

LESSON 44  
“God is Love”  
1, 2 and 3 John

**OVERVIEW:** Manifestations of God’s love for us. The Savior’s love for us. Showing our love for Heavenly Father , Jesus and others. Walk in the light.

The letter seems to bear a close relationship to the Gospel of John, which is dated about AD 90 or 95. 1 John was probably written about AD 96. For sure it was written between 70 and 100. John spent the latter part of his life in and near Ephesus. His warning is against false teachers and false doctrines. We know these epistles were written by John because the word phrasing and language is similar to the Gospel of John.

(As far as the Biblical Dispensation is concerned, this treatise is probably the last recorded inspired writing of which we have record. DNTC, 3:371-2) The Book of Revelation was written first, then the Gospel of John, and then these epistles. These are the last words written by a prophet in the Bible. John presides over the Church for 2,000 years until the keys are given to Joseph Smith. Some taught that Jesus only seemed to have a physical body but did not. John refutes that in the first verse. Satan wanted the teaching out that God does not have a body, but it is Satan who actually does not have a body. The apostasy was already well underway. Peter and John were the only two Church Presidents at this time. In the First Epistle of John, John uses the word love 47 times.

**SCRIPTURES:**

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN  
CHAPTER 1

*Saints gain fellowship with God by obedience—We must confess our sins to gain forgiveness.*

**1** (Brethren, this is the testimony which we give of) <sup>a</sup>THAT<sup>•</sup> which was from the <sup>b</sup>beginning<sup>•</sup>, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, (John was eyewitness of Jesus’ life and his resurrection.) and our hands have handled, of the <sup>c</sup>Word of life; (The language of the greeting is similar to John’s Gospel. John 1:1-5 1 IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.)

**2** (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and <sup>a</sup>shew<sup>•</sup> (declare, announce, bring tidings) unto you that <sup>b</sup>eternal<sup>•</sup> life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

**3** That which we have <sup>a</sup>seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: (We may see the same things John and the other apostles have seen. “For God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them.” TPJS, p. 149, DNTC, 3:374) and truly our <sup>b</sup>fellowship *is* with the <sup>c</sup>Father<sup>•</sup>, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

**4** And these things <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>light<sup>•</sup>, and in him is no <sup>b</sup>darkness at all. (This language is similar to the Gospel of John.)

**6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and <sup>a</sup>walk in <sup>b</sup>darkness<sup>•</sup>, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we <sup>a</sup>walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the <sup>b</sup>blood of Jesus Christ his Son <sup>c</sup>cleanseth us from all sin. (John 1: 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.)

8 If we say that we have <sup>a</sup>no <sup>b</sup>sin, we <sup>c</sup>deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (All have sinned.)

9 If we <sup>a</sup>confess our sins, he is faithful and <sup>b</sup>just to <sup>c</sup>forgive us our sins, and to <sup>d</sup>cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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

## CHAPTER 2

*Christ is our Advocate with the Father—We know God by obedience—Love not the world—Antichrists shall come in the last days.*

1 MY little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. <sup>a</sup>And (But) if any man sin (and repent), we have an <sup>b</sup>advocate (intercessor, helper, comforter) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (D&C 45: 3 Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—4 Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; 5 Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.)

2 And he is the <sup>a</sup>propitiation (pay) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole <sup>b</sup>world. (John continued his teaching that salvation comes through Christ. “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2-3). The Greek word translated “advocate” is *paraklatos*. It literally means “one who is called to someone’s aid”; “one who appears in another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper.” The use of this word outside the New Testament gives the sense of a “person called in to help, summoned to give assistance.” The meaning is a “helper in court.” It is not necessarily a professional legal advisor but “is to be understood in the light of legal assistance in court, the pleading of another’s case.” This fits the meaning of John’s use of the word in 1 John. The role of Jesus as an advocate is seen in the D&C 45:3-5: “Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.” As an advocate, Christ offers His sinless, infinite life for the life of those who believe on Him. As Lehi explained: “Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered” (2 Nephi 2:7). Bruce Satterfield, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 44.)

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we <sup>a</sup>keep his commandments. (Since the very fact of knowing God, in the ultimate and full sense, consists of thinking what he thinks, saying what he says, doing what he does, and of being like him, thus having exaltation or godhood – it follows that saved souls must advance and progress until they acquire his character, perfections, and attributes, until they gain his eternal power, until they themselves become gods. DNTC, 3:377. John 17: 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.)

