



Jesus in 1 John

Patrick J. Griffiths

Jesus in 1 John

Revised 10/24/13

Copyright © 2013 Patrick J. Griffiths
Published by Torn Veil Publications

Waukesha Bible Church
S53 W24079 Glendale Road
Waukesha, Wisconsin 53189
www.waukeshabible.org

All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—except for brief quotations for the purpose of review or comment, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Jesus in 1 John

The Isenheim Altarpiece is on display at the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar, Alsace, in France.¹ It depicts John the Baptist. “John’s life and ministry were dedicated to preparing the way for and in fact pointing the world to Jesus. This is often represented in classical art, where John is usually depicted as pointing to the cross. Very often, John’s finger was even elongated by the artists to a length beyond anatomical propriety, not to make John look odd, but to show that this was John’s role.”² This picture would be inappropriate if John were pointing at himself. John’s singular role was to point to another, to point to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. John would see Jesus and herald forth, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

“The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**’” (John 1:29).

“and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, ‘**Behold, the Lamb of God!**’” (John 1:36).

Like John the Baptizer, this is Pastor John’s role as well. The role of the believing has not changed since that of John’s. The preeminent importance of this singular and severe truth cannot be over estimated. Yet in every age since the Garden of Eden there is a persistent onslaught seeking to undermine and push against the sobering reality of who Jesus is and what He did and does.

In this study we will see what I, church history and modern confessors recognize as the most fundamental element to the

Story. I've stressed the single *Story* of God and how at the center of the *Story* is Jesus. I cannot stress this enough.

If it is possible for me to stress this any more than I have, I will do so. If I deviate from this centerpiece of the Christian *Story*, then by all means possible remove me from this ministry.³

Listen to one who seeks to capture the unsurpassed weight of Jesus to God's *Story*.

"Christology as a term contains a depth of paradox and even irony: the meaning of the universe, the way of salvation from sin, the revelation of God and the purpose of history, encompassed in a human field of study, an 'ology'! Christology involves the basis of all study, all thought, the very Logos behind reason itself - and yet is a subject for analysis and detached critical thinking. For the Christian, Christology breaks the bounds of the academy and indeed reverses the flow of judgment. But our secular - increasingly anti-Christian - culture, and other cultures based on other religions, relate to Christ with rejection, questioning, even integration into other systems of faith and thought, and Christians cannot escape giving reasons for the hope that is in them in their mission and life. Christology then is unavoidable for worship, for evangelism, and even more widely for our input into society and politics. The Gospel itself is a Christology: the truth that Jesus of Nazareth is God's very Word to us, the crucified and risen saviour of the world. The question then is what sort of Christology do we espouse, and how do we explain Christ to our unbelieving culture?"⁴

As we consider Pastor John's record, let us not be so foolish as to think we created Christology. We did not create what is written; what is written reveals what is already true. We diminish Jesus when we ask Him to fix our problems. He is not here to fix our life; He is life. He is not here to make my life easier, but He invites me to receive His life, His yoke, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Perhaps we come to Jesus believing He will turn our life around and give us something for which we crave. What we fail to see is how Jesus does something so fundamentally different than what is done by and through shadow that we bypass and underplay His importance. Listen to how Romans 7:24 and 25 read from *The Message* by Eugene Petersen.

²⁴“I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question? ²⁵The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different” (Rom. 7:24, 25).

Jesus alone and only can set things right. Jesus answers our quest for joy, yet it is not a shadow joy, but the substance existing inside of the very Tri-unity of God. Jesus redeems debt, restores relationships and recovers lost children. Jesus does what no one and nothing else can do. He answers our sin issue. He gives to us what we can never secure for ourselves. He gives us redemption, forgiveness, a blameless standing before the Father, peace and a bottomless inheritance. This study seeks to unveil Jesus inside of our story. He is impossibly woven into its fabric. There is no *Story* apart from Him and we have no story in His absence. This is Pastor John's pursuit in the weight of what he writes.

