sinless One that He could qualify as the sin-bearer.

If Jesus was manifested to take away our sins, have we availed ourselves of the work which He did and the provision He made on our behalf? Have we had *our* sins taken away?

HE CAME TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.

1 John 3:8 -

Satan is the instigator of all the sin and suffering that the human race has known. All the sickness, heartbreaks, murders and wars come because of his presence in the world.

But Jesus came to destroy Satan's works and to restore to us all that we have lost through his evil workings. Jesus did this by His death upon the cross of Calvary. There, once and for all, Satan was defeated.

Hebrews 2:14 -

Revelation 20:10 -

Jesus 'bound the strong man'.

Mark 3:27 -

He did this *potentially*.

Soon, at His second coming, He will do it *actually*.

Revelation 20:10 -

There is a beautiful illustration of this in -

John 10:10 -

Satan, as a thief, comes to rob, spoil and destroy. Jesus comes to reverse the whole process and to overthrow and remove all Satan's works.

What a great thing it is to be on the side of the Lord Jesus Christ!

What a solemn thing to be on the devil's side.

Matthew 12:30 -

Satan today is doing his utmost to keep men and women in the dark concerning the person and the work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Corinthians 4:4 -

Satan is also intent on attacking and accusing God's children, but, thank God, he is a defeated foe.

Romans 16:20 -

HE CAME TO GIVE US ETERNAL LIFE.

1 John 4:9 -

This was our greatest need, because the coming of sin had brought death upon the whole human race, spiritual death, which is separation from God.

Romans 5:12 -

Ephesians 2:1 -

Compare -

John 5:40 -

We were spiritually dead. God loves us and sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have eternal life. This is the good news of the gospel.

John 3:16 -

How do we get this life?

1 John 5:11-12 -

Do you possess eternal life and have the assurance that you have passed from death into life?

John 5:24 -

4. HE CAME TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.

1 John 4:10 -

These words are saying that the Lord Jesus not only came to take away our sins, but that, because He did that by offering Himself as the sacrifice for sin, He entirely vindicated the holy and righteous character of God and satisfied all the demands of His holiness and justice, thus enabling Him to be merciful to the sinner.

God is righteously angry with our sinfulness.

Psalm 7:11 -

His holy and righteous nature demands this. Sin must be punished. But, sin has been punished in the person of our Substitute, Who bore our sins in His body on the tree.

1 Peter 2:24 -

Thus we can say with the psalmist -

Psalm 103:10 -

The Lord Jesus has once and for all dealt with the sin question. Because our trust is in Him, we are safe and secure. How wonderful to have this assurance!

5. HE CAME TO BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

1 John 4:14 -

This is the glorious note with which we end our study. Jesus is the Saviour of the world. The work of salvation which He accomplished upon the cross is adequate for all people everywhere.

Christ is the universal Saviour.

The message given to the shepherds on the first Christmas Day is still true.

Luke 2:10-11 -

Compare -

John 4:39-42 -

Does this mean that everyone is saved? No!

It means that salvation is available and provided for all - but it has to be accepted.

Jesus is the only Saviour.

Acts 4:12 -

He is well able to save all who come to Him.

Hebrews 7:25 -

But to be saved, we must call upon and trust Him as our own personal Saviour.

Romans 10:13 -

‘We know that the Son of God is come’ - and these are some of the reasons why He came.

Are you rejoicing, not only in the fact and the purpose of His coming, but in the Lord Himself as your Saviour and your God?

John 20:28 -

Compare -

Psalm 48:14 -

NOTES

ETERNAL LIFE AND HOW TO GET IT

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: 1 John 5:1-13

The Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to bring to all men the wonderful gift of eternal life.

In this study we are to see what is eternal life, where it is to be found, how we may get it and what is the alternative if we do not get it.

In this first epistle of John, three great truths about God are brought before us.

(1) God is *LIGHT* - 1 John, chapters 1 and 2.

(2) God is *LOVE* - 1 John, chapters 3 - 5:5.

(3) God is *LIFE* - 1 John, chapter 5:6-21

God's Word is our only source of information about the subject of eternal life.

