

*A Study
on the
Three Epistles
of John*

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Bible Study Guides for the New Testament

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is

presented herein is an analysis of important details in God's creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our

intuition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start

writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study

questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with [Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

JESSE JONES

The First Epistle of John

Introduction

From the Apostle John

From the John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible

The author of this and the two following epistles, the fourth gospel, and the book of Revelation was the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. His close intimacy with Jesus is indicated by the expressions “the beloved disciple,” and the “disciple whom Jesus loved.”

Whether this epistle preceded or followed the writing of the Gospel is a matter of considerable dispute, and consequently a difference of opinion as to date, some placing it as late as 90 A.D., while others assigned an earlier date. It is generally admitted that it was written at Ephesus, the residence of this apostle. In thought and style it closely resembles the fourth Gospel.

Error in doctrine and practice had spread among the Christians of that region. They failed to come into full spiritual relationship with God in Christ because of their erroneous ideas about the person of Christ. The point of central importance in these false notions was their denial that Jesus came in

the flesh. They did not deny that such a person had come, but that He came in the verity of our human nature. That is, they denied the Incarnation, “and saw in the person of Jesus Christ only a transient apparition of the Divine Nature.” Such a view of the person, the real humanity of our Lord, would have the most serious effect upon their spiritual life since they were unable to have that fellowship with God in Christ as He had revealed Himself in the incarnate Christ, who was very man as very God.

The Person of Christ

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you may also have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

These things we write to you, that your joy may be full. This is the message we received from Him: that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness whatever. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness we lie, and are not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of His Son Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).* Here John is talking to those that are in the light (are believers), but have failed to abide in Him, and as a result have sinned.

I believe we need to clarify this for there appears to be some confusion as to what happens within us when we become believers: when we receive this wonderful blessing that Christ died for. Romans 3:23-25 says, *“For all have sinned, and come [fall] short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past [because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime], through the forbearance of God.”* Bible expositors do not agree on the interpretation of this passage of scripture. The main point of disagreement is the phrase relating to past sins: some argue that this refers to sins of the old testament (OT) saints that occurred before the advent of Christ, while others hold that this refers to all past sins of Jews and Gentiles alike, before they receive salvation. To me the latter interpretation seems most logical: the blood of Jesus expiates our past sins and we are pardoned by God through the propitiation of Jesus Christ. The word “propitiation” relates to the place (mercy seat) in the Holy of Holies in the Temple where God met with the High Priest on the day of Atonement to expiate the sins of the Jewish people. In this passage this word refers to the reconciliation of God with those whose sins were cleansed through the blood of Christ. After this believers have a clean slate with God, they are innocent

but not holy: they are totally free to choose between God's will and the worldly way they have known in the past.

But what about sins believers commit after they have been born again? We know there are several scriptures that state that Christ died for the sins of many, as well as those that state that He died for "us," and for "all". Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible argues that any confusion here can be explained by the fact that Jesus died for all sins, every act of sin, and every type of sin, but only those who receive salvation through faith in the blood of Christ can claim access to this forgiveness. We also know that in addition to our individual sins, Jesus took our sin nature (inclination to sin) when we joined Him on the cross. Thus, as a born again believer we no longer have a sin nature, so we are not by nature a sinner, i.e. we do not have an overriding tendency to sin. When a believer sins it is not a result of his/her nature, we do not have a habit of sinning. Christ has already died on the cross for sins we commit; therefore, we need to go to Him with repentance (feeling guilty and contrite), and confess our sin: He is faithful and just to forgive our sin (Acts: 3:19; 1 John 1:9). Gill says: "A man that truly confesses his sin is one that the Spirit of God has convinced him, and has shown him its exceeding sinfulness, and filled him with a godly sorrow for it." I have also heard that the word

“*confess*” in this verse carries the implication that we agree with God’s assessment of the sin, and determine to turn in the exact opposite direction and follow God’s guidance if confronted by this temptation in the future. God will grant the sinner repentance if he/she has this change in heart.