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

5 But whoso <sup>a</sup>keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are <sup>b</sup>in him.

6 He that saith he <sup>a</sup>abideth in him ought himself also so to <sup>b</sup>walk, even as he walked. (Put upon you the yoke of Christ.)

7 <sup>a</sup>Brethren, I write ~~no~~ (a) new commandment unto you, but ~~an old~~ (it is the same) 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, <sup>a</sup>which thing (was of old ordained of God; and) is true in him and in you: because the <sup>b</sup>darkness is <sup>c</sup>past (passing away) (in you), and the true <sup>d</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>loveth his <sup>b</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. (John 1: 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.)

12 I <sup>a</sup>write unto you, little <sup>b</sup>children, because your sins are forgiven you <sup>c</sup>for his <sup>d</sup>name's sake. (because of, through his name)

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 (Apparently John is saying: I now write you this Epistle, but I have already written you my Gospel. DNTC, 3:379) unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. (John 1: 1 IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.) 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 <sup>a</sup>world, neither the things *that are* ~~in~~ (of) the <sup>b</sup>world. If any man love the world, the <sup>c</sup>love of the Father is not in him. (John's point here is at the heart of his writings. The first great commandment is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:27). When the things of the world become more important to us than God, then we have displaced God, violated the first commandment, and are guilty of worshiping other gods. President Spencer W. Kimball once stated: "Whatever thing a man sets his heart and his trust in most is his god; and if his god doesn't also happen to be the true and living God of Israel, that man is laboring in idolatry." Bruce Satterfield, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 44. No man can love God and rebel against him. Love is measured in obedience and service. DNTC, 3:379)

16 For all *that is* in the world, (that is of) the <sup>a</sup>lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the <sup>b</sup>pride (haughtiness, ostentation) of life, is not of the Father, but is of the <sup>c</sup>world.

17 And the <sup>a</sup>world <sup>b</sup>passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the <sup>c</sup>will of God <sup>d</sup>abideth for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that <sup>a</sup>antichrist shall come, even now are there many <sup>b</sup>antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. (While we ordinarily associate the prefix anti with opposition and antagonism, the base meaning in Greek is "instead of" or "in place of." Thomas W. Mackay, Studies in Scriptures, 6:241. Anti Christ is an opponent of Christ. DNTC, 3:381.)

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 <sup>a</sup>unction (anointing) from the <sup>b</sup>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. (Truth is truth.)

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

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the <sup>a</sup>promise that he hath promised us, even <sup>b</sup>eternal life.

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that <sup>a</sup>seduce (deceive, lead astray, cause to wander) you.

27 But the anointing (The gift of the Holy Ghost. DNTC, 3:383) which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man <sup>a</sup>teach you: but as the same <sup>b</sup>anointing <sup>c</sup>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 (then shall your confidence wax strong in the Lord), and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth <sup>a</sup>righteousness is <sup>b</sup>born of him.

### CHAPTER 3

*Sons of God shall become like Christ—Love for the brethren required to gain eternal life—Obedience assures us an answer to our prayers.*

1 BEHOLD, what manner of <sup>a</sup>love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the <sup>b</sup>sons (children) of God (children, people): therefore the <sup>c</sup>world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (The world does not understand the Latter-day Saints, because they don't know the true God.)

2 Beloved, (John was beloved of Christ, now calls us beloved) now are we the <sup>a</sup>sons of God (children, people), and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall <sup>b</sup>appear, we shall be <sup>c</sup>like him; for we shall <sup>d</sup>see him as he is. (We shall be like Christ. We shall conform to his image and be glorified as he is. We shall have exaltation, for that is what he has; and he is life his Father. Thus, we also shall be as the Father, which accords with the Prophet's declaration: "God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself." TPJS, 354, DNTC, 3:385. Moroni 7: 48 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.)

3 And every man that hath this <sup>a</sup>hope (firm or confident expectation) in him <sup>b</sup>purifieth himself, even as he is <sup>c</sup>pure. (We don't just automatically become like God, without effort on our part. Through our obedience to the ordinances and commandments, we become like God and change our nature to resemble him more closely.)

