

## Lesson for December 4, 2005

### The Book of I John

#### Chapter 5:1-9

##### Verse 1

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him.”

The motivation to love others comes as a result of loving God. The person who believes in Jesus Christ is “born-again” (literally, born from above). All believers are born of God. *Begotten* (an old English word) is the Greek word “gennao” and means to be born. If the believer learns to love God (personal love), the natural progression is to love all mankind (impersonal love). Both, of course, are potential only, based on the personal volition of the believer.

##### Verse 2

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and we keep His commandments.”

The development of virtue-love inside God’s power system assures us that we are exhibiting virtue-love toward our fellow believers. By first learning to love God, the advancing believer who is continually developing virtue in his soul, will be motivated to demonstrate God’s love toward others. When the believer is obeying the mandates of God through the consistent intake and application of Bible doctrine, he will learn the doctrine of impersonal love and make the proper application. Remember that Christ commanded us to love others as we love ourselves.

##### Verse 3

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”

If, as a believer, you refuse to keep the mandates of God found in His Word, you will not know or experience the love of God. As you learn about God and His instructions, you will come to know that the Christian Way of Life is not difficult when executed according to God’s plan. The Christian life becomes hard only when we attempt to play by our own rules or those of others, while ignoring God’s perfect plan. Only negative volition will keep

you from fulfilling God's will for your life. God never forces His plan on anyone. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Verse 4

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

Jesus Christ won the *strategic victory* (planning and directing of operations to counter the enemy) over Satan and His world system. At salvation, the believer shares in this strategic victory. Christ dealt Satan a fatal blow that will be reality at the end of human history when Satan and his fallen angels are cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity. (Hebrews 6:17-20; Colossians 2:9-15)

It is because of Christ's strategic victory over Satan that the believer has the potential to win the *tactical victory* (the method or procedure carried out against the enemy) over Satan and His world system. The filling of the Holy Spirit supplies the power to accomplish this. The Christian Way of Life is a supernatural way of life and it requires a supernatural power to live it and to overcome the tactics of Satan, his demons (fallen angels) and his world system. (John 16:33; I Corinthians 15:51-57; I John 5:1-21)

Verse 5

“Who is He that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

*Overcometh* is the Greek word “nikao” and means to prevail. How has the believer overcome? He has overcome by his faith in Christ. The person who has come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God is the one trusting Christ as Savior, and thereby, winning the strategic victory over Satan and his cosmic system. (I John 5:4-5; Revelation 12:11)

Verse 6

“This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

There has been much discussion and speculation about the meaning of this verse. It is a difficult passage to understand. In keeping with the context of the Book of I John, I believe John is once again teaching us about the Hypostatic Union of Christ. Remember, the Gnostics had various sects within their ranks.

One group denied the humanity of Christ and another His deity. One of these groups believed that God entered the body of Jesus when He was baptized by John and left His body before the crucifixion. I believe John is using symbolism to prove the humanity and the deity of Christ. The water represents His unique virgin birth and ultimate sinless life. (John 3:5-6) The blood represents the judgment for sin that would be imputed to Him by God. (Hebrews 9:1-14) Both His impeccability and His sacrificial death bear witness to Christ's humanity and deity. The Holy Spirit bears witness that the person in whom we believe is the Savior, because God the Holy Spirit is truth.

Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe. He is the only person in history to be both fully God and fully man. The term for this unique union is derived from the Greek word "hupostatis" meaning *same essence*. In the case of Christ it is both divine and human essence in one person forever. He is the God-Man. (Hebrews 1:3)

Being born of a virgin, Christ was born without a sin nature. He is superior to man because He is God. He is superior to sinful humanity because He is sinless. He is the only way to God and was qualified to be a substitute for all of us. Even though His two natures are united in one person, they retain their separate identities. The attributes of one do not belong to the other. Deity remains deity and humanity remains humanity. Because of this unique union, Christ is the perfect mediator between God and man. He is the only one in history qualified to go to the Cross and pay the penalty for sin. Christ was also our prototype, in that He lived an impeccable (sinless) life under the control of God the Holy Spirit. (I Timothy 2:5)

Jesus, as a man, is seated at the right hand of the Father at this very moment. Deity is omnipresent and does not sit; only His humanity sits. Theologically we say that Jesus is *undiminished deity* and *true humanity* in one person forever. He is undiminished deity in that He is as much God as the Father and the Holy Spirit in essence, attributes and character. He is true humanity in that our Lord possesses a body, a soul and a spirit. (Acts 5:31; Hebrews 1:3, 4:15,10:5; I Peter 2:24; Matthew 26:38; Mark 2:8; Luke 23:46; I John 3:3)

Verses 7 and 8

”For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water and the blood: and these agree in one.”

Most of the early manuscripts exclude most of verse seven and part of verse eight. Apparently a translator added a footnote in the margin and it eventually became part of the text. Verses seven and eight should be placed together and read as follows: “For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these three agree in one.”

Under Jewish law there must always be at least two witnesses (three is better) in a court of law to testify of an event or happening. In keeping with this tradition, John gives his hearers three credible witnesses to affirm the Hypostatic Union of Christ. These three witnesses are all in agreement regarding this fact. Jesus Christ was born physically alive and spiritually alive (unlike all other human beings). God showed His pleasure with His Son at His baptism by John the Baptist, which marked the start of Christ’s earthly ministry. God showed His pleasure with His Son’s sacrificial death for sin by placing Christ at His right hand in Heaven. The Holy Spirit makes the truth regarding Christ understandable to the unbeliever before salvation and reveals the truth of God’s Word to the believer after salvation.

Verse 9

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.”

*If* is a first class condition meaning if and it’s true. John says that since we receive the witness of men, how much more should we receive the witness of God. God’s witness on any subject would be infinitely greater than that of any human being. God’s witness is this: the things that He testified regarding His Son. God has given much testimony regarding Jesus Christ through the Old and New Testaments. God said that Christ was His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased. God said that Christ was to sit down at His right hand until such time as His enemies would be made His footstool. God was always pleased with His Son and testified to both Christ’s humanity and His deity. (Matthew 1:21-23; 3:14-17; Hebrews 1:1-14)