

The Better Way

Volume XXXX, Issue 2

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SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

DIVINE TESTS: 1 John 5:1-12

Guy N. Woods

INTRODUCTION

In 1 John 3:13-24, the obligation to love our brethren is clearly set out and emphasized. More of the same teaching, by John, is contained in 1 John 4:1-21. Again and again, it is shown that in order to love God, we *must* love our brethren. And, as a necessary consequence, he who loves God, loves his brethren. The questions then arise, "Who is my brother?" "How may I know that I love my brother?" "How may I know I love God?" Answers are set out in our lesson text today. But, what is the source of our information, and by whom has it been provided? There are witnesses to this end. Who are the *witnesses*? Again, our lesson provides the answer. What are the results of belief? What are the results of unbelief? This, too, is dealt with, and clearly answered in our text today. It will be seen, therefore, that this is a very important lesson, with many matters of special interest set out. Let us master it thoroughly.

HOW MAY WE KNOW WE LOVE GOD'S CHILDREN?

(Verses 1, 2)

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (ASV). "**Believeth**," in this passage, is in the *present* tense in the Greek text; and, the Greek present is linear action—*continuous*. The meaning is, "Whosoever *keeps on* believing that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God." Also, it is belief which includes obedience, since this is the only kind of faith that avails:

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. ...Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. ...For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead (Jam. 2:20-26).

One thus believing is "**begotten of God**." God is a masculine personality. Contemplated as the *begetter*, his children are begotten of Him. This means the same thing as being "**born of God**," the word *born*, in such a construction, signifying the whole act of birth (John 3:3-5). The meaning is that such a one is a child of God. Let us be impressed with the fact that it *was not* the design of John to (a) set out the *conditions* of pardon here; nor (b) were his words addressed to *alien* sinners. He is simply providing the test by which it may be determined whether one is a child of God. Here, for example, is a man claiming to be a child of God. The test is: Does he believe (with all that is involved in such belief, including obedience to the Lord's commands), that Jesus is the Christ? To understand why this particular test was so effective, let

us remember that some in that day, denied that Jesus is Christ, thus denying His *deity*; others said that Christ was not Jesus, thus denying His *humanity*. Still others argued that His fleshly body was merely an appearance and not actual, thus denying His *reality*. When, therefore, one was able to believe that Jesus is the Christ, such a one accepted His *deity*, His *humanity*, and His *reality*. In the light of doctrines circulating in that day, it was just the test needed to reveal genuine believers and expose heretics. A detailed discussion of these doctrines John was refuting may be seen in *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter, John and Jude*, by Guy N. Woods, published by the Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, TN.

In the second clause of this verse, the apostle returns to the theme often discussed in the epistle—*love*. **“Whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”** **“Him that begat,”** is the father; **“him also that is begotten,”** is His child. But, whoever loves the father, loves the father’s child. Therefore, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, loves the children of God. The converse would then follow: Whoever does not love the children of God is not begotten of God. But, the question may be raised, How can we know that we love the children of God? The apostle answers:

“Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments.” Affirmed here is the fact that *love for God*, and *love for the children of God* are parallel duties; neither can exist without the other, and each one becomes the test of the other. But, why should we need such a test? Are we not able to know whether we love one another, or not? How does the fact that we love God and keep His commandments prove we love our brethren? It is because one may entertain affection for others for reasons not related to religion, such as kinship, friendship, etc., reasons not affording the motives for the love taught here. The type of love required to prove that we are children of God is that which prompts us to serve our brethren whether they are attractive to us or not; and to serve them because of our desire to obey the commands of God which require such service. This is why keeping the commandments of God provides the test of genuine love. One of His commandments makes necessary love for brethren, involving the performance of service (1 John 4:21; Rom. 12:9, 10; 1 Pet. 1:22-25).

HOW MAY WE KNOW WE LOVE GOD? (Verses 3-5)

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” We have seen above that we can know that we love the *children* of God when we (a) love God; and (b) keep His commandments. But, how can we know we love God? The answer is: Because we keep His commandments! It is idle for one to claim to love God, yet refuse to do what God has said. Obedience is thus the test of love, being the *outward* exhibition of it. These commandments are not **“grievous,”** that is, irksome, unpleasant, objectionable. This does not mean that some of them are not difficult, because they are. The meaning is that they are not burdensome because, however difficult the situation of the faithful Christian may be, there is the realization that triumph will come and this hope supports and sustains one in the face of trial.

“For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.” Only faithful children of God overcome the world; only those who are begotten are children of God; therefore, only those who are begotten, overcome the world. All others are partakers of the world, imbibing its guilt, pollution and power. Faith thus provides the victory, because it is this living, active faith which prompts us to become children of God; and, being children of God, we overcome the world. What must one believe in order to overcome the world? The answer is, “Jesus is the Son of God.” Keeping in mind that this was the test which would expose the false doctrines of that day, the acknowledgement that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, was a confession both of His deity and His humanity; it exhibited the fact of discipleship; and, it led to the conclusion that such a one has overcome the world by obedience to the gospel, and by living the Christian life.

THE THREE WITNESSES (Verses 7-9)

“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.” Having shown that belief of the proposition, “Jesus is the Christ,” is the test of faith, John

proceeds to show that there are *witnesses* which support this proposition. Our Lord came by *water* and *blood*. The reference to water is to His baptism (Mat. 3:13-17); the reference to blood is to that which was shed in His death (John 19:34, 35). He came by water when introduced into His public ministry at His baptism; and with blood in His death on the cross. The first of these, water at His baptism, witnessed at the beginning of His ministry; the other, the blood, at its close. These were cited, by the apostle, because, in the first, He was acknowledged by the Father as His beloved Son; and, in the second, the announcement was made, **"It is finished,"** thus signaling the end of work on earth before death (John 19:30).

