

I John Translation

Colin Stetter, 2017

1. (1:1-4) Introduction and statement of purpose

Having seen, and heard, and handled with our own hands what was the original teaching concerning how one may attain to life in the final age, we now proclaim to you that same message of life in the final age. Once known only to the Father, it was manifested among us and we saw it and testify to it. Our hope is that what we proclaim to you of what we have seen and heard will result in your having fellowship with us. Indeed, this ought to be of great interest to you as our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus the Christ. So, we write to you in order that your hope of attaining Life may be fulfilled.

2. (1:5-2:2) Refutation of false teachers

This is the essence of the teaching that we received from Jesus himself and now proclaim to you--that God is the source of all truth and righteousness and that to be in fellowship with Him (Jesus) is to embrace the truth and renounce all evil. It follows then that anyone who claims to have fellowship with Jesus and yet fails to embrace the truth and renounce evil deeds must lie and not live in keeping with the truth. But, if we live in keeping with the truth, seeking to emulate the life and teaching of Jesus, then we have fellowship with the Father, and we know that the blood of His Son Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness. If, as a manifestation of one's failure to embrace the truth, one claims to be without sin and thus without need of Jesus' intercession, such a one deceives themselves and the truth is not in them. However, if we confess our transgressions, He has promised to forgive us and cleanse us from all our unrighteousness--such is His righteousness. On the other hand, if we claim not to need His mercy, then we make Him a liar and His teaching is not in us. Let me be clear-- I am not writing this to you so that you may feel license to sin (though, if anyone should fall to temptation, we have an advocate on our behalf

with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous! He is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the whole world also).

3. (2:3-6) First criteria by which John can judge if someone has fellowship with Jesus: they must embrace what He taught and live as He lived

As one who lived along side Jesus, I can say that to know Him is to uphold His teachings. By implication, anyone who claims to know Jesus and yet does not uphold what He taught is a liar and the truth is not in him. If you want to know in whom the love of the Father is to be found, it is in the one who upholds what the Son taught. This is how I can tell if someone is in fellowship with Jesus--they will live as He lived.

4. (2:7-8) Reiteration that what John writes has its foundation in the original teaching, but will also contain some new clarifications

On the one hand, what I am writing to you is nothing revolutionary--it is in keeping with the original teaching that you have received. On the other hand, it is a new teaching with respect to it being the truth as proclaimed by Jesus; the truth I understand also to be embraced by yourselves as the darkness is passing away from your midst and the true light is already shining.

5. (2:9-11) Corollary of first criteria: The one who is in the Light will love his brother because he is a human being and deserves our love just as Jesus demonstrated

That you remain in the light of the Truth is evidenced by the fact that you love your brother. But there are those who claim to be in the light and yet they act towards their brother out of hatred--they are in darkness. The one who hates his brother is in darkness--it is the path he walks in blindness and he knows not where he goes.

6. (2:12-17) Clarification that John's purpose in writing is to encourage them and to warn them not to imitate the false teachers, who are ultimately motivated by their love of the world, which is antithetical to an authentic love of God

I want to clarify and reassure you that I am writing you from the confidence that you are in fact His children and that your sins have been forgiven on account of your belief in His name. To you, the fathers of the congregation, I am writing because you have embraced what was taught originally. And to you, the young men of the congregation, I am writing to you because your belief shows that you have overcome the influence of the evil one, and testifies to your strength and the fact that the word of God abides in you. I am writing to you all because you know the Father. But I also want to admonish you, in the light of what has developed concerning these false teachers, not to love the world or the things in the world, for if anyone loves the world then the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the desires of our eyes, the craving after respectability--these things are not from the Father, but from the world. And we know that the world is passing away and with it all that it promises, but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

7. (2:18-28) Introduction of concept of antichrist, identification of the false teachers with antichrist, encouragement of the believers to reject the false teachers and to remain true to the original teaching

