

II PETER - JUDE

You, God, and a KJV Bible

By Eric Neumann

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Quotations

The only material quoted in this book is the Word of God in the King James Version. No commentaries or scholars are quoted, because God's Word is important, not man's word. As such, I encourage all readers to be good Bereans by searching the scriptures to see if what I have said is true (Acts 17:11). It is okay if you do not agree with what I say, but it is not okay if your disagreement is not based upon the Word of God in its proper context, which involves "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Goal

The goal of this Bible study is to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5) so that members of the body of Christ may "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

Contact the author

Therefore, the author encourages any disagreements be brought to his attention so that future versions of this Bible study can be changed if deemed necessary.

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II Peter Introduction

As with I Peter, II Peter is written to the believing remnant of Israel as instructions for them during the tribulation period. II Peter may be the last book written of the books in Hebrews through Revelation, as Paul has already written scripture for the mystery dispensation when II Peter is written (3:15-16).

Lest you think that the book is written to us today, 3:1 says that Peter is writing this epistle to the same audience as his first epistle, which would be to the saved Jews scattered among the Gentiles (1 Peter 1:1). Also, 3:2 says that they are to “be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets.” Peter preached that “which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). By contrast, Paul preached “the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25). Therefore, II Peter is written to the believing remnant of Israel. It is not written to us today.

Chapter 1 reminds them to stand on the Word of God. Chapter 2 warns of the false prophets, who will come into the church and try to lead the little flock astray. Chapter 3 puts chapters 1 and 2 together to tell them not to listen to those who doubt the Word of God.

Summary: The little flock of Israel needs to beware of false prophets and teachers, who will try to come in and devour the flock (2), and keep their trust in the second coming of Christ to save them (3:9-14).

Key passage: 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1 Peter writes this second epistle to remind the little flock (vs. 13-15) to add some things to their faith so that they may bear fruit for God (vs. 5-8). He reminds them that Christ will, indeed, come and establish His kingdom, as He promised (vs. 17-21), and they have received promises to be part of that kingdom as sons of God (vs. 3-4). Therefore, they should give all diligence to be established in the faith (v. 5).

1:1 For Peter’s audience to “have OBTAINED like precious faith” (1:1), the faith being referenced must be the faith OF Jesus Christ to obey the Father and go to the cross. The little flock obtained Christ’s faith “through [receiving] the righteousness of God” (1:1). Similarly for the body of Christ, we are told that we have received “the righteousness of God...by faith OF Jesus Christ” (Romans 3:22). This tells us a little about how justification works. The little flock repented by putting themselves back under the law covenant and were water baptized (Acts 2:38). Thus, they believed what God told them. The result of that faith is that they received God’s imputed righteousness, which is made possible by the faith OF Jesus Christ. Thus, “the righteousness of God [is] revealed from faith [man’s] to faith [Jesus’]” (Romans 1:17).

1:2 “Grace and peace” refer to God’s grace to help the believing remnant to endure unto the end of the tribulation period (Hebrews 4:16) by having the gift of the Holy Ghost and peace with God in their hearts in the midst of trials, which peace is also from the Holy Ghost (John 20:21-22). Unlike us today, the believing remnant does not have the permanent, indwelling Holy Ghost (Romans 5:5), because they will not receive their atonement from sins until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20). Therefore, they must approach the throne of grace for help in time of trouble (Hebrews 4:16), and the way they receive their grace and peace is by the intake of more sound doctrine for their dispensation. Therefore, “grace and peace [are] multiplied unto [them] through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” (1:2).

Therefore, in just two verses, we have already seen the salvation of believing Israel (v. 1) and the preservation of believing Israel in the tribulation period through God’s grace and peace given to them via the Holy Ghost (v. 2).

These two verses have also said that Jesus is both their Saviour (1:1) and their Lord (1:2). You rarely see the combination of both among man. Man either fights to free people (savior), or he rules over people (lord). He rarely is both. Yet, Jesus became “meek and lowly” (Matthew 11:29), taking “upon Him the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:7), so that He could be “the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (I Timothy 4:10). He did this even though He is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16). Therefore, He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15), understanding what it is like to be a man. That is why He multiplies grace and peace to the little flock (1:2).

1:3 “DIVINE power” is mentioned to contrast it with man’s power. The divine power of God is shown when God raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His right hand far above all powers (Ephesians 1:19-21). And, because Jesus is at that position of power, He can give the gift of the Holy Ghost to the believing remnant of Israel. (That is why Jesus had to “go away” before He could send the Comforter to them (John 16:7).) In other words, because God delivered Jesus up for the little flock, He can give them Himself and “all things” as a free gift to them (Romans 8:32). Then, God gives them the Holy Spirit so that they can learn about these things freely given to them (I Corinthians 2:9-14).

Therefore, as Lord, Jesus gives the little flock “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (1:3) by the Holy Ghost. These things include comfort in tribulation (John 14:16-18), prophets to speak the Word of God to them (I Peter 4:11), and the remembrance of God’s Word to them so that they will make godly decisions, as they go through life. Thus, the Holy Ghost helps them live godly lives “through the knowledge of Him” (1:3). It is by their living godly lives in the tribulation period by the power of the Holy Ghost that attributes “glory and virtue” to God (1:3), while apostate Israel brings Him shame.

We should also note that godliness only comes by sound doctrine built up in the inner man over time. “Godliness” appears 15 times in scripture—11 times in I Timothy – Titus and 4 times in II Peter. Therefore, it only appears after the cross in

the more advanced doctrine epistles. That is because it takes years of sound doctrine built up in the inner man before a person can live a godly life.

1:4 “Whereby” tells us that their “exceeding great and precious promises” come by glory and virtue. Virtue is strength. If the little flock reads and believes God’s Word, they will be “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). They can then “DO all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). They just learned that Jesus’ divine power GIVES them all things (1:3), now they learn that Jesus’ divine nature can cause them to DO all things (1:4).

Before they were saved, they were in Adam, meaning that all they could do was sin, because they had the sin nature (Romans 5:12). After they are saved, they are in Christ. Christ’s divine power gives them “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (1:3). Then, if they allow Christ to live in them, Christ’s divine nature will live through them. Living for God becomes natural to them, thanks to the divine nature.

However, because they are still in their vile flesh, they do not completely escape “the corruption that is in the world” (1:4) until they are resurrected with glorified bodies. When we die, the body is “sown in corruption” and “raised in incorruption” (I Corinthians 15:42). “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (I Corinthians 15:50). Therefore, while the little flock can allow Christ to live in them during the tribulation period, 1:4 will not be completely fulfilled until Israel enters God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

That is why Peter talks about them having “great and precious promises” (1:4), which would be ultimately received in the kingdom. They will then fully experience being “partakers of the divine nature” (1:4). This is “that holy thing” that is mentioned in Luke 1:35. Furthermore, John 1:12 says that they will “become the sons of God.” That is when Israel is finally put under the new covenant with God. Ezekiel 36:27 says that, under that new covenant in the kingdom, God will put His Spirit in them, such that they “cannot sin” (I John 3:9). Therefore, in the kingdom, believing Israel will actually be like God (I John 3:2) in that they cannot sin because they have been made “partakers of the divine nature” (1:4), and, because they are sons of God, God will fulfill His “exceeding great and precious promises” (1:4) to them in the kingdom. (Since the body of Christ can still sin today, it means that we are NOT spiritual Israel, as reformed theologians like to claim that we are.) Thus, Israel fully escapes “the corruption that is in the world” (1:4) only when they are placed under the new covenant in the kingdom, since the sin nature will be done away with for them and they will be operating entirely in the divine nature or in Christ.

Finally, note that 1:4 says that the way that corruption is in the world is through lust. Whenever the word “lust” is used, Christians automatically think of sexual lust. That way, they can say, in their pride, that they have not lusted, even though ALL sin is due to lust. The way we know this is that the world became corrupt when Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He did not commit

sexual sin. I John 2:16 says that, “all that is in the world” is “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” The tree was “good for food” (lust of the flesh), “pleasant to the eyes” (lust of the eyes), and “a tree to be desired to make one wise” (pride of life) (Genesis 3:6). Therefore, when 1:4 says that corruption came through lust, it means that it came through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, not through sexual lust. By contrast, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, God did not suffer His “Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10). Therefore, the little flock escapes the corruption that is in the world by being placed into Christ.

1:5-8 The little flock should not stop once they have escaped lust. They should move on to the things listed here (1:5-7). Christianity often thinks that God saves you so that you do not sin any more. However, that is just the beginning. God “is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (3:9). The way that the lost sheep of the house of Israel will know that the little flock belongs to God is if they have love one to another (John 13:35). Therefore, God saves the little flock so that they will not sin AND then go on to the nine things listed here so that the rest of the lost sheep of Israel will be saved.

First, they need to be diligent about reading and believing God’s Word to them (1:5). They already have faith in God. Now, they need to add virtue to their faith, which is being strengthened with might in the inner man with sound doctrine (Ephesians 3:16). Next, they need knowledge of God’s Word to them, especially the mysteries of the kingdom that Jesus shared with them in parables. That knowledge is needed to control their emotions. Therefore, temperance comes next, which is living by God’s Word to them, rather than going by their feelings. The Antichrist and apostate Israel will rule for 7 years; therefore, the next thing they need is patience to continue in sound doctrine, in spite of the tribulation that they face. Knowledge, temperance, and patience lead to the next thing, which is godly living or “godliness” (1:6).

Godliness results in God’s love being seen through how they live their lives. This is first manifest in “brotherly kindness” (1:7), i.e., love for the little flock. It is then ultimately manifest in “charity” (1:7), i.e., God’s love for all. These are the qualities that the tribulation period are designed to create in believing Israel, but the charity will only come if they give all diligence (1:5) toward allowing God to work these qualities out within them.

The charity aspect is most important because “knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth” (I Corinthians 8:1). It is great that they are “in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8), but, if they stop with knowledge, people will not be saved through them. They will not use their knowledge to consider others, nor be patient with others, nor have a godly life, and the result will be that they will not show love for the brethren and not show love for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (1:6-7). If that happens they will be “barren” and “unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8).

We need to be clear that charity grows out of knowledge, because Christianity thinks the two are separate. They think of the scholarly-type people as having knowledge, and they think of those who feel bad for the poor and sick as having charity. However, the scholarly-type people do not really have God's knowledge, because they are too busy studying the world's system, which is why Paul describes them as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). Those, who feel bad for others and want to help them with material things, have good feelings on the physical side, which does not help others spiritually.