Knowing Christ Our Advocate and Mediator

My children, I write to you so that you do not sin. But if you do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ our Mediator. He is the propitiation (atonement) for our sins, and not for our sins alone, but for all kinds of sin in all the various places in our world. And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. Matthew 7:21-23 says, *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”* This quote certainly emphasizes the importance of “knowing Him,” and of Him “knowing us.” In this passage of scripture He goes on to answer this question by saying that the one hearing and following His word is like a wise man, who built his house on a rock: and when the winds blew, and beat upon his house it withstood the onslaught and did not fail because it was built upon rock. The one hearing His teachings but failing to follow them, is like the a foolish man, who built his house upon sand: and the

rain came down and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

I think another applicable truth regarding those He knows, and those He does not know is found in the words “in” and “into.” In many versions of the Bible the Greek word *eis*, which means “into,” or “one,” is often interpreted incorrectly by the word “in” (Greek word *ev*), meaning within, or among. The comment from the Recovery Version of the new testament (NT) on John 3:16 is helpful in understanding the difference between these two prepositions.

“Believing into the Lord is not the same as believing (in) Him. To believe (in) Him is to believe that He is true and real, but to believe into Him is to receive Him and be united with Him as one. The former is to acknowledge a fact objectively, the latter is to receive a life subjectively” (parenthetical words added). Many of today’s Christians never get beyond believing “in” Him. To believe into Christ means that a spiritual relationship has been established much like the physical and spiritual bond between husband and wife in a godly marriage: they *know* each other intimately. Matthew 19:5-6 describes this relationship in this way, “*For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*” We must *know*

Christ for Him to guide, direct, and use our lives for His purposes on earth. Believing in Jesus Christ involves recognizing Him as the Son of God and believing that He came to forgive our sins, but it fails to recognize the real purpose of His coming to claim us as his own: to make us holy so that we can do His works on earth (Matthew 25:34-36). Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament says, "Into, (*eis*) denotes *inward union, participation; not in order to bring about* the union, for that has been effected. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 27." "Baptizing into the name of the Holy Trinity implies a spiritual and mystic union with him. *Eis, into*, is the proposition commonly used with *baptize*. See Acts 8:16; 29:3,5; 1 Corinthians 1:13, 15; Galatians 3:27." Compare John 3:16 Greek New Testament (GNT) to that given in many English versions of the Bible: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" The significant difference is in the phrase "*everyone believing into Him*" in the Greek, versus "*whosoever believeth in him*" in the King James Version (KJV). I think the difference is clear and important to our understanding of this vital scripture.

In talking to Christian acquaintances I have found that most believers seem to initially start their walk with belief in Christ, rather than belief into Him. This was my own experience when I first believed. I knew Jesus as the Son of

God, and knew that He had forgiven my sins, but I had no personal relationship with Him, nor did I know that such a thing was even possible. I knew who God the Father and Jesus were, but I had little, or no knowledge about the Holy Spirit, or about His relationship to man. This seemed to be enough in the early part of my life, when I was under the influence of my parents, friends, and teachers, but when I left the safety and comfort of home I was no longer protected in this way, and the glitter and glamour of the world were very enticing. It took many years for God to get me to the place that He could trust me with more of Himself. Like Paul, it took a Damascus Road encounter to make me realize that Jesus Christ was an actual person, interested in me personally, and who wanted to share my life. The men who were with me also shared this encounter as Christ entered the room where we were praying. The effect on my life was dramatic: I knew for the first time He wanted me to believe *into* Him, to realize that He had given me a new nature, and that I was to be “one” with Him. Later, I realized that I had received the Holy Spirit, for I had the witness within that I was a child of God (Romans 8:16). He knew me, and I definitely knew Him.

The Love of God in Making Us His Sons

Verse 1 of this chapter has been put to song, and was often sung in charismatic groups in the 1970's. The song goes, "Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us, behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called the son's of God, that we should be called the son's of God." The world that did not know God, would not likely join us if they heard us singing that song.

Beloved, now we are the son's (children) of God, but it is not clear what we will be like (in appearance) when we join Christ in the clouds. We do know this: that in some way we will be like Him, for 1 Corinthians 15:49 says, "*As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*" The Appendix of this book provides an analysis of the question of what we will be like. (see also Chapter 5, of the book "[The Spiritual Life](#),")

Little children, don't let anyone deceive you — it is the person that keeps on doing what is right who is righteous, just as God is righteous. He that keeps on sinning is of the devil, for the devil sinned from the beginning (John 8:44).

