

Introduction

Throughout this series on 1 John, I have referred back to 1 John 5:13, which many consider to be the key verse in the whole book. In that verse, John gave one of the main purposes of writing the book. He said, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” Throughout the book, he gave many different characteristics of believers, and unbelievers. He gave a clear contrast between those who believe and those who do not believe.

(1 Jn 5:13) “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

In chapter two, he wrote, “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep his commandments. The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him;”

(1 Jn 2:3–4) “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. {4} The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;”

John also wrote in chapter two that if anyone loves the world or the things in the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

(1 Jn 2:15) “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

In chapter three, he wrote that it should be obvious who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are. He said that anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.” Those were just two of the characteristics of a believer. God does not want people wandering if they are a believer or not; He wants to know if we have eternal life or not. Therefore, He gave lots of different characteristics of believers so that it would be obvious.

(1 Jn 3:10) “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.”

Our passage today is the first thirteen verses of 1 John 5. John makes four statements about believers. First, he said that those that believe that Jesus is the Christ are born of God. Second, believers love God. Those who love the Father will also love the children of God, i.e., they love their brother, and they will keep His commandments. Third, he said that believers are overcomers. They have overcome the world by their faith. Fourth, believers have the testimony of God in them.

Who Are Believers

1. Believers are born of God
2. Believers love God
3. Believers are overcomers
4. Believers have the testimony of God in them

(1 Jn 5:1) “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.”

(1 Jn 5:2-3) “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. {3} For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

(1 John 5:4-5) “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” {5} Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

(1 Jn 5:6-13) “This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. {7} For there are three that testify: {8} the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. {9} If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. {10} The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. {11} And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. {12} He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

1. **Believers are born of God** (1 Jn 5:1)

The first statement about believers is that they are born of God. John wrote, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.” The word believe is not an intellectual assent that Jesus is the Christ. The Jewish concept of belief was that if a person believes, he will demonstrate that belief through his actions. A person who believes would put their faith in Jesus and follow Him. A person who believes would entrust their life to Jesus. A person who believes in God would be a disciple of Jesus.

(1 Jn 5:1) “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.”

In John 3, Jesus had a conversation with Nicodemus, who had come to see Him at night in order to ask Him some questions. He began by stating, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jesus’ answer to Nicodemus was, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He told Nicodemus that what is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. A man must be born of the Spirit. The first birth is of the flesh, and the second birth, being born again, was of the Spirit. John’s first statement is that believers have been born of God. They have been born of the Spirit, or born again.

(Jn 3:1–3) “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; {2} this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” {3} Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

There are many people today that consider themselves Christians who have not been born again. They have never placed their faith in Christ. They have never yielded their life to Christ, and followed Him. We have made the gospel an easy gospel, but it is not the gospel that Jesus and the apostles preached. We tell people to say a sinner's prayer and they will be saved. Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." Jesus' gospel was to deny yourself, take up your cross daily and to follow Him. It was denying yourself and dying to self. It was about yielding your life to Jesus and following Him every day. It was not following Jesus one day a week by going to a church service, but it was seven days a week denying yourself, dying to yourself, and yielding your life to Jesus. Therefore, Jesus told people to count the cost before making that commitment.

(Lk 9:23–24) "And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. {24} For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

When a person is born of God, reborn, or born of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit comes into the person and seals them. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit comes into the person and abides with Him. In Ephesians 1:13, Paul explained it this way. "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise."

(Eph 1:13) "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

2. Believers love God (1 Jn 5:2)

The second statement that John makes about believers is that "whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him." A believer is going to love God and he is also going to love his brother. A believer loves the Father, and he loves the child born of Him, which means other believers.

(1 Jn 5:1) "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him."

This is a continuation of John's discussion in chapter four. In fact, many scholars say that the first three verses of chapter five should have been included in chapter four. John had just written that if someone says that they love God and hate their brother they are a liar, for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."

(1 Jn 4:20–21) "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. {21} And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also."

