



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 3:11-14 – LOVE AND HATE! WYOMING FEBRUARY 12, 2020

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Everyone, everywhere belongs to these two groups of people, “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious...”. John 3:10 says it is obvious, evident as to what family you belong to, whether God’s family or the devil’s. If you do not practice righteousness, you are not in God’s family. The credibility of your profession will be evidenced by your transformed life. And then, John states that the transformed life is evidenced by two features; the practice of righteousness and a love for fellow believers. So not only will there be a practice of righteousness, but a selfless service that seeks the good of others. To claim to be a child of God Who is love, and yet not love your brother or sister, is to show that your true parent, your true family, is not God but of the devil.¹

I. 1 JOHN 3:11-14- LOVE AND HATE!

“(10) By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious; anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (11) For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; (12) not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil and his brother’s were righteous. (13) Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you. (14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.” 1 John 3:10-14

Love has always been an essential characteristic of genuine faith in Jesus Christ. Believers will be marked by a love for one another as Christians. Because God loves us, true believers will reflect that love with others. And we know John is not saying anything new, but this is an old commandment. John talks about what it means to love your brother or sister. We must ask the question, has this new birth produced the practice of righteousness in our lives? (3:10) And now in these next verses, John will show us that the absence of love reveals the absence of genuine faith.

A. “LOVE ONE ANOTHER”- 1 JOHN 3:11

“For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;” 1 John 3:11

John directs us back to 1 John 1:1, *“the message which you have heard from the beginning.”* This is not anything new. John refers to the teachings of Christ Himself. John 13:34-35, says that love should mark the lives of believers and Christ was our example. In John’s Gospel, the commandment to love was Christ’s commandment to His disciples and all who would follow.

This commandment, *“that we should love one another”*, is not a suggestion to consider. We are to love as Christ loved. And

how is that? It expresses itself in self-sacrifice and a concern for those in need. This love originates with God Himself and indicates the existence of a bond with God. On the other hand, hate is the opposite of love and it originates with the devil and indicates a bond with him. It expresses itself in the practice of sin, selfishness, jealousy and even murder.²

Having stressed the importance of love here in this verse, John contrasts the children of God with the children of the devil in the next verse. Children of satan are not characterized by love.

B. A CONTRAST BETWEEN LOVE AND HATE - 1 JOHN 3:12

“not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil and his brother’s were righteous.” 1 John 3:12

John brings to light a strong example from the Old Testament to contrast with love; when Cain slew his brother. We cannot underestimate the sinful potential lurking in our heart. (Jeremiah 17:9)

“evil one” Greek **“poneros”** means aggressive and fervent evil that actively opposes what is good, a malignant sinfulness that pulls others down to ruin

John tells us that Cain *“was of the evil one”*. His lineage was of satan, he was in satan’s family. That’s what he was known for.

John takes Cain as the perfect example of hatred from Genesis 4:3-8. What did Cain do? He *slew his brother*”. Consumed by jealousy and hatred, and ignoring even God’s own warning, his hatred consumed him and he rose up and slew his brother.

“slew” Greek **“sphazo”** a vivid verb meaning to butcher or slaughter, used of animals killed in sacrifice and implies a violent death.

Genesis 4 tells us that Cain worshipped God and offered God a sacrifice yet in these verses we find it was not acceptable to the Lord. However his brother Abel, brought an animal sacrifice to God and the text implies that this was acceptable to God. An animal sacrifice was what God required, and obedience was essential. Cain brought a sacrifice from the fruit of the ground ignoring what God’s divine law required. Cain’s sacrifice was rejected by God because of his inferior sacrifice while Abel’s was accepted by God. Consumed by jealousy and hatred and ignoring even God’s own warning, Cain’s hatred

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consumed him and he viciously killed his brother.³ This was the first and ultimate act of evil, hatred and jealousy. Cain committed the first murder.

And so John asks, “*And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil.*” (1John 3:12) A striking contrast is revealed between love and hate. Abel’s righteous deeds rebuked Cain. Cain was evil and full of hate for Abel’s righteous deeds. He didn’t care about doing what was right. This is the only example from the Old Testament that John uses in his letter. It demonstrates the contrast between the children of God and the children of satan.

C. ATTITUDE OF THE WORLD TO BELIEVERS- 1 JOHN 3:13

“Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you.” 1 John 3:13

John moves now from the attitudes and actions of Cain toward Abel to the attitude of the world towards Christians. Christ warned not to be surprised if the world hated believers.⁴

John warns his readers that although they love others, they should not be surprised that the world hates them. So rather than being shocked by the opposition from the world, believers should expect it. Jesus warned, “*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.*” (John 15:18-19, 23-25) Enemies of the gospel have always persecuted those who love Jesus Christ. The persecuted church around the world has always suffered for their faith in Christ with their very lives. The world hates Christ and any who are identified with Him. 1 Peter 4:12 warns us not to be surprised by the “*fiery ordeals*” that will come our way. If we think back through the history of this world, they have always persecuted God’s people. (Hebrews 11) By hatred, the children of the devil reveal their true character.

D. TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE - 1 JOHN 3:14

“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.” 1 John 3:14

John is emphatic, “*We*”. “*We*” who are Christians are different. “*We*” love one another, “*we*” stand out, and that gives evidence that “*we*” are children of God. Just as hatred and jealousy give evidence that one is not a believer, so also does love and self-

sacrifice indicate that one has “*passed out of death into life*”, into God’s family. Against the backdrop of the world’s hatred in the previous verse, John looks to an analysis of Christian love that characterizes the children of God.⁵

Our new birth gives us a new life through salvation in Jesus Christ. This salvation changes and transforms our sinful and murderous attitudes into loving ones that demonstrate genuine faith.⁶ (Colossians 2:11) Thus all believers have, “*passed out of death into life*”. Christ’s atonement on the cross lifts us up to new life in Christ for all who believe in Him.

So how do we know we have “*passed out of death to life*”? John says “*because we love the brethren.*” Jesus said in John 13:35, “*By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” This is a self-sacrificial love demonstrated by Jesus Christ Himself. And John emphasizes who this love is directed towards, “*the brethren.*” John isn’t talking about a love for the world, but more specifically fellow believers. By using the word, “*brethren*”, John is making reference more to family, God’s family. And it’s important to reflect on that truth. Do we really love our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? Or are they the ones we quarrel with most and often hardest to love?

Are you in God’s family? Can that be demonstrated by your love for fellow believers? Whose family do you belong? Remember there are only two groups. And John says, “*He who does not love abides in death.*” The one who does not love remains spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins. The one who does not love reveals whose child they are. People do not begin this life in a neutral place and from there they must choose to accept or reject God. Scripture repeatedly says that all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory. (Romans 3:23) All come into this world as sinners. The only hope for salvation from our sins is found in Jesus Christ in Whom I am given new life.

So, what family do you belong to; the children of God or the children of the devil? What is your life characterized by? Do you have new life in Jesus Christ or are you still abiding in your trespasses and sins? These are the most important questions you could ever answer in life.

¹ Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 41.

² Boice, James Montgomery, *An Expository Commentary: The Epistles of John*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. Pg. 92.

³ MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 132.

⁴ Boice, James Montgomery, *An Expository Commentary: The Epistles of John*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. Pg. 93.

⁵ Boice, James Montgomery, *An Expository Commentary: The Epistles of John*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. Pg. 93-94.

⁶ MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 133.