Pastor John writes in response to an unsettling that has impacted the local churches in Asia Minor of which he has oversight. There is a factious group who either left the local church voluntarily or had been removed through church discipline causing strife and doubt to enter the hearts and minds of God's people. Their error is a rejection of their own personal sin and thus a need for their own personal Savior. They reject Jesus as God incarnate. They reject Him as God's only begotten Son. Because they refuse to see themselves as sinners and thus in need of a Savior, they equally reject the thought that Jesus is a substitutionary sacrifice which atones for sin, placates God's just sentence against sinners and then stands before the Father to mediate their own station before Him. Pastor John writes this short letter to refute the error and confirm the saints. This is the message/promise (1:5; 2:25) Pastor John brings. Pastor John has a very distinct and definable Christology. We will consider Pastor John's Christology as found in his first Letter and we will look at the Letter sequentially.⁵

Although the targeted audience is a Gentile church throughout Asia Minor, the "opponent" appears Jewish. The Jews were rejecting Jesus as being the Christ, incarnate and the Son of God. However, regardless of ethnicity or religious structure his message is relevant for any who would deny sin and Jesus. This enables us to understand the pointed thrust in which Pastor John communicates his message.

I cannot fathom any elasticity to the statements made by Pastor John. Although the church of Jesus need not fight over non-essentials, this is not one of those "non-essentials." The following eight items are nonnegotiable. I will conclude

that Pastor John is intentional is what he says concerning who Jesus is and what Jesus did/does.

I. The coming of Jesus was/is intentional.

We have considered this idea when we noted both sin and the world. Yet let us allow the text of Scripture to speak on its own merit. From the following passages found in 1 John we are safe in concluding something or someone provoked the Father to send His Son into the world.

“You know that **He appeared** in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

“the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. **The Son of God appeared** for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that **God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him**” (1 John 4:9).

“And we have beheld and bear witness that **the Father has sent the Son** [to be] the Savior of the world” (1 John 4:14).

“And **we know that the Son of God has come**, and has given us understanding, **in order that we might know Him who is true**, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

Pastor John sees the appearance of Jesus in time as intentional and set. We will note in short order how His intent in coming has purpose.

II. Jesus is uniquely positioned to address the sin issue of humanity.

- A. He is uniquely positioned to address sin through His incarnation.

Jesus is God incarnate.

For Pastor John it isn't that Jesus is God [which indeed He is], but rather God became man.

“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (1 John 4:2).

¹ “What was from the beginning, what we have **heard**, what we have **seen** with our eyes, what we have **looked** at and **touched** with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--² and the life was manifested, and we have **seen** and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--³ what we have **seen** and **heard** we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3).

“The first letter of John, which takes the intentions of the Gospel further, defines this precisely: “Whoever does not love does not know God; *for God is love*. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might love through him (4.8ff). This means that in the Son who has become human, God's love, his very nature, has become manifest for humankind; **God himself comes to them. The *incarnation of the love of God, not the deification of Christ, is the main theme of Johannine theology*** [Emphasis added].”⁶

Consider the following citation. It captures well the unique element the incarnation brings to our study.

“A removal of the doctrine of the Incarnation destroys the doctrine of the Trinity and ultimately affects all other major doctrines. J. Macquarrie in his review of *The Myth of God Incarnate*, the volume that began the most recent vigorous attack on the Incarnation, said: ‘**Christian doctrines are so closely interrelated that if you take away one, several others tend to collapse. After incarnation is thrown out, is the doctrine of the Trinity bound to go? What kind of doctrine of atonement remains possible?** [Emphasis added]’⁷ The absolute uniqueness of Jesus is dependent upon His Incarnation. H. P. Owen observes that “if he (Jesus) was God incarnate and if the Incarnation was unrepeatable he must have been absolutely unique. Similarly the only absolutely unique element in Christianity-- the only thing that distinguishes it wholly from all other religion--is the belief that the Creator became man in one figure of history. This point has been well made thus by J. A. Baker:⁸

