

CHAPTER FIVE

In the quick succession John sums up all that he has said up to this point in the book. These are the main points in his refutation of the false teaching the churches were facing in that age. In this sense it is like a check list. If we have been carefully following John's reasoning up to this point in the book then these are the conclusions we should have drawn and the convictions we have acknowledged.

- 5:1 Whoever **believes Jesus is the Christ** is **begotten** of God
Whoever **loves** him(God) who **begat** **loves** him who is **begotten**
- 5:2 We know we **love** God's children — when we **love** God and **keep his commands**
- 5:3 this is the **love** of God: **keep his commandments**(not grievous)
- 5:4 whatsoever is **begotten** of God **overcomes the world**:
the **victory** that overcomes the world is **our faith**.
- 5:5 he that **overcomes the world** believes **Jesus is the Son of God**

They are all linked together and to break one of them would break the entire chain. You can't have *agape*-love without the commands and you can't keep the commands without *agape*-love. You can't understand *agape*-love unless you believe Jesus came in the flesh as the Christ, the son of God. No one can keep God's commands unless they believe in Jesus and love the brethren. The key words:

Believe/Faith;	Jesus is Christ/Son of God
Begotten;	Love;
Commands	Overcome/Victory

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God:

Literally *pas* (all the ones , everyone) believing (Present Active Participle – continuously). Every individual who never doubts or wavers on this truth is begotten (perfect tense - happened in past and is still true today). This was the conclusion of the first gospel sermon preached by Peter at Pentecost. It is the heart of the gospel and absolutely essential both to become and to remain a Christian. Everything that undermines this is false teaching leading away from the truth. This is such an important part of the letter that John will return to it in 5:7-12.

Believing that Jesus is the Christ reveals both our understanding of God's love (Jn. 3:16) and the need to keep his commands (Jn 14-15). As Christ we recognize him as God's prophet, priest and king. If one truly believes this, nothing is important enough to hinder the sacrifices that our belief in this brings. Paul eloquently described how he did this.

*Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, Phil 3:7-8
Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. Phil. 3:15-17
I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that (life) which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, (the faith) which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. Gal 2:20*

Those with these deep convictions are truly begotten of God. This is exactly how John started the gospel that bears his name.

But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, (even) to them that believe on his name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Jn 1:12-13

Belief in Jesus' name gives us the right to become the children of God. Those who take advantage of the opportunity given to them by this faith exercise that right be full belief are begotten of God. This verb is a perfect passive. God did this once in the past, but once it occurred it continued up to the present moment. John has already revealed that we can lose this relationship and go back to Satan if we refuse to love our brethren(fellow begotten believers). He elaborates on this in the next phrase **and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.**

Once again he connects *pas*(every/all) with a present active participle this time *love*. "All the ones loving..." Essentially participles personify action. The person who is believing becomes a believer (participle) and a "lover" is a person who is always loving(verb). Our difficulty comes in trying to force action into the participle. We can't do it without adding words, but the addition of the words changes it from a participle back into a verb. So we say the one who is loving or

the one who loves because if we just say lover or all the lovers we miss the action of the participle.

What is important here is to realize that the Spirit is taking the action of love and making that action the essence of a person. So if we are a lover(continuously) of God we grasp the meaning(though it is now a paraphrase and not a translation. So “all/every” continuously loving ones (lovers) of God (the one who begat us) will also be loving(continuous action) those whom God begat (all believers).

Paul used this same spiritual logic when warning the Romans about the issues of eating meat around those brethren who felt it was a sin. He pointed out that if we do not love those Christ died for enough to forego our own liberties and rights, then we are not waking in love and are destroying the very thing Christ died to bring into being

For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. . . . 20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. . . . 1 Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. Rom 14:15, 20; 15:1-2

No one can love God and not love those God created along with us. All who cannot find it in their heart to love those whom Jesus died for and to do all in our power to help them through this life truly cannot love God for if we love someone we protect the things they love.

2 Hereby we know that we love the children of God,

Now John takes an interesting and startling turn. We cannot even know whether we truly love the children of God simply by our own feelings. Since this love is based on God’s love and Jesus’ love, since it is something new and different from anything man has ever been asked to do before(Jn 13:34) and since it requires that we truly act in their best interests and not what we want or think is good, there is only one option.

With a “*hereby*” (*in the midst of*) to place a boundary around our knowledge of loving God’s children. The tenses are both active in the present moment. We are knowing(continuously) and are loving(continuously). So we always know that we are always loving the children of God based on the next statement. If we are always doing what follows then we are always knowing we love.

when we love God and do his commandments.

The word “when” forces the Greek reader to consider this in the context of time. We love the children of God, “*at the time that*” or “*whenever*” we love God and keep his commands.

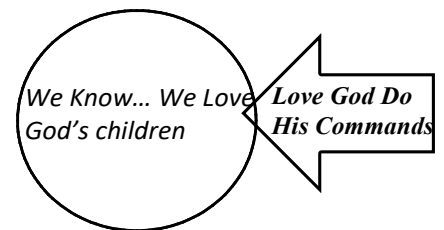
hotan... a particle of time, comp. of hote and an, at the time that, whenever, ... used of things which one assumes will really occur, but the time of whose occurrence he does not definitely fix (in profane auth. often also of things which one assumes can occur, but whether they really will or not he does not know; hence like out in case that,...) ... a. with the subjunctive present... as often as, of customary action... at the time when i. q. as long as... c. acc to the usage of later authors, a usage, however, not altogether unknown to the more elegant writers... a. future: when...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 458; 3752)

So when we assess our actions in the present moment, one thing will always tell us whether we are acting in true *agape*-love. *Whenever* we love God and do his commands, *at that time*, we are within the boundary set above. There are two conditions. First we must love God. We must be seeking to act in his best interests and put his needs above our own. We must see his plans, goals and purposes as our own. Like David, *agape*-love means that we must be “*after God’s own heart.*” Which means that we will want exactly what he wants at all times. We take our own thoughts and ideas and set them aside replacing them with God’s thoughts and desires.

But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Jehovah hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which Jehovah commanded thee. 1 Sam 13:14

Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding: 6 In all thy ways

“*in the midst of*” ^{5:2}



acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths. Prov 3:5-6

As Paul summed up how David lived as a man after God's own heart, he revealed that this means "serving the purpose of God" in our own generation.

For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: Acts 13:36

The second part of the condition is to "do" his commands. This means we are "carrying them out" and "executing" them. We are meeting their demands, performing and accomplishing them.