I have personally come across many people that are not part of a local church. Most of them have been offended by someone at church, and don't want to be around the hypocrites at church. They tell me that they are good with God, or tight with God; it is just those people at church that I have a hard time with. John's statement is pretty direct and piercing, "If someone says they love God

and hate their brother, they are a liar. If they cannot love their brother that they see, they cannot love God whom they cannot see.

Next, John tells us how we can love God and the children of God. He said, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

(1 Jn 5:2–3) “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. {3} For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

If we look at the ten commandments, the first few were about loving God, and the remainder were about loving your brother. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 22 that the great and foremost commandment was to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; and the second was like it, to love your neighbor as yourself. Then He said, “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.

(Mt 22:36–40) “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” {37} And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ {38} This is the great and foremost commandment. {39} The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ {40} On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Those who love the Father will also love the children of God, i.e., they love their brother, and they will keep His commandments. When we keep the commandments, we will be loving God and also loving our brother.

In John 13:34-35, Jesus gave a new or fresh commandment to the disciples. He told them to love one another, just as He had loved them. He said that by this all men would know that they are His disciples by their love for one another. It is a fresh commandment. The Greek word is *kainos*, which means to be made fresh. When we are born of God, and have the Holy Spirit inside of us, we are made new and have the ability to love God and to love others.

(Jn 13:34–35) “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. {35} By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Then John said, “And His commandments are not burdensome.” The Greek word is *barys* (Strong’s G926), which means heavy, or weighty. In the oil and gas industry, they add barite to their drilling fluid in order to weight up the mud to match the formation pressure that they are drilling in. God’s commandments do not weigh us down; they are not burdensome.

(1 Jn 5:3) “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

When we look at what weighs people down, it is sin. That is why in Hebrews 12, we are told to lay aside every encumbrance (or weight) and the sin which so easily entangles us, and to run the race with endurance.

(Heb 12:1) “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,”

That is why David wrote in Psalm 32, “When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away *as with the fever heat of summer*.” David was weighed down by sin.

(Ps 32:3–4) “When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. {4} For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away *as with the fever heat of summer*. Selah.”

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus said, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden. He said to take His yoke and learn from Him. He ended by saying that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The Law was burdensome because they could not keep the Law. However, Jesus’ yoke was easy and His burden was light. Jesus’ command to love Him and love our neighbor is not burdensome or heavy.

(Mt 11:28–30) “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. {30} For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

3. **Believers are overcomers** (1 Jn 5:4-5)

The third statement that John makes about believers is that they have overcome the world. He wrote, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” Those whom have believed in Jesus have overcome the world. They have overcome the world by their faith in Christ.

(1 John 5:4-5) “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” {5} Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

The word, overcome, means to conquer, be triumphant over, or to be victorious over. The Greek word is nikao (Strong’s G3528) comes from the Greek word, nike (Strong’s G3529), which means to be victorious. Nike was the Greek goddess of victory. The word nikao is used twenty-eight times (28), and sixteen of those references are found in the book of Revelations.

Jesus used the word once, after He was accused of casting out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. He destroyed their line of thinking, saying, “any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a house divided against itself falls.” He challenged the Jews, saying, “But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers (nikao) him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.” Jesus conquered, and was victorious over the demons. He overpowered them or overcame them.

(Lk 11:15–22) “But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons... {17} But He knew their thoughts and said to them, “Any kingdom divided against

itself is laid waste; and a house *divided* against itself falls. {18} If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. {19} And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges. {20} But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. {21} When a strong *man*, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed. {22} But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.”

In 1 John 4:4, John wrote that believers are from God and have overcome false prophets and evil spirits, because greater is He who is in them, than he who is in the world. John saw Jesus demonstrate this many times, casting out many demons over His three years of earthly ministry. We are overcomers because the Spirit of Christ is in us, and He has all power and authority.

(1 Jn 4:4) “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

Paul used the word three times. In Romans 12:21, he wrote, “Do not be overcome (nikao) with evil, but overcome (nikao) evil with good.” Believers are overcomers; they are not to be overcome by anything, but they are to overcome evil, the evil one, and the world.