This is one of the reasons the Son of God came to earth, that He might

destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is begotten of God does not continue in sin, because he is born of God. 1 John 5:18 says, “*We know that whosoever is born (begotten) of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth (guards) himself, and that wicked (the evil) one toucheth him not.*” In this, the children of God and those of the devil are revealed: whoever does not perform righteous acts is not of God, and neither is the one that does not love his brother. Because this is the message you have heard from the beginning: that we should love one another. Not as Cain did when he killed his brother. And why did he do this? He was jealous: his offering to God of fruit from the earth was rejected, but his brother Able’s offering of firstlings from his flock was accepted, and Cain became very wroth, even after God had talked to him about sin, and doing well to be accepted. Cain killed his brother Able even after God had warned him that sin lieth at the door. It seems obvious that Cain’s heart belonged to Satan, while Able’s heart was committed to God.

My children, we should not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Hereby, we know the love of God: that Jesus Christ laid down His life for us, and, accordingly, we should be willing to lay down our lives for others. If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence with God, and everything we ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments,

and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another. And he that keeps His commandment dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us: by the Spirit He has given us. (see also Romans 8:16)

Love is the Answer

Do not believe every one that comes to you preaching and teaching, for there are false prophets and teachers in the world who bring in destructive heresies. Do not trust every spirit, but on the contrary test the spirits to see whether they are from God. In the time of John when this epistle was written, if the speaker did not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, he was considered to be a false prophet. Believers in today's world have received the Spirit of God *"that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."* God's wisdom, now within us through the Holy Spirit, equips us with discernment to recognize spiritual truth when we hear it. He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves has been born of God, and knows God. The one that does not love has not known God, because God is love. By this the love of God was revealed in us, because His Son, the only begotten of God, was sent into the world that we might live through Him (let Him guide our lives). In this is love, not that we

loved God, but that He loved us first, and sent His Son to be a propitiation (conciliation) for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us we also ought to love one another. If we love one another God abides in us, and His love works to perfect us. We know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us His Spirit. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement: that as He is, we are also in this world.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear results in torment: one that fears has not been perfected in love. We love Him for He first loved us. If anyone says he loves God but hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? A commandment from God says that the one that loves God must also love his brother. (Exodus 20: 16-17, Matthew 22: 37-40, I John 3:16-18)

This is the Love of God, That We Keep His Commandments

If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and if we love the Son, which was begotten of the Father, we also love the Father: for the Father and Son are One. When we love God and keep His commandments, we will also love the children of God. In Leviticus 19:18, God says, “. . . *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.*” This is not “*agape*,” love as described in Galatians 5:22, which is one of the fruits of the Spirit available to us after we have received the Holy Spirit. I believe we can get the best understanding of the OT word “*ahab*,” which means love for your fellowman, by referring to the parable in Luke 10:30, in which Jesus was answering the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which striped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at that place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came by where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and sat him on his own beast, and brought him to an

inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took two pence, and gave them to the host, and said to him, take care of him; and whatsoever thou spends more, when I come again, I will repay thee.” Jesus then asked the questioner which of these three men do you think was a neighbor unto him that fell among thieves? He answered: “the one that showed mercy unto him.” Jesus responded by saying, “*Go, and do likewise.*” The meaning of the word “love” in Leviticus 19:18, as defined in Webster’s New World Dictionary is: “The feeling of benevolence and brotherhood that people should have for each other.” There is obviously a great difference between OT love, as in Leviticus, and that of the NT scripture, 1 Corinthians Chapter 13: which describes *agape* love.

On the next page, I have enclosed several verses from this beautiful scripture that I believe describes the particular kind of love that God makes available through His Holy Spirit.

Though I speak with the tongues of men, and angels; if I do not have love, I am become as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge; and if I have faith to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy, nor vaunt itself: nor is it puffed up. Love does not behave in unseemly ways, nor does it seek its own. Love is not easily provoked, nor does it take account of wrongs. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails: but if there be prophecies, they will fail, and if there be tongues, they will cease, if there be knowledge it will vanish. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, and I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I will know even as I am known. Now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

I Corinthians 13 KJV

He that believes on the Son of God has the witness within himself that he is a son of God (see also Romans 8:16). He that does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he did not believe the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record: that God has given us eternal life through His Son's guidance and control. He that believes into the Son has everlasting life, but he that does not believe (obey) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. Everyone having been regenerated by God overcomes the world, and is thus an overcomer: our faith gives us the victory to withstand the world. Whosoever is born of God does not have a sin nature: does not have an inclination to sin. But he that is begotten by God has the Holy Spirit within, and the protection of the Mediator in heaven, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness. And we know that the Son has come, and has given us spiritual understanding of the truth: that we are in Him, the true God and will join Him in life everlasting.

Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

Please see the Appendix A to this book which examines the subject of the washing of regeneration in detail entitled "Washing of Water by the Word".

The Second Epistle of John

Introduction

To the Elect Kyria

From the John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible

This Epistle is addressed to an individual—"unto the elect lady"—but the more correct translation is "to the elect Kyria" This Christian woman was evidently well known, and it also appears that the apostle was acquainted with her children.

John's object in writing this brief letter is to warn her against the false teaching which is dealt with in the first epistle. That she was well known for her hospitality would appear from the apostolic admonition not to extend it to those whose teachings were injurious to the Christian faith, and who were "like most of the heretics of that age, conspicuous for their impure and profligate lives." She is thus advised to safeguard both the faith and the interests of her children.

Note: This personal letter from John to his friend Kyria is not discussed further.

The Third Epistle of John

Introduction

To Gaius

From the John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible

This epistle is addressed to Gaius. There are several references in the New Testament to persons having this name, but the Gaius of this letter cannot be identified with certainty (Acts 19:29, 20:4; Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14). It would appear that he lived near Ephesus.

Gaius had evidently extended his hospitality to some Christian teachers and John requests him to repeat this kindness. The apostle commends Demetrius by whom this letter was probably sent.

Note: This personal letter to Gaius is not discussed further.

Questions From 1 John

Chapter 1

1. Look up all the uses of the word “light” in the Bible (verse 5), and give a summary of what this word means, when used to describe Jesus.
2. Discuss verse 9 and its applicability to sins we commit after salvation.

Chapter 2

1. Verse 3 describes how we know Him; how do we know that He knows us?
2. Describe how lusts and pride described in verse 16 relate to Jesus’ temptations following baptism.

Chapter 3

1. Describe how you think you will appear after meeting Jesus in the clouds.
2. Explain how believers are said to not commit sin in verse 9, but in 1 John 1: 8, 10, are said to be a liar if we say we have not sinned.

Chapter 4

1. Do you feel agape love for God and His Son Jesus Christ? Do you have agape love for your Christian brothers (and sisters)? Do you have agape love for all those around you? Verse 8 says that “He that loveth not knoweth not God. How do you measure up to this high goal of the Lord?

Chapter 5

- 1.** Verse 3 states that the love of God is that we keep His commandments, which are not grievous. Does this make you feel a little better about yourself?
- 2.** Explain the meaning of verses 7 and 8?
- 3.** How can you know that you have eternal life?

Washing of Water by the Word

I have never heard a sermon, or teaching, on “*washing of water by the Word*” (Ephesians 5:26), nor on “*the washing of regeneration*,” as it is given in Titus 3:5. I think it is fair to ask, “What happened to this teaching from God?” Granted, it is not discussed at great length, nor is it mentioned a great number of times in the Bible, but the few times it is referred to have such great significance that is difficult to see why, or how, it could have been overlooked. Even great biblical expositors of the past have seemingly ignored, or overlooked this teaching, although some have written on regeneration apart from the “*washing of water by the Word*”. God’s most valuable gems are at times buried in the Bible in such a way that it takes considerable digging to ferret them out: to bring them to the surface for edification and enlightenment. The “*washing of regeneration*” may be one of these great truths. I hope that what I have gleaned from God’s Word on this subject will bring some increased appreciation of this wonderful teaching.

Various scriptures pertinent to this subject are quoted below, followed by an analysis of each passage. All scripture references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.

1. Ezekiel 36:25-27 - *“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”* The English word “*clean*” in this passage interprets the Hebrew word “*taber*”. “*Taber*” relates to moral purity, and is defined by Strong’s Concordance as being physically sound, clear, unadulterated, uncontaminated; morally innocent, or holy. The “Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament” (TWOT) by Harris, et al, gives examples of the use of this word in Psalm 51 when David cries out to God after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband: *“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean”*. We infer that what David is asking for here is ceremonial cleanliness, and moral purity. In Psalm 51:2 David asks to be washed thoroughly from his iniquity and cleansed from his sin, which only the blood of Christ can do. The Hebrew word “*tum’a*” is interpreted by the English word “*filthiness*” (“*impurities*” in Ezekiel 36:25 NIV). As used in this scripture it refers to ethical and ceremonial uncleanness; unrelated to spiritual cleanliness or purity. The Hebrew word “*gillul*” is interpreted by the English word “*idols*” in this verse. The Brown, Driver, Briggs (BDB) Hebrew and English Lexicon indicates that this word specifically means logs, blocks, or shapeless things. TWOT gives some synonyms that help in understanding the

meaning of this word: “image, thing of shame, thing of horror, empty or meaningless thing, sinful thing, and thing of mystery”.