"poieo... II to do... i.e. to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind... a. univ., with adverbs describing the mode of action... with nouns which denote a command, or some rule of action pogo signifies to carry out, to execute... in bibl. Gk. to do the law, meet its demands... with nouns describing a plan or course of action, to perform, accomplish..." (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 524-527; 4160)

Like God's exhortation to Joshua to keep that law in our thoughts, words and actions all the time. This is the true and only way to have *agape*-love to our brethren.

Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou gayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Josh 1:7-8

The only difference is that it is now God's servant Jesus(Acts 3:13;4:27, 30).

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:

The two conditions above now blend into one. For to love God is to **keep** his commands. The conjunction "for" shows how this passage is tied to the previous one. It explains the true nature of how to love God. Once again, we have no point of reference within ourselves to know how to love God. It is not in man to "direct his steps" in this matter. "His ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts" Any action we take to love God without his commands is leaning upon our own understanding.

Jesus not only taught it, but He lived it Himself. God's commands are the only means we have to act in His best interest and manifest our true love for Him by the sacrifices that we make.

*For I have not spoken on My own authority; but **the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.** 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." John 12:49-50*

***A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.** 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Jn 13:34-35*

***"If you love Me, keep My commandments.** 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — 17 the Spirit of truth, John 14:15-17*

***He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.** And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." John 14:21*

***But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do.** Arise, let us go from here. John 14:31*

***If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.** John 15:10*

***This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.** 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. John 15:12-15*

and his commandments are not grievous

This is John's final word about God's commands in this epistle. It is an interesting point for all of us to seriously consider. As we look at the commands of God we find some are easy to follow and we see their justice and fairness. But other commands, due to our own blindness based on the lusts that cloud our judgment lead us to think otherwise. Our natural/fleshly man will never understand or see this. The mind of the flesh will never submit to God's commands.

For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: 7 because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: Rom 8:6-7

Only our natural man would see God's commands as "grievous" but they are not. None of God's commands are a *burden*, they are not *heavy*, *severe* or even *stern*.

barus . . . *heavy*; 1. properly, i. e. heavy in weight: . . . 2. metaphorically, a. *burdensome*: . . . *entole* ... the keeping of which is grievous, 1 John 5:3. b. *severe*, *stern*: ... the weightier precepts of the law, Matt 23:23; . . . Acts 25:7. d. *violent*, *cruel*, *unsparing* (A. V. *grievous*): . . . (Thayer ; 926)

Moses took this same thought from a different perspective. Far from being a burden or severe, each command of God was designed and crafted out of love and is for our good. By keeping them we are doing what is *good*(*agape*) for God and for our fellow man.

And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. 25 And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God, as he hath commanded us. Deut 6:24-25

4 For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world:

If see all that John has said about being begotten, we know why those who are begotten of God overcome.

every one also that **doeth righteousness** is begotten of him. 2:29

Whosoever is begotten of God **doeth no sin** 3:9

he **cannot sin**, because he is begotten of God. 3:9

every one **that loveth** is begotten of God 4:7

Whosoever **believeth that Jesus is the Christ** is begotten of God: 5:1

whosoever loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him. 5:1

For whatsoever is begotten of God **overcometh the world**: 5:4

whosoever is begotten of God **sinneth not**: 5:18

he that was begotten of God **keepeth himself**, and **the evil one toucheth him not**. 5:18

There is obviously great power exerted for those who are begotten of God, just as there was in our first birth. We received life, an eternal soul and great potential when we were born into this world. When we are born into the family of God even greater power was given. It is exceeding abundant above all that we can ask or think and it works in us who are born of God.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 unto him (be) the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen. Eph 3:20-21

So those who are truly begotten of God will overcome. This word is used of gaining a *victory*, *winning* and *conquering*.

"nikao... to conquer... a. to carry off the victory, to come off victorious... when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, maintain one's cause..." Thayer p. 425; 3528

Those who are begotten of God will be victorious over this world, they will conquer all adversities and troubles this world can throw at them and they will win their souls. This word is hardly used at all in the epistles(just in Romans), but it is used six times in 1John and seventeen times Revelation. As the persecutions became more and more severe and the position of the church more and more precarious, the Spirit emphasized more and more that those God has chosen and bought will overcome it all.

I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. 6 So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me? Heb 13:5-6

and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, (even) our faith.

Instead of discussing God's side of the power that is working in us, John chose to discuss our side. Obviously both are very important. Consider electricity as an illustration. Although the generators may be producing enough electricity to power the entire city, it makes little difference to us unless we have done what is necessary to access the power. God's power is exactly the same. He has unlimited power and that power is described in many places in Scripture.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is **the power of God** unto salvation to **every one that believeth**; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom 1:16*

*And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, (even the word) of God, ye accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, **which also worketh in you that believe**. 1Thes 2:13*

*who **by the power of God** are guarded through faith unto a **salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Pet 1:5*

God's power is ready to help everyone overcome and gain the victory. The only thing God lacks to make our victory complete is our faith. If we give him that and continue to give him that then we will

overcome the world. If we lose it or shrink back then that power will be lost to us.

But my righteous one shall live by faith: And if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul. Heb 10:38-39

5 And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

John now expands the previous verse by explaining exactly where the faith that overcomes the world must be directed. This is not simply a general belief that there is a God, or that the Bible is God's word. It is not a faith that Jesus was a good man, or a prophet equal to other prophets. This passage hits at the heart of *Gnosticism*, and all other *-isms*. No religion or belief system that rejects that Jesus is the Son of God can overcome (be victorious, conquer and win against) the world. Remember Jesus told Peter that this was the "rock" upon which the church would be built.

He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Mt 16:15-18

Any doctrine that shatters or chips away at this rock will never overcome the world. Faith that Jesus is the Christ the son of God is the victory that overcomes the world. Paul equated this faith in Jesus with the faith of Abraham and its being reckoned to him as righteousness.

and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; 24 but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification. 1 Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; Rom 4:21-25; 5:1

6 This is he that came by water and blood, (even) Jesus Christ;

There is universal agreement that this is a strong rebuke of the teaching of *Gnosticism*. The *Gnostics* were convinced that no human flesh could contain someone as pure as the Christ. So the Christ came to the human body of Jesus to dwell with the human spirit that actually animated that body. But the Christ left Jesus just before his death. So the one who died and shed his blood was not the Christ, but only Jesus with a human spirit. So nearly everyone agrees that the blood here refers to the death of Jesus. There is some dispute about the water. Some affirm it is the water which began his ministry: The baptism of John.