(Ro 12:21) “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Of the twenty-eight times the word is used, twenty-four of those belong to the writings of John. The book of Revelations contains sixteen references to overcoming. Eight of those are in the prophecies to the seven churches, and these primarily talk about rewards for overcoming. Here are some of those promises of rewards for overcoming:

- “I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.” (Re 2:7, Ephesus)
- “...Will not be hurt by the second death.” (Re 2:11, Smyrna)
- “I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone.” (Re 2:17, Pergamum)
- “I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron... and I will give him the morning star.” (Re 2:27-28, Thyatira)
- “...will be clothed in white garments, and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” (Re 3:5, Sardis)
- “I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem.” (Re 3:12, Philadelphia)
- “I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne.” (Re 3:21, Laodicea)

One important verse about overcoming is Revelation 12:11. The accuser of the brethren was thrown down, “and they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.” In these last days, it is important to be under the blood of the Lamb. That means that you have been forgiven of your sins, and entered into the new covenant with Jesus; i.e., you have become a believer. Second, believers have a testimony, and it is a powerful tool; and believers need to use their testimony. Third, the believers did not love their own life, even unto death. They have

courage and boldness because they are not holding on to this present life, but are confident of where they will be if they die in the flesh.

(Re 12:11) “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

Who is the one who overcomes? It is he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. The key to being an overcomer is to believe and entrust your life to Jesus. When you believe in Christ, He comes into your life, and greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

(1 Jn 5:5) “Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

One of the characteristics of believers is that they are overcomers. They overcome evil. They overcome the world, which is the world system that is ruled by Satan. Believers overcome Satan and his demons. Believers overcome tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, and many other things. In Romans 8:35-39, Paul describes things that believers overwhelmingly conquer. The Greek word is *hupernikao* (Strong's G5245), which means an over-conqueror, or someone who decisively defeats and is victorious. Paul writes, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer (*hupernikao*) through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Ro 8:35–39) “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {36} Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” {37} But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer (*hupernikao*) through Him who loved us. {38} For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, {39} nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In the fall of 1992, I entered into the PGA Tour Qualifying School to go back onto the PGA Tour. The Lord had clearly spoken to me that He was going to put me back onto the Tour, and He had confirmed this to both Karen and I. I made it through the local and regional qualifiers. The finals were held at the Woodlands in Houston, Texas the week after Thanksgiving. I had one of the earliest tee times the first day, and it was a cold blustery day. The temperature was thirty-one degrees and the wind was blowing twenty-five to thirty miles per hour. I had almost no feeling in my hands, and so it was very difficult playing conditions. I was four over at the turn, and things were not looking good for me. I knew that it would probably take several under-par for the six-round qualifying tournament. As I walked from the ninth green to the tenth tee, I had a talk with the Lord. I reminded Him of His promise in 2 Chronicles 16:9. There He said, “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His...” I told Him that my heart was completely His, and I was His servant, doing what He had asked me to do. I told Him that I needed His strong support right now. The Lord did strongly support me. I shot three-under par the next nine holes, and eight-under par the final sixty-three holes to finish in a tie for thirteenth. The top twenty-five and ties

earned their tour cards. I overcame the cold, blustery conditions through faith and the powerful work of Christ in me.

(2 Ch 16:9) “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His....”

I asked my wife about some of the things that we have had to overcome. In church planting, there are many things to overcome, and we have been able to overcome distress, persecution, accusations, false brethren, and false teachers. We have kept our eyes on the Lord, and His promises to us, and His ongoing support of us, and have continued to be overcomers.

4. Believers have the testimony of God in them (1 Jn 5:6-13)

The fourth characteristic of believers that John writes about is that they have the testimony of God in them. In verse ten, John wrote, “The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself.”

(1 Jn 5:10) “The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.”