What do we learn about this tremendously important subject from -

1 John 5:9-13 -

**ETERNAL LIFE IS QUITE DIFFERENT AND DISTINCT FROM THE
NATURAL, PHYSICAL OR HUMAN LIFE.**

This portion of scripture makes that quite clear.

For example, in -

1 John 5:12 -

some have eternal life and some do not.

All have human, physical, natural life, but all do not possess eternal life. They are two quite different kinds of life.

See what Jesus said in -

John 5:40 -

All those to whom He was speaking had physical, natural, human life, but they lacked spiritual, eternal life.

What, then, is eternal life?

It is God's life, divine life, and therefore of a different kind and quality from human life. It is more than existence. It is more than eternal existence. It is to share in the unending life of God Himself.

2 Peter 1:4 -

The whole human race will *exist* eternally, but those who have eternal life will *live* eternally.

ETERNAL LIFE IS A PRESENT POSSESSION.

1 John 5:11 -

God has already given eternal life and all may receive it. Those who do, receive it at once!

It is not something that begins when we die. It begins here and now.

We must wait until we die for some things, but we do not have to wait until then to possess and enjoy this new life.

Indeed, we must begin to enjoy it before we die (physically), because if we die without it, we shall never have it. We shall just go on existing.

Notice the word 'hath' in the following verses, denoting present possession -

John 3:36 -

John 5:24 -

3. ETERNAL LIFE IS A FREE GIFT.

Notice the word 'given' in -

1 John 5:11 -

When and how has God 'given' eternal life?

He did it *historically* when He gave His Son, our Lord Jesus, at the incarnation.

He does it *experimentally* when we, as individual persons, reach out to receive it by faith as a free, unmerited gift.

Eternal life cannot be paid for, worked for, earned or merited. It is a free gift.

John 10:27-28 -

Romans 6:23 -

There are two things you can do with a gift - receive it or refuse it.

It is stated in -

John 3:16 -

that God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, in order that we might have eternal life.

How do we get it? By *receiving* God's gift.

Have you received the Lord Jesus?

Luke 19:5-6 -

4. ETERNAL LIFE IS IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE.

This is told to us in -

1 John 5:11 -

Eternal life is not in religion, church-going or ordinances, nor is it in some great religious leader, some 'guru' nor some 'angel from heaven'. It is one person and only in that person and that is Christ.

Compare -

John 1:4 -

John 5:26 -

John 10:10 -

John 14:6 -

Colossians 3:4 -

1 John 4:9 -

1 John 5:20 -

The Lord Jesus alone is the Repository of eternal life.

So there is only one place where eternal life can be found - in Him!

It therefore follows that:

5. TO POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE WE MUST POSSESS CHRIST.

This is clearly taught in -

1 John 5:11 -

1 John 5:12a -

If eternal life is in Christ, *I must have Christ* to have eternal life!

The two words 'hath life' literally read 'hath *the* life', because He is the life -

Acts 3:15 -

where the word 'Prince' means 'Author'.

Christ is the source as well as the embodiment of eternal life. This being so, I can only have eternal life by having Him.

The same truth is emphasized in different words in -

Acts 4:12 -

How can I have Him? What do I do with a gift if I want it?

John 1:12-13 -

6. ALL WHO POSSESS CHRIST HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND MAY KNOW IT.

1 John 5:9-10 -

We may know we have eternal life because of -

1. the outward witness of the Word -

1 John 5:9 -

2. the inward witness of the Holy Spirit.

Compare -

Romans 8:15-16 -

Galatians 4:6 -

For a good illustration of this, read the account of the woman with the issue of blood who came to Jesus and received healing - **Mark 5:25-34**.

After she touched the Saviour in simple faith, two things happened.

#1 - Mark 5:29 -

She *felt* in her body that she was healed of that plague. But something else happened.

#2 - Mark 5:34 -

These words of the Lord Himself gave her absolute assurance that she had been healed. She knew she was healed because *Christ said so* and because she had the *witness within*.

Now look again at -

1 John 5:12a - Notice the two 'haths'!

Read -

1 John 5:13 -

and see that God wants us to know that, because we *have* Christ (having received Him and trusted Him as our Saviour) we *have* eternal life.

Do you have this assurance?

7. NOT TO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE IS TO REMAIN SPIRITUALLY DEAD
AND TO FACE THE PROSPECT OF ETERNAL DEATH.