Peter is saying that the little flock needs to grow in the doctrine for their dispensation. When they do that, they will suffer for the truth (I Peter 3:14, 3:17, and 5:10), which will lead to the things mentioned in 1:5-7 being built up in their inner man. Then, they will use the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ to see the SPIRITUAL needs of others so that they may be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of charity. Without it, they will not have charity. That is why Paul says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). They will then bear fruit, meaning that lost souls will be saved and enter the kingdom with them (1:8).

Speaking of bearing fruit, note that 9 things are listed here, and the last thing is love. In Galatians 5:22-23, 9 things are listed under the fruit of the Spirit, and the first thing is love. Therefore, it can be said that Israel learns the things in the tribulation period to have God's love come through them. Then, God's love is used as a springboard for the fruit of the Spirit to be displayed through them in God's eternal kingdom on earth.

1:9 Those, not being built up in sound doctrine, are spiritually blind, and so they "cannot see afar off" (1:9), which would be past the tribulation period and into God's coming kingdom. The result will be that they forget their new identity in Christ and may join with apostate Israel in taking the mark of the beast, losing their souls.

This is a picture, on the individual level, of what happened to Israel, on the national level, in Matthew through Acts 7. For apostate Israel, Jesus was "a stone of stumbling and...a rock of offence" (Isaiah 8:13-14), meaning that they stumbled at the cross, because they sought righteousness by their own performance, rather than by faith (Romans 9:32-33). Romans 11:11 says that they did not stumble that they should fall, because God tried to save Israel through the ministry of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2-7. Yet, because of their unbelief, they fell anyway (Romans 11:11). Similarly speaking, if individual members of the little flock do not build up in their inner man the things mentioned in 1:5-7, they are blind (1:9). If they are blind, they are likely to "stumble" over the things of this world (I John 2:10). They do not stumble that they should fall. However, their stumbling could very easily lead to them bowing down to the image or taking the mark of the beast, which result in them losing their salvation (Revelation 14:9-11). Therefore, they "fall away" (Hebrews 6:4-6), which is a very real danger, since they must endure unto

the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 10:22 and 24:13). How do you endure when you are blind to what Satan is doing through the Antichrist?

Now, you may think that this verse teaches eternal security for the little flock, because it says that an individual “was purged from his old sins” (1:9). However, this just means that he was purged from his past sins. Hebrews 6:4-6 says that “it is impossible” if someone should “fall away, to renew [him] again unto repentance.” This means that, if he takes the mark of the beast or worships his image, he loses his salvation. How do I know that is what this means? Because Revelation 14:9-11 tells me so. Thus, when a person believes the gospel of the kingdom, he is “purged from his OLD sins” (1:9), but he is not purged from the future apostasy of taking the mark of the beast or worshipping his image.

1:10 This is a great verse to show that individual predestination is a lie of the devil. If individual predestination is true, then God has called and elected certain people to be saved. Since you have no free will in the matter, there is nothing you can do to make sure you are still saved. Yet, Peter tells the little flock, here, to make their “calling and election sure” (1:10) by giving diligence to obtaining knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity to make sure they do not lose their salvation. Therefore, what is true is that God has called and elected each person in Israel to be saved, but they must believe and have works coming from that faith in order to actually take the position in God’s eternal kingdom on earth that God has called and elected them to.

By contrast, today, in the dispensation of grace, once we believe the gospel, we are justified right now (Romans 5:9) and receive the atonement right now (Romans 5:11). Therefore, we cannot lose our salvation, like Israel can.

1:11 Jesus said, “I am the way ... unto the Father” (John 14:6) in the kingdom. If Israel believes the gospel of the kingdom and adds the things mentioned in 1:5-7, they will have taken “the way unto the Father,” such that God will give them an abundant entrance into the kingdom (1:11), because they have received an abundant life from God (John 10:10). Therefore, it certainly does pay to read God’s Word, believe it, let it work through them, and endure tribulations.

1:12 If the little flock lives virtuous lives, they will make an eternal impact for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Therefore, Peter writes this second epistle as a reminder to them, even though they should already know this from his first epistle.

Note that Peter wants them to “be established in the PRESENT truth” (1:12). It must have been necessary for Peter to distinguish between present truth to Israel and other truth that is to the body of Christ, or else the word “present” would not have been used. Therefore, this is a great verse to support dispensationalism. All of God’s word is true forever. However, God gives different doctrine or truths, for different dispensations. If the little flock were to read and try to follow Paul’s epistles, which is what Satan will try to get them to do, they will be following truth

that is to us today and not to believing Israel in the tribulation period. Therefore, they need to read and believe “the present truth,” which is found, for them, outside of Paul’s epistles. Therefore, for us today, when we are told by Christianity to follow what Jesus said in Matthew – John, we need to reject that idea. That does not mean that we are rejecting Jesus and His perfect Word in those books, but it does mean that we recognize that “the present truth” for us today is found only in Paul’s epistles, and not in Jesus’ red letters.

1:13 The job of an elder in the tribulation period is to put the little flock in remembrance of the commandments of the Lord so that they will endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 10:22). The job of an elder, today, is to remind believers of the grace that we are in and to walk in that grace doctrine that is found only in Paul’s epistles (Romans 6:14).

Note that Peter, in 1:13-14, refers to his body as a tabernacle. Jesus did the same with His body in John 2:19-21. This shows to the believing remnant that their body is not the essence of who they really are, because, even if it remains intact until Jesus’ second coming, it will be destroyed and replaced by a new, glorified body. This should encourage the little flock to obey God’s law covenant, in spite of the possible cutting off of body parts (Mark 9:43-49) or even death at the hands of the Antichrist and apostate Israel for not bowing down to the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15). After all, their bodies will be destroyed sooner or later, so, if it brings glory to God, why not let it happen sooner.

1:14 The Lord Jesus Christ showed Peter, in John 21:18-19, that Peter would be carried away in his old age and be killed for serving God. Peter knows that his time is short; therefore, he might as well use his last days in service to God. As such, Peter is a good example to follow for the believing remnant during the tribulation period, since Jesus Christ comes back and establishes God’s kingdom on earth once the seven-year tribulation period is over (Daniel 2:44 and 9:27). If a member of the little flock denies Christ, he will only live until Jesus comes back. If the Antichrist kills him, Christ will resurrect him soon anyway, so death is not a big deal. Either way, his time is short. Therefore, he might as well serve God until the end.

1:15 The mystery program began in Acts 9. In Acts 15, Paul had a conference with the Jewish believers of the prophecy program, and they agreed that the twelve apostles would minister “unto the circumcision” (Galatians 2:9), i.e., saved Jews of the prophecy program. The reason that the twelve apostles continued the ministry that Jesus Christ had given them, even though Israel’s program had been put on hold, was so Israel would have instructions to follow when the tribulation period takes place, after the rapture of the body of Christ. Thus, this epistle is written and in the preserved Word of God today.

1:16-18 Fables are stories with a moral to them. More and more people, today, claim that is what the Bible is—a book of made-up stories that never happened, that are designed to teach spiritual truths. Peter refutes this argument here.

The word “fables” appears five times in scripture (I Timothy 1:4, I Timothy 4:7, II Timothy 4:4, Titus 1:14, and II Peter 1:16). In all five cases, “fables” are mentioned negatively. The reason is because “fables...minister questions, rather than godly edifying” (I Timothy 1:4), and we are told that, when people turn their ears from the truth, they turn their ears toward fables (II Timothy 4:4). Therefore, fables are to be avoided.

Toward the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus taught parables so that the little flock would learn the mysteries of the kingdom (Matthew 13:10-11). Thus, His parables related to “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:16). Christians think that parables and fables are the same thing. That is, they think that parables are made-up stories with a moral to them, but this cannot be the case, because Peter says that he did not follow fables. Therefore, the parables, that Jesus taught, are all stories that really happened. This is important to note because Titus 1:14 mentions “Jewish fables,” which means that the Jewish religion must have been teaching “cunningly devised fables” (1:16), and that religion probably accused the little flock of following their own set of fables. That is why Peter has to make it clear that they are not following fables.

Note also that he says “cunningly devised fables” (1:16). Being cunning means that you are skillful. This means that cunningly devised fables would be made-up stories skillfully designed to teach false doctrine. This is like the “cunning craftiness” (Ephesians 4:14) that Satan’s ministers in Christianity use today in order to deceive people (II Corinthians 11:13-15). Therefore, when people claim that the stories in the Bible are made up, they are really accusing God of operating as Satan does, that is, deceiving people into believing what Christianity teaches.

Look at how Satan will operate during the tribulation period. False christs will “deceive many” (Matthew 24:5), and false prophets will “deceive many” (Matthew 24:11). Moreover, the Antichrist will “speak marvellous things against the God of gods” (Daniel 11:36), and his minions will do “many wonderful works” in God’s name, when they are really not part of God at all (Matthew 7:22-23). By contrast, God’s truth program involves just “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Therefore, the way, that Israel will know that Jesus is the Christ of God and the Antichrist is the christ of Satan, is simply by comparing Jesus and the Antichrist to the truth of God’s Word, which stands in contrast to the “cunningly devised fables” (1:16) of the Jewish religion that will be advanced in the tribulation period.

The way that the little flock were “eyewitnesses of His majesty” (1:16) was when they saw Him transfigured on the mountain before their very eyes (Mark 9:2-3). This explains Jesus’ statement that “there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). Although Peter’s decease was at hand (1:14-15), he still saw God’s kingdom come with power at the transfiguration.

I Peter 1:11 says that Christ’s glory follows His suffering. Therefore, we know that Christ’s glory comes in the kingdom. The fact, that He received glory, in Mark 9:2-3, shows that the transfiguration, that took place, was a transfiguration from the

old flesh to the glorified body that He will have in the kingdom. Therefore, Mark 9:1 was fulfilled for Peter, James, and John in Mark 9:2-7. Of course, since Jesus still had to go to the cross, He was then changed back to old flesh before He came down from the mount.

The intention of the transfiguration was to give Peter, James, and John a little glimpse into what Jesus' kingdom on earth will be like, so that they would be "eyewitnesses of His majesty" (1:16) so that they would be willing to suffer for God. Jesus had just started sharing His death, burial, and resurrection with the twelve (Mark 8:31), and they did not understand it (Mark 9:9-10). Therefore, Jesus showed them the kingdom of God with power so that they would understand that He must die before He can bring God's kingdom to them on earth (John 12:24). However, they did not believe in Jesus' resurrection until after He had already risen from the dead (John 20:9), which is why Peter refers to God's Word as "a more sure word of prophecy" than seeing the actual transfiguration (1:19).