On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. 32 And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. 34 And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. Jn 1:29-34

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer (it) now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. 16 And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; 17 and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Mt 3:13-17

As we look at the above Scriptures it is clear that this water not only began the ministry of Jesus but also marked him as the *Son of God* and *the lamb to take away the sins of the world*. John the Baptist was very forceful in his affirmation that God specifically sent him to baptize to make Jesus known to Israel as the Messiah (*that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water*). John also stated that God had foretold that the true Son of God would be the one upon whom the Spirit came as a dove. John the Baptist testified that this is exactly what happened to Jesus. The Holy Spirit through Matthew revealed the actual event and explained that at His baptism the Spirit did descend as a dove, but at the same time "and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" This makes a very powerful proof that it is this event that is described by the water.

While others John's specific statement after Jesus crucifixion that the side pierced by the sword had both water and blood pouring out.

The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: 33 but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water. 35 And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe. John 19:32-35

Though this is a possible interpretation, the first is obviously strikes me as the more powerful proof of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God.

Jesus began his ministry with the water of baptism and ended it at the cross when he shed his blood for the remission of our sins.

not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

This is a crushing truth to the *Gnostic* philosophy. Their conviction that matter was evil and spirit was good which made it impossible for the spirit (Christ) to inhabit the body (Jesus) from conception to death. They would freely admit that the Christ was there at baptism. As a matter of fact that is what they taught: The Christ came at baptism. But he left before the blood. He left before the crucifixion. John makes the doctrine taught by the apostles abundantly clear. Jesus did not just come by water only! He came by water(baptism) and by blood (crucifixion). No one who accepts the witness and authority of the apostles would deny this.

7 And it is the Spirit that beareth witness,

For all those who are only able to read the Scriptures and were not there to see these things for ourselves, this is the most important of all witnesses. Jesus expressed this to Thomas after Thomas was given the right to see for himself and Jesus then spoke of all those who would not see.

Jesus said to him, Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Jn 20:29

Only the Spirit can give us the testimony that will lead us to believe when we have not seen. Sadly, with the unreliability of man's testimony, even though the apostles were giving the perfect account of what they had truly seen, it would be difficult for that testimony alone to move many others. The truths in the gospel were so important that God did not leave it to man alone to witness. Jesus spoke of this before he departed.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, (even) the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: 27 and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. Jn 15:26-27

As the times of the living apostles was drawing to a close the writer of Hebrews made some interesting observations along the same line as John here.

For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; 4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will. Heb 2:2-4

And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said, Heb 10:15

There are two clear methods by which the Holy Spirit added his testimony to theirs. First, as they were preaching, he allowed them to perform many different types of miracles to confirm that what they were saying was the truth. But the miracles were only a portion. More important was what these miracles were designed to prove.

But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. Mt 10:19-20

The things they testified were not of their own choosing. They did not speak anything that was not given them by the Holy Spirit.

But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual (words). 1 Cor 2:12-13

Hence every word is from the Spirit of God. It is he who guided them into all truth. It is the Spirit who was speaking in all the sermons they preached and all the words they wrote. The Spirit gave the prophecies in the Old Testament that validate the truths in the NT. It was the Spirit who created a book over 1500 years by many different authors that has a perfect and timeless unity of truth.

because the Spirit is the truth.

This is the true essence of the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that he would guide the apostles into all the truth.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, (these) shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare (it) unto you.

Jn 16:12-14

The essence of the Holy Spirit is the truth. The Holy Spirit is the truth. All that he has revealed in the Scripture is truth, whole truth and nothing but truth. The Scripture is simply his sword to bring truth to all.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Eph 6:17

8 For there are three who bear witness,

This is one of those passages that create the impression of unreliability in the transmission of the Greek Text down to the present moment. It requires that we take some time and seek to understand the methods used and the issues involved in the variants in the text. Comparing the KJV text with the ASV gives a fair picture of the differences in the Greek text between the Textus Receptus("Received Text") and the later efforts of Wescott and Hort. The words in question/dispute are in bold and underlined.

*For there are **three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.** 8 **And** there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. 1 John 5:7-8 (NKJV)*

And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. 8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one. 1 John 5:7-8(ASV)

Before commenting on the textual issues, it is important to see that the words themselves are not critical to our understanding of the Scripture. There is nothing gained or lost either way. The three(*Father, Word and Holy Spirit*) are in the context whether we add this sentence or not. John has spoken of the witness of the Spirit(1Jn. 4:2-3,12-15; 5:7). The witness of God (Jn 5:31-39; 1Jn 5:9-12) and the Word:

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17 Yea and in your law it is written, that the witness of two men is true. 18 I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Jn. 8:13-17

The witness of the Word is implied in this and other epistles (1Tim. 6:13) and plainly stated in the gospel:

*But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and saith unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Mark 14:61-62
Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a*

*king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." John 18:37
I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; 1Tim 6:13*

There is nothing to be gained or lost from either its inclusion or exclusion . So there is no reason to be prejudiced either way. Let's look at the facts:

That these words are spurious and have no right to stand in the New Testament is certain in the light of the following considerations.

(A) EXTERNAL EVIDENCE. (1) The passage is absent from every known Greek manuscript except eight, and these contain the passage in what appears to be a translation from a late recension of the Latin Vulgate. Four of the eight manuscripts contain the passage as a variant reading written in the margin as a later addition to the manuscript. ... (2) The passage is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers, who, had they known it, would most certainly have employed it in the Trinitarian controversies (Sabellian and Arian). Its first appearance in Greek is in a Greek version of the (Latin) Acts of the Lateran Council in 1215 A.D. . . .(3) The passage is absent from the manuscripts of all ancient versions (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic), except the Latin; and it is not found (a) in the Old Latin in its early form (Tertullian Cyprian Augustine), or in the Vulgate (b) as issued by Jerome (codex Fuldensis [copied A.D. 541-46] and codex Amiatinus [copied before A.D. 716]) or © as revised by Alcuin (first hand of codex Vallicellianus [ninth century]). . . . The earliest instance of the passage being quoted as a part of the actual text of the Epistle is in a fourth century ...