Ezekiel 36:25 indicates that the first thing that happens to an unbeliever on the path to becoming a believer is that he/she is washed with the water of purification. What we tentatively conclude from the above is that this cleansing seems to be related to impurities, unethical and immoral beliefs, shameful strongholds, empty and meaningless thought processes, bad habits, etc. We know that the washing of verse 25 has nothing to do with our human spirit, nor with our heart because they are dealt with in a different way (see Ezekiel 36:26-27). When we bathe water cleanses our bodies, not our spirit or soul. God surely chose this way of describing the first step on the road to salvation to distinguish it from the changes that follow having to do with the inner (spiritual) man. The goal of this first step is the purification of our bodies, which will later become a temple of the Holy Spirit as part of the born-again experience (1 Corinthians 6:19).

2. John 13:8-10 - *“Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but*

not all.” This event occurred after the last supper, when Jesus took a towel and a basin of water and began to wash the disciples’ feet. In this passage of scripture Peter objects to the Master humbling Himself in this way. But after Jesus explains that if He does not wash him, he will have no part with Him, Peter quickly changes his mind. It was important for Peter to submit to the Master humbling Himself by washing his feet, and to realize that Jesus came to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (see also Mark 10:45).

The word we are interested in here is the Greek word “*katharos*”, which is interpreted as the English word “*clean*”. “The Analytical Greek Lexicon” by Harold Moulton gives the definition of this word as “sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, void of evil”, which seems to agree with the OT use of the word “*clean*” in Ezekiel 36:25.

We see that this passage of scripture describes the bodily condition of eleven of the twelve disciples at the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Judas, although he had been privy to the ministry of Jesus throughout the three plus previous years, was not “*clean*”. He had apparently held on to his own version of Jesus’ mission on earth. He had “*hardened*” his heart in acting on his own inclinations and lusts, even to the extent of being accused of being a thief (John 12:6). The other eleven disciples were identified as being “*clean*” by Jesus, so

they were essentially ready to receive the Holy Spirit: only one more thing needed to be accomplished in the disciples' bodies before that momentous event could occur. It is noteworthy that all this transpired before Jesus went to the cross, so we know that the "*washing*" process is normally initiated before we join Him on the cross in death and resurrection. We recognize from the above that Jesus' preparation of the disciples in this manner was directly in accord with the steps listed in Ezekiel 36:25-27.

There is another wonderful teaching in the action of Jesus' washing of the disciples feet that is mostly overlooked in today's world. Jesus emphasized the importance of the disciples need to remain humble, and to take on the mantle of a servant. This is also encouraged in 1 Peter 5:5, where Peter reminds the brethren that they should be subject, one to another. Another teaching here is related to the need for continuing this practice. Washing of the feet in this passage is highly symbolic of the need for Christians to seek continued cleansing as we continue on our "*walk*" through this world. We pick up a lot of "*worldly*" dirt in our daily lives that can draw us away from abiding in Christ, and becoming conformed to His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). Jesus is encouraging members of His body to be diligent in keeping this dirt washed off our bodies so we remain "*clean*" and useful in His service. It is significant that

members of His body are to support and edify the other members in this way, always maintaining a humble attitude of service.

3. John 15:3 - *“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you”.*

This verse answers the question, “How did Jesus prepare the disciples for receiving the Holy Spirit?” He fed them on the Word, but He had to administer the Word with power: faith (power) that results in belief. Hebrews 4:2 says, *“For unto us was the gospel preached as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”* These two verses give us vital information about how Jesus goes about preparing those He has chosen for salvation. He starts by ministering the Word so that the penitent becomes clean (sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, void of evil). He then *“quickens”* their human spirit so they can receive guidance from God through the Holy Spirit. Finally, He empowers the ministered Word through saving faith, by which the penitent believes unto salvation (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2). The Word can be ministered in many different ways as we will see later on in our discussion.

It was necessary for the disciples to receive a *“quickened”* (live) human spirit (Ephesians 2:5) because the human spirit received at birth was dead to

communication with God as a result of Adam's sin (Genesis 2:17). Ezekiel 36:26 refers to this as receiving a new spirit, which was necessary for the Holy Spirit to minister to the believer's body.