The one totally new thing which Christianity brought into the world was the belief, hammered out over the first four-and-a-half centuries of its existence, which in Jesus of Nazareth God had been living a genuine human life. Other religions had gods walk the earth incognito, or had proclaimed the divinization of some hero or sage. Christianity alone took a historical person and said, ‘Here in this human personality, with all the limitations and suffering of our human condition, was the eternal God, the Cause and Origin of all that is.’ As defined in all its classical rigour this is the unique feature of the Christian religion, its only valid claim to separate existence. A God of goodness, a Creator who cares, it shares with Judaism, and philosophical theism. A man who truly reflects the nature of the divine is no new thing to the Hindu or

the Baha'i. A divinely inspired prophet, even one miraculously born, is acceptable to Islam. The Spirit of God indwelling man and guiding and strengthening their lives is a religious commonplace. Divine food received in a sacramental meal is Zoroastrian; ritual washings and initiation rites are found universally. Islam holds fast to judgment, heaven and hell; Judaism to repentance, amendment, and God's merciful pardon. At every point accommodation is possible save at this one: this unique claim about Jesus, with it's under girding in the doctrine of the Holy Blessed and Undivided Trinity. If this goes then the end of Christianity as an independent entity cannot be indefinitely delayed. **No Incarnation, no Christianity.**"⁹

Jesus is God and this God has come in the flesh. Its denial is part of the onslaught faced by the first century church and this barrage of insult continues to this day.

B. He is uniquely positioned to address sin as the Christ.

"what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son **Jesus Christ**" (1 John 1:3).

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, **Jesus Christ** the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

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.** ²³ Whoever **denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also**" (1 John 2:22, 23).

“This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son **Jesus Christ**, and love one another, just as He commanded us” (1 John 3:23).

“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that **Jesus Christ** has come in the flesh is from God” (1 John 4:2).

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

“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” (1 John 5:6).

“And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son **Jesus Christ**. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

Pastor John clearly identifies Jesus as the Christ. And one cannot embrace the Father without also embracing the Son. Again, regardless of what one might think concerning the theological implications of Pastor John’s usage of the title/office “Christ,” he is thoroughly convinced and believes Jesus is the CHRIST. Jesus is the one spoken of in ancient promises and He is the fulfillment of all aspirations and anticipations.

- C. He is uniquely positioned to address sin as the Son of God.

Throughout his short Letter, Pastor John identifies Jesus as Son.

“what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is **with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ**” (1 John 1:3).

“but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of **Jesus His Son** cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

“the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. **The Son of God** appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

“This is His commandment, that **we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ**, and love one another, just as He commanded us” (1 John 3:23).

⁹ “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that **God has sent His only begotten Son** into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son** to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10).

“We have seen and testify that **the Father has sent the Son** to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God**, God abides in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:14).

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

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**. 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 John 5:9-13).

“And we know that **the Son of God** has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we

are in Him who is true, in **His Son Jesus Christ**. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

All God is intrinsically, Jesus is. To be God's Son speaks to His preeminence, His authority, His nature and His position. No one and nothing else can make such a claim. One might reject the thought that Jesus is the Son of God, but one cannot deny that Pastor John thought otherwise.

- III. In coming, Jesus offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice to satisfy the divine sentence against humanity's sin.

This statement sits impregnated with undeniable weight.

"the **blood** of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

¹ "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and **He Himself is the propitiation** for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for [those of] the whole world" (1 John 2:1, 2).

"I am writing to you, little children, because **your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake**" (1 John 2:12).

"We know love by this, that **He laid down His life for us**; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

Pastor John has a wonderful collection of words to describe the outcome of our Lord's substitutionary work in behalf of sinners. The richness of this word is found in the first covenant shadow of ritual surrounding the blood sacrifice and the mercy seat where God's presence existed and His justice was addressed. Jesus becomes the substance. This is seen in the word "propitiation."¹⁰

“The doctrine of the atonement includes both the dimensions of propitiation—averting the wrath of God—and expiation—taking away or covering over human guilt. By the expiation of human guilt, the wrath of God is turned away, the holiness of God is satisfied. **Yet it is God who in the person of His Son performs the sacrifice of expiation. It is God who in the person of His Son swallows up evil within Himself through vicarious identification with the sin of His people.** A sacrifice was necessary to satisfy the demands of His law, but God Himself provided the Sacrifice out of His incomparable love. What human ritual offerings could not do, God has done once for all by giving up His Son for the sins of the whole human race.”¹¹