Dear children, we are living in what can be called the Last Hour; and just as you have heard to expect that the characteristic spirit of this age will be an opposition to Jesus and His teaching--the spirit of antichrist, even now we see that many have arisen whose fellowship is with the spirit of antichrist; confirming that the Last Hour is upon us. These false teachers with whom you are dealing who claim to represent the truth are a manifestation of this. And, while it is true that they went out from us, they do not really represent us. For, if they truly had fellowship with us, they would have remained true to what we teach. Rather, their departure makes it clear that they do not have fellowship with us. But you, who have an anointing from the Holy One, know the truth! And so I am writing to you not because you are in ignorance of

the truth, but so that you will have assurance both of your knowing it and of the fact that their lie is not of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Messiah? This is the mark of the spirit of antichrist--the denial of the Father and the Son. I say this because whoever denies the Son does not have fellowship with the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, be sure to uphold the teaching that you received from the beginning. For if you remain true to that teaching, then you will have fellowship with the Son and with the Father. He Himself has promised eternal life to those who have fellowship with Him! There are those who would try to deceive you, I write to you concerning them. As for you, you have no need to be taught by them, but as the anointing which you received from Him abides in you and teaches you all true things, remain in Him! And now, dear children, remain in Him so that when He returns, we may confidence and not hide ourselves from Him in shame at His coming.

8. (2:29-3:3) Second criteria: the child of God will be committed to righteousness

If you know that God is truly righteous, then surely you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. See what a great gift of love the Father has given to us, that we might be called children of God, which we are! Just as the world did not recognize the true Son of God, so also the world does not recognize our identity as children of God. Beloved, already we are children of God, and yet what one day we will be has not been revealed. We know that when He returns, we will be like him, just as He is, just as we see Him. Everyone who has this hope strives for righteousness himself just as He is righteous. On the other hand, everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.

9. (3:5-8) One defining feature of Jesus' life and ministry was His opposition to the works of the evil one; the one in fellowship with Him will likewise oppose evil

You know that the object of Jesus' life and ministry was the nullification of our sins; by implication, the one who is in Jesus will oppose sin. So, anyone who abides in Him will not practice sin, while

anyone who practices sin cannot be said to have seen or know Him. Children, may you not be deceived by anyone; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is from the evil one, for from the beginning the evil one has pursued unrighteousness. For this purpose the Son of God came to us--that He might destroy the works of the evil one.

10. (3:9-10a) Introduction of "child of God" metaphor, exploration of key characteristic of the child of God

No one who is a child of God will cling to evil because the Father's children remain in Him. Moreover, the children of God cannot be committed to evil, because they are fathered by God. By this the children of God and the children of the evil one are known.

11. (3:10b-11) Corollary to second criteria: the child of God will love others who are likewise committed to righteousness

Whoever is not committed to righteousness is not a child of God. Likewise, the one who does not love his brother cannot be called a child of God. For this is the message which you have heard from the first--that you should love one another!

12. (3:12-13) Cain and Abel used as a model

Contrast this to the example of Cain, a child of the evil one, who murdered his brother. For what reason did Cain slay him? Because his life was directed towards evil while his brother lived righteously. Do not be surprised then brethren, if the world hates you, just as Cain hated Abel.

13. (3:14-15) Further implications for the one who hates those committed to righteousness

We have as evidence of our leaving death and entering life, the fact that we love the brethren. But, those without love abide in death. Every one who hates his brother is no different from a murderer, and as you well know, no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

14 (3:16-18) To love as Jesus loved is to love actively out of our capacity

We know love by this model: that on our behalf Jesus laid down His life. Just so, we ought to direct our lives towards the benefit of our brethren. Little Children, let us not stop at talking about love, but let us love truly in our deeds. For, how can the love of God abide in one who has the wealth of this world and yet, seeing his brother in need, closes his heart against him?

15 (3:19-24a) Third criteria and corollary given: fellowship with the spirit of Truth as evidenced by faith in Jesus as Messiah, and love for others who exhibit such faith

In this manner we can know that we are in the truth and will thereby reassure ourselves of our standing with the Father, (whenever our own heart condemns us, for God, who is the source of truth, is to be trusted over the source of our doubts. Beloved, because we keep His commandments and do what is pleasing to Him, we are able to overcome our self condemnation and we have confidence before God that whatever we ask of Him we will receive.) And this is His commandment: that we believe in the name of His son Jesus Christ and that we love one another, just such a command has He given us. The one who keeps His commandments stays with the Father and the Father with him.