This is solemn, but see what we are told in -

1 John 5:12b -

All who are without Christ, who do not possess Christ, are here and now spiritually dead and do not have eternal life. This is made clear from -

John 5:40 -

Ephesians 2:1 -

Romans 6:23 -

and 'death' here means separation from God.

To die like this, leads to what the Bible calls 'the second death', which is eternal separation from God.

Revelation 2:11 -

Revelation 20:14 -

Revelation 21:8 -

The choice has to be made. Eternal life or eternal death - which?

John 3:14-15 -

and compare with -

Numbers 21:5-9 -

If you have not yet done so, *look and live!*

*There is life for a look at the crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee;
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,
Unto Him Who was nailed to the tree.*

GOD'S PLEDGE TO HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: 1 John 5:14-21

We find a most wonderful promise in -

1 John 5:14-15 -

which tells us that it is possible for us to pray and not only get the things we for which we pray, but to know beforehand that our prayer is heard and answered.

See how clear the promise is in these verses.

Notice the following points.

#1 - This promise is made to a particular class of people.

1 John 5:13 -

If we are to come before God with confidence that He will hear and answer our prayer, we must be true believers, members of His family.

Compare with -

1 John 5:1 -

We must know the Lord and be known of Him. We must be Christians.

#2 - This promise reminds us that prayer is necessary for the accomplishment of God's will.

There is an element of mystery here, but scripture teaches that there are some things that the Lord does only when His people pray.

Ezekiel 36:37 -

James 4:2 -

If prayer is offered, God works. If prayer is not offered, His hand is stayed.

#3 - This promise makes confidence in prayer dependent upon our asking 'according to His will'.

This is made very clear in -

1 John 5:14 -

It is reasonable that it should be so, for God to answer prayer which did not harmonize with His will would be for Him to do something inconsistent with His nature. Of course, God, being God, could not do such a thing.

#4 - This promise is given, not to hinder our asking, but to encourage it.

We must remove from our minds the idea that prayer is so difficult, and that receiving things from God is such a hard business!

To pray 'according to His will' -

1 John 5:14 -

does not mean asking for less but for more. If it means asking for more, it means receiving more.

#5 - This promise implies that we may be absolutely sure of God's will when we pray.

Notice the words 'confidence' in -

1 John 5:14 -

and 'we know' in -

1 John 5:15 -

Compare -

John 11:41-42 -

We may be absolutely sure of God's will when we pray. If we are sure of His will when we pray, we are absolutely sure of the answer.

All this leads us to ask: How may we be sure of God's will when we pray? We can be sure, otherwise the words in **verse 14** would mock us.

But the question is: How?

First, He reveals His will by His word.

Second, He reveals His will by His Spirit.

1. HE REVEALS HIS WILL BY HIS WORD.

The will of God is revealed in the Word of God, where, over and over again, we find specific statements which tell us what is God's gracious will.

For example:

3. We know it is God's will that our unconverted loved ones should be convicted of their sin and made to feel their need of the Saviour because of -

John 16:7-8 -

For an illustration of this, look up -

Acts 2:37-38 -

Acts 16:25-31 -

This means that you may pray with confidence for the Holy Spirit to strive with your loved one or friend.

4. We know we are praying in the line of God's will when we ask for the salvation of any man, woman or child, because of -

1 Timothy 2:1-4 -

For further assurances, look up -

Isaiah 45:22 -

Ezekiel 33:11 -

John 3:16 -

2 Peter 3:9 -

This means you may pray with confidence for the salvation of your loved ones or friends.

5. We know that we are praying in the line of God's will when we ask for the sanctification of His people, because of -

1 Thessalonians 4:3 -

For an example of Paul's prayer for the Christians at Ephesus to be sanctified, look up

-

Ephesians 3:13-19 -

This means that we may pray with confidence for our Christian friends to grow in grace.

6. We know it is God's will to give us wisdom when we ask for it, because of -

James 1:5 -

For the way in which Solomon prayed for this, look up -

2 Chronicles 1:9-12 -

This means that when we need special wisdom we may ask God for it knowing that He will give it.