(B) INTERNAL PROBABILITIES. (1) As regards transcriptional probability, if the passage were original. no good reason can be found to account for its omission, either accidentally or intentionally, by copyists of hundreds of Greek manuscripts, and by translators of ancient versions. (2) As regards intrinsic probability, the passage makes an awkward break in the sense. (Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition, © 1994)

Barnes commentary also used all the above but adds the following:

The supposed importance of the verse in its bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity has contributed to this, and has given to the discussion a degree of consequence which has pertained to the examination of the genuineness of no other passage of the New Testament. On the one hand, the clear testimony which it seems to bear to the doctrine of the Trinity, has made that portion of the Christian church which holds the doctrine reluctant in the highest degree to abandon it; and on the other hand, the same clearness of the testimony to that doctrine, has made those who deny it not less reluctant to admit the genuineness of the passage. . . .

"It would be much easier to prove the doctrine of the Trinity from other texts, than to demonstrate the genuineness of this. (2) It is not NECESSARY as a proof-text. The doctrine which it contains can be abundantly established from other parts of the New Testament, by passages about which there can be no doubt. (3) The removal of this text does nothing to weaken the evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity, or to modify that doctrine. As it was never used to shape the early belief of the Christian world on the subject, so its rejection, and its removal from the New Testament, will do nothing to modify that doctrine. The doctrine was embraced, and held, and successfully defended without it, and it can and will be so still. (Barnes' Notes, I Jn)

With all this in mind it appears that the evidence for the words to be removed is much stronger than the evidence for them to remain. This is one of the most interesting aspects of "How we Got the Bible." If man were in charge, he would be certain that the original manuscripts remained, carefully guarded and protected, but available to prove that nothing had changed from the time they were written to the present. But God did not do that. He promised we would always have his word, but did nothing tangible to prove he has done so. Like so many other things in the Scriptures, this too is a matter of faith and trust.

One of the things that I use to give me confidence is to consider the two texts above. The Textus Receptus(i.e. the received text) is a single document coming down through many centuries. The Wescott and Hort is the compilation of the thousands of manuscripts, fragments and quotations of Bible verses. Weight is then given to the most reliable of these and after all this work, there is almost no difference between the KJV and NKJV that are based on the Textus Receptus(Received Text) and that of the later translations based on the compilations cited above. God has clearly kept his promise whether we can conclusively prove it or not is immaterial, it is by faith that we are saved. Faith in God's

promises has always been the identifying characteristic of all God's genuine children.

having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and abides 24 For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls 25 But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you. 1 Pet 1:23-25

8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood:

John now sums up the previous verses. The Holy Spirit is a witness, the water (Jesus baptism) is a witness and the blood (his death, burial and resurrection) are a witness. These witnesses now combine to establish the exact same points. That Jesus is the Christ (5:1), the Son of God(5:5) and that our eternal life is in believing in the name of the Son of God(5:11).

As noted above, the testimony of the water is set forth first by God's words to John, then by the actual events, then by God's spoken words and the coming of the dove, which also includes the next one (the Spirit).

The testimony of the Holy Spirit is much broader as it takes in all the prophecies of the Old Testament and the pointing them out in the New. It also includes all the miracles Jesus performed as he warned the pharisees that to reject his power was to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. It also includes all that he did with the apostles from the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 right up to the end of that period with the death of the last apostle (John).

The testimony of the blood first takes into consideration all the prophecies that so clearly and exactly recorded what Jesus endured. Many of them Jesus had no control over. It also takes in ripping of the veil, the resurrection of the saints, and Jesus resurrection.

and the three agree in one.

Each of the above witnesses agree. The amazing events surrounding his baptism that John the Baptist witnessed. The amazing facts surrounding his death, burial and resurrection as testified by those who witnessed it. Finally the testimony of the Holy Spirit who validates and gives even greater power to the first two. So the three agree "into" or "for the purpose of" one. There is only one goal in all this testimony. To fully establish beyond doubt that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God.

9 If we receive the witness of men,

John opens this passage with a simple fact that leads to a logical conclusion. It argues from the lesser to the greater. If we do something small(accepting man's testimony/witness as true), there is no excuse for not receiving the greater and much more elaborate evidence of God's testimony. The means for accepting or rejecting are the same for both. Except that God's testimony has been more highly documented than man's.

From the furthest reaches of our memory we have accepted what others tell us unless there is a strong reason not to. From parents to teachers we trust what they are teaching us, unless there is something there that leads us to doubt. Evidence and testimony play a powerful role as also does consistency. If what our parents told us was different from what our teachers or friends told us it created a paradox we had to solve by looking at the power of the reasons to accept one over the other.

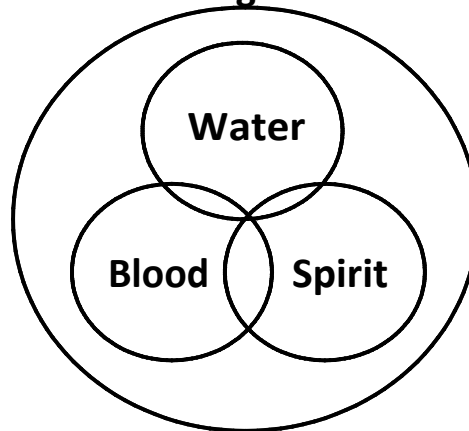
Consider the magnitude of man's testimony. Everything we have not seen or experienced ourselves has to be accepted upon the testimony of men. No matter how convinced we are that it is the truth, if we did not see it ourselves, then it was "learned" through the testimony of men. This is the only means we have for learning anything we can't see for ourselves.

Many branches of science, education and everyday activities are based solely upon the testimony of men. Police and lawyers use it to solve crimes and assess guilt or innocence, doctors use it get an accurate diagnosis, newspapers to get news, drivers when they use a map, and teachers to impart the knowledge of history, geography, math and science. All successful and intelligent people use this ability.

Anyone who refuses to accept such testimony is ridiculed as a fool and severely handicapped in their ability to learn, grow, and gain wisdom and experience. If we don't learn from the experiences and testimony of others, we are doomed to make every mistake ourselves before we learn from it.

This is the very point John is making! We all accept the witness of men. Very seldom does this method fail to glean the truth. It is a reliable and respectable way to gather knowledge. God selected this method for the gospel. Whenever we use a map, dictionary or encyclopedia to gather facts, we are

The Three Agree in One



validating God's choice.

When we speak confidently of the revolutionary or civil war. When we speak with conviction that Abraham Lincoln or George Washington were presidents, we are speaking of things others saw but we did not. Yet no one scoffs or makes any distinction between the knowledge of personal experience and the knowledge gained by receiving the testimony of men. The things we can't "see it for ourselves" are still accepted with equal conviction when there are eyewitnesses testifying about it.