John transitioned from being overcomers to having the testimony of Jesus by saying that overcomers believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Then he describes the Son of God. “This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. This statement has been interpreted so many ways by different scholars, so let me try to give some understanding about what John meant.

(1 Jn 5:6) “This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”

The context of this part is the testimony of God. So, when we look at what John meant by water and blood, we have to keep the context in mind. Some say that the water is our water baptism, and the blood represents the Lord’s Supper. But that does not fit the context. Others say that the water represents God’s word, and that fits better, but I do not believe that is what John had in mind. The word of God is a testimony. The Old Testament testifies to the coming Messiah, and the New Testament testifies of Jesus’ earthly ministry. The context is the testimony of Jesus coming.

Another interpretation is that the water and the blood represent the water and blood that came out of Jesus when the soldier pierced His side to verify that He was dead. While that provides a testimony that Jesus was indeed dead, it is not the testimony of God that Jesus is the Son of God. Again, the context of the passage is very important in looking at the meaning of a passage.

When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He was baptized by John the Baptist. John did not want to baptize Jesus; he said that he should be baptized by Jesus. But Jesus said to permit it because it would fulfill all righteousness. John baptized for a repentance of sins, and Jesus did not need to repent and be baptized for repentance. He needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness.

Jesus set an example for all of us, and He also gave us a picture of salvation. We are buried with Christ through baptism, and raised up to be a new creation. John baptized Jesus, and after being baptized, as Jesus came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and John saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Jesus. Then, a voice came out of the heavens and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” That voice out of heaven was God the Father. The water represents Jesus’ baptism, because God testified that Jesus is the Son of God.

(Mt 3:13–17) “Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. {14} But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” {15} But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. {16} After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, {17} and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Jesus is the one who came by the blood. Jesus came to atone for our sins. John introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It is by the blood of the Lamb that our sins are forgiven. When Jesus was put to death, God also testified that Jesus is the Son of God. Let’s go to Matthew’s account in Matthew 27. First, we see that there was a darkness that fell from the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.). That should be the brightest part of the day, but there was total darkness. This was not a normal phenomenon; this was the work of God.

(Mt 27:45) “Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.”

Next, when Jesus yielded up His spirit, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. It was ripped from the top down, signifying that it was God who tore it in two. This was a thick curtain, not something that anyone could just tear. Then, the earth shook, and the rocks were split. This was what most of us call an earthquake, but it was really more of a God-quake. God caused the earth to shake and the rocks to split. God testified about Jesus through signs.

(Mt 27:50–51) “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. {51} And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.”

Next, we find that the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen aslee were raised, and were coming out of the tombs. Again, these were supernatural manifestations that were bearing witness to the world.

(Mt 27:52-53) “The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; {53} and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.”

What was the result? The centurion and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus saw the earthquake, the darkness, the tombs opening, and all these things and they became very frightened. Then, they said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” When Jesus shed His blood on the cross, the Father had once again testified that Jesus is the Son of God. This was the testimony of God.

(Mt 27:54) “Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

Another purpose of John’s writing was to prevent believers from being deceived. He wrote, “these things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.” Gnosticism was prevalent, and it denied the deity of Christ, and the trinity. Therefore, John said that whoever denied the Father and the Son is the antichrist.

(1 Jn 2:26) “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”

(1 Jn 2:22) “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

The Gnostics denied the incarnate God, that Jesus, the Son of God had come in the flesh. So, John made a point to tell believers to test the spirits. If someone denied that Jesus had come in the flesh, it was an antichrist.

(1 Jn 4:2–3) “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; {3} and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

Similarly, there was a false teacher named Cerinthus. He said that Jesus was an ordinary human being, born naturally of Joseph and Mary. He said a divine Christ spirit descended upon Him at His baptism and left before the crucifixion. He said that only the human Jesus suffered and died. He brought revelation, but did not atone for the sins of the world. John made a point that Jesus died for the sins of the world. Now, John makes the point that at Jesus’ baptism and at His death on the cross, God affirms that Jesus is the Son of God. John has refuted this false teaching with this testimony.