- e. *We know it is God's will for us to pray for laborers to be thrust into the harvest field because of -*

Matthew 9:38 -

For the description of the way this happened, look up -

Acts 8:4 -

Acts 8:11 -

Acts 8:19-21 -

Acts 13:1-4 -

This means that we may pray with confidence that the Lord will fill the 'gaps' on the mission field.

These are only given as examples to show that in many matters we can know God's will when we pray because *He has revealed His will in His Word.*

But, here is the problem. There are matters about which we can find no specific promise in the Word of God.

For example: Shall I get married? Shall I buy this house? Shall I go to Bible College? Shall I retire? Shall I join this church or that one?.....

There are no specific promises in the Bible that assure us of God's will concerning these and many other matters.

How, then, can I be sure of His will concerning these matters?

2. HE REVEALS HIS WILL BY HIS SPIRIT.

Romans 8:26-27 -

These verses completely cover our needs.

We do not know God's will concerning a certain matter? Well, the Holy Spirit, Who is God and Who dwells with us, comes to our aid and actually inspires the prayer within us which is in full accord with God's will.

In other words, as we yield to Him and seek His will, He makes the will of God known to us so that we can pray with confidence.

God's will, then, may be known by His Word and by His Spirit. We may be quite sure that the Holy Spirit will never lead us into any course of action contrary to what He has caused to be written in His Word.

To be sure of God's will, then, we must read, study and obey the Word of God. We must live day by day in humble submission to the Spirit of God - the Holy Spirit.

If we do this we shall find we are constantly doing the *asking.....asking.....asking.....* and God will constantly be doing the *giving.....giving.....giving.....!*

John 16:24 -

So keep on praying!

NOTES

HOW TO QUALIFY FOR A FULL REWARD

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: 2 John 1-13

This is a study of John's second epistle. Over the centuries there has been much discussion concerning the authorship of this letter (and of John's third epistle), but there is evidence that it was written in Ephesus by John the Apostle and Evangelist.

It has also been a problem to know to whom the epistle was address. Who was the 'the elect lady' referred to in -

2 John 1 -

Who were 'her children'?

Both phrases are capable of more than one interpretation.

The word 'lady' in Greek is "Kuria". This may be translated as a proper name, or translated impersonally, that is, it could refer to a specific Christian lady or to a Christian church.

What we do know is that the message of this short letter is for us today. It is relevant to us.

The six words in -

2 John 8 -

provide a 'key' to unlock the central message of this epistle. Hence our title "How to qualify for a full reward", that is, how to live and work down here so that at the Judgment Seat of Christ we may be rewarded and not suffer loss.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 -

2 Corinthians 5:10 -

Colossians 3:24-25 -

How, then, must we seek to live and work if we would qualify for a full reward?

WE MUST CULTIVATE AND SHOW FORTH A SPIRIT OF TRUE HUMILITY.

Notice how John begins his letter. He simply refers to himself as ‘the elder’. He does not mention his name, does not say he is an apostle, nor that he is the only one of the original apostles still alive, nor that he is the disciple -

John 13:23 -

This indication of humility is very beautiful and very pleasing to the Lord.

Matthew 11:29 -

John 3:30 -

1 Peter 3:1 -

1 Peter 5:5-6 -

Compare -

Isaiah 57:15 -

WE MUST BE FULL OF LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY FOR MEMBERS OF ‘THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH’.

Galatians 6:10 -

2 John 1 -

John expresses his love for those to whom he is writing.

See what he says in -

2 John 5 -

This is the burden of his first epistle. Now it comes to the forefront again.

Christians are to be love-filled.

John 13:14 -

1 John 3:11-12 -

1 John 3:14-18 -

1 John 4:11-12 -

Meditate on the following.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - (NEB) - *Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance.*

WE MUST PROVE AND DEMONSTRATE THE REALITY OF OUR LOVE BY OUR OBEDIENCE.

Love is not only talking, but walking!

2 John 6 -

If our hearts are filled with the love of Christ and for Him, the proof will be seen in our obedience. We shall prove our love by keeping His commandments.

John 14:15 -

In the Revised Version of the Bible, this verse reads -

'If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.'

It is hypocritical to profess to love Him if we are not obeying Him.

