

“Demanding Evidence”

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The Last Eyewitness Series – a study of 1 John (Part Two)

Text: 1 John 2: 3 – 29

Last week I gave you a lot of background on John to provide context for this epistle we are studying together. John, “the disciple Jesus loved”, was the last remaining eyewitness to the love, life, and works of Jesus Christ Messiah. We noted in his life, John witnessed:

- Jesus ministry and miracles on earth (one of the first four disciples chosen)
- The transfiguration of Jesus
- His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven
- The only disciple present during the crucifixion standing with Jesus’ mother
- The overpowering descent of the Holy Spirit on them at Pentecost
- Seeing Peter changed from denier of Jesus to one of the leaders of His church
- The death of his brother, James, by sword at the hands of King Herod. He was the first disciple martyred.
- The persecution and salvation of Saul-Paul
- The deaths of all his fellow apostles
- The birth of the Christian church and its struggles to survive of which he was a great leader.

Then we know he was exiled, with “criminals”, on Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea, for preaching the Gospel. This is where he received and wrote The Revelation. Later he moved to Ephesus to spend the rest of his life preaching and exhorting the churches.

We also discussed one of the great enemies of Christianity—**Gnosticism**—that Paul also confronted. We examined the importance of *giving our testimonies* and the *real meaning of fellowship*. Then we looked at how John used the contrasts of light and darkness and truth and lies to challenge us to examine our lives. We ended with a discussion of Christ being the **propitiation** (appeasement) for our sins and what that means. Today we examine how John applies that to everyday living as Christians—evidence we are indeed born-again in Christ.

Evidence #1 of being born-again in Christ: *Obedience*

“By this we know that we have come to know Him if we keep (obey) His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep (obey) His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps (obeys) His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides (exists) in Him ought himself to walk (live) in the same manner as He walked (lived). 1 John 2: 3-6:

Exhibit A: *Obeying His commandments.* This is evidence we know Jesus, and He is in us. The opposite is also true. If one says he is in Christ but does not obey, John called him a liar.

Exhibit B: *We walk (live) like He did.* It is not enough to say we abide in Him and obey His commandments. **Talk is cheap.** Abide means to exist within. John wrote in his gospel (John 15: 5), “Jesus said, I am the vine and you are the branches.” Our life flows from Him. If we are not in the vine, as branches, we wither and die. *Our walk speaks louder than our talk.*

Evidence #2 of being born-again in Christ: *Love*

*"Beloved, I am not writing to you a new commandment, but an old one, which you have had from the beginning. This commandment is the message you have heard. Then again, I am also writing to you a new commandment, which is true in Him and also in you. For the darkness is **fading** and the true light is already **shining**. If anyone claims to be in the light but hates his brother, he is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in him. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness. He does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."* 1 John 2: 7 – 11

Exhibit A: (vs 7-8) Jesus' new commandment of love is in us—evident in our lives.

John wrote as if he were writing and teaching today in the U.S. The "old commandment" to which John referred was in the Levitical law. The Jews were taught this from their youth.

*'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall **love your neighbor as yourself**; I am the LORD.'* Leviticus 19: 18

They just did not obey it. The "new commandment" was the part Jesus taught His disciples when He added, "**as I have loved you**" (John 13: 34) to the previous one. No one loved like Jesus—sacrificial even unto death. Now we are instructed, not just to love our nations as ourselves, but in the way Jesus lived and loved. Hate = lost in your sin.

Exhibit B: (vs 9-11) Love = Light; Hate = Darkness. Recall in Chapter One, John wrote God is Light. Later he wrote, God is love. Jesus is also called the *Light of the World*. When John wrote, "the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining", he referred to the

process that takes hold when people are truly born-again in Christ. While we are saved immediately, the old “dark” self can take some time to give way to the Light of Christ that will shine on, in, and through us.

You cannot hate anyone and think that you are a Christian. John is adamant about this. Hate in the heart of a man is a sign that the love of Christ is not in him. If he says he is a Christian, he is a liar because this strong evidence convicts him. He remains in darkness.

The next section of this chapter is an interesting pause in his message to make clear that not all Christians are equal in terms of our maturity levels in Christ. He notes three:

“I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven through His name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” (vs 12-14)

- (Little) Children – new babes in Christ
 - Fathers – spiritually mature (grown-up) in Christ
 - Young Men – *growing* in Christ (evidence the word of God abides in them)
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Then John returned to stating the evidences of those who are truly born-again and those who are not.

Evidence #3 of being born-again in Christ: *Not loving the world...hating sin.*

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father but from the world. The world is passing away, along with its lusts; but whoever does the will of God remains forever.” vs 15-17

Exhibit A: If a man loves the things of the world, follows hard after them, this is evidence he does not know Christ. No evidence of repentance. After John gives a very specific command and consequence, he lays out the three types of sin—all sins fall into one of these: ***lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, boastful pride of life.***

Exhibit B: the one who does the will of God (hates sin and the world) lives forever.

Evidence #4 – NOT being born-again in Christ: Pretenders (John calls antichrists)

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But their departure made it clear that none of them belonged to us. You, however, have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I have not written to you because you lack knowledge of the truth, but because you have it, and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar, if it is not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father, but whoever confesses the Son has the Father as well. As for you, let what you have heard from the beginning remain in you. If it does, you will

also remain in the Son and in the Father.” vs 18-24

Exhibit A: People who put on a good mask or show in the church and give the appearance of being good Christians, but ultimately show their true colors. They deny God and Jesus.

Exhibit B: The opposite is also true. Those who confess that Jesus is Lord and live according to His word also know and have the Father. Their confession is the evidence for them.

Evidence #5 of being born-again in Christ: *We have the anointing of the Holy Spirit*

“And this is the promise that He Himself made to us: eternal life. I have written these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. And as for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But just as His true and genuine anointing teaches you about all things, so remain in Him as you have been taught. And now, little children, remain in Christ, so that when He appears, we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you also know that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him.” vs 25 – 29

John closed this powerful chapter with the greatest promise in the Bible. If we are born-again and remain in Christ, we have eternal life with the Holy Trinity and all believers in Heaven.

Exhibit A: We abide in and learn from Him—do not shrink away or fall back into a life of sin.

Exhibit B: Because He is righteous, we “practice” living righteously until He returns for us.

We have covered a lot of important, rich food of truth in just part of one chapter. I hope you will make the time to read this for yourself (1 John 2). If you are a Christian, examine your life in the light of each of these points of evidence John presented. If you are not, this is the time for you to see that you need Jesus as your Savior now more than ever. I pray you repent of your sins and invite Him to do so.

God bless and keep you this week and may the power and fruit of the Holy Spirit be evident in your life as you love the unlovely as Jesus did.

For Christ's sake,

Walter