The idea of sacrifice and atonement are inextricably linked to blood. It is by means of His blood that cleansing takes place for sin. Although the blood of Jesus is literal, the reference is to His sacrificial death as a lamb slain. Fallen humanity struggles with the idea of a blood sacrifice and equally so if not more than the idea that a Father would offer up His only Son for the “sins” of another. Yet this is Pastor John’s message. Propitiation has two sides. First, God’s wrath is stopped by His justice being satisfied. Then God’s favor is granted. Judgment is withheld [i.e. mercy] and blessings are bestowed [i.e. grace].

“Propitiation means the turning away of wrath by an offering. In relation to soteriology, propitiation means placating or satisfying the wrath of God by the atoning sacrifice of Christ.”¹²

In His position as an atoning sacrifice He mediates for His people before the Father. He comes alongside of His people

and stands before the Father in their behalf. First John 2:2 stresses that **He Himself** is the means whereby propitiation takes place.

How beautiful is this?

Nothing we read separates the fullest addressing of the sin issue from the person and work of Jesus Christ. Whatever hope exists is firmly rooted in and sourced out of Jesus.

Not only is Jesus uniquely positioned to answer the sin question, but He is the only answer to the sin issue.

IV. Jesus Himself is the only answer for the problem of sin.

“the blood of Jesus His Son **cleanses** us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

“He is faithful and righteous to **forgive** us our sins and to **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

¹ “My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is **the propitiation** for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for [those of] the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2).

“I am writing to you, little children, because **your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake**” (1 John 2:12).

“You know that He appeared in order **to take away sins**; and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

“the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, **to destroy the works of the devil**” (1 John 3:8).

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son **to be the propitiation for our sins**” (1 John 4:10).

“We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son **to be the Savior of the world**” (1 John 4:14).

Whatever hope does exist, Jesus is it. This aspect of the provision cannot be overstated. Because of who He is and what He has done everyone everywhere at all times must be presented with this invitation. Yet what moved God to do for us what we could never do for ourselves? Let us listen to what Pastor John has to say concerning this matter.

V. The substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus is motivated by love and loving.

“**We know love by this**, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16).

⁸ “The one who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**.⁹ By this **the love of God was manifested in us**, that **God has sent His only begotten Son into the world** so that we might live through Him.¹⁰ **In this is love**, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:8-10).

When one pokes around the doctrine of a substitutionary atonement they might find differing “theories” of the atonement. But there is a line that can be crossed where the Bible is openly rejected. There is such a thing as wrong, heresy, sin and damnation. And there might be different vantage points from which one might examine this idea, but the idea of a substitutionary atonement made in behalf of sinners to answer the justice of God against sinners is a non-negotiable in orthodoxy.

I believe it is quite impossible for finite minds to fathom the action of God to save His people from their sins. We might say what we wish in surmising an answer or find such sacrifice repugnant and perhaps offensive, yet it is the record and there is no other way for humanity's rebellion against God to be put down and thus answered. God's love for Himself and for His world moved Him to act graciously for the redeeming and restoring of His people to Himself. As emotionally and morally brutal such a sacrifice might appear to us from a finite perspective, in the wisdom of God such an action was demanded and graciously provided. Jesus is our only hope.

VI. His death secures a certain outcome.

The life giving power of His person and work is only for those who appropriate the provision by faith in God's record of their sin and His Son.

A. As a consequence of this appropriation His people are said to be "born" of God.

"If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is **born of Him**" (1 John 2:29).

"No one who is **born of God** practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is **born of God**" (1 John 3:9).

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is **born of God** and knows God" (1 John 4:7).

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

“For whatever is **born of God** overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

“We know that no one who is **born of God** sins; but He who was **born of God** keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him” (1 John 5:18).

Pastor John uses this same imagery in his Gospel. He opens his Gospel with the same language (John 1:12, 13) and expands on this language in John 3 as recorded in the conversation between Jesus and the religious leader Nicodemus. His children reflect Him in their conduct. They cannot be something they’re not.