(1 Jn 2:2) “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*”

Jesus did not come with water only, but with the water and the blood. Both testimonies, at His baptism and at His death were vitally important. John said, “It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.” In John 14:6, Jesus said that He was the way and the truth and the life. Now we find that the Spirit is truth. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all truth; they are all One, and part of the trinity.

(1 Jn 5:6) “This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”

John wrote that there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and all three are in agreement. Remember that in the Old Testament, God said that all legal proceedings had to be confirmed through two or three witnesses. In Deuteronomy 19:15, God said that a single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

(1 Jn 5:7-8) “For there are three that testify: {8} the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”

(Dt 19:15) “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”

In the New Testament we also find the principle of two or three witnesses confirmed. In church discipline in Matthew 18:15-18, and in the correction of elders in 1 Timothy 5:19, two or three witnesses were required. God supplied three witnesses to establish that Jesus is the Son of God.

Before I move on, let me make a few comments on verse seven. The King James Version reads, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” The KJV is based on the Textus Receptus. At that time, they did not have some of earlier Greek manuscripts that we have today. The Textus Receptus was based on copies that were written from the 15th to the 18th centuries.

(1 Jn 5:7 KJV) “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

The NASB, ESV, and other modern versions are based on the NU (Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies). It appears that the note of the “Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” were written in the margin of a Bible as a side note, and is referred to as the “Comma Johanneum.” It appears to have originated as a marginal note in the Latin manuscript tradition before eventually being incorporated into the text of some Latin manuscripts that the Textus Receptus used. However, there are over five hundred Greek manuscripts containing all or part of 1 John, yet the Comma Johanneum is absent from the overwhelming majority of them and from ALL of the earliest Greek manuscripts. We have significant copies of the New Testament that span from the third through the seventh century, and none of these contain the additional clause. These include the Papyrus 9 (3rd century), Papyrus 74 (7th century), Codex Sinaiticus (AD 330-360), Codex Vaticanus (AD 325-350), Codex Alexandrinus (5th century), Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (5th century). None of these older manuscripts contain the Comma Johanneum. Additionally, none of the Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Georgian, Arabic, or Slavonic versions include that phrase. Additionally, none of the early church fathers wrote about that clause in their commentaries. All of this evidence strongly points to the fact that this was not written by John, and should not have been included in Scripture.

The phrase about the trinity is doctrinally true, and there is nothing questionable about what it says. The question is not whether the trinity is biblical, but whether John originally wrote those words, and if it should be included in our translations. We do not need the verse to prove the deity of Christ and the trinity; there are many other scriptures that clearly state this.

Then John said that if we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. He always speaks truth, and His testimony is trustworthy and it is greater than the testimony of men. God has testified concerning His Son, and we should believe His testimony.

(1 Jn 5:9) “If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.”

(Nu 23:19) “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”

Next, John said that the “one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. The way it is written sounds like we can make God a liar, but that is not what John is saying. Essentially, we are calling God a liar when we do not believe His testimony. God is the truth, and never lies, so He will never be made a liar.

(1 John 5:10) “The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.”

The testimony that we have is that God has given us eternal life, and that life is in Jesus, His Son. He who has the Son has the life, and he who does not have the Son does not have the life. John wrote these things so that we may know that we have eternal life. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you have the Son of God in your life? Have you received Christ into your life? If you have believed and received, you have the testimony of God in your life.

(1 Jn 5:11-13) “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. {12} He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Conclusion and Applications

John is nearing the end of this book, where he has written to let believers know if they have eternal life. He has also written concerning those who were trying to deceive them. In our passage today, John gives us four statements about believers, and woven into that discussion are truths that refute the false teachings that were prevalent at that time.

His first statement is that believers are born of God. His second statement is that believers love God, and they also love the children born of God. These are the two greatest commandments, to love God and to love our neighbor.

The third statement is that believers have overcome the world. Jesus overcame the world, and believers have Jesus in them. Greater is He who is in them than he who is in the world. Believers are overcomers through their faith, and they can stand victorious over persecution, distress, tribulation, or other things. Believers are also promised some rewards for overcoming in this life.