"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth." The Spirit (Holy Spirit) bore witness at the baptism of Jesus having, in symbol, descended upon Him (Mat. 3:15). The Holy Spirit thus became the *third* witness, the *first* being water, the *second*, blood. This is next asserted by the apostle: **"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."** They bear witness to the deity of Jesus; and, though three, they agree in one; that is, their testimony is to the same point, and in complete agreement.

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son." To emphasize the lesson being taught, John refers to a well-known fact. Men accept and acknowledge human witnesses, and rely upon their testimony in ascertaining the truth of matters; and, if this is proper and acceptable, and it is, we may rely even more confidently on the witness of God respecting His Son. Because God is greater than man, and not susceptible of mistakes at all, we may depend fully on what He says with reference to Jesus. This is the ground of our faith in Him.

THE WITNESS OF GOD (Verses 10-12)

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son." The Spirit, by means of the word of truth which He provided (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), enables *us* to have in our own minds and hearts testimony regarding the

Christ. This testimony is full, complete and sufficient; therefore, to reject the proposition, "Jesus is the Christ," is to make God "a liar," because God has testified to this effect. One who does not believe and accept the testimony which God thus provides implies, in the rejection of it, that it is not worthy of belief, and thus makes God out a falsifier. The witness which God bears is the sum of that provided (1) by the Spirit through the word; (2) by water; (3) by blood.

"And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The word *witness* here signifies testimony, evidence, proof. All of the foregoing evidence establishes the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and, that through Him we have eternal life. **"In him was life"** (John 1:4). Jesus Himself said, **"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die"** (John 11:25). And, Paul wrote: **"For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory"** (Col. 3:3, 4). See, also John 10:10; 14:6; 17:3.

"He that hath the Son hath the life: he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." Here is indicated the way in which we are privileged to have the life (eternal life) which is in Christ. Only those who have the Son have *the life*; and, inasmuch as one is privileged to **"have the Son,"** only by living a godly, consecrated, Christian life, it follows that this life here on earth is conditioned on faithfulness and devotion to Christ. Only in this sense is it possible to have eternal life here; and this is really such life in promise (Mark 10:29, 30; Tit. 1:2; Rom. 8:24; 1 John 2:25). The true believer has eternal life *in prospect* here, and not in actuality; he possesses life to the extent that he possesses Christ who is the life; that is, who is the source, origin and preserver of life. It is possible for one to cease to be faithful, and to lose the reward (Rom. 11:22). We read in the Scriptures, of those who have **"condemnation, because they have rejected their first pledge"** (1 Tim. 5:12). We must, at all events, avoid such, if we desire to go to heaven.~

Deceased

1ST PETER

Hope In Hard Times
(Lectureship: Part I)

January 25, 2025



Fish Hatchery Road Church Of Christ

These timely lessons will be presented at the church of Christ
Located at 1380 Fish Hatchery Road, Huntsville, Texas
Phone: 936-581-4346 Email: bruces_l@netzero.com

9:00 AM: "A Living Hope" (1 Peter 1:3-12)
Jack Stephens

10:00 AM: "Set Your Hope On His Grace" (1 Peter 1:13-19)
Eric Paluka

11:00 AM: "Love One Another Deeply" (1 Peter 1:20-2:3)
David P. Brown

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

1:30 PM: "Identifying God's People: A Spiritual House" (1 Peter 2:4-8)
Bruce Stulting

2:30 PM: "Identifying God's People: A Chosen People" (1 Peter 2:9-11)
Jose Gamez

3:30 PM: *Question & Answer Session*

Spring Church Of Christ

Contending For The Faith Lectureship

**Things Helpful To
Becoming & Being
A Christian**

February 22, 2025

9:00 AM: *Integrity* (Psalms 26) – Jonathan West

10:00 AM: *Ahab, The Accuser* (1 Kings 16:29-33) – Jack Stephens

11:00 AM: *Courage* (Psalms 27) – Jose Gamez

LUNCH PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION

1:30 PM: *Kinds Of Fear* – Bruce Stulting

2:30 PM: *Let Brotherly Love Continue* (Hebrews 13:1) – Eric Paluka

3:30 PM: *OPEN FORUM* (All speakers)

LECTURESHIP DIRECTOR: David P. Brown
ELDERS: David P. Brown, Kenneth D. Cohn, John West

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LIVE VIEWING @ www.churchesofchrist.com

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

What relation were Esther and Mordecai?

Answer to last week's question:
Paul & Silas; Acts 16:17

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2025

Announcements Bret Bailey
Scripture Reading Bret Bailey
Genesis 5:21-32

Song Leader Gary Blasingame
Prayer J.D. Gunter/Stephen Cohn (AM)
Steven Johnson/Andrew Paluka (PM)

Speaker David Brown

Lord's Table (AM)
(Mark 14:37-42)

Joshua West Gary Blasingame
Stephen Cohn J.D. Gunter

Lord's Table (PM)

Andrew Paluka Steven Johnson

Audio/Video Monitor Eric Paluka
Camera/Door Monitor Jaden Gruchow

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025

(via Zoom Meeting)

Announcements Bret Bailey
Speaker J.D. Gunter
Bible Class Teacher David Brown

FOR JANUARY

Prepare Communion Bailey
Lock Buildings Blasingame
Prepare Bulletin Board West

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Edith Young, Ashlyne Cohn, Cynthia Jackson, Glenn Kryszak, Barbara Perkins, April McCain, Gayle Barnett, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Tania Turcios, Robbie Kirby, Zack Nero, Debbie Brannon, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Saturday, January 25th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship.
- **Sunday, January 26th:** Monthly meal
- **Saturday, February 22th:** Spring *CFTF* lectureship.