16 (3:24b-4:6) Belief is victory over the world and an indication of our fellowship with the Spirit of Truth

By this we know that He is with us--by the spirit that He has given us. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but put them to the test to see if they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world! This is how you will know the spirit that is from God--every spirit that testifies that Jesus is the Christ who has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not testify for Jesus is not from God. You, beloved, are from God, and you have victory over them, for greater is He who is with you than he who is with the world. They are of

the world, therefore they speak out of the spirit of the world and the world listens to them. We (apostles) are from God, whoever knows God listens to us, while whoever does not know God does not listen to us. In this way we know if they are with the spirit of truth or the spirit of lies.

17 (4:7-8)) Fourth criteria given: the child of God will resemble the Father in loving others.

Beloved; let us love one another, for love is from God, and all who love know God and are His children. Those who do not love do not know God, because God is love.

18 (4:9-11) Examination of Love evidenced by Jesus

This is the way in which God's love has been manifested towards us--that God sent His unique Son into the world in order that we might live on account of Him. In this is our model of love--not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiatory offering for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, so should we love one another.

19 (4:12-19) Active Love for others as a characteristic mark of the child of God resembling the Father

No one has ever beheld The Father; if we love one another, the Father abides in us and His love (being made perfect) is in us. In this way we (the apostles) have confidence that we abide in Him and he in us--by the spirit that He has given to us. We have seen and bear witness to the fact that the Father sent the Son to be the savior of the entire world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. Further, we know and trust in the love that the Father has for us. God is love--thus the one who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him. (In this manner the love of God realizes it's objective in us--that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment, for we have come to resemble Him in this world. Fear has no place in love; rather, perfected love removes fear, which expects punishment. So, the one who lives in fear is not being perfected in love.) It is fitting that His love for us should manifest in our loving one another.

20 (4:20-5:3a) Corollary to fifth criteria given

Further, if anyone would claim to love God while hating his brother, then he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother (who stands before him), cannot love God (who is hidden from him)! This teaching we have from Him: that the one who loves God should love his brother. Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born of God. And, anyone who loves the Father will love His child. In this way we know that we love God--when we hold fast to His teaching and love those born of Him. For this is the love of God, that we uphold His instructions.

21 (5:3b-12) Fifth criteria: belief in the facts about Jesus' life/agreement with the testimony of the Father concerning the Son

Furthermore, what He taught is no burden, for everyone who has been born of God has overcome the world; and this is the substance of our victory over the world--that we have come to believe the Truth. For who is it in whom victory over the world is displayed but in the one who believes that Jesus is the Messiah? This Jesus is the one who came through water and blood. Not by the water alone, but by the blood and by the spirit. It is the spirit who bears witness because the spirit is the source of truth. There are three instances in which the spirit has born witness--His transfiguration, His baptism, and His crucifixion, and in all three cases, the message was the same. If we take the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. And this is the testimony of God--that He has given His affirmation on behalf of His Son. The one who believes in the truth about the Son holds to the Father's testimony about Him. The one who does not believe God has effectively made Him out to be a liar because he has not believed in His testimony concerning His Son. And this is the testimony--which God has given life in the final age to us and this life is through His Son. Whoever has the Son has life, whoever rejects the Son rejects life.

22 (5:13-17) Reassurance that Life awaits those who have put their belief in Jesus

I have written these things to you in order to assure you that by your belief in the name of the Son of God you already are destined for life in the final age. Before the Father we have this confidence--that He will hear us in anything that we ask of Him that accords with His will. So, if we have this confidence that He hears us in whatever we ask, then we know that we are in possession of that which we have asked of Him. If any of you should see your brother committing a sin that is not tantamount to the rejection of the life giving God, ask on his behalf, and if it is in keeping with His will, the Father will give life to such a one. Of course, there are those whose evil will culminate in destruction, and in this case is fruitless to ask for life on their behalf. All unrighteousness is evil, but not all evil will culminate in destruction.

23 (5:18-21) Conclusion

These things we know: no one who is a child of God will persist in evil, the One who was born of God keeps him so that the evil one has no power over him; we are of God and yet the whole world lies in the power of the evil one; The true Son of God has come and has given us understanding in order that we might know what is true. We are in the truth in His son Jesus Christ; this is the true Son and life eonian. Dear ones, remember to guard yourselves against idols!