The fourth statement is that believers have the testimony of God in them. God testified that Jesus is His Son at His baptism, the water. He also testified that Jesus is His Son at His death, the blood. The water, blood and the Spirit all testify that Jesus is the Son, and those that believe have the testimony in them.

The first application is from verse thirteen. Do you have the Son of God in your life? Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He came in the flesh, and died for our sins, and was raised from the dead? If you believe that and want to receive Jesus into your life, I encourage you to pray right now.

Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that You died for our sins and were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and to forgive me of my sins. I submit my life to You, and confess You as my Lord. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The second application is a reminder to believers of the two most important commandments: we are to love God and to love one another. Believers are filled with the love of God. Do you love God? Do you keep His commandments? Do you love those born of God, other believers? Or, do you struggle with loving your brother? Ask God to help you to love your brother. Ask God to show you how to love your brother, and to help you grow in this area.

The third application is about overcoming. Are you facing trials, distresses, persecution, or other difficult times right now? God says that you are an overcomer. He has made you to be an overcomer. Jesus overcame the world, and now that He is in you, you are an overcomer. Know first of all that you are an overcomer, and can get through the circumstances. Second, ask God for strength, perseverance, and wisdom to help you endure the trials. Third, ask a brother or sister to help you bear your load. Ask them to pray with you, and to stand with you so that you can overcome this situation. Fourth, ask God to encourage and strengthen you. He is the lifter of our heads, and the help of our countenance. Ask God to build you up and encourage you.

The fourth application is to be a witness. God has called us to be His witnesses. Ask God to give you opportunities to witness to others. Ask God to give you boldness to share with others.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for this passage in John. Thank You for giving us eternal life. Thank You for the new life we have in You. Thank You for loving us and bringing us into Your family, as children of God. Help us to love You and Your children, with the same love that You gave to us. Father, thank You for making us overcomers, and victorious over the world. Help us to be overcomers in all situations that we face. Finally, help us to bear witness about You. Give us opportunities. Help us to be bold and courageous in sharing with others. I ask You to bring us opportunities to witness to others. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- If loving the child born of God, i.e., other believers, is one of the leading traits of a believer, why do “Christians” struggle so much with loving one another?
- What are things that the church can do to help believers learn to love one another?
- Jesus said His commandments are not burdensome. Are there aspects of the Christian life that seem burdensome? Does the fact that His commandments are not burdensome mean that living the Christian life is a cake walk?
- What is something that God has allowed you to overcome the world in?
- If Christians are victorious conquerors or overcomers, what kind of attitude should they have? What kind of confidence should Christians have in all circumstances?
- How does faith factor into being overcomers?
- Why is God's testimony of Jesus, His Son, so important?
- Why is our testimony important for us to share with others?

Who Are Believers

Introduction (1 Jn 5:13, 1 Jn 2:3–4, 2:15, 3:10, 1 Jn 5:1-13)

1. **Believers are born of God** (1 Jn 5:1, Jn 3:1–3, Lk 9:23–24, Eph 1:13)
2. **Believers love God** (1 Jn 5:1-3, 1 Jn 4:20–21, Mt 22:36–40, Jn 13:34-35, Heb 12:1, Ps 32:3-4, Mt 11:28-30)
3. **Believers are overcomers** (1 Jn 5:4-5, Lk 11:15–22, 1 Jn 4:4, Ro 12:21, Re 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:27-28, 3:5, 3:12, 3:21, 12:11, 1 Jn 5:5, Re 12:11, Ro 8:35–39, 2 Ch 16:9)
4. **Believers have the testimony of God in them** (1 Jn 5:6-13, Mt 3:13–17, 27:45, 27:50–54, 1 Jn 2:26, 2:22, 4:2-3, 2:2, Jn 14:6, Dt 19:15, Mt 18:15-18, 1 Ti 5:19, Nu 23:19)

Conclusion and Applications

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.