The point to Peter's audience in this epistle is that they should be willing to endure tribulations for Christ's sake, knowing that they will also receive honour and glory in Christ's kingdom, if they keep the faith until the end of the tribulation period.

1:19 People like to look for signs and wonders as "proof" that God's Word is true. With the transfiguration, Peter, James, and John certainly saw a sign and wonder, proving that God will establish His kingdom on earth forever. However, this verse says that God's written word is "a more sure word of prophecy" (1:19) than what Peter, James, and John saw. The first reason, that God's Word is more sure than experiences, is because it stands forever (Psalm 119:89 and Matthew 24:35). Therefore, instead of us being slighted because God is not doing physical miracles today, we are actually more blessed than Jesus' 12 apostles were, because God's completed, holy Word is in our hands, and His Word is more sure than any physical miracles that God performed in time past.

The second reason that God's Word is more sure is because Satan can do miracles, too. We are told that the Antichrist will perform "signs and lying wonders" (II Thessalonians 2:9), as will the false prophet (Revelation 13:13) and Satan himself (Revelation 16:13-14). They are signs and wonders, but they lie because they really point people to Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44), when the Antichrist will use them as proof to say that he is God. Therefore, although the transfiguration was great, it is better for the little flock in the tribulation period to rely upon the truth of God's Word because God's Word never changes.

"The day star" that shall "arise in [their] hearts" (1:19) is Jesus (Revelation 22:16). He will come after the tribulation period is over. The way that He will arise in saved Israel's hearts is by them being placed under the new covenant in God's kingdom. Jeremiah 31:33 says that, under the new covenant, God will write His law in their hearts. Moreover, Ezekiel 36:26-27 says that God will give them a new heart, put His spirit within them, and cause them to walk in His statutes. Therefore, Jesus arises in their hearts in the kingdom. This means that the kingdom of God is not in the hearts of men, as Christians like to twist Luke 17:21 to say. Therefore, the

way that God gives believing Israel the morning star (Revelation 2:28) or day star is by having Christ live in them to obey the law perfectly under the new covenant (Revelation 2:28).

During the transfiguration, Jesus' "face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). Israel is told that God's Word to them is like "a light that shineth in a dark place" (1:19), and it is "more sure" (1:19) than the transfiguration. That is because Jesus' face stopped shining after they left the mountain, but God's Word never stops shining. It is the Light. Jesus is called both "the Word" (John 1:1) and "the Light" (John 1:7-9). When Jesus came to the earth, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). When the believing remnant takes in sound doctrine for their dispensation, the Light of God's Word shines in their hearts, which is more sure than shining on the outside, as Peter, James, and John saw Jesus do in Matthew 17.

The day dawns at Jesus' second coming (1:19). 3:10 says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." That is because the tribulation period is known as the night. Psalm 30:5 says, "Weeping may endure for a night [the tribulation period], but joy cometh in the morning" [the kingdom]. To show everyone this, God turns the lights out when the tribulation period is over, as Matthew 24:29-30 says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light....And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Therefore, believing Israel has God's Word as "a lamp unto [their] feet, and a light unto [their] path" (Psalm 119:105) during the darkness of the tribulation period. Then, they have God's Word living inside them on a permanent basis (because their vile flesh has been eliminated and they now have glorified flesh) under the new covenant, which is how the day star arises in their hearts (1:19).

Finally, we should note that Peter is writing in Israel's prophecy program, and he has them go to "a more sure word of PROPHECY" (1:19). Therefore, they are to go to Genesis – Acts and Hebrews – Revelation, which are the prophetic scriptures, in order to have the Light shine in their hearts. Today, since we are in the MYSTERY program, we should go to Romans – Philemon, which are the mystery scriptures, in order to have the Light shine in our hearts.

1:20-21 Now, before the believing remnant starts digging into the Word, Peter reminds them "that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (1:20). What does this mean? Well, 1:21 says that prophetic scriptures come from God, and not "by the will of man." Therefore, the interpretation of the scripture must also come from God. In I Peter 1:10-12, Peter said that they can now understand prophecy because the Holy Ghost has been sent down to them from heaven. The Holy Ghost can now speak the oracles of God to and through them (I Peter 4:11). Therefore, Peter's warning, in 1:20-21, is not to listen to what man says God's Word says. If they listen to man, they will follow apostate Israel's religion right into the pit of hell. Instead, they should believe what God says God's Word says, and they will understand what God's Word says when the Holy Ghost shows it to them and also when holy men of God speak it to them. They can

compare these words to the Bible to determine if what is said is of the Holy Ghost or not.

Today, in the dispensation of grace, every believer has the Holy Spirit living inside him (Romans 5:5), teaching him the things of God (I Corinthians 2:10-13). Therefore, the argument, that right division is wrong because most Christians do not believe it, is a faulty argument, just like the argument in the tribulation period, that what the believing remnant believes is not true because only a minority believes it, is also a faulty argument. In fact, when people use these scriptures to try to disprove your beliefs, they are really disproving their own beliefs, because they are relying upon what the majority of Christians believe, rather than what the Word of God says. That is, they are relying upon “the will of man” (1:21), rather than looking at what God is saying to them by His Word through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Therefore, put simply, “private interpretation” (1:20) means you need to get your beliefs from the Holy Spirit’s guiding you through the Bible, rather than getting your beliefs from some established religion, especially the “Christian” religion. Thus, each doctrinal statement of every Christian denomination is a “private interpretation” of the Word of God, because they say they have the truth apart from Christians being led by the Holy Spirit into the things of God.

We should note that 1:21 also tells us that God’s Word is holy and without error, because He used “holy men” and the “Holy Ghost” to speak His holy Word. That is not to say that the “holy” men were perfect. Rather, they were “holy” men in the sense of being set apart for the task of recording God’s Word. For example, Deuteronomy 14:2 says that Israel “art an holy people unto the Lord thy God.” I Peter 2:9 confirms that the believing remnant of Israel is “an holy nation.” Obviously, even the believing remnant committed sin from Deuteronomy to I Peter, but they are “holy,” because God set them apart to reconcile the Gentiles back to Himself (Exodus 19:5-6). Therefore, “holy,” in this context, does not mean sinless. In fact 1:18 demonstrates this as well by saying that Peter saw Jesus transfigured on “the holy mount.” There was sin on that mount, because Peter, James, and John were in unbelief, yet it was holy, because it was set apart to show “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:16).

Finally, 1:21 also shows us that all three members of the Godhead wrote the Bible. God the Father willed it into existence, God the Holy Ghost spoke it to men to write it down, and God the Son IS the Word (John 1:1) that they wrote down.

2 Jude is a parallel passage to this chapter, often using similar phrases. Rather than showing that Jude copied from Peter or vice-versa or that a copyist made an error in copying the Bible, causing a duplicate chapter to be created, the fact, that God gives the little flock the same information from two, different writers, shows that this information is very important for the little flock to endure unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13).

Chapter 2 is a warning to the little flock to watch out for false teachers in their midst (v. 1). If they follow them, they will be punished. In the tribulation period, it may seem like God does not punish the ungodly. Therefore, Peter gives the

examples of Noah and Lot (vs. 4-8) to show that God does deliver the righteous and punish the ungodly (v. 9). The ungodly, in the little flock's midst, will get the little flock to follow them by speaking evil of the government (v. 10). That may seem right, but, even the angels do not do so, because the government that exists is ordained of God (v. 11; Romans 13:1). They get the little flock on their side in this matter so that they can use them for their own profit (v. 3). Peter warns the little flock of the great evils of these ungodly men and how their end, including all those who follow them, is worse than their beginning (vs. 12-22). Therefore, the little flock should not follow "their pernicious ways" (v. 2).

2:1 As mentioned in the commentary on 1:20-21, the danger in the tribulation period is for the little flock to follow apostate Israel's religion ("the will of man" (1:21)), instead of following God's Word as given to them by the Holy Ghost (1:21). Peter, in 2:1, now warns them more plainly that there will be false teachers among the believing remnant, like there were false prophets before. A good example of false prophets in Israel's history is found in I Kings 22:10-12,19-23. There, we are told that false prophets told Israel that they would prosper in Ramoth-Gilead, when that was not the case. We are told that the Lord actually asked the devils how they would persuade Ahab to fall at Ramoth-Gilead (I Kings 22:20), and we are told that a devil succeeds by putting "a lying spirit in the mouth of all [Ahab's false] prophets" (I Kings 22:22).

Now, you may wonder why a loving God would intentionally cause Israel to fall. The reason is because, while God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (3:9), God still gives man what he wants. If man chooses to believe lies, then God will help him to continue to believe lies. We see this with the Gentiles in Romans 1:18-32. There, after man refused to believe God, "God...gave them up to uncleanness" (1:24), "up unto vile affections" (1:26), and finally "over to a reprobate mind" (1:28).

With Israel, they were in unbelief at Jesus' first coming (John 12:37). Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matthew 23:37). Since Israel was not willing to be saved, God says that, in the tribulation period, He "shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:11-12). In other words, God will give them what they want. Therefore, "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). Therefore, not only does the believing remnant need to watch what apostate Israel says, but they also need to compare what their own people say to what the Word of God says to see if they are speaking the truth.

Jesus called these false teachers wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15), because they use the Lord's name, but they deny Him. At judgment time, many will say to Jesus, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied IN THY NAME? and IN THY NAME have cast out devils? And IN THY NAME done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work

iniquity” (Matthew 7:22-23). The doctrine they teach will even deny the Lord. Jesus said that He would deny to the Father those who deny Him before men (Matthew 10:33). Therefore, following these heresies causes people to lose their salvation, which is why they are called “DAMNABLE heresies” (2:1).

What is ironic is that the doctrine they teach will actually be grace from Paul’s epistles. Peter mentioned this in I Peter 5:12, where he said that he gave them “the TRUE grace of God,” as opposed to these false teachers who preach grace from the wrong dispensation. We know that they preach from Paul because of what Peter says in II Peter 3:15-16 that they “wrest” Paul’s epistles. Finally, Jude 4 also tells us that these unbelievers preach grace, as this verse says that “ungodly men [are] turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Remember that II Peter 2 and Jude are parallel passages. Therefore, Jude is talking about the same people as Peter is.)