4. John 20:22 - *“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost.”* There is disagreement among Christians about this verse, and the purpose of Jesus' breathing on the disciples. Regarding this verse, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's "Commentary on the Whole Bible" states that this act of Jesus amounted to a symbolic conveyance of the earnest of the Holy Spirit, in anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Vines Expository Dictionary of Bible Words says, “. . . Jesus invokes the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on His disciples in John 20:22 with the words 'receive the Spirit,' in anticipation of the baptism of the Spirit in Acts 2.” Although it is not stated here, I believe this is when Jesus “quickened” the human spirit within the disciples, for we know the human spirit must be alive to enable the Holy Spirit's ministry to the body (Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:11). In Genesis 2:7 when God breathed into the lifeless body of dust it received a soul, and a human spirit, and became a living creature, whom God named Adam. It was through Adam's spirit that he had

communion with God, but he forfeited this when he disobeyed God's command and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When Adam was told in Genesis 2:17 that he would die if he ate of the fruit of this tree, God was referring to spiritual death. When this spiritual death took place the physical body was cut off from its source of life, and it began the slow progression toward death as well. God forms man's spirit which He gives to us while we are still in the womb, and it returns to God at physical death (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1). Jesus exercised this same creative power when He breathed on the disciples and "*quicken*ed" their dead human spirits, in anticipation of receiving the Holy Spirit ten days later at Pentecost.

5. John 3:5 (GNT) - "*Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, if not one is generated of water and of Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God.*" Here we deviate from our chronological scripture presentation concerning the disciple's lives to discuss the encounter Jesus had with Nicodemus early in His ministry. I cite this scripture from the GNT because it uses the word "*generated*" rather than "*born*", to interpret the Greek word "*gennao*". This is another one of those scriptures that is interpreted in many different ways. If you consult the GNT it seems pretty obvious that Jesus is referring prophetically to the Word

recorded later in Titus 3:5: Christ saves sinners by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. Vincent's "Word Studies in the New Testament" says that the "*washing of regeneration*" in this scripture refers to cleansing, as performed by the OT priests in the brass laver, which is referred to as the "*laver of regeneration*". "The new life is inaugurated both *symbolically* in the baptism with water, and *actually* in the renewing of the Holy Ghost". For baptism to have meaning it must be preceded by the "washing of regeneration" by the pure water of the Word.

Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ

Above we have restricted our discussion to cleansing, which normally precedes the born-again experience. We have not addressed the need for all who become believers to be forgiven of sin. We can never be reconciled to God until our sins are forgiven, and the Adamic nature within (the sin factory) is replaced by the righteous nature of Christ, imputed to us through Jesus' death and resurrection. This was the thing Nicodemus did not understand when he asked Jesus "*How can these things be?*" (John 3:9); he was not prepared to comprehend spiritual rebirth. I would hasten to add that until a person has an encounter with Jesus Christ that leads to a personal relationship, they, like Nicodemus, cannot truly understand the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14).

In our consideration of "washing of regeneration" and "washing by the pure water of the Word," we noted that Jesus had "cleansed" the disciples, thus preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We now want to take up the spiritual significance of Jesus' death on the cross, and His ascension to the Father three days later. First, we need to explain the use of the word "sprinkling" rather than "washed" in discussing the efficacy of Jesus' blood. While searching the Word, I was very surprised to find little scriptural

basis for believing that sinners are washed (bathed) in the blood of Jesus. Only two scriptures use the word “washed” in this context: Revelation 1:5 says, “*Unto him that loved us, and washed [loosed] us from our sins in his own blood*”. Many of the oldest Bible manuscripts render Revelation 1:5 as, “*loosed us in [virtue of] His blood*”. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s (JFB) “Commentary on the Whole Bible,” compares this verse to Matthew 20:28, which refers to Jesus giving His life a ransom for many. The NIV gives this scripture as, “*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood . . .*”. Old Christian hymns such as “There is a Fountain Filled With Blood”, which includes the phrase, “sinners plunged beneath that flood”, imply that the entire body is immersed and washed in this fountain. Zechariah 13:1 also says that in the “*day of the Lord*” there will be a fountain opened to the Israelites for sin and uncleanness, which seems to imply bodily washing. The Hebrew word “*maqor*” is interpreted “fountain” in Zechariah 13:1. This Hebrew word consistently refers to flowing **water**, but derivatives of this word can also refer to menstruous blood, or to the flow of blood in child-birth. I see no justification here for assuming this scripture implies that believer’s bodies are washed in the blood of Jesus.