4 Whosoever committeth sin <sup>a</sup>transgresseth also the law: for <sup>b</sup>sin is the transgression of the law.

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

6 Whosoever abideth in him <sup>a</sup>sinneth not: <sup>b</sup>whosoever <sup>c</sup>sinneth (continueth in sin) hath not seen him, neither <sup>c</sup>known him. (All men sin, before and after baptism, but those saints who strive to keep the commandments, and are continually repenting and returning to the Lord, no longer continue in that course of sinful rebellion against God and his laws which was their lot before they were baptized for the remission of sins. Church members who do so continue in sin are members in name only; they do not receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost, through whose revelations alone can the Lord be known. DNTC, 3:386)

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

8 He that <sup>a</sup>committeth (continueth in) <sup>b</sup>sin is of the devil; for the devil <sup>c</sup>sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the <sup>d</sup>devil.

9 Whosoever is <sup>a</sup>born of God <sup>b</sup>doth not <sup>c</sup>commit (continueth in) sin; for his seed (the Spirit of God) remaineth in him: and he cannot (continue in) sin, because he is born of God, (having received that holy Spirit of promise).

10 In this the children of God are <sup>a</sup>manifest (conspicuous, apparent), and the <sup>b</sup>children of the devil: whosoever doeth not <sup>c</sup>righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the <sup>a</sup>message (precept, doctrine) that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>life, because we love the <sup>b</sup>brethren. He that <sup>c</sup>loveth not his brother abideth in <sup>d</sup>death.

15 Whosoever <sup>a</sup>hateth his brother is a murderer (How strong is this doctrine! In the eternal perspective those who hate their fellowmen are murderers whether they shed blood in the literal sense or not. They have committed murder in their hearts and will be judged accordingly, even as those who look upon women in lust are numbered with and judged as adulterers. The deeds have been done in the heart. And so Jesus said of the devil: He was a murderer from the beginning, though that enemy of all righteousness did not personally shed blood either in pre-existence or after being cast down to earth. DNTC, 3:389): and ye know that no <sup>b</sup>murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the <sup>a</sup>love of God, (Christ,) because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (John 3: 16 ¶ 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.)

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his <sup>a</sup>brother have <sup>b</sup>need, and <sup>c</sup>shutteth up his bowels of <sup>d</sup>compassion (is hardhearted, void of compassion) from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, <sup>a</sup>neither in tongue (only); but in <sup>b</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we <sup>a</sup>confidence toward God. (An actual knowledge to any person, what the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God, is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life. It was this that enabled the ancient saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions, and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing (not believing merely) that they had a more enduring substance. Lectures on Faith, 6:2)

22 And whatsoever we <sup>a</sup>ask, we receive of him, because we <sup>b</sup>keep his <sup>c</sup>commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his <sup>a</sup>commandment, That we should <sup>b</sup>believe on the <sup>c</sup>name of his Son Jesus Christ, and <sup>d</sup>love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments <sup>a</sup>dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he <sup>b</sup>abideth in us, by the <sup>c</sup>Spirit which he hath given us.

#### CHAPTER 4

*Try the spirits—God is love and dwells in those who love him.*

1 BELOVED, believe not every <sup>a</sup>spirit, but <sup>b</sup>try (test, prove by trial, discern) the <sup>c</sup>spirits whether they are of God (We may look for angels and receive their ministrations, but we are to try the spirits and prove them, for it is often the case that men make a mistake in regard to these things.