When Peter told the Lord that he loved Him, Jesus said -

John 21:15 -

Go and prove it!

Compare -

1 John 5:3 -

4. WE MUST SAFEGUARD THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

2 John 7-8

How important John felt the 'truth' to be !

W. Griffith Thomas has left us this outline.

#1 - Truth as a SPHERE.

2 John 1 -

2 John 3-4 -

#2 - Truth as an EXPERIENCE.

2 John 1 -

#3 - Truth as a MOTIVE.

2 John 2 -

#4 - Truth as a STANDARD.

2 John 4 -

#5 - Truth as a POWER.

2 John 5-6 -

2 John 8 -

#6 - Truth as a HOME.

2 John 9 -

#7 - Truth as a TEST.

2 John 10-11 -

There is a tendency today to say that doctrine is not important. But what a fallacy! The truth of the gospel has been committed to us. We are to safeguard it and contend for it.

Jude 3 -

Compare -

Philippians 1:17 -

There are false teachers on every hand.

2 John 7 -

The characteristics of the future antichrist are seen in these false deceivers, so we are to guard the truth concerning -

1. The person of Christ, His unique personality, combining the true deity and perfect humanity.

2 John 3 -

b. The work of Christ.

2 John 7 -

To deny that Christ is come in the flesh, as some were doing, and as some do today, leads to a denial of His saving purpose and work.

5. WE ARE TO BE VERY WARY OF FALSE TEACHERS AND OF FALSE TEACHING.

The words in -

2 John 8 -

are an exhortation to self-examination. We are to look to ourselves that we do not become, or have become, contaminated in the slightest degree by error or by false teaching.

What a word for today when so many heresies abound on every hand!

2 Timothy 4:1-5 -

Beware of the 'isms' that threaten you.

Acts 20:28-30 -

Colossians 2:6-8 -

2 Timothy 2:15 -

6. WE ARE TO KEEP THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF GOSPEL TRUTH IN BALANCE.

This word is needed for today when some Christians are taking one precious aspect of truth and 'running it to death', thus getting 'off balance'.

2 John 9 -

The words 'whosoever transgresseth', should literally read, 'whosoever goes onward' - referring to the danger of going *beyond* the teaching of the Bible.

This can be done when truth is taken out of its context or when one aspect of truth is made a main line of teaching.

Usually those who fall into this danger soon show signs of pride and later, when challenged, of arrogance.

Beware! Pray that you may know 'the simplicity that is in Christ'.

2 Corinthians 11:3 -

7. WE MUST SEEK AFTER AND EXERCISE THE JOY OF TRUE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

2 John 12 -

We learn from this verse that John had a burning love for those to whom he was writing. He longed to be with them that he and they might rejoice together.

There is nothing quite so wonderful as true Christian fellowship - but we must seek it, cultivate and enjoy it! If we give heed to these things, one day we shall hear the Lord Himself say to us -

Matthew 25:21 -

We shall receive 'a full reward'.

NOTES

TWO GOOD EXAMPLES AND ONE BAD ONE

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: 3 John 1-14

In concluding this series of studies, we turn to John's third epistle.

It would seem that the key verse of this short letter is -

3 John 11 -

Dr. Weymouth renders it -

'Do not follow wrong examples but right ones: he that does what is right is a child of God; he who does what is wrong has not seen God.'

The letter is a private one in which we read of three characters: *Gaius*, *Diotrephes* and *Demetrius*.

John tells us some exceedingly good things about Gaius and Demetrius, but in the case of Diotrephes, he can only write of bad things.

Then comes the exhortation: 'Follow the right examples'. In other words, do not follow Diotrephes, but follow Gaius and Demetrius.

It is easily possible to follow the wrong examples. To do so is always fatal.

When we get absorbed with someone, we become like that person, for they influence us. In turn, we influence others.

Here, then, we have pictures of three members of the church of long ago.

Let us look at them with the prayer in our hearts that God will give us grace to follow the two good ones and not the bad one!

1. **GAIUS - A GOOD EXAMPLE!**

Read **3 John 1-8**.

In his informative pen-picture of Gaius, John tells us three very significant things about him.

He abounded in spiritual health.

3 John 2 -

He may have been physically unwell, possibly he was poor materially, but the thing that is emphasized here is that his soul was brimming over with spiritual life and vitality.

Compare -

John 10:10 -

Some Christians live in a constant state of spiritual invalidism. They are never really well. They do not know anything about life more abundant. They exist, or endure, but they do not enjoy living in fellowship with the Lord from day to day.

The secret of spiritual health is in -

3 John 3-4 -

It consists of receiving the truth and walking in it.

Matthew 4:4 -

His life harmonized with his profession.

3 John 3-4 -

Not only did Gaius believe the truth (for it was *in* him) but he lived out what he believed (he *walked* in the truth).

He not only had the truth in his head, he had it in his heart also. His faith really worked.

James 2:20 -

It is most necessary that we should stand for the truth and for the whole counsel of God.

Acts 20:27 -

But there is a still greater need for Christians to demonstrate the truth in their lives.

Titus 2:7-10 -

- c. *His life and his service were dominated by faithfulness, hospitality, large heartedness, generosity and, above all, love.*

3 John 5-8 -

What an example for us to follow!

Gaius knew what it was to be faithful to the Lord and to his brethren, to give hospitality to those itinerant preachers who visited the churches, to be open hearted and generous, and above all, to be loving in his relationship with others.

If there was any way in which he could help the work of the Lord, Gaius would do it. His dominant motive in all his service was that of love (the word 'charity' in **verse 6**).

2 Corinthians 5:14 -

Read **1 Corinthians 13**.

2. DIOTREPES - A BAD EXAMPLE!

3 John 9-10 -

This man reminds us of the tares and the wheat.

Matthew 13:25 -

Romans 8:9 -

2 Timothy 3:5 -

How did he get into the church? Or, having got in, why did he deteriorate so terribly?

1. He was a proud, self-willed man who always wanted to be first.

3 John 9 -

It is clear that he loved the public eye and was always pushing to the front. He was certainly not content to work behind the scenes. He wanted the limelight. He was insufferably proud. This was the root cause of all the trouble that he was to himself and to others.

What a tragedy it is when anyone pushes around like this in a church! How unlike the Lord Jesus to act in this way!

Matthew 11:29 -

Matthew 20:27-28 -

Compare -

1 Peter 3:4 -

Do not follow the example of this man who was dominated by self and was obstructive, destructive, critical and jealous.

2. He had an undisciplined and dangerous tongue.

He was guilty of 'prattling' -

3 John 10 -

This means he overflowed with words which were usually malicious or evil. Be careful of the loquacious person!

Diotrephes talked much. In so doing, he tried to build up his own reputation, usually by belittling others and speaking against them.

Oh, the damage that is caused by undisciplined tongues! How much we need to pray the prayer of the psalmist.

Psalms 141:3 -

- c. He turned others away from the church.*

3 John 10 -

Fancy casting others out of the church, excommunicating them!

Why did he do this? Because they resisted him. Anyone who would not 'play up' to him became his enemy.

Have we ever been guilty of turning anyone away from the church by our bad example, our criticism or lack of love? Do others avoid us because we are like Diotrephes?

Read and meditate on **Philippians 2:1-18.**

3. DEMETRIUS - ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE!

3 John 12 -

In all probability Demetrius was the bearer of this letter. We are told three things about him.

1. Everybody spoke well of him.

3 John 12 -

Sometimes, of course, it is not good when everyone speaks well of us, but in this case it was good.

Wherever Demetrius went, in the church, among his friends, at home or in business, everyone had a good word to say for him.

Even his enemies could not fault him.

Daniel 6:4-5 -

2. Like Gaius, he lived out the truth.

3 John 12 -

Here are five rules for Bible reading and study:

#1 - Look it up.

#2 - Write it down.

#3 - Pray it in.

#4 - Live it out.

#5 - Pass it on.

This is just what Demetrius did. The truth itself attested the reality and the spirituality of this man.

3. He had the commendation of his spiritual leaders.

3 John 12 -

John, along with other men of spiritual maturity and insight, was able to commend him as a godly, Christ-honoring, Spirit-filled man.

Do not be like Diotrephes. Be like Gaius and Demetrius!

How?

Certainly not in your own strength, but in the strength of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:10 -

*May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self-abasing,
This is victory.*

NOTES