Granted, grace from Paul’s epistles is sound doctrine for today, but it is not for Israel’s program. Meanwhile, today, preachers teach works from Israel’s program. That is sound doctrine for Israel, but it is not for us today. This shows that, the way Satan gets people to follow his lie program is by taking the truth of God’s Word and applying it to the wrong time. That is why it is absolutely essential that we rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15) by recognizing that only Paul’s epistles are written specifically to us today.

False teachers have their own, private interpretation of scripture according to the will of man (1:20-21). Just because it is private does not mean that it is unpopular. In fact, the popular view of scripture among Israel will be this private interpretation.

The same holds true today in the dispensation of grace. Satan has transformed himself into an angel of light and has transformed his ministers to look like ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:13-15). Therefore, rather than allowing the Holy Ghost to teach them God’s Word, they follow Satan into a private interpretation, which is any interpretation that man comes up with, rather than relying upon God to teach him His Word. As such, most people follow Satan’s ministers to their own destruction. Since Satan’s deception will be at its peak during the great tribulation period (Matthew 24:21-24), it is of the utmost importance that believing Israel use God’s Word to guide them, rather than what men tells them that God’s Word says.

“The Lord that bought them” (2:1) is the Lord Jesus Christ. He bought them with His Own blood (I Peter 1:18-19).

Note that these false teachers bring upon themselves “swift destruction” (2:1), not “soon destruction.” Their destruction is not soon enough for the little flock, who ask from heaven, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:10). Also, they continue in their wickedness because “sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily” (Ecclesiastes 8:11). However, when it is time for God to destroy

them, their destruction will come swiftly, meaning that the Lord will use His Word to kill them in an instant (Revelation 19:13,15,21).

2:2 Because the wolves in sheep's clothing will be so deceptive, many people will be led astray by them. They will be speaking lies, i.e., "feigned words" (2:3), and "wrest" (3:16) or twist God's Word to convince people they are speaking the truth. Therefore, those, who are really speaking the truth, will be marked as being evil and as part of a cult. Is not that how it is today? We stand on God's Word rightly divided because it is the truth, and "the way of truth [is] evil spoken of" (2:2). How much more, then, will this be the case when one, world religion is in place, under the Antichrist, that claims to be for God! Since nothing can be done against the truth (II Corinthians 13:8) and they want their lie program to continue, those following the truth will "be evil spoken of" (2:2) in the tribulation period, just like they are today. This is a warning, then, for the little flock not to be deceived by these wolves in sheep's clothing. By the way, an example of these wolves is seen in Acts 19:9 during Paul's ministry.

When people speak evil of "the way of truth" (2:2), they are really speaking evil of the Lord Jesus Christ, because He IS "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Therefore, by speaking evil of "the way of truth," they are "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). Jesus said, "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:33). That is why Peter later says that these people are "made to be taken and destroyed" (2:12).

2:3 In the tribulation period, it is apostate Israel, who has the riches and power, while the little flock is poor, even to the point of not having food or water. Yet, it is apostate Israel that is covetous of believing Israel. Galatians 5:17 says that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit." That is what is going on here. Apostate Israel tries to obtain the things of the Spirit by using their own flesh, but it does not work. In addition, it is impossible to satisfy the lusts of their flesh. It always wants more. Proverbs 27:20 says, "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied." Therefore, they "work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). They do not want to have faith in God, because it would mean suffering and denying the flesh. Yet, they are covetous of the "exceeding great and precious promises" (1:4) that the little flock has. Since the flesh cannot have what the spirit has, the flesh persecutes those who have faith in God's promises. ("As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Galatians 4:29).) Thus, apostate Israel is rich in this world, while believing Israel is "rich in faith" (James 2:5-7).

Apostate Israel is so desperate in their pursuit of the flesh that they will literally sell the little flock of Israel into slavery (Revelation 18:11-13)! Since apostate Israel cannot deny the truth, they will make up stuff about the believing remnant to "make merchandise" (2:3) of them, meaning that they will sell them to the Antichrist, as Joseph was sold into slavery (Genesis 37:28). Believers will have eyes plucked out and arms chopped off (Mark 9:42-49), as the Antichrist tries to get them to deny Christ. Meanwhile, apostate Israel will cash in on the whole

thing, being rewarded by the Antichrist for turning them in, even to the point of ratting out their own family members to the Babylonian religious system (Matthew 10:34-37). That is why Jesus told the little flock to flee to the mountains when the Antichrist sets up the image of the beast, because things will go from bad to worse overnight (Matthew 24:15-21).

The good news for the little flock is that “the judge standeth before the door” (James 5:9) of the sheepfold of Israel, waiting for the time when He will take away apostate Israel to be destroyed (Luke 17:33-37). But, the world must get as bad as it was in Noah’s day (2:4-5 and Luke 17:26-27) and in Lot’s day (2:6-8 and Luke 17:28-30) first. In the end, Satan will be in the lake of fire, laughing over the very people he fooled into going there with him (Ezekiel 32:31). Therefore, apostate Israel may prosper during the tribulation period, but they will suffer for all eternity in hell with the devil and his angels.

2:1-3a tells the bad news of Satan’s crowd leading people astray. 2:3b-10 tells the good news of Satan’s crowd being destroyed by God. Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” For a long time, God’s punishment of evildoers has been delayed, such that evil has prevailed. However, during the Great Tribulation period, although it may seem like judgment is taking forever to be executed (Revelation 6:10), God says, here (2:3), that their judgment is soon coming. Therefore, the little flock need only endure tribulation for a little while longer before God comes and avenges them.

2:4-5 Now, Peter gives two examples of God bringing judgment upon evildoers. The first example is in Noah’s day. We saw, in I Peter 3:19-20, that God put devils in prison for having sex with women to create superhuman creatures. When Jesus died, He preached judgment to them, because He now had the authority over them as “the righteous judge” (II Timothy 4:8).

However, they are still reserved “unto judgment” (2:4), meaning that God still has them bound in chains of darkness to be used at the end of the tribulation period. Revelation 9:14-18 gives the detail of this. It says that, toward the end of the tribulation period, God has an angel “loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates...for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand.” Jude 6 says that God “hath reserved [these angels] in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” (Note that their chains are actual darkness, which shows that spirits can be chained.) Thus, it appears that the rebellion by devils during Noah’s day was primarily orchestrated by four devils with 200 million additional devils participating. These are all bound in chains of darkness, to keep them from rebelling further, until the end of the tribulation period. What this shows is that, even devils have rules they must follow, or else God will punish them. We see this in Job 1:6 and 2:1, which says that the angels and Satan both have “to present themselves before the Lord.” As such, these devils serve as a reminder to the rest of Satan’s realm, not to disobey God’s commands.

For humans, those around during Noah's day serve as a reminder that we should believe God. After all, God also did not spare "the old world, but saved Noah" (2:5). He preached righteousness for 100 years (2:5), and the only people he was able to save was his family (I Peter 3:20). Noah had a 100-year ministry with only seven conversions, and those conversions were his family. Why, then, do Christians think that doing the will of God will cause people to flock to your church? Real-world experience proves the opposite is true. If you have a big church and abandon religion for the truth of God's Word, you will see people leave your church in droves. In fact, Jesus had an audience of 5,000 men plus women and children in John 6:10. Then, the next day, He gave a five-minute sermon of the truth and was left with just 12 followers (John 6:66-67).

However, the point of 2:4-5 to Peter's audience is that God will execute judgment upon the ungodly. In Noah's case, only 8 people were saved, yet God judged "the angels that sinned" (2:4), the ungodly people of the world, and even "spared not the old world" (2:5) itself. God destroyed it all to save 8 people. Surely, then, the believing remnant, which will number around 200,000 (the sealed 144,000 from the first 3 ½ years of tribulation plus all those saved in Israel during the last 3 ½ years of tribulation), can count on God to judge the ungodly of the tribulation period and spare the little flock (3:10-13).

Remember that II Peter 2 and Jude are parallel passages. As such, it is interesting to note that Peter mentions Noah, while Jude mentions Enoch. Noah and Enoch appear to be the only righteous people on the earth at the time. Enoch preached God's judgment (Jude 14-15), and then God raptured him away (Genesis 5:24). Noah was also saved, but he was saved by going through God's judgment on the earth. Similarly, the body of Christ will be raptured up (I Thessalonians 4:16-17), while believing Israel will have to endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 10:22).

Note that Noah is called "the eighth person" (2:5). This seems odd because Genesis 5 lists ten generations, not eight: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah. Jude 14 specifically says that Enoch was "the seventh from Adam." So, God counts Enoch as seven, and He counts Noah as eight. This means that God does not count Methuselah and Lamech as people. Rather, they must be "natural brute beasts" (2:12). The reason for this must be due to the polluted seed, due to devils having sex with women to create superhumans (Genesis 6:2-4). Since Noah was not polluted, this means that Methuselah's and Lamech's seed must have been polluted after they gave birth to Lamech and Noah, respectively. Methuselah lived 969 years (Genesis 5:27). He was 187 years old when he begat Lamech (Genesis 5:25), and Lamech was 182 years old when he begat Noah (Genesis 5:28). 969 years minus 187 minus 182 = 600 years. Thus, the infiltration of giants on the earth probably took place for 600 years.

Also, note that, not only was Noah "the eighth person" (2:5), but there were also "eight souls...saved by water" (I Peter 3:20). That is because the number eight is associated with resurrection or a new beginning.

2:6-7a In the first example (Noah), God judged the world just to spare 8, righteous people. Now, in the second example (Lot), God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah just to spare 1, righteous person. Surely, then, God will judge the Antichrist, apostate Israel, and all of the wickedness in the tribulation period in order to spare the believing remnant of Israel. You may think it odd to say that God destroys cities in order to save man. However, that is how God looks at it. Man looks at what man has made, which is why Abraham asked God to spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah if at least 10 righteous people are in them (Genesis 18:32). By contrast, God looks at His most prized creation, which is believing man, and does what He needs to do to save them. Therefore, God says that He will destroy the world in order to save believing Israel (Matthew 24:22).

2:6 says that “Sodom and Gomorrah” is “an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.” Genesis 19:24 says that God “rained...brimstone and fire” upon those cities. Therefore, God will also rain brimstone and fire upon the ungodly. We see this fulfilled in Revelation 20:9, after Jesus’ millennial reign on earth. Moreover, Jude 7 says that Sodom and Gomorrah is “an example [of] suffering the vengeance of ETERNAL fire.” Therefore, not only will God rain down fire from heaven upon unbelievers, but all unbelievers will also “be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched” (Mark 9:43,45).