Revelation 7:14 GNT says, “*These are the (ones) coming out of the great tribulation; and they washed their robes and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb.*”

It is clear from this that believers' robes are "*washed*" in Jesus blood. This is the robe of righteousness, referred to in Isaiah 61:10. Revelation 7:14 implies that believers' robes are "*whitened*" through their own actions. However, since the "whitening" is corollary to the righteousness of a particular life, this must actually refer to holiness manifested by that life during sanctification (the process of making them holy). These works unto holiness are actually works done through the believer's body as the believer subjects his/her will to the will of the Holy Spirit within. In this way believers are "conformed to the image of Christ" through renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2). The more we become like Christ, the whiter our robe of righteousness will be when we receive it from Him after rapture. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 records that every person's works will be made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ. If any works survive the refiner's fire, that person will receive a reward.

Scriptures in the KJV (other than those discussed above) invariably describe the application of Jesus' blood (or the blood of animal's in the OT), using the word "sprinkled", or some variant of this word. Deuteronomy 12:23 and Leviticus 17:11 indicate that life is in the blood, and therefore, the Israelites were cautioned against eating (drinking) it. The implication here is that eating or drinking blood can cause the life in the blood to be manifested in some way

by the one eating or drinking it. Jesus initiated the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:26-28, and clarified its significance in John 6:53-54:

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”

Taking the cup, representing Christ's blood, is one way in which the believer's life becomes more like Jesus' life, but this desirable effect only occurs if this ordinance is celebrated in accordance with God's direction in 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

Blood placed on the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites abodes in the OT protected them from the death angel sent to take the life of the firstborn of all Egyptian households. From this we note that blood can be used by God as a sign to protect His chosen ones from evil, even evil that He Himself has ordained, as in this case (Exodus 11:4-6). We also see the symbolic nature of Jesus' blood in the celebration of the Lord's supper. In a sense the blood of the cup is like the blood painted on the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites houses in Exodus 12:7: when Satan, or any of his minions, see the (spiritual) blood painted on the doorposts and lintel of the heart they know they have no access to that life.

It is clear from many scriptures in the Bible that God separates us from our sins by Jesus blood shed for us through His death on the cross; and He washes us clean with His written and spoken word, the Logos and Rhema.

1. John 3:5 - *“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* I do not believe that the mention of water here refers to our physical birth: it would seem to be unnecessary to state that a person must be born physically in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Nor do I believe that this refers primarily to water baptism, which is the outward symbol of a change that has occurred on the inside of a person. John the Baptist’s baptism was unto repentance, which is a necessary step for a person to enter the kingdom of God; but baptism unto repentance must be followed by baptism in the Holy Spirit so that the believer can become holy, and useful in God’s purpose on earth (Hebrews 12:14).

2. Titus 3:5 - *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”*

Among other things, rising out of the water in baptism is symbolic of being washed clean, or purified. Jesus, when speaking to His followers in John 15:3,

indicates that they were clean through the Word spoken unto them; and in talking to Peter at the last supper (John 13:10), Jesus stated that they were clean, but not all (speaking of Judas). They were clean from the Word ministered by Jesus, and this cleansing was required before the Holy Spirit could come to reside within them. This cleansing is like pruning a vine, it removes the pollution (dead growth) from sins previously committed through our flesh, but does not remove the guilt of sin within our conscience, which can only be removed by the blood of Jesus Christ. In the NT the flesh of mankind is characterized as vitiated human nature: works of the flesh include sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, magic, and hatred (Galatians 5:17-19). Galatians 5:17 says, *“For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”* Believers are to live by the Spirit, and not by the flesh.

Unlike cleansing by the blood, cleansing by the water of the Word needs to be continued for the rest of our lives: Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church by the washing of water by the Word. Notice that He does this to make (and keep) us holy so that we can be presented to the Father without spot or wrinkle: holy and without blemish. This is Christ's primary task as Mediator of the new covenant.

Both blood and water flowed from Jesus' side when the soldier pierced it with a spear after His death on the cross (John 19:34). This is symbolic of what happens to the believer when they join Jesus on the cross, and are resurrected in Him: the blood is shed for our forgiveness, and we are cleansed by the washing of regeneration.