The condition of those needing Him is so critical and chronic that nothing less than “new birth” will do.

B. As a consequence of this appropriation there is no shame or fear before the Father.

Because we are now children of God and fellow heirs with Jesus we have no shame or fear before our Father.

“And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, **we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming**” (1 John 2:28).

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, **we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:2).

¹⁷ “By this, love is perfected with us, that **we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.** ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love

casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love” (1 John 4:17, 18).

His provision is so thorough as to cancel completely the sin issue. The work wrought by Jesus in behalf of His people for the removal of their sin issue is so exhaustive that they can confidently stand before the Father in the Day of Judgment without shame or fear. There is nothing else one can do to secure such an end.

C. As a consequence of this appropriation His people have eternal life.

As a consequence of His sin destroying work He is able to move sinners from the certainty of eternal death to one of eternal life. The power to do so rests solely in Him.

“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world **so that we might live through Him**” (1 John 4:9).

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 John 5:11-13).

Eternal life is inseparable linked to Jesus Christ. You cannot have one without the other. God in Christ moves His people from death to life (1 John 3:14).¹³ Death is the opposite of eternal life, thus death in 1 John is eternal death (1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11-13).

Eternal life is promised to those who say the same thing as God [i.e. confess] concerning their sin and Jesus as Savior (1 John 3:23; 5:13).

“This is His commandment, that **we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ**, and love one another, just as He commanded us” (1 John 3:23).

“Whoever **confesses that Jesus is the Son of God**, God abides in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15).

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

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.** 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.** . . . 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 John 5:9, 10, 13).

Because He is faithful and righteous His people can believe His promises (1:9; 2:1, 29; 3:7). Although the nature or quality of the provision is capable of addressing the sin issue for everyone and thus enabling all to enjoy Him forever, only those who appropriate the provision by affirming God’s testimony concerning themselves and Jesus will benefit from His work in their behalf. The opposite is equally true. Those who reject God’s record are called **liars** and are said to make God a **liar**.

“If we say that we have not sinned, **we make Him a liar** and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:10).

“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 John 2:4).

“**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” (1 John 2:22).

“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” (1 John 4:20).

“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” (1 John 5:10).

Thus, the sinner is not a passive spectator but an active participant in their rebellion against God.

Pastor John in addressing the problems of his day provides for us in our day a thorough study of Christology. Where does this leave us? Jesus is God’s means of completing what He began.

“The Christian estimate of Jesus must satisfy several theological requirements in obedience to Scripture. A very neglected factor is that of worship: if we reduce Jesus to just being a good and inspired man, how does this affect Christian worship of God the Son, and are we not en route quickly to deism or binitarianism? Closely linked is the factor of salvation: how does the death of an innocent young man save us, and does it not seem more like an Aztec appeasement of the gods than the work of the triune Father, Son and Spirit? The doctrine of creation likewise is often forgotten in Christology: the life, death and resurrection of

Jesus constitutes a restoration of creation, yet to be finalized. We need Jesus Christ eschatologically, the judge and saviour, the bringer of hope, the vanquisher of evil, and the meaning of creation. Our Christology must embrace such basic theological facts.”¹⁴

Here is Pastor John’s conclusion and invitation.

First, there are two polarized and opposite positions one can take concerning one’s own sin and the need of a Savior as depicted and portrayed by Pastor John.

Second, the outcome of each position is certain and only one leads to eternal life while the other concludes with eternal death.

Finally, the provision God has made for your redemption from sin and restoration into His family is sourced in His love for you. Now you must decided what you will do with what Pastor John has said concerning your sin and your need of Jesus the singular Savior of sinners.