2:7-8 Now, if you read of Lot in Genesis 19, you would not guess he was a righteous man, based on his actions there. 2:7-8 tells us that the wicked “vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds” (2:8). God saw how troubled Lot was and how the wicked around him affected his actions. Therefore, God decided it was time to get Lot out of there, because Sodom was unworthy of such a righteous man (Hebrews 11:38).

Similarly, the little flock may not present their “bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1). In fact, Matthew 25:5 states that most of saved Israel “slumbered and slept” during the tribulation period, meaning that they will not serve God during that time, much like it does not appear that Lot served God in Sodom and Gomorrah. Believing Israel is told to come out of Babylon (Revelation 18:4-5), but most will only come out kicking and screaming, as Lot did (Genesis 19:16-20).

Although they do not appear to be righteous, God recognizes that believing Israel sleeps through the tribulation period because of the wicked world around them. This wicked world has caused their souls to be distressed (Romans 8:23). Therefore, God delivers them from this wicked world at the end of the tribulation period. They will see and hear the wicked every day, just like Lot did (2:8). Because they have faith in God, the little flock’s souls will be vexed with what is going on, and God will deliver His just little flock from fiery judgment, like He delivered Lot (2:7) from the judgment of the world.

Another example of a vexed soul is Samson. Delilah kept trying to get Samson to reveal the secret of his strength. Finally, because “she pressed him daily with her

words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; That he told her all his heart” (Judges 16:16-17). This is what will happen to believing Israel. There “shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21), which will vex their soul to the point of not serving God.

We should also note that Ecclesiastes, which talks about the vanity of following after the things of this world, says no less than 10 times (1:14, 1:17, 2:11, 2:17, 2:22, 2:26, 4:4, 4:6, 4:16, and 6:9) that this is “vexation of spirit.”

Therefore, the true stories of Noah and Lot serve as examples to the little flock during the tribulation period, that: 1) God will judge and destroy the wicked in due time, 2) God will save the righteous and bring them into His kingdom, regardless of how few in number they may be, and 3) God will judge Satan and his realm into the lake of fire. In fact, 2:6 specifically says that God made “Sodom and Gomorrha ... an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly” (2:6). In other words, the ungodly of the tribulation period will have no excuse for not believing the gospel of the kingdom, because the ensample of Sodom and Gomorrha tells them that God’s judgment is “that they which commit such things are worthy of death” (Romans 1:32).

2:9 This verse is the conclusion of 2:4-8. In spite of the wickedness that prevails during the Antichrist’s day, the little flock needs to continue to have faith that God will deliver them out of the temptations of the tribulation period and will punish the unjust on the day of judgment. Therefore, they should not follow the apostate religion of the Antichrist during the tribulation period.

Actually, tribulation is how God delivers the godly out of temptations. In other words, all of the things of this world are a temptation to the flesh. When tribulation comes, believers recognize that their flesh is not what is important, and so they do not succumb to the temptation. That is why the tribulation period is known as God’s “refining fire,” by which believing Israel is purified of the lusts of their flesh so that they will be pleasing unto the Lord in the kingdom (Malachi 3:2-4).

Note also that this verse says that the ungodly are reserved “unto the day of judgment” (2:9). That is because that, while the righteous receive the kingdom at Jesus’ second coming, the unrighteous are not judged until the Great White Throne Judgment, which is after the millennial reign.

2:10-22 2:1 says that “there shall be false teachers among you.” 2:20-22 describes the people of 2:10-19 as people, who believed the gospel, but then were overcome by the world. The book of Jude is a parallel passage to II Peter 2, using many of the same words, and Jude 4 says that there “are certain men crept in unawares.” Therefore, the men, described in 2:10-22, are Jews, who once believed but have not gone into unbelief. As backslidden Jews, they decide to use the little flock and twist the scripture for their own profit. 2:3 says that “through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.” Therefore,

the greatest danger to the little flock is following the “damnable heresies” (2:1) of ungodly men, who are in their midst, because many will follow them (2:2), because they think they are godly men. Therefore, they will not compare their doctrine with the word of God rightly divided and will be led astray, as a result.

2:10-11 That is why, among those being punished on the day of judgment, these men are chief (2:10). They follow after riches and power, which means that they “walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness” (2:10).

Note that the first, specific thing mentioned against them is that they “despise governments” (2:10). This may seem like a good thing to the little flock. After all, the government will be ruled by the Antichrist, and he will be persecuting the little flock. So, he is bad. However, because “the powers that be are ordained of God” (Romans 13:1), resisting these powers means disobeying God (Romans 13:2), REGARDLESS OF HOW EVIL THOSE POWERS ARE. If you do not believe that, 2:11 says that, even the angels, “which are greater in power and might,” will not bring an accusation against the Antichrist and his rule in the tribulation period. Jude gives an even stronger example, saying that the highest ranking angel, the archangel Michael, would not bring a railing accusation against the devil himself, but left it up to the Lord to rebuke the devil (Jude 9). Therefore, although the little flock is in the right, they do not have the authority to speak evil of the Antichrist’s government. Therefore, the ungodly in the little flock are following their own will, rather than God’s will, by speaking “evil of dignities” (2:10). (How much more today, then, should we not speak evil of our rulers, even the worst ones, such as Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin!)

With that being said, the government, that Peter says these people are despising, is spiritual government. In other words, the “false teachers” (2:1) are despising God’s government of the little flock by teaching against what the elders have taught (I Peter 5:5-6).

The problem with these false teachers is that they are “selfwilled” (2:10). In other words, instead of doing God’s will of leading people to come to repentance so that they will not perish (3:9), they are doing their own will of working “all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:19). In other words, they are trying to get richer and richer in this world, resulting in them going against God’s will for Israel to be saved. Lucifer is the primary example of this, as he operated according to his will, rather than God’s will (Isaiah 14:13-14), which resulted in his fall (Isaiah 14:15). It should be no surprise, then, that Jesus called the false teachers of His day, children of the devil (John 8:44), and Peter says that these false teachers are “made to be taken and destroyed” (2:12).

2:12 Comparing this verse with Jude 10 will make the meaning of this verse clearer. “Natural brute beasts” means that speaking evil of government goes against the basic conscience that God gave man when he fell in Genesis 3. In other words, what separates man from animals is that man has a soul, a conscience, and is able to make decisions based upon what is right and what is wrong. Animals, on the other hand, operate solely on instinct. Since these false teachers

are not submitting to their conscience and the government that God set in place, they are just following the lusts of their flesh, which means that they are operating solely on instinct, as beasts do. Also, since they are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1), they are not really even men. Thus, they are called “natural brute beasts.” Since they are operating contrary to God’s plan, they are “made to be taken and destroyed” (2:12).

Because God set up the government, it is part of God’s plan to reconcile all things into Christ (Ephesians 1:10). Therefore, by speaking evil of it, they are really speaking evil of God’s plan. That is why Michael, the archangel, would not bring a railing accusation against the devil, but said that the Lord would rebuke him (Jude 9). In the case of II Peter 2, apostate Israel has spoken evil of God’s people. God’s people are in the right and apostate Israel is in the wrong, which is the opposite case of Michael with the devil. Since Michael would not dare speak out against the devil, how much more should apostate Israel not speak out against God! That is why these people will be destroyed by Jesus at His second coming.

2:13 God says that these unbelievers are like those who riot in the day time. If you riot in the day time, it is plain to all that you are causing disruption and chaos to an orderly society. Similarly, apostate Israel is speaking evil of God and His people. Thus, they are trying to disrupt God’s society by keeping people from enduring unto the end of the tribulation period and being saved. Therefore, they will be judged by God into hell.

As God looks at the little flock, He sees these ungodly men as spots and blemishes. In reference to the body of Christ, Christ says that He will wash us by the Word so that we have no spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27). Since the ungodly men of II Peter are spots, they must be destroyed. Israel, as the bride of Christ, will then be “without spot, and blameless” (3:14) in order for them to be holy so that Christ can marry them. Therefore, the little flock should not be feasting with them, but they do so to get in good with the Antichrist (Jude 16).

These “feasts” are on God’s Word, but the ungodly use God’s Word to feed their own deceivings. They parade around, making themselves look good to others by carrying their Bibles and quoting scripture. What they are really doing is “sporting themselves with their own deceivings” (2:13).

The word “sporting” is defined for you in your King James Bible in Genesis 26:8, where it is attributed to sexual foreplay. Today, the word “sport” is used for a game or being at play. So, if these people are “sporting themselves with their own deceivings” (2:13), they are trying to make their deception fun so that you will play along with it by believing them and giving them your money. The little flock should recognize this game and not have any part of it, because it is a game that everyone loses at. The reason they do this is that they covet the salvation that the little flock has in Christ (2:3).

The same goes on today. When people see you walk in the Spirit, their flesh covets those things (Galatians 5:17). Since the flesh is not on the same level as the spirit

but it still wants what the spirit has, a game is made out of the truth of God's Word. That game is called religion. In this way, religious folks are seen as playing right along with those believing the truth of God's Word. Because it appears that they can satisfy the flesh and still get the things of the Spirit, most people abandon the truth for fables due to their itching flesh (I Timothy 4:3-4). Thus, the flesh is satisfied while the spirit appears to be satisfied. This is the state of over 99% of Christians today.

Thus, Peter describes this as "sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you" (2:13). They are feasting in the flesh; the little flock should be feasting in the spirit. Apostate Israel is deceived and has fun with it in their flesh. The little flock should have no part with them, heeding the warning of Revelation 18:4 to "come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins."

2:14 Look at the contrast between the little flock and the ungodly in their midst. In the kingdom, the little flock "cannot sin" (I John 3:9), but the ungodly "cannot cease from sin" (2:14). When the ungodly looks at the little flock, their eyes are "full of adultery" (2:14). In other words, the ungodly serve their own "lust of uncleanness" (2:10) by using the little flock to make merchandise of them (2:3). They will talk out of one side of their mouths to "speak evil of dignities" (2:10). Then, they will talk out of the other side of their mouths to condemn members of the little flock to punishment, or even death, for the sake of money.

Judas Iscariot is an example of this. He was among Jesus and the apostles, yet he sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. That is what the ungodly tries to do with the members of the little flock. For those not grounded in the word of God, they beguile their unstable souls (2:14) by teaching them damnable heresies that cause them to deny the Lord and join apostate Israel on the Antichrist's side (2:1). They have exercised their hearts with covetous practices (2:14), such that they "have forsaken the right way" (2:15). Such "exercise" makes them better at their "sport" among believers (2:13).