3. 1 John 5:7-8 - *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”* Speaking of believers, Romans 8:16 says that the Holy Spirit within witnesses with (or through) our human spirit that we are children of God; and thus, we know that we have been adopted by God the Father, and are a member of the family of God. The continued washing by the pure water of the Word (washing of regeneration) sanctifies us and makes us holy, or more like Christ (Ephesians 5:26). The works the Holy Spirit can do through our bodies bear witness not only to ourselves, but to the world we live in. The blood of Christ shed on the cross removes the stain of sin from our lives, and the sprinkling of His blood within our hearts purges our conscience, and cleans us inwardly so that we can approach the throne of God with boldness (Hebrews 10:22). If we did not have

the witness within that our hearts were pure we could not approach God the Father in His throne and could not communicate with Him.

We referred earlier to the purification bath in the Jewish marriage. This was to (symbolically) cleanse the bride, much like Christ does with the church, as described in Ephesians 5:26-27. In the same way, we are to prepare for the return of Christ by continually being washed by the Word and renewed by the Holy Spirit. This cleansing process continues throughout our regeneration and subsequent sanctification (Romans 12:2), until we at rapture/resurrection meet Christ, our bridegroom, and our marriage to Him is consummated. If we are not cleansed along the way our interest and love for Christ tend to wane, and we gradually fall away from our first love, Jesus, our Lord and Master (Revelation 2:4-5). When we join Christ on the cross our hearts are sprinkled with His shed blood and the guilt of past sins in our conscience is washed away completely, forever. This is what happens when we believe into Jesus Christ, but it also foreshadows our continued need for cleansing and forgiveness for the rest of our earthly lives. Jesus taught the disciples this important principle in John 13:14-15, and we should do as Jesus did: not necessarily through the act of washing others' feet, but by continuing to love, edify, teach, and provide

spiritual guidance and assistance as God equips us (see 1 Corinthians 12; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 5:5-7; 1 John 1:7-9).

As indicated above, the act of destroying our sins on the cross is portrayed in the OT by the priest sacrificing for the sins of the Israelites. In this ceremony Aaron would lay his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confess the sins of the Israelites, thus (spiritually) placing their sins on the scapegoat's head. The scapegoat was then led away into the wilderness where he was abandoned and left to die. This is symbolic of Jesus bearing the sins of many on the cross (Hebrews 9:28). The sins we have committed in the past are placed on Jesus' head when we come to Him in repentance and through faith, believe into Him (Romans 3:25). His blood sacrifice was offered once for all time, after which He took His place at the right hand of God the Father to become our Mediator to insure that none of those God had given Him were lost (Hebrews 8:6; 13:12). We understand from this that sins committed after believing into Jesus Christ are covered by His sacrifice on the cross. I believe the Bible teaches that believers should deal with sins committed after we have believed as follows: we should confess such sins, repent (turn back in the opposite direction), and regard the sin as God does, with hatred. God is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Jesus took our past sins **and** our sin nature in His death on the cross, and He gave us a new (His) nature at resurrection (Romans 3:25). If our sin nature were not done away with we would continue to sin *willfully*, eventually without remorse, after Christ paid for our sins by His death on the cross. The book of Hebrews describes this perfect work of Christ and states that He obtained “***eternal redemption for us***” by “***entering once into the Holy Place***” (emphasis mine). This scripture points out the difference between the work of the OT priests in casting the sins of the Israelites on the head of the scapegoat, and that of Jesus on our behalf at the cross.

Closure

Washing of water by the Word begins with God the Father drawing us, and ends at our physical death, but the method God uses to bring this about changes as we mature in our walk. When we join Christ in His death and resurrection we are regenerated (born again), and after we are regenerated the sanctification process must begin (Hebrews 12:14). God, through the Holy Spirit, begins to purify us (make us holy) by the washing in the water of the

Word, and renewing our minds (Romans 12:2). We become more like Christ by allowing Him to take over more and more of our lives. We do this by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our thoughts and actions, and by spending time in God's presence, talking to Him and listening (praying). If we are to continue to be washed by the pure water of the Word we must spend time studying the Bible, His written Word: allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us more about God, and His wonderful plan for us in His Kingdom. In this process of sanctification, I decrease and He increases.

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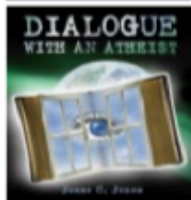
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