God has so ordained that when he has communicated, no vision is to be taken but what you see by the seeing of the eye, or what you hear by the hearing of the ear. When you see a vision pray for the interpretation; if you get not this, shut it up; there must be certainty in this matter. An open vision will manifest that which is more important. Lying spirits are going forth in the earth. There will be great manifestations of spirits, both false and true...Not every spirit, or vision, or singing is of God. TPJS, p. 161-2. D&C 129: 4 When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you. 5 If he be an angel he will do so, and you will feel his hand. 6 If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear— 7 Ask him to shake hands with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the <sup>a</sup>order of heaven for a just man to <sup>b</sup>deceive; but he will still deliver his message. 8 If it be the <sup>a</sup>devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands he will offer you his hand, and you will not <sup>b</sup>feel anything; you may therefore detect him. 9 These are three grand <sup>a</sup>keys whereby you may know whether any administration is from God.): because many <sup>d</sup>false prophets are gone out into the world. (It is evident from the apostles' writings that many false spirits existed in their day and had gone forth into the world, and that it needed intelligence which God alone could impart to detect false spirits and to prove what spirits were of God. The world in general has been grossly ignorant in regard to this one thing, and why should they be otherwise? For no man knows the things of God but by the spirit of God...Nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the spirit of God. Thousands have felt the influence of its terrible power and baneful effects; long pilgrimages have been undertaken, penances endure, and pain and misery and ruin have followed in the train. Nations have been convulsed, kingdoms overthrown, provinces laid waste, and blood, carnage, and desolation are the habiliments in which it has been clothed. The Turks, the Hindus, the Jews and the Christians, the Indians, in fact all nations have been deceived, imposed upon, and injured through the mischievous effects of false spirits. Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible, p. 211-13)

2 Hereby <sup>a</sup>know ye the <sup>b</sup>Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the <sup>c</sup>flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is <sup>a</sup>not of God: and this is that *spirit* of <sup>b</sup>antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now <sup>d</sup>already is it (is already) in the world. (The apostasy has started.)

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 <sup>a</sup>world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God <sup>a</sup>heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby <sup>b</sup>know we the <sup>c</sup>spirit of truth, and the spirit of <sup>d</sup>error. (deception, wandering, sin) (To catch the full import of this inspired utterance, apply it to the Lord's people in this day: "We Latter-day Saints are of God; we alone have the truth; we alone have the gospel; we alone can save men in the celestial kingdom. Unless men hear us and receive our message they shall be damned. What we have is true, what the world has is error; all things are judged by the gospel standard which we have." How plainly and bluntly John and all the prophets speak as the Holy Ghost rests upon them. DNTC, 3:396)

7 Beloved, let us <sup>a</sup>love one another: for <sup>b</sup>love is of God; and every one that loveth is <sup>c</sup>born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he <sup>a</sup>loved us, and <sup>b</sup>sent his Son to be the <sup>c</sup>propitiation for our sins.

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

12 <sup>a</sup>No man hath <sup>b</sup>seen God at any time, (except them who believe). If we love one another, <sup>c</sup>God

<sup>d</sup>dwelleth<sup>\*</sup> in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we <sup>a</sup>dwell<sup>\*</sup> in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (We know that God is in us because we have the gift of the Holy Ghost.)

14 And we have seen and do <sup>a</sup>testify that the Father <sup>b</sup>sent the Son to be the <sup>c</sup>Saviour of the <sup>d</sup>world<sup>\*</sup>.

15 Whosoever shall <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>dwelleth<sup>\*</sup> 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 <sup>a</sup>is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no <sup>a</sup>fear<sup>\*</sup> in <sup>b</sup>love; but perfect <sup>c</sup>love casteth out fear: because fear hath <sup>d</sup>torment<sup>\*</sup> (correction, punishment). He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We <sup>a</sup>love him, because he first loved us. (This last statement aptly describes the love of God.

His perfect, pure love has extended to all mankind the grace of salvation. But if that love is refused, so is the grace of God. This condition is taught throughout the scriptures. During the last several decades, a heresy regarding God's love has surfaced. The heresy states that God's love is unconditional. The heresy first started with humanist psychologists who invented the term.

Unconditional love, they taught, is the love parents ought to have for their children. Eventually, the term was adopted into Christian dialogue to describe God's love. However, the term is never found in the scriptures. Rather, it is a classic example of mingling the philosophies of men with scripture. This has been true even within the dialogue of the Church. However, in an attempt to eradicate this heresy through the teaching of correct doctrine, Elder Russell M. Nelson wrote an article that was published in the *Ensign*. Said he: "While divine love can be called perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal, it cannot correctly be characterized as *unconditional*. The word does not appear in the scriptures. On the other hand, many verses affirm that the higher levels of love the Father and the Son feel for each of us—and certain divine blessings stemming from that love—are *conditional*." Elder Nelson taught that understanding the true nature of God's love will guard against common fallacies that could lead to untoward behavior. Said he: "Understanding that divine love and blessings are not truly "unconditional" can defend us against common fallacies such as these: "Since God's love is unconditional, He will love me regardless"; or "Since 'God is love,' He will love me unconditionally, regardless" Elder Nelson continued, "These arguments are used by anti-Christ to woo people with deception. Nehor, for example, promoted himself by teaching falsehoods: He "testified unto the people that all mankind should be saved at the last day, for the Lord had created all men, and, in the end, *all men should have eternal life*" (Alma 1:4). Sadly, some of the people believed Nehor's fallacious and unconditional concepts. Bruce Satterfield, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 44.)