It is so common place and so universally accepted that we never think of challenging or doubting it. When eyewitnesses speak, people listen and believe it. That being so, when we read the Bible using this sound reasoning as our basis, we are reading what eyewitnesses saw and should accept what they say with the same credibility we do a newspaper or history book. There is no difference between the Bible and any other historical document. They are exactly the same except for their content. Other books record the life of Julius Caesar, Aristotle or Abraham Lincoln. The Bible records the life of Jesus Christ. The content of each should be accepted exactly the same way. This is the basis of the Holy Spirit's strong words about those who reject God's testimony of Jesus.

The foundation of our judicial system, medical practice, and commerce is based on accepting testimony. If we accept the witness of men, and see it as a reliable and respectable way to gather knowledge, we thus agree it is a reliable method to leave information for the next generation to learn. It has been done this way for thousands of years and it has always been reliable. So when God chose to prove the gospel in the same way, we are being inconsistent if we say it is not a good enough method to reveal such important truths.

the witness of God is greater:

All that God has recorded for us in Scripture make up his testimony. He has testified regarding the creation and fall of man. The history of man and his plan for our salvation. He has given many prophecies of the future which all came true. He gave Jesus extraordinary power to do mighty works and allowed multitudes to witness them. God used competent witnesses to validate the truth of the gospel. This is testimony on a grand scale! Man cannot duplicate it. No one can predict the future. No one can perform the works Jesus performed. All historical events as well documented as Jesus birth and resurrection are never questioned.

There is a grave inconsistency when we accept man's testimony without question and then reject God's when God uses exactly the same method. In a trial, we use eyewitnesses to determine guilt and punish based on our findings. How can we do this without any qualm then reject God's eyewitness testimony and credible witnesses.

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty 2Pet 1:15

When the gospel is scorned and then other things respected with exactly the same criteria it is an open act of hypocrisy and prejudice. It is a terrible hypocrisy to read a newspaper accept every word then scoff at the Scriptures.

The truth is that they both stand or fall together. If the eyewitness testimony of Paul or Peter is rejected in Scripture(God's writings) then they should also reject other historical documents(man's writings).

When we objectively examine the carefully documented miracles that eyewitnesses saw and experienced, what conclusions are we forced to draw? Multitudes witnessed his miracles and testified of them. So many that it is impossible to explain unless it is true.

for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son.

The term "this" is used to refer to what just preceded. John summed up God's testimony he gave of his son. "This" refers back to the water, the blood and the Spirit. This is God's testimony he gave of his Son. The events God selected to prepare the way for Jesus with John the baptism and Jesus' own baptism(water) include eyewitness testimony and carefully documented facts. The events surrounding the death of Jesus and his resurrection(blood), use exactly the same methods. The Holy Spirit used all of the methods man cherishes in his own documentation. There is simply no logical or consistent way to reject God's testimony of Jesus and accept man's testimony of anything.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him:

So there are only two options based upon the above reasoning. Those who carefully assess the facts and believe in their heart all that testimony will believe in the Son of God. This was Jesus point to Peter. Peter did not know Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God by any testimony of man or even his own observations. Peter knew it because he received it from the Father.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. Matt 16:17

It was this witness of God within Peter that had led him to this faith and conviction. So it is with all who accept the truths recorded in God's word and acts upon them. When we accept that witness it creates faith and our faith is the witness each of us carries within ourselves.

he that believeth not God hath made him a liar;

The only other option is to reject this testimony and refuse to believe and act upon it. But with all that God has done, there is a serious consequence to refusing the believe. We are calling God a liar. Think about it. If a man ran up to us and told us a story of an accident around the corner with people dying, and we did nothing about it, what would the man be forced to conclude? They did not believe what he was saying they are implying he is not telling the truth. This is exactly how God feels. He has testified of the power and greatness of his Son. He has testified of the wonderful promises that will be given if we believe and the terrible consequences if we don't. It has all be documented to the very highest proofs of veracity.

So those who refuse to believe and act upon God's testimony are "making" him a liar. They never called him that but the results of their conduct has created and brought this into being. By withholding believe they have made him into a liar.

because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son.

This is the consequence of rejecting the gospel. The gospel is God's witness of his Son. Anyone who rejects this testimony is making God a liar because he hasn't believed the witness God has given of Jesus. Back in eternity, when all the plans were prepared for man, God also planned the things necessary for man to believe. God carefully revealed the Scriptures in the Old Testament to prepare many things to prove his later testimony. He sent Jesus on his mission with all the tools necessary for man to believe. When the apostles went forth, he equipped them with every necessary tool. So when man rejects Jesus, he is rejecting God's testimony. Not because there was not enough testimony or the testimony wasn't powerful enough. They did not believe because they did not want to believe.

Hence when the gospel is preached the testimony of God is revealed. All who reject it will be condemned:

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mk. 16:15-16

The condemnation comes for the same reason as is explained here. The gospel is so well documented and presents such a compelling picture that once one hears it they should feel compelled to pursue it until they either reject it for lack of evidence or accept it as the truth. Since it can never be the lack of evidence, those who reject it are calling God a liar.

11 And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

This passage contains an amazing paradox. Everything God has testified and witnessed is for the purpose of giving us eternal life. God has used the most powerful testimony available to man to off eternal life through his son Jesus Christ. The way men respond to the gospel one would think God was seeking to put something onerous and unpleasant upon them. But the amazing thing is that all God is seeking to do is give people eternal life. He has lowered the standards as low as he can. Eternal life is in Jesus the Son of God, all God is asking is that we acknowledge this as the truth and live as he has asked us to live. This is good news indeed.

The sum total of all God's testimony is to help us see these truths. God the Father so loved the world that he gave his Son. This is John 3:16 stated another way.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. 18 He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. Jn 3:16-18

12 He that hath the Son hath the life;

This term is a participle(taking an action and turning it into a person, place or thing(noun)) This is a present active participle emphasizing continuous action. The "one who is *having*," "the *having one*" "he who is *possessing*," "the *possessing one*" "the one who is *holding fast* or *keeping*," the *holding fast one* or the *keeping one*." "the one who *adheres* and *clings to*" "the *adhering one*" or " the *clinging one*" to the Son. This person is having, holding and possessing the life.

"echo... . Transitively. 1. to have i. q. to hold; a. to have(hold) in the hand: ... b. in the sense of wearing... c. trop. to have (hold) possession of the mind; said of alarm, agitating emotions... d. to hold fast, keep... e. to have (in itself or as a consequence), comprise, involve... f... to regard, consider, hold as... 2. to have i.q. to own, possess; a. external things such as pertain to property,

riches, furniture, utensils, goods, food, etc. II. Intransitively... *to hold one's self to a thing, to lay hold of a thing, to adhere or cling to*; to be closely joined to a person or thing... *near, adjoining, neighboring, bordering, next...*" (Thayer, p. 265-268; 2192).