Jesus warned that they are ravening wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). They mock the little flock (Jude 18), looking like them. However, because they are of their father, the devil (John 8:44 and Jude 19), all they can do is sin (Romans 7:18). Thus, spiritually speaking, they are in bed with Babylon (Revelation 17:1-5; Hosea 1:2), which is why they are said to have "eyes full of adultery" (2:14).

2:15-16 Balaam is an example from the Old Testament of these ungodly men. Balaam heard the word of God and believed it, saying that "the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you" (Numbers 22:12-13). Then, he was bribed with honour and money, and Balaam went unto Balak, even though God told him not to go (Numbers 22:17-21), such that God had to make a dumb ass speak to him to keep God from killing him because of his disobedience (Numbers 22:22-31).

Similarly, these ungodly, among the little flock, had God's Word to them, since they were Jews. Then, the Antichrist dangled honour and money in front of them, and they forsook the right way, loving the wages of unrighteousness better (2:15).

So, they began to follow and teach “damnable heresies” that deny the Lord (2:1), and they got many people to follow them (2:2). Balaam would not listen to the voice of the Lord directly. It took a dumb ass to set him straight. However, apostate Israel will not be set straight, even though they have sheep, i.e., the little flock, speaking to them the things of God, and they will not listen. Why? Because they went “in the way of Cain” (Jude 11), which is religion. They then used that religion to go for material rewards, like Balaam did (Jude 11). Their end result will be the way of “Core” (Jude 11), which is for the earth to swallow them up and for God to consume them with fire (Numbers 16:32-35).

2:17 “Wells without water” and “clouds that are carried with a tempest” (2:17) are things that appear, from the outside, to quench the thirsty soul, but there is no relief on the outside. The point is that these ungodly men appear to be godly because they speak of God in a positive manner and use the Bible. However, when you look at the substance of their message and compare it with God’s Word for their dispensation, you find that there is none. Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 23:25-28 by saying that they appear beautiful on the outside, but are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness on the inside. Therefore, the only substance they have is the lies of the devil.

Their words are dark. Therefore, darkness is reserved for them for ever. Note that the parallel passage in Jude 13 says that “the blackness of darkness” is reserved for them for ever. In other words, not only will they go to hell, but they will also be in the worst part of hell, because they are not just in darkness, but they are in “the blackness of darkness.” (In Matthew 23:15, Jesus also revealed that there are degrees of punishment in hell.)

2:18 When Lucifer rebelled against God, his words were selfwilled (2:10) and prideful (Isaiah 14:12-14). So, too, are the ungodly’s words in Israel. Psalm 39:5 says that “every man at his best state is altogether vanity.” Since their words are vanity, they exalt the flesh and blaspheme God.

The little flock, by believing God’s promises to them under the law covenant, “were clean escaped” (2:18) from living according to the lusts of the flesh. However, they still have the flesh within them, and “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit” (Galatians 5:17). Therefore, although the ungodly may come into the little flock and speak damnable heresies and deny the Lord (2:1), what they say appeals to their flesh, and it is cloaked in a “form of godliness” (II Timothy 3:5). Therefore, some of the little flock is allured away “through the lusts of the flesh [and] through much wantonness” (2:18). These members of the little flock “were clean escaped” (2:18) from living after the flesh, but now they are living in the flesh again, following the “pernicious ways” of the ungodly (2:2). Thus, they lose their salvation, since Jesus said that “whomsoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father” (Matthew 10:33). This shows how dangerous these people are and why II Peter 2 and Jude are devoted to warning the little flock about them. Therefore, instead of following these heretics, the little flock should believe God and His Word, so that they can save others from the fires of hell themselves (Jude 23).

Although we cannot lose our salvation today in the dispensation of grace, the same forces of Satan are predominant today to keep the body of Christ from filling the positions God has for us in heavenly places. The pulpits of today's churches are filled with ministers of Satan (II Corinthians 11:13-15), and believers are so far gone into wantonness and lust that they happily follow Satan's lies, trampling the Word of God and making it look vulgar.

2:19 The promise, of these ungodly men, is liberty. By believing the gospel of the kingdom, the little flock agrees to put themselves back under God's law covenant with them. In comparison to the bondage of religion, this yoke of the law "is easy, and [its] burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). However, the flesh sees the restrictions of the law as bondage. Therefore, when the ungodly promise the little flock liberty, they believe it, because they do not have to follow God's law any more. However, the truth is that liberty is only found in Christ. For believing Israel, this means that the old covenant, that God made with them, is "the law of liberty" (James 1:25 and 2:12). Following religion and the lusts of the flesh bring you into bondage, making you "the servants of corruption" (2:19). This is confirmed by Hebrews 2:14-15, which says that, before they were saved, the little flock was "all their lifetime subject to bondage." Therefore, instead of being freed by following apostate Israel's religion, the little flock is overcome with "the pollutions of the world" (2:20), just like Revelation 13:7 prophesied would happen.

2:20-21 Note that the way of escape from "the pollutions of the world" (2:20) is not religion or man's philosophy. The way of escape is "the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2:20). This means that they have the knowledge that Jesus' death on the cross made Him "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), such that His sacrifice on the cross provides atonement for their sins. It is this knowledge that causes them to repent, or change their minds, about making into God's kingdom based upon their own righteousness. Instead, they will trust in God's imputed righteousness to them by putting themselves under God's law covenant with them. Being under God's program, then, and not Satan's program, causes them to escape Satan's program.

Since Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), they have, then, escaped the pollutions of the world. Yet, these ungodly people tell them that liberty comes from forsaking God's law covenant with them, and their flesh is lustful enough for them to buy into this polluted way of thinking, such that some of the members of the little flock get entangled again by the things of this world. Then, instead of being overcomers with Christ and being part of His eternal kingdom on earth (Revelation 2:7), they are overcome themselves by Satan (Revelation 13:7).

In this status, the end result is worse for them than if they never believed in the first place. In order to understand this, we need to understand what salvation does for them. Before they were saved, they were under the Mosaic law. This was "the mount that might be touched" (Hebrews 12:18). In other words, the Mosaic law had to do with their flesh. Thus, the sacrifices, under that law, "sanctifieth to the purifying of the FLESH" (Hebrews 9:13), but they did not take away the sin on

their SOULS (Hebrews 10:4). Then, they believed the gospel of the kingdom, and “the blood of Christ” purged their “conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14). In other words, Christ shed His blood “to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:28) so that they now “are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). Since their sins are purged with Jesus’ sacrifice, Hebrews 12:18 says that “ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched.” Instead, they “are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (Hebrews 12:22-24). In other words, they have believed the gospel, putting them under the “holy commandment” (2:21), which is love (John 13:34), as will be explained later. If they “fall away” from this commandment (Hebrews 6:6), which means that they stop believing in Jesus to save them (Luke 8:13) and pledge their allegiance to the Antichrist instead, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26).

That is because, since they have been brought to Jesus Christ and the heavenly Jerusalem by believing the gospel, if they then pledge allegiance to the Antichrist, “they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:6). Since Jesus only died once (Hebrews 10:10) and they need Him to die twice, having crucified Him to themselves afresh, all they have now is “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:27), and they are now the adversaries. Thus, because God has brought them to heavenly Jerusalem by them believing the gospel of the kingdom and there is no sacrifice for sins to cover them pledging allegiance to the Antichrist, then “our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29). In other words, He will consume them with the eternal fires of hell. Thus, “the latter end is worse with them than the beginning” (2:20). They actually would have been better off if they would have not “known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2:21). That is because, if they never believed the gospel of the kingdom, they could still believe it and be saved. But, if they believe it and then bow down to the image of the beast, they have committed the unpardonable sin and cannot regain their salvation.

This “holy commandment,” specifically, refers to the new commandment Jesus gave the little flock to love one another as Jesus loves them (John 13:34). It is holy, because only believers can follow that commandment. So, here in 2:21, we see people, who were believers in the gospel of the kingdom, but then they turned away from Jesus’ commandment to love other members of the little flock, opting instead to gain honour and money in the Antichrist’s kingdom by selling the little flock down the river. But, because they profess God, “the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2:2), such that they will now lead others astray and keep some from not believing the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, they will receive a greater punishment in the lake of fire than those, who never believe, because, at least the lifetime unbelievers are not called by God’s name, only to blaspheme it.

For us today, in the body of Christ, we cannot lose our salvation, because we are in a different position. God has already seated us together with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6), because we have already been adopted as God’s sons

(Galatians 4:5-7), because we have already received forgiveness of sins (Romans 5:9,11). Thus, our sin has already been judged. Therefore, if we sin afterward, that sin is covered by the blood of Christ. However, for Israel in their program, they are standing in the place of judgment before Christ during the tribulation period (Hebrews 12:22-24). They do not receive forgiveness of sin until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-20 and I Peter 1:7-9). They do not become God's adopted sons and receive their inheritance until then (Revelation 21:7). Therefore, if Israel commits the "willful sin" (Hebrews 10:26) of taking the mark of the beast or bowing down to the image of the beast, they have turned from the holy commandment Jesus gave them (2:21). In other words, they are not loving others (John 13:34) so that men know they are Jesus' disciples (John 13:35), which will lead men to believe the gospel of the kingdom. Instead, they tell the world they follow God by becoming the Antichrist's disciples. Thus, Jesus will deny them before the Father (Matthew 10:33), and they will burn forever in the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). Therefore, God's different treatment of Israel in the tribulation period versus us today in the body of Christ has to do with our respective positions. The body of Christ is already with Christ in heavenly places, and so we already have salvation. Israel is standing before Christ in judgment ("Behold, the judge standeth before the door" of the sheepfold (James 5:9).), and so they can deny Christ and lose their salvation.

Now, you may say, "How do you know that taking the mark of the beast or worshipping his image is the unpardonable sin?" That's easy. It is because God says that "if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God..., and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...for ever and ever" (Revelation 14:9-11). God says this about no other sin; thus, making it the unpardonable sin.

2:22 The reason dogs eat their own vomit and pigs wallow in the mud is to give us visual illustrations of people, who believe the gospel of the kingdom and then turn away, aligning themselves with the Antichrist instead. In the case of the ungodly in the little flock, their returning unto the ways of the world shows that they were never changed in the first place. They were dogs and pigs (both are unclean animals) before they believed the gospel, and, by returning to the things of the world, they show that they are still unclean. Because they have committed the unpardonable sin, they cannot be saved. That is why Jesus told the little flock: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6). It is no accident, then, that both dogs and pigs are mentioned in Matthew 7:6 and in II Peter 2:22!