20 If a man say, I love God, and <sup>a</sup>hateth his <sup>b</sup>brother, he is a <sup>c</sup>liar: for he that loveth not his <sup>d</sup>brother<sup>\*</sup> whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not <sup>e</sup>seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who <sup>a</sup>loveth God love his brother also.

## CHAPTER 5

*Saints are born of God through belief in Christ—Water, blood, and Spirit testify of Christ—Belief in Christ required in order to gain eternal life.*

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 <sup>a</sup>love the <sup>b</sup>children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the <sup>a</sup>love of God, that we <sup>b</sup>keep his commandments: and his commandments are not <sup>c</sup>grievous<sup>\*</sup> (burdensome, oppressive). (The issue is not the act of sin as such, but the feelings and

**desires which are uppermost in the heart of the one who is wrestling with whatever appetite of the flesh is involved. DNTC, 3:402)**

4 For whatsoever is <sup>a</sup>born of God <sup>b</sup>overcometh the world: and this is the <sup>c</sup>victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

5 Who is he that <sup>a</sup>overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that <sup>a</sup>came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the <sup>b</sup>Spirit that beareth <sup>c</sup>witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the <sup>a</sup>Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are <sup>b</sup>one. **(From evidence of the original manuscripts, verses 7 and 8 may actually have not been written by John, but may have been added centuries later. Thomas W. Mackay, Studies in Scriptures, p. 238)**

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the <sup>a</sup>Spirit, (gift of the Holy Ghost) and the water (baptism), and the <sup>b</sup>blood (atonement): and these three agree in one. (Just as there can be no mortal birth without: Water (the viable fetus being immersed in such in its mother's womb, and Blood (the life of the mortal body is in the blood, without which there is immediate death; and there can be no mortal birth as such without the loss of blood by the mother) and Spirit (the offspring of God which comes from pre-existence to dwell in the tabernacle of clay formed from the dust of the earth in the womb of the mother). So there can be no spiritual birth into the kingdom of heaven without: Water (baptism by immersion under the hands of a legal administrator) and Spirit (the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit which burns sin and iniquity out of the human soul as though by fire, thus making the soul fit to dwell with holy and pure beings in God's kingdom) and Blood (the shed blood of Him who poured out his soul unto death so that all of the terms and conditions of the plan of salvation would have force and validity and so that mortal man might be ransomed from the temporal and spiritual death brought into the world by the fall of Adam. Also: The symbolism here used helps center our attention in the atoning sacrifice of the Son. The same elements were there present. Spirit (in that our Lord voluntarily gave up the ghost, permitting his spirit to leave the body). Blood (in that he there completed the act, commenced in Gethsemane, of shedding his own blood for the sins of men) and Water (in that when one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side...forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it [John himself] bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. DNTC, 3:403. Moses 6:59 That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; 60 For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified;)

9 If we receive the <sup>a</sup>witness of men, the <sup>b</sup>witness of God is greater: for this is the <sup>c</sup>witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that <sup>a</sup>believeth on the Son of God hath the <sup>b</sup>witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the <sup>c</sup>record (testimony, witness) that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us <sup>a</sup>eternal life, and this <sup>b</sup>life is in his Son.

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 <sup>a</sup>written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal <sup>b</sup>life, and that ye may (continue to) believe on the name of the Son of God. (Same testimony John wrote in his gospel.)