This participle is then followed by the active verb. The one who is holding fast, clinging possessing and adhering to Jesus is having(continuously) eternal life. It is our relationship with Jesus that determines our relationship to eternal life. If we have done all to take possession of Jesus as Lord and Savior, then we have the life. To the degree that we are clinging to and holding fast to Jesus, to that very same degree we are holding fast and clinging to eternal life. For us they are the same. In his next book John will reveal that it is exactly the same thing with the doctrines and teachings(commands of Christ). If we abide in the commands we have the father and the son. If we do not, then we have neither.

Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. II Jn 1:9

he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

John then stated it the opposite way to emphasize his meaning. He used exactly the same grammar. First the participle then the verb. The "one who is *having*," "the *having one*" "he who is *possessing*," "the *possessing one*" "the one who is ***not*** holding fast or keeping," the ***not*** holding fast one or the ***not*** keeping one." "the one who ***is not*** adheres and ***is not*** clings to" "the ***not*** adhering one" or "the ***not*** clinging one" to the Son. They are linked and tied together. The more the one grows the more the other grows, the more the one diminishes the more the other diminishes.

13 These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,

As he did in his gospel so he does here. This is the true purpose of the book. His gospel was written so we might believe and this letter is written so we might know.

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name. Jn 20:30-31

Walk in the light as he is in the light 1:7

Confess your sins 1:9

Keep his commandments 2:3-4,10; 5:3

Love your brethren 2:10-11; 3:14; 4:7-8

Love not the world 2:15-17

Believe Jesus is the Christ 2:23; 5:10

Do righteousness 2:29; 3:10

Purify yourself 3:3

Love in deed and truth 3:18

Heart does not condemn 3:20-21

Test doctrine and teachers for truth 4:1

Hearken to those who wrote the NT scripture 4:6

Confess Jesus is the Christ / Son of God 4:15;

5:5 No fear of judgement of God 4:17-18

Believe the testimony / have the son 5:8-11

If we look at the things in the gospel of John as a checklist we grasp the significance of this verse. Those who can read all the above and realize they are doing and believing all these things then they know they have eternal life. Those who read the above and understand that they are not doing them does not have eternal life.

(even) unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.

It is interesting that John words this as though it is a sequel to his gospel. Only when we believe all that John wrote in his gospel are we prepared to begin reading the book of 1 John. When we believe on the name of the Son of God then and only then are we prepared to study John with the right understanding, ability to comprehend and do the things in this epistle. Yet even belief has to be qualified. This is the belief found in the Scriptures. Full persuasion with all that follows. Faith leads to works and obedience. Those who believe, but with not fully enough to comply with all that Jesus has asked do not have the quality of faith necessary to fulfill the above conditions. Getting to heaven is not the result of doing works. It is as a result of fully believing in Jesus and doing everything he commands.

What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. 18 Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from (thy) works, and I by my works will show thee (my) faith. 19 Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; 23 and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. 24 Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. 25 And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in

that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead. Jas 2:14-3:2

14 And this is the boldness which we have toward him,

The term “and” ties back to the previous verse. Those who have read this epistle and after carefully assessing all of the conditions that John has given have found that they are complying to the best of their ability now “*know they have eternal life.*” Those who know they have eternal life also have the right and the privilege to feel “boldness.”

“*parresia... 1. freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, ... openly, frankly, i. e. without concealment... 2. free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance, ... of the undoubting confidence of Christians relative to their fellowship with God... 3. the deportment by which one becomes conspicuous or secures publicity...*” (Thayer,., p. 491; 3954)

This is one of the difficulties Christians face. As they are repenting and confessing their sins they feel unworthy of God. We can’t measure up to His standards no matter how hard we try. We beat our breast like the publican (Lk. 18). We feel poor in spirit and we mourn. We are humble, contrite, and often have the broken spirit (Isa. 57:15). Yet this passage states that those who know they have eternal life based on the standards revealed in the previous verse all also allowed to feel boldness.

Those who know they have eternal life have a “*free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage.* This gives us another truth that will lead us one step closer to his statement that “*perfect love will cast out fear.*” As we grow to understand how much God wants to save us and how strong and deep his loving kindness and mercy extend we begin to feel more and more comfortable, confident, cheerful and fearless in his presence. John affirmed that this is a boldness we have toward him. This is a Greek preposition that “*denotes direction towards*” and “*the relation or close connection entered.*”

“*pros* a preposition,... I with the accusative, *to towards*,... denoting direction towards a thing, or position and state looking towards a thing... 1. of the goal or limit towards which a movement is directed... 2. It is used of close proximity -- the idea of direction, though not entirely lost, being more or less weakened;... 3. of relation or reference to any person or thing;... b. of the relation or close connection entered (or to be entered) into by one person with another...” (Thayer, p 541-543; 4314)

As we move closer to God and understand him better, the more boldness and confidence we can feel. Not because of ourselves, but because of the one whom we are moving toward.

Compassion and mercy (Ex. 34:6-7),

Longsuffering (2Pet. 3:9)

Pity(Ps. 103:8-13),

Faithfulness (Ps. 89)

Love(Rom. 5:8-11, Titus 3:4-6)

Promises and Oaths (Heb. 6:13-20)

Grace(Titus 3:7; Eph. 2:8)

All of these are a fixed and constant part of God to those who “*know they have eternal life.*” How could they feel anything else after the wonderful promises of what God will do for those who are on his side. We are already more than conquerors appointed to salvation.

What then shall we say to these things? If God (is) for us, who (is) against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; . . . 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Rom. 8:31-33, 37 For God appointed us not into wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1Th. 5:9

that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:

This boldness leads to a very important attitude toward the things we ask(our prayers). The Holy Spirit is very careful here to limit this asking. First, we must have gone through the checklist and passed to the level where we know we have eternal life. Without this, God will not hear no matter what we ask.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. Isa 59:1-2

When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.” Jer 14:12

Every type of question or request we might make of God we can be bold regarding both the reception and the answer. At first glance this verse seems to reveal that once we know we have eternal life and have this boldness toward God that any request we might make of him will be unequivocally answered. Yet John limits this asking to a specific set of circumstances. It must be “*according to his will.*” The term

“according” is the Greek *kata*- in proportion as; according the measure of:

“*kata*,... II with the Accusative... 3. it denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... *as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning*;...c. *according to, agreeably to*; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard, in various ways (aa) *according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...*(bb) *in proportion to, according to the measure of...*” (Thayer, cit., p. 328; 2596)

We have a balancing scale where whatever we ask is on the one side of this scale and God’s will is on the other side.