"The true proverb" (2:22) referenced here is Proverbs 26:11, where it says that a fool returns to folly like a dog returns to vomit, showing that the man in the tribulation period, who gives up eternity in God's kingdom for rewards in the Antichrist's kingdom, is a fool.

3 This chapter is meant to "stir up" (v. 1) the faith of the little flock so that they will continue to hold to the promise of Jesus' coming (v. 4), even though there are

scoffers in the last days (v. 3). The flood, in Noah's day, serves as an example that everyone knows of how God has the power to bring judgment against the ungodly (vs. 5-7). The little flock should look forward to that time when righteousness will dwell on the new earth (v. 13). In the meantime, they should not believe the scoffers when they say that God is not coming (v. 4). Rather, they should realize that God is longsuffering, not wanting anyone to perish (v.9). In fact, the dispensation of grace is proof that God is longsuffering (v. 15). Once that dispensation is over, Israel's program will resume, and they can use God's longsuffering during the tribulation period as a time of growth, in which they depend on God's grace and grow in the knowledge of their Saviour; thus, bringing glory to God, both now and for ever more (v. 18).

3:1 Because the little flock has believed the gospel of the kingdom, their minds are pure (3:1). In other words, their minds are pure because they now have the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16). The problem is that they are living in a world with ungodly minds. False prophets and teachers will be in their midst (2:1) who have corrupt minds (2:12,19; II Timothy 3:8). There is a great danger of not using their pure minds because of what is all around them. Therefore, Peter writes this second epistle to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance" (3:1).

3:2 Since the words were "spoken BEFORE," as opposed to being spoken right now, "the holy prophets" would be a reference to the Old Testament plus the words of Jesus in Matthew – John. Then, "the commandment of us the apostles" would be the ministry of the 12 apostles (Paul is not included here) from Acts 1 forward. Although II Peter was written after Acts 9 after the mystery dispensation began, Peter agreed that the 12 apostles would continue their ministry to the circumcision, i.e., Jews saved under the prophecy program (Galatians 2:9), and that is what Peter does with this epistle. He reminds the little flock of the promises of God to Israel under the law covenant and the commandment of God through the apostles of the specific instructions applicable to the little flock in the tribulation period.

This verse can also be used as a proof text that II Peter is written to Israel in their program, and not to us today in the dispensation of grace. That is because Peter reminds them "of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets" (3:2). Therefore, Peter's message was a continuation "of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). By contrast, Paul's message was "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 11:25). Therefore, Peter's message and audience are different from Paul.

3:3-4 First, the little flock needs to understand that people will mock them and scoff at what they say. These scoffers "come in the last days" (3:3) because the devil knows he has a short time (Revelation 12:12). Therefore, the devil ratchets up his attack on believers. The same thing can be observed in the dispensation of grace. We are told that perilous times will come in the last days of the dispensation of grace (II Timothy 3:1); thus, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Timothy 3:13).

Since the devil's deception program is so strong during the tribulation period and the little flock is to preach the gospel of the kingdom to Israel (Matthew 10:5-7), God sends the Holy Ghost to combat these scoffers (Acts 2:17-21). Various signs and wonders will be performed through the little flock (Mark 16:17-18) to confirm the gospel of the kingdom is true (Mark 16:20). These signs will make them quite popular (Acts 5:14-16). This will cause apostate Israel to desire these crowds, and the Antichrist will perform "signs and lying wonders" to support his claims, as well (II Thessalonians 2:9). Apostate Israel will then get many in Israel to follow them because unbelievers will want to continue to follow the lusts of their flesh, and so they will scoff at the warning of God's judgment.

They will say that they can continue to do what they want to because the Messiah has not come and never will come. They say that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (3:4). This shows their unbelief and their lack of Bible knowledge. Today's Pentecostals are less versed in scripture than other Christian denominations because they go after emotionalism and feelings, rather than after truth. So, too, these scoffers will only know key verses taken out of context to support their lies. Therefore, they do not even know that scripture promises a Messiah, much less that He already came and died for their sins. (This is taken from the fact that they say "where is THE PROMISE of His coming," rather than, "where is His coming.") Therefore, the little flock needs to be on the lookout for these emotionalists so that these scoffers do not cause them to lose their faith. (Jude warns of the same thing in Jude 1:18-19).

3:5-7 Some people use these verses to support the gap theory, i.e., that a world existed with people on it between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. While this theory may be true, 3:5-6 refers to Noah's flood. We know this because 3:5 says "they WILLINGLY are ignorant" of this event. This means that there must be clear information in scripture about this event, and they have chosen not to read and believe it. Since the gap theory is not clearly true, 3:5-6 must be referring to Noah's flood.

Therefore, not only are these ungodly men ignorant of the Messiah's first and second comings, but they also do not know about Noah's flood. As I mentioned previously, they are Bible ignoramuses. They only know certain verses to support their lies. The Messiah's comings and Noah's flood are two of the most significant events in the Bible. In Jesus' first coming, He paid the penalty for sin. Recognizing this event means that they would have to recognize that they are sinners. Noah's flood brought judgment upon sinners. Jude promises that Jesus will come later and "execute judgment upon all" the ungodly (Jude 15), and Noah's flood is proof that God has the power to do this. Therefore, recognizing both events means they would have to recognize they are sinners and that God will judge them with death for their sins. This goes against the flesh and Satan's lie program. Therefore, "they WILLINGLY are ignorant" of these events, much like the world, for the most part, is today.

In Noah's day, the world perished by water. Now, in the tribulation period, "the heaven and the earth" are ready to perish again, this time by fire (3:7). Jesus said,

“As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37). No one believed Noah that judgment was coming (2:5). Therefore, it should be no surprise that there will be scoffers in the last days, who also will make fun of the idea of God coming to judge the world for their sins. Yet, Jude 15 says that God’s judgment will be on “ungodly sinners.” The example of Noah proves that God’s judgment of ungodly men has happened before, and it will happen again. In order to continue in their ungodly deeds, apostate Israel chooses to ignore all Biblical evidence of God’s judgment of man.

Note that 3:5 says that the earth stands “out of the water and in the water.” Genesis 1:6 says that God created “a firmament in the midst of the waters,” and it divides “the water from the waters.” This shows that the universe is covered in water, and God put the earth and the firmament in the middle of the water. Therefore, in Noah’s day, all God had to do was to let that firmament give way, and the earth was destroyed by a flood. Of course, God promised never to destroy the earth by water again (Genesis 9:14-16).

Therefore, “the heavens and the earth ... are kept in store” (3:7) now to be destroyed by fire on the day of judgment. When something is kept in store, it is reserved for a specific purpose. This means that God has already decided to destroy the heavens and the earth, but He has not done so yet, because He is waiting for people to be saved (3:9). Therefore, instead of scoffing at God’s judgment, apostate Israel should be afraid of it and thank God that they still have a chance to repent.

Note that 3:7 says that fire is reserved “against the day of judgment and PERDITION of ungodly men.” Judas Iscariot and the Antichrist are the only ones called “the son of perdition” in the Bible (John 17:12; II Thessalonians 2:3). Now, we are told of the “perdition of ungodly men” (3:7). This means they will be eternally damned. This means that the current heaven and earth will be destroyed at the same time they are, which is confirmed by Revelation 20:11.

Finally, note that God brought rain as judgment in Noah’s day. Then, He put His bow (rainbow) in the sky as a token of His promise that He will never destroy the earth by water again (Genesis 9:13-16). Because this is an everlasting covenant, God’s bow can still be seen today. While this reminds us that God will not destroy the earth with water again, it still reminds us of God’s judgment upon the earth. With regard to fire, God sent a warning to the earth first, by destroying Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, and the total destruction of the earth by fire will come later, although God also has volcanoes as fire reminders today. Therefore, man is not ignorant of God’s power to judge the earth. Moreover, Romans 1:32 says that ungodly man knows that his deeds have made him worthy of death. Therefore, man knows he should be destroyed, but he chooses to ignore all of the evidence against him, so that he can continue to indulge in the lusts of his flesh.

3:8 People use this verse to say that God is outside of time; therefore, time flies when you are spending eternity in heaven. While that is true, that is not with this verse is primarily saying. “The day of the Lord” is a reference to God’s time of

judging man. At His second coming, God does judge the wicked (Revelation 19:15). However, many survive Jesus' second coming to live as Gentiles in the millennial reign. It is only after the millennial reign that God destroys the earth by fire and replaces it with a new heaven and earth (Revelation 20:5, 20:13-15, and 21:1-2). Therefore, God's complete judgment is delayed for 1,000 years after Jesus' second coming.

The reference in 3:8, then, is a warning for the unbelieving Gentiles to be sure to obey the Lord during the millennial reign, so that they will have faith in God when His eternal judgment comes upon them at the end of the reign. "The day of the Lord" may stretch over a 1,000-year period, but, because there will be peace on earth, "a thousand years [is] as one day" (3:8). Therefore, the Gentiles, that are spared God's judgment at Jesus' second coming, had better believe God in order to avoid being consumed by fire when the heavens and the earth pass away. Psalm 90 confirms this interpretation of II Peter 3:8. Psalm 90:3 speaks of God's judgment. Psalm 90:4 says 1,000 years is like one day. Then, Psalm 90:5 says that God "carriest them away as with a flood." Thus, we see Jesus' 2nd coming (Psalm 90:3), followed by the millennial reign (Psalm 90:4), followed by the Great White Throne Judgment (Psalm 90:5).

Note also, from 3:12, that the little flock should be "hasting unto the coming of the day of God." Therefore, 3:8 is also a warning to believing Israel that, since 1,000 years with the Lord is like a day, when they are with the Lord for 1,000 years in the millennial reign, they need to be working the whole time to get the law to the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19-20). This is especially true in light of the fact that, at the end of the millennial reign, Satan is able to amass such a large force against God that we are told that the number of them "is as the sand of the sea" (Revelation 20:8).

3:9 The fact, that "the heavens and the earth...are kept in store" for judgment (3:7) is critical to understand in light of 3:9. Since God will wait 1,000 years after the end of the tribulation period before bringing final judgment upon the world, some may say that "The Lord is ... slack concerning His promise" of judgment (3:9). In other words, saved Jews in the millennial reign may say, "What's taking the Lord so long? Is He lazy?" This verse answers this question, letting the reader know that God delays His second coming until after the tribulation period so that Israel may be saved, and He delays the Great White Throne Judgment until after the millennial reign, so that Gentiles may be saved in the kingdom. Therefore, the "longsuffering" of God refers to God waiting for both Jews and Gentiles to believe the gospel of the kingdom so that the whole earth may be reconciled back to God (Exodus 19:5-6; Zechariah 8:23). Thus, God delays judgment because He wants all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4). The longer He delays His judgment of man, the more opportunity man has to have eternal life with Him. Therefore, He delays judgment in the hope that all will come to repentance (3:9). (As we will learn in 3:15, the whole dispensation of grace is at least a 2,000-year delay of God's judgment so that even more people are saved.)