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

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we <sup>a</sup>ask, we know that we have the petitions that we <sup>b</sup>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. **(In the sense that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, that is, that none guilty of pre-meditated murder can ever gain the celestial kingdom, murder is also a sin unto death. Such persons can never again enjoy spiritual life. It appears that there are some special circumstances under which adultery, in this sense, is also a sin unto death, as witness the Prophet's declaration: If a man commit adultery, he cannot receive the celestial kingdom of God. Even if he is saved in any kingdom, it cannot be the celestial kingdom. It may be that there are other abominable things which men in certain circumstances can do which will bar them eternally from the receipt of spiritual life. MD, p. 737-8, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:92-94)**

17 All unrighteousness is <sup>a</sup>sin: and there is a <sup>b</sup>sin not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is <sup>a</sup>born of God <sup>b</sup>sinne<sup>t</sup>h (continueth) not (in sin); but he that is begotten of God (and) <sup>c</sup>keepeth (guards, shields) himself, and that <sup>d</sup>wicked one toucheth (overcometh) him not.

19 And we know that we are of <sup>a</sup>God, and the whole <sup>b</sup>world lieth in <sup>c</sup>wickedness. (There is only one true church and the rest of the world is wrong.)

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 <sup>a</sup>eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. (Dummelow says: If, as seems likely, the Epistle of St. John's latest work, these are, in point of time, the last words of Holy Scripture. Dummelow, p. 1057, All of which to Latter-day Saints, singles out the concluding sentence of the Epistle as a message of supreme prophetic insight and warning to all those from John's day forward as long as time shall stand: DNTC, 3:372)

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN CHAPTER 1

*John rejoices because the children of the elect lady are true and faithful.* (Elder McConkie said: Why these two brief personal epistles? Their doctrinal content and historical recitations are, of course, minimal. But they do add a unique contribution to the revealed word which well pays for their preservation... Brief, less significant than some portions of Holy Writ, these two lesser epistles of the Beloved John are yet of eternal worth, and the saints rejoice in the added perspective they give to the Bible as a whole. DNTC, 3:409)

1 **THE** elder unto the elect lady (An elect lady is a female of the Church who has already received, or who through obedience is qualified to receive, the fullness of the gospel blessings. This includes temple endowments, celestial marriage, and the fullness of the sealing power. She is one who has been elected or chosen by faithfulness as a daughter of God in this life, an heir of God, a member of his household. Her position is comparable to that of the elders who magnify their callings in the priesthood and thereby receive all that the Father hath. Mormon Doctrine, p. 217) **and her children, whom I love in the truth;** (Is John writing a personal letter to a wife and expressing appreciation for their children? DNTC, 3:410) and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is <sup>a</sup>love, that we <sup>b</sup>walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the <sup>c</sup>beginning, ye should walk in it.

7 For many <sup>a</sup>deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an <sup>b</sup>antichrist.

8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have <sup>a</sup>wrought (performed, acquired), but that we receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your <sup>a</sup>house, neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is <sup>a</sup>partaker of his evil deeds. (John is saying that saints should support only those who come teaching the gospel doctrine that Christ actually came in the flesh, suffered for mankind and was resurrected. Institute Manual, p. 437)

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not <sup>a</sup>write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

### THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN CHAPTER 1

*John commends Gaius for his help to those who love the truth.*

1 THE elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, (Apparently John's wife. DNTC, 3:413) whom I love in the truth.

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater <sup>a</sup>joy than to hear that my <sup>b</sup>children <sup>c</sup>walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the <sup>a</sup>brethren, and to <sup>b</sup>strangers;

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the <sup>a</sup>preeminence among them, <sup>b</sup>receiveth us not. (In John's last letter, we have our last snapshot of the photo album that is the New Testament. Like any photo album, it gives us a view of things but not the whole story. Likewise, 3 John gives us a view of the apostasy tearing the Church apart. The view is not a pretty one. As part of this brief letter, John spoke of a Church leader name Diotrephes: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 1:9). What a chilling picture. **Diotrephes not only refused to accept John as the head of the Church but spoke out against him and excommunicated those of his congregation who sustained John as head of the Christian church.** What a sad state of affairs. **With such attitudes as this, to whom could John give priesthood authority and keys. "With their rejection of John, they severed the final legitimate link of doctrinal and priesthood authority between Christ and the church that bore his name."** Without such authority, the Church would cease to exist. Shortly thereafter, the Church did cease to exist as the only true and living Church! Bruce Satterfield, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 44)

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record (*witness, testimony*) is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.