

## Love Manifests God's Children (3:16-23)

Water of Life

Dr. John Niemelä

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### REVIEW OF 1 JOHN 1:1ff

### REVIEW OF 1 JOHN 2:29-3:10a

#### REVIEW

“In this” (3:10a) refers back to 2:29–3:9. 3:10b transitions to a new topic: Christian love.

**Any [believer] not doing righteousness is not of God [in his actions], nor is any [believer] not loving his [spiritual] brother [is not of God in his actions (3:10b)], because this is the message that you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another, unlike Cain (3:10b-12a)**

Before discussing my point, let us see the common misinterpretation. Note the NIV.

*This is how **we know** who the children of God **are** and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's **child**, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister. For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. [NIV]*

The NIV has paraphrased *are manifest* as *we know... are*. It assumes that John seeks to distinguish *true* believers from *self-deceived* unbelievers.

How we know that *his brother* = a fellow believer

Verse 11 starts with *For*, so verse 11 explains verse 10b.

Since verse 11 explains verse 10b, his brother = one another (John 13:34).

Certainly, John does not say, “An unbeliever must love his **FELLOW**-believer”!

John is rebuking believers who do not love their fellow-believers.

Was Cain a believer or an unbeliever? Consider Genesis 4

Does any passage specifically say that Cain was an unbeliever?

What about 1 John 3:15 (in context)? What does abiding mean?

Can we infer this from Abel offering animals, but Cain brought produce? (4:4a)

What can we infer from God respecting Abel's sacrifice, but not Cain's (4:4b-5)

How do we explain Genesis 4:7, if Cain were an unbeliever?

What about 1 John 3:12?

**Cain murdered Abel because Cain's works were evil, but Abel's were righteous (3:12b)**

The evaluation here is of character, not status as believer versus unbeliever.

**[In light of hatred of fellow-believers existing] the readers should not be surprised that the world hates them (3:13)** *World* speaks of the *antichrists* of 1 John 2:18, 22; and 4:3.

**We [the apostles] recognized [experientially] our passing from death to life, because we love the brethren—any [believer] who does not love [fellow-believers] abides in death (3:14)**  
(This alludes to John 5:24)

“Amen, amen, I tell you, the *one* who listens to My word and believes the *One* who sent Me has everlasting life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

Does John's assurance that he is a believer comes from loving fellow-believers? NO!

If rendered abide (John's usage of the word), he means *abiding in death*.  
Believers either abide in Christ (fellowship with Christ) or  
abide in death. (the following are the uses within 1 John:  
2:6, 10, 13, 17, 19, 24, 27f; 3:6, 9, 14f, 17, 24; 4:12f, 15f.

There was a noticeable change for John himself that resulted from abiding in Christ.

John believed either at the time of John 1:35 (Fall of AD 29) or earlier.

Mark 3:17 (soon after Mat 12:1-8 // Mark 2:23-28 // Luke 6:1-5), says Jesus nicknamed Zebedee's sons (James and John) the Sons of Thunder (*Boanerges*).

We can date the plucking of barley to April 8, AD 31. John was nicknamed Son of Thunder 1½ years after believing.

In Luke 9:54 (late in AD 32) James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village that was unfriendly toward Jesus.

After Peter, James, John saw the Transfiguration (Mark 9:1-11), who led the argument over who was greatest (Mark 9:34-35)— in light of Mark 10:35-37? Pentecost changed John.

**Whoever hates his brother (fellow-believer) is a murderer and no murderer has everlasting life ABIDING in him (3:15)**

## NEW EXPOSITION: 1 JOHN 3:16-23

### Jesus laying down His mortal life (*psuchē*) for us is the very definition of love (3:16a)

Context uses two different words for life. We need also to consider a third:

*Psuchē* [derivatives include the noun *psyche* (sīkē), the verb *psyche* (sīk), *psychology*]. English Bibles often translate *psuchē* as *soul*, but it is also often translated *life*. It usually refers to life, but to the life that can be lost. Cf. John 13:37-38.

However, John never uses the word *psuchē* in the phrase everlasting life. John 6:51 is a verse in which Jesus gives His flesh (that is: He dies) for the life (*zōē*) of the world. Jesus also speaks of His crucifixion as giving His *psuchē* (mortal life) in John 10:11, 15, 17; and 15:13. Jesus gave up His mortal life that believers might have everlasting life. The *psuchē* is seen as valuable; *zōē* is priceless. 1 John 2:25 is one usage of this word.

1 John 2:17 and 3:16 use the word *bios* restrictively for life's-possessions or livelihood. These have their role, but are far less important than either *psuchē* or *zōē*. I believe that John would say something like:

"*Bios* should be viewed as expendable under various circumstances, *psuchē* is also expendable *zōē* is used for two distinct precious gifts given by God: (1) physical life, that only God can give and only God can take away; and (2) everlasting life, that only God can give, and no one can take away."

### Believers ought to lay down their lives (*psuchē*) for their fellow-believers (3:16b)

### Believers having worldly-means to help a fellow-believer with need, but who locks up his sympathies from him does not have God's love [toward others] abiding in him (3:17)

Worldly-means is literally "life's possessions (*bios*) of the world."

Is John suggesting that we give away all of our possessions?

Observation: The Bible c\_\_\_\_\_ giving from flow; but c\_\_\_\_\_ from stock.

Flow = \_\_\_\_\_; Stock = \_\_\_\_\_

John's focus is upon motivation. Locked up sympathies do not result from abiding.

### Love is an expression of [God's] truth in action, not just in words (3:18)

**By this [love expressing truth by actions] assures us that we [abide] in truth (3:19a)**

John is not saying that the apostles knew they were regenerate by their action.

He is saying that he saw how much God's truth had changed him (cf. page 2); but John would not say that he had arrived.

**We shall persuade (*peithō*) our hearts before Him that (if our heart condemns us) God is greater than our heart and knows all things (3:19b-20)**

Clearly, John does not want any engaging in destructive self-critique.

The truth of 1 John 1:8–2:1a: If we might say that we do not sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we might say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin.

**We have confidence toward God, when our heart does not condemn us [as a result of (1) 3:19a or (2) the persuasion of 3:19b-20] (3:21)**

**We receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandments [especially to love one another] and do what pleases Him (3:22)**

John has emphasized that love is an expression of God's truth in our action (3:18). In other words, aiming to please Him is a way of saying Thank You to Him. This is life looking towards the Lord, not rivetting our attention on the rear-view mirror.

Part of doing what pleases Him is asking for that which pleases Him (His will be done)

We are to believe His name (that Jesus, the Christ, God's Son) [answers prayer] and we are to love one another, as He commanded (3:23)

## CONCLUSION