ENDNOTES

¹ "The *Isenheim Altarpiece* is an altarpiece sculpted and painted by, respectively, the Germans Niclaus of Hagenau and Matthias Grünewald in 1512-1516. It is on display at the Unterlinden Museum at Colmar, Alsace, in France. The museum celebrated the 500th anniversary of this masterpiece in 2012. By far Grünewald's greatest and largest work, it was painted for the Monastery of St. Anthony in Isenheim near Colmar, which specialized in hospital work. The Antonine monks of the monastery were noted for their care of plague sufferers as well as their treatment of skin diseases, such as ergotism. The image of the crucified Christ is pitted with plague-type sores, showing patients that Jesus understood and shared their afflictions."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isenheim_Altarpiece

² "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4" in *Luther's Works*, Jaroslav Pelikan, ed., St. Louis: CPH 1957, p. 126-27." <http://emmaus-stl.org/>

³ <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/21-transformation/252-barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years#.UmRhGVPhfbA> "March 6, 2009 -If Jesus were to ask, "Who do you say I am," the question He famously asked his disciple Peter, He would be disappointed by some of the answers He'd receive from contemporary Americans. 'A minority of American adults (40%) are persuaded that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life while He was on earth. Slightly less than two-thirds of the born again segment (62%) strongly believes that He was sinless.'"

⁴ <http://www.theologynetwork.org/studying-theologys/going-on/christology-in-the-19th-and-20th-centuries.htm>

⁵ "The issues at stake focus on the messiahship of Jesus, and the need to reinforce the limits of the Johannine community, not only by right confession but also by right conduct. Failure to keep either part of the dual commandment to believe in Jesus and to love one another (3:23) amounts to apostasy and places oneself outside the boundaries of Johannine Christianity." Tyndale Bulletin, TYNBUL 49:2 (NA 1998), Article: A Non-Polemical Reading Of 1 John: Sin, Christology And The Limits Of Johannine Christianity, Terry Griffith.

<http://www.galaxie.com/article/tynbul49-2-03>

⁶ Martin Hengel, 'Christological Titles in Early Christianity,' in *The Messiah*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p. 432.

⁷ Green, Michael, ed., *The Truth of God Incarnate* (Hodder, 1977), 144.

⁸ The quote from Bishop John Baker is from a speech made at King's College, London, in 1974 and quoted in Owen, *Christian Theism*, 49.

⁹ http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/CTR-NT/Parker-IncarnationJohn-CTR.pdf

¹⁰ "The propitiation (hilasmos). Late substantive from hilaskomai (Lu 18:13; Heb 2:17), in LXX, Philo, Plutarch, in N.T. only here and 1 John 4:10. Christ himself is the means of propitiation for (peri concerning) our sins. See hilastêrion in Romans 3:15." *A.T. Robertson's NT Word Pictures* on 1 John 2:2.

¹¹ <http://www.studylight.org/dic/hbd/view.cgi?number=T1978>
Holman Bible Dictionary, "Expiation, Propitiation," Donald G. Bloesch.

¹² Charles C. Ryrie (1999-01-11). *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Kindle Locations 5503-5504). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

¹³ "We have passed (metabebêkamen). Perfect active indicative of metabainô, old compound to pass over from one place to another (Joh 7:3), to migrate, out of death into life. We have already done it while here on earth. Because (hoti). Proof of this transition, not the ground of it." *A.T. Robertson's NT Word Pictures* on 1 John 3:14.

¹⁴ <http://www.theologynetwork.org/studying-theologys/going-on/christology-in-the-19th-and-20th-centuries.htm>

Studies in 1 John

4 of 11

I believe it is quite impossible for finite minds to fathom the action of God to save His people from their sins. We might say what we wish in surmising an answer or find such sacrifice repugnant and perhaps offensive, yet it is the record and there is no other way for humanity's rebellion against God to be put down and thus answered. God's love for Himself and for His world moved Him to act graciously for the redeeming and restoring of His people to Himself. As emotionally and morally brutal such a sacrifice might appear to us from a finite perspective, in the wisdom of God such an action was demanded and graciously provided. Jesus is our only hope.

Pastor John clearly identifies Jesus as the Christ. And one cannot embrace the Father without also embracing the Son. Again, regardless of what one might think concerning the theological implications of Pastor John's usage of the title/office "Christ," he is thoroughly convinced and believes Jesus is the CHRIST.

His provision is so thorough as to cancel completely the sin issue. The work wrought by Jesus in behalf of His people for the removal of their sin issue is so exhaustive that they can confidently stand before the Father in the Day of Judgment without shame or fear. There is nothing else one can do to secure such an end.