There is a very important distinction that must be made between they type of prayers we are offering. Some of the things we ask God for are promised and we know His will. When we pray for wisdom or confess our sins, we already know God’s will.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. Jas. 1:5

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1Jn. 1:9

We already know his will and when we pray for such things, we know he will give them to all his faithful children. Yet John is very specific and he says nothing about the other types of prayers. The ones where we don’t know God’s will and cannot predict whether God will hear and give them or not. Jesus prayed such a prayer in the garden. He knew what God’s will was and was asking if there were any other way. But he put in the caveat that all of us should also have. “*If it be thy will.*”

And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. . . . 42 Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. . . 44 And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words. Mt 26:39; 42; 44

When praying for a new job, the health of a friend, or the rulers of the land, it is impossible for us to know what God’s will actually is. In such situations we don’t know if we will have the petitions we ask. We want God to make those decisions so we do not expect or have confidence in receiving those things. We pray, and leave it to God what the outcome will be. Whenever we are asking for things that God has not revealed his will regarding, we must be as prepared for “**no**” as for “**yes**.” When Paul asked for his thorn in the flesh to be removed, he did not know God’s will. So it was not a shock or disappointment to him when the answer was no.

Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for (my) power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Cor 12:8-10

James revealed the true attitude of the devout Christian to all dealings where God has not yet revealed his will.

For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. James 4:15

We pray prayers of this type when asking for a safe journey, for God to bless an operation or help someone who is terminally ill. There are many prayers prayed in humility and trust with the understanding that though the prayer of the righteous avails does much, they are al subject to God’s assessment and decision.

John is not speaking of these prayers. He is speaking of those things God has clearly revealed his will. In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus told us it is God’s will to give us our daily bread and to forgive us of our sins. When we pray for these we know we are asking according to his will and so we know we will receive them. James also told us to pray for wisdom. So when we pray for wisdom we are praying according to his will and we know we will have those petitions. Even those things we do not know God’s will we can still know we will receive it if it is according to his will. But only after we receive it will we know.

15 and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask,

With a second “*and*” he joins another clause and the second reason we are allowed to have boldness. We “*know*” he hears us. This is the perfect active of *eido* — *oidamen*. We saw, accepted as fact and came to know this some time in the past and the affects of that knowledge are still with us. We know this because the Holy Spirit has revealed it to us. It is right for us to have confidence and boldness because that is what God expects of those who have faith in his promises and faithfulness. The “*if*” here

is better viewed as a "since." God hears all of our prayers. Those he will say yes because they are according to his will and those he will say no to because they would not be in our best interest or are impossible to fulfill without violating something he cannot violate (like the freewill of another). Those who know they have eternal life also know that God will hear every prayer they utter.

we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.

We also know that we will receive the petitions we have asked of him (with the limitation discussed in the previous verse. There is no real difference between asking (verb) and petition (noun) for they are of the same root word. The things we ask for are called our petitions. He ends this with the perfect tense. These are things we have asked for in the past and continue to ask for up to the present moment. Within this tense are the parables Jesus gave to emphasize that we ought always to pray and not to faint.

And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; . . . 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and (yet) he is longsuffering over them? Lk 18:1, 6-7

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; 7 and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? 8 I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth. Lk 11:5-8

There is a difference between the Christian who is repenting of sin and won't lift up his eyes to heaven and therefore pleads for mercy and the one who is no longer sure that God will even hear his prayers. We need to be confident even after 70 times 7 that we are confessing and repenting. But we know if we confess that sin we will be forgiven for that is God's will and it is part of the confidence we have.

16 If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death,

Much thought and effort have gone into finding a "sin" that is not unto death. But the simplest explanation is obviously the best. Every sin that anyone commits brings death. The wages of a sin (singular- just one) is death (Rom 3:23). There are no exceptions or limitations. Every sin that is labeled as sin is worthy of and will bring death. What sin then does not bring death. Again, the simple answer is that any sin that is repented of and confessed is not unto death. John began his letter with this very truth.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 Jn 1:9

Other verses also establish that repented of and confessed sins are not unto death and need no further action from those who have witnessed it or become aware of it.

Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. Lk 17:2-4

I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, (a repentance) which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Cor 7:9-10

So any sin we know they repented and confessed either because they told us, confessed it to us or because we know their character we know they will repent, then is a sin that is not unto death.

he shall ask, and (God) will give him life for them that sin not unto death.

This seems to take us back to the previous verse and simply be one example of what we can pray for and know we will receive our petition. We know God's will toward repented of and confessed sin. It is his will to forgive any sin that is not unto death because it has been taken care of. So when we ask God to forgive them God will give him life instead of death. This was Job's attitude toward his children.

So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly. Job 1:5

This seems to fall into the same category as "the supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working." When we pray to God about the sins of our brethren and we know they are not unto death because they have repented of them, we know that God will hear our prayer and give them life.

There is a sin unto death:

Any sin, no matter whether it be a private sin between individuals, a public sin or a sin of doctrinal or practical import, God commands that it be dealt with and not prayed for and forgotten.

And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he hear (thee) not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. 17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Mt.18:15-17

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. Rom. 16:17

For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, 4 in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1Cor. 5:3-5

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. 14 And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. 15 And (yet) count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 2Th. 3:6, 14-15

It is clear from these passages that every sin that is not repented of, or that we do not know whether it has been repented of we must deal with very differently that the one John speaks of here. So it seems clear that the sin he refers to is the one that has been repented of and confessed.

not concerning this do I say that he should make request.

There is no point asking God to forgive someone of any sin they refuse to repent of. We can pray that God will bring about repentance. We can pray that God will be longsuffering and give them time to repent. But we can't repent and confess for them.

"Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you. Jer 7:16-17

"So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble. Jer 11:14

God explained all this very clearly in Ezekiel:

"But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 22 None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. Ezek. 18:21-22

When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. 14 Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, ... he shall surely live; he shall not die. 16 None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live. Ezek. 33:13-16

When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. 19 But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it. Ezek. 33:18-19

The sin unto death is the unrepented and unturned away from sin. The sin not unto death is the sin that has been repented and confessed.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

This passage validates the above point that there is no sin that is not unrighteousness. He is not speaking of degrees of sin. He is not creating a distinction between sins that are not unrighteous and therefore not worthy of death. All unrighteousness is sin. Any act of injustice or any violation of law is sin.