This understanding leads to the conclusion that II Peter 3:9 and I Timothy 2:4 show that individual predestination is false. If God predestinated certain individuals to heaven and certain individuals to hell, why does He say that He wants “ALL” men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4) and is not willing that ANY should perish (3:9)? The Calvinists will say, “All men’ refers to all who God has predestinated to be saved.” However, that explanation does not account for the longsuffering of God. God suffers with ungodly men because he is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Habakkuk 1:13). Therefore, to eliminate His suffering, why did not God, for example, save the first 10 million people to be born and not send anyone to hell? After all, why suffer long if He does not have to? I Peter 3:20 says that “the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” God waited 100 years just for eight souls to be saved! That is a pretty stupid thing to do if He does not have to! No one needs to go to hell. After all, hell was “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41), not for humans. Therefore, the fact that God is “not willing that any should perish” (3:9) means that individual predestination must be false.

3:10 As has already been mentioned, “the day of the Lord” refers both to God’s judgment at Jesus’ second coming and God’s judgment at the end of the millennial reign. The reference to His coming “as a thief in the night” refers to Jesus’ second coming, since the night of the tribulation period is over and Jesus steals away Satan’s people to bring them into judgment, as Matthew 24:37-44 says. Jesus is a thief because “the goodman of the house” (Matthew 24:43) is the Antichrist and apostate Israel watching over Satan’s house. Then, Jesus comes as a thief, stealing away those who belong to Him.

Jesus comes “in the night,” because the tribulation period is referred to as nighttime in the Bible, e.g., Psalm 30:5 and Matthew 14:25. In other words, the tribulation period is a time of spiritual darkness. To symbolize this, God turns off the lights once the tribulation period is over. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light” (Matthew 24:29). Believing Israel then waits in darkness for Jesus’ second coming “to bring...them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Isaiah 42:7). Also, at His second coming, Jesus will tell Israel: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:1-2). Also, see Micah 7:7-8 which says, “I will wait for the God of my salvation....When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.”

Jesus’ coming is a surprise to Satan. This is seen by Jesus’ statement in Luke 12:39-40 that, “if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” Therefore, when God turns out the lights at the end of the tribulation period, Satan thinks he has won. After all, he is the ruler “of the darkness of this world” (Ephesians 6:12), and the whole world will be in darkness at that time.

Then, there is the 1,000-year millennial reign of Christ on earth before the second part of 3:10 is fulfilled, i.e., the part about the heavens and the earth passing away. Thus, the day of the Lord encompasses a 1,000-year period of grace. This verse makes it seem like it happens all at once. That is because it is not until Revelation 20:4 that God reveals that there will be a millennial reign, thus creating the two, different times of God's judgment.

The same is true of the Messiah, as prophesied in the Old Testament. Isaiah 61:1-3 talks about the Messiah's coming, but the first part happens at His first coming and the second part happens at His second coming. Jesus tells Israel this in Luke 4:17-21, when He reads the first part of the Isaiah passage and says: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He closed the book on the second part of the passage, showing that that part will not be fulfilled until a future day—the day of the Lord. Therefore, it should not surprise us to see God do the same thing in II Peter 3:10 regarding "the day of the Lord."

Also, note that 3:10 says that "the works that are therein shall be burned up." The reason why the earth has to be burned up and replaced is because it has been polluted (2:20) through Satan's works. Hebrews 11:3 says that, by faith, Israel understands "that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." The things, seen in the tribulation period, are the works of men and of Satan. These things need to disappear in order for a holy God to cause His things appear and for Him to live on earth forever with Israel (Revelation 21:3 and 22:5).

3:11 Just like in Hebrews 11:3, the things of Satan and of man are referred to, here, as "these things." Since "these things shall be dissolved" (3:11), the little flock should not be involved in them. Rather, they should be obeying God's law and His commandments to them for the tribulation period, because only the things of God last forever (II Corinthians 4:18). Then, they will have godliness and holy conversation or lifestyles.

They should not fear the Antichrist, because he is only able to destroy the body, while God can destroy the soul (Matthew 10:28). Instead, they should say: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118:6).

3:12 The "looking for" part of this verse refers to preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6) so that all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26) at Jesus' second coming. The "hasting" part of this verse refers to the millennial reign, when saved Israel will "go... and teach all nations..., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever" Jesus commanded them (Matthew 28:19-20). In other words, they will teach the nations the Mosaic law, and Jesus will make sure the nations follow that law by ruling the world with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:7-9). Then, the nations will go with the Jews to Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:23), and Israel will finally be a kingdom of priests to the world (Isaiah 61:6). As such, they will be "hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (3:12), preparing the world for their judgment at the end of the millennial reign.

Once the millennial reign is over, Satan will come to deceive the nations, God will destroy Satan and his army (Revelation 20:7-10), and THEN the heavens will be dissolved (3:12) and the earth will be burned up (3:10).

3:13 Then, there will be “new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” (3:13), meaning that the works of Satan, including those following Satan, will be burned. Therefore, Israel, according to God’s promise, should look for Jesus’ second coming so that they may be part of God’s eternal kingdom on the new earth, and so they can hasten the Gentiles during the millennial reign unto the coming of the day of God so that the Gentiles, also, may be part of God’s eternal kingdom on earth during the millennial reign.

The way Jesus brings Israel into the kingdom is that He goes to the sheepfold of Israel (John 10:16), gathers the sheep (Isaiah 40:10-11), leads them into His Father’s house (John 14:2-3) for the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9) to “dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Psalm 23:6).

3:14 Saved Israel knows “that all these things” of Satan “shall be dissolved” (3:11); therefore, they “look for such things” of God that belong to the new heavens and the new earth (3:13-14). This is the faith of Hebrews 11:3. They understand that the “things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Because during the tribulation period the little flock only sees the new heavens and the new earth by faith, they need to be diligent to keep looking to God’s Word written for their program so that they remain “without spot and blameless” (3:14), as opposed to the ungodly in their midst, who are “spots ... and blemishes” (2:13). Being diligent also means that they need to watch for the deception of Satan (Matthew 24:4,42), lest they lose their salvation (Matthew 24:13).

3:15 Most people in the world see God’s longsuffering and view it as God’s inability to fulfill His promises to Israel (3:9), or as a sign that God’s judgment is not coming (3:4). Instead of taking one of these views, the little flock should see God’s longsuffering as a chance for more of Israel to be saved (3:9). God’s extension of man’s time on the earth to give them more time to be saved is also seen in the mystery dispensation given to the apostle Paul.

When Jesus stood at the right hand of God in Acts 7:55, instead of destroying His enemies, as prophecy said He would (Psalm 110:1), He stood and offered grace and peace to the whole world (“grace and peace” are mentioned in Romans 1:7 and at the start of every one of Paul’s epistles). Therefore, the interruption in the prophecy program, known as the mystery program (Ephesians 3:2-6), that had begun not too long before Peter wrote this second epistle, is yet another demonstration of the longsuffering of the Lord resulting in salvation. It should not surprise us, then, that God will suffer with the Jews for 7 years and with the Gentiles for 1,000 years in Israel’s program in the future.

Note that Peter distinguishes Paul’s wisdom as being separate from the wisdom given to Israel by saying, “according to the wisdom given UNTO HIM” (3:15). This is because Paul’s wisdom came not from the 12 apostles, or anyone else for that

matter, but it came “by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-12). Now, when Peter says that Paul wrote “unto you” (3:15), it does not mean that he wrote to Israel, because his wisdom is different from the wisdom for Israel’s program. However, just like all scripture is profitable to us today (II Timothy 3:16), all scripture is also profitable to Israel’s program. Therefore, Paul’s epistles are also for the profit of those saved in Israel’s program, which makes them be “unto” the little flock.

3:16 Note from this verse that Peter calls Paul’s epistles “scripture” by putting them on the same level as “other scriptures” (3:16). This tells us two things: 1) The canon of scripture was not established by some heathen, Catholic council 300 years after they were written, as Christianity would have you believe. Rather, before II Peter was even written, some of Paul’s epistles were already established as scripture by the prophets (I Corinthians 14:37) Jesus gave to the mystery dispensation (Ephesians 4:11-13), showing that the Holy Ghost establishes scripture—not some “official” religious council! and 2) Paul’s epistles are just as much scripture and authoritative as Matthew – John are. Since all scripture comes from God (II Timothy 3:16), it is ALL on the same level of authority. Jesus’ “red letters” in Matthew – John are not any more God’s words than Paul’s epistles are God’s words. In fact, Paul’s epistles should be elevated today, because they are the only words of God written specifically to us today, and we must understand Paul’s epistles before we can understand the rest of the Bible today (II Timothy 2:7). Christians elevate Matthew – John above the Old Testament, saying that the gospels have replaced the Old Testament. So, too, we should elevate Romans – Philemon above Matthew – John, seeing that Paul’s epistles have replaced Matthew – John as scripture that is written to us today.

Now, the reason that Peter says that there are some things in Paul’s epistles that are hard to understand is because Paul’s epistles were not written to those in Israel’s program. Since Peter wrote to Israel, it is harder to understand books not written to them, just like it is harder for us to understand books not written to us today, such as Daniel and Revelation. Today, since we have the Holy Spirit to teach us the things of God (I Corinthians 2:9-16), we can understand Paul’s epistles. The things that are hard for US to understand are the future events of the tribulation period, since they are not part of our program.

People, who “are unlearned and unstable[,] wrest” (3:16) Paul’s scriptures. They wrest the other scriptures, as well. In other words, they take the scripture and change them to mean something that they do not say in order to satisfy their own fleshly desires. They do this because they are unstable in the faith. They fall from faith to cater to the lusts of the flesh. Then, they ease their guilty consciences and justify their sinful deeds by twisting the scripture. That is why religious people are so much harder to reach with the gospel than unbelievers. Unbelievers know they are lost and need help. Religious people think they are okay because of their religious practice. Therefore, when you tell them they are lost, they do not believe you.

Note also that these people “are unlearned” (3:16). Paul says they are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