

LESSON NINE

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN (Continued)

TEXT: I John Chapters 3, 4 & 5.

A. CHAPTER THREE:

1. THE PURIFYING HOPE: (I John 3:1-3).

The most sanctifying influence in the life of a believer is the hope that he shall see Jesus. God's love has permitted us to know that we are the sons of God, but we do not know entirely just what we shall be. However, we do know that we shall see Jesus and that we shall be like Him.

This is the hope of the church and it has a tremendous purifying influence in the life of every saint.

2. OBLIGATION OF PURITY: (I John 3:4-8).

A definition of sin is given here in verse 4: *"Sin is the transgression of the law."*

The devil has sinned from the very beginning and the man who abides in sin is of the devil. It was the reason of destroying the works of the devil that Jesus Christ came into the world. Jesus came to take away our sins. Therefore one cannot abide in Christ and abide in sin at the same time.

The righteous man will live righteously even as Jesus Christ is righteous. There is no alternative to this principle of truth.

3. THE MAN WHO CANNOT SIN:

Scriptural Reference:

"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" (I John 3:9).

This is not referring to an individual act of sin but rather to the habitual practice of sin. The man who is born of God has God's nature abiding within. As such, it is impossible for him to abide in sin and God's seed abide within him at the same time. He is either a child of the devil or a son of God. If he is a son of God then God's nature will not permit him to live a life of sin.

4. MARKS OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD: (I John 3:10-17).

Here the children of God and the children of the devil are compared:

a. Children of God:

- i. Love the brethren (verse 14).
- ii. Lay down our lives for the brethren (verse 16).
- iii. Have compassion for our brother in his need (verse 17).
- b. Children of the Devil:
 - i. Loveth not his brother (verse 10).
 - ii. Abideth in death (verse 14).
 - iii. Hateth his brother and is a murderer (verse 15).
 - iv. Shutteth up his bowels of compassion (verse 17).

Even as Cain hated Abel because of his righteous works, so the world hates the children of God. We are not to be surprised at this.

5. THE TRUE TEST: (I John 3:18-24).

The true test is that we love, not in word, but in deed and truth. If we keep His commandments and do those things pleasing to Him, we know that He abideth in us and will answer our prayers (verse 22).

We cannot always trust our own hearts. Sometimes our hearts would condemn us but at such times we must remember that God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. By loving in deed and in truth, our hearts will be assured and we shall have confidence towards God (verse 21).

B. CHAPTER TWO:

1. FALSE PROPHETS: (I John 4:1-6).

There are many false teachers. These false teachers are to be tested by the error they teach and the wrong spirit, which dominates them. The test is concerning the truth of the incarnation and the deity of Jesus. Every spirit that does not confess the deity of Jesus is of the world and is the spirit of antichrist. Everyone who confesses the truth of the incarnation is of God.

The world will listen to this wrong teaching because it has a kindred spirit. The children of God have nothing to fear from these false teachers and wrong spirits because He who dwells within our hearts is greater than the forces of darkness in the world.

2. LOVE: (I John 4:7-21).

The rest of Chapter 4 is dealing with love. Two times John states that God is love (verses 8 & 16).

The love of God is manifested by Christ's death on the cross that we might have eternal life. God loved us before we love Him, and we love Him because He first loved us (verse 19).

In verse 18, love is contrasted with fear. Fear has torment but love will cast out fear. The real proof that a man loves God is that he loves his brother. If he hates his brother and says he loves God, he is a liar.

C. CHAPTER FIVE:

1. THE PROOF OF OUR LOVE: (I John 5:1-3).

Everyone who loves God will also love them who are born of God. The real proof that we love God is that we shall keep His commandments. The commandments of God are not oppressive and will be kept by all that love Him.

2. THE VICTORY OF FAITH: (I John 5:4-5).

Everyone who is born of God has victory over the world. The power, which gives us the victory, is the faith that we have in the deity of Jesus. The person who is victorious over the world is the one who believes in the deity of Jesus.

3. THE WITNESS IN EARTH AND HEAVEN: (I John 5:6-9).

When the soldiers pierced the side of our Lord on the cross, there came out blood and water (John 19:34). Just as Eve was taken from the side of Adam, so the church was born as blood and water from the side of Christ.

In this Scripture there are three elements named which bear witness to our salvation: spirit, water and blood. John stated that these three are in agree. They all testify to the same thing.

There are also three witnesses in heaven: Father, Word and Holy Ghost. John is careful to state that these three are one. On earth the three witnesses agree in one, but in heaven the three are one!

4. THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT:

Scriptural Reference:

"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" (I John 5:10).

The child of God has the witness within himself. The Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirit that we are born of God (Romans 8:16).

5. LIFE IN THE SON: (I John 5:11-13).

The truth that eternal life is in the Son is very important. At the conclusion of this chapter we read: *"This is the true God, and eternal life" (verse 20).*

The fact is that whosoever has the Son has eternal life. If the presence of Christ withdraws from a life, he does not have eternal life. There is no such thing as possessing eternal life and at the same time abiding in willful transgression.

6. CERTAINTY OF ANSWERED PRAYER: (I John 5:14-15).

There is a definite assurance of answered prayer when one prays according to God's will. God listens to the child of God praying when he prays according to His will. If God listens, He will also answer.

7. THE SIN UNTO DEATH: (I John 5:16-17).

There is a sin unto death, which is the unpardonable sin. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven (Matthew 12:31-32). It is a waste of time to pray for a person who has committed this sin.

If the Holy Ghost burdens a person to pray, then it is positive that he has not committed this sin. We are told to pray for our brother who may have sinned which is not unto death. God will hear and give him life. This is another strong Scripture, which reveals the error of unconditional eternal security.

8. THE BELIEVER'S KNOWLEDGE: (I John 5:18-20).

Here are stated four things that the believer knows:

- a. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not;
- b. We are of God and the world around us is under Satan's power;
- c. Jesus has come and given us understanding;
- d. We are in Jesus Christ who is the true God.

9. CONCLUSION:

Scriptural Reference:

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (I John 5:21).

John concluded his epistle with an exhortation against idolatry. Anything that takes God's place in our hearts becomes an idol. We are to keep ourselves from anything of this nature.

LESSON NINE

SELF HELP TEST

- A. Give a definition of sin.

- B. What is the great "purifying hope" of the child of God?

- C. Explain what is meant by the "sin unto death."

- D. Write a paragraph explaining this phrase: "Life is in the Son."

- E. What are the THREE witnesses in earth which agree?
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____

- F. Contrast the differences given by John between the children of God and the children of the devil.