"adikia,...1. injustice, of a judge... 2. unrighteousness of heart and life... 3. a deed violating law and justice, act of unrighteousness..." (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 12; 93)

Anything we do that is outside of God's character of love and fairness, justice and equity is sin. So anything God identifies as being unrighteous is sin and will bring out death. But there is one

that does not: The sin that has been repented of and confessed.

18 We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not;

John has already dealt with this earlier in his epistle. But it fits well here after his statements regarding “sin unto death” and “sin not unto death.” “Sinneth” is an present indicative active verb which means it has continuous action. No one begotten of God “continually sins.” John had already made it clear in the first chapter that there is no such thing as a state in which we are sinless while sinning. Only after we confess our sins is he faithful and just to forgive. Those who seek to find anywhere in this epistle the idea that after one becomes a Christian there is no longer any need for concern over sin because we can just turn it over to God will never find it. When John spoke of these things he has a very specific idea in his mind.

Whosoever abideth in him sins not: whosoever sins hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. 7 My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: 8 he that doeth sin is of the devil; . . . 9 Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. 1 Jn 3:6-9

The tenses are the key in all these passages. These are not sins that continue on and on and on. But this is what happens to any sin we commit that is not dealt with by us. God never offers nor is there any place in Scripture that reveals that if we commit a sin and allow enough time to pass it will be forgiven. Sins are forgiven in obedience to the gospel and in repentance and confession after obedience. Those who do these things have no sin. So whoever is born of God never allows sin to go on and on in their life. They deal with it the moment they are aware of it. This is the meaning of the word keep in the next clause.

but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not.

It is because we “keep” ourselves (in his commands), by “attend to carefully,” “hold firmly,” and “observe” what we are doing and how we have dealt with the things we have done.

“tereo... to attend to carefully, take care of; i.e. a. prop. to guard... b. metaph. to keep, ... to hold firmly... c. to observe ... d. to reserve...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry; op. cit., p. 622; 5083)

When we guard and protect ourselves in the manner God has revealed in Scripture then we cannot be touched by the evil one. This is exactly how Paul described putting on the whole armor of God.

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual (hosts) of wickedness in the heavenly (places). 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Eph 6:11-13

Note that it is not what God does for us. It is what we do with what God has given to us. This is exactly what we read of in the initial creation. God gave us everything we needed, but it was up to Adam and Eve to properly use and protect themselves. If God allowed them to fall because of lack of vigilance and obedience how can we think that the gospel has removed this same danger for us? Every promise in the Scriptures is conditioned on our continued obedience. If we keep ourselves and protect ourselves in the manner God has revealed then we are safe. The devil cannot touch us if we do all that God has left for us to do.

“hapto...1. prop. to fasten, to, make adhere to; ... 2. Mid., to fasten one’s self to, adhere to, cling to... a. to touch,... b. hunaikos, of carnal intercourse with a woman, or cohabitation, I Cor 7:1... “ (Thayer, p. 70; 680)

He cannot latch on to us and hold us under his power. He cannot reach out to us and by temptation or sin lead us back under his dominion. But it takes vigilance on our part to do all and to stand.

19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one.

Once again we find ourselves with the question of properly interpreting the pronouns. Has John reverted back to *we - apostles* and *you - those who hear*? In 1Jn 4:6 it is obvious that the *we* are the inspired writers of the NT and the *he* who hears and the *he* who does not hear.

We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 1 Jn 4:6

This passage is a little more difficult. The context makes it a little more complex.

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 5:19-20

This can either be the objective standard of the inspired writers or the subjective standard of each one of us. When the inspired apostles and prophets say “we know” it is inspired truth that cannot be doubted. When it is our own subjective feelings, then we know must be understood in light of our faith and actions based on their writings. The only way we can know is if we are doing what they have written. If we do everything they have written we can say “we know” too, but always with the understanding that there may be more growing that we need to do.

The apostles knew they were of God because they had seen and heard Jesus (1Jn 1:1-4) and because they had been given the Holy Spirit to validate their words (1Jn 3:24; 4:1-6). While the only way that “we the hearers” know that we are of God is because of their words.

Since both are true, and have been discussed in other parts of John, it is left to each of us to strive to understand which one is under consideration here.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, (even) in his Son Jesus Christ.

John now sums up the epistle. The apostles knew that the Son of God has come and those of us who are listening to them also know. They had been convinced by the “water” the “blood” and the “Spirit” God had given as testimony and they refused to call God a liar by withholding their faith and conviction, and so have we.

Therefore they knew that the Holy Spirit had taught them all things. Jesus had promised it and they had seen it unfold through revelation first to themselves and then in their letters for all. God had given them an understanding and through them we can get the same understanding.

how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, 4 whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; Eph 3:3-4

The apostles knew that Jesus was the genuine and true Son of God and that by following him we would be in him (closest relationship). This was proven over and over again throughout the epistle and as John now concludes his words, he again sums it up and reemphasizes it.

This is the true God, and eternal life.

There are grammatical and doctrinal issues in this clause that make it nearly impossible to determine if this is speaking of Jesus or of the Father. Grammatically it could be either. The term “this” can refer back to Jesus in this verse or to God the father in verse 19. The doctrinal considerations are based only on whether one is seeking to prove a Unitarian (Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father are all the same person) or a Trinitarian (Each of these individuals are separate and make up the godhead in three persons). Those who reject Jesus as one of a triune God with the Father and the Holy Spirit will always read this as the Father. While those who believe the truth, that the Father is in heaven, Jesus was on the earth and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove. The truth is that while this verse may refer to Jesus if it stood alone it could not prove anything. Scripturally because of other passages (Jn 1:1-3, 14; Heb 1) we can see that either interpretation is Scriptural. Both also give eternal life so that too does not definitively prove anything. Perhaps the most compelling argument put forth that this is in contrast to the next verse which deals with idolatry and since the Father has always been the antithesis of idolatry it seems that this is John’s thought.

21 (My) little children, guard yourselves from idols.

The doctrines of the Gnostics would have led them back into idolatry (aeons, etc). The aeons that led back to a very different God than the one revealed in Scripture created an idolatrous system very similar to that created by Jeroboam. Such blatant revisions to God would not recreate God in a new image. It would simply create a new idol to worship for this conception of God is not God at all.

Yet all Christians must beware of idolatry. As Paul pointed out all covetousness is idolatry and thus anything that we want more than God is an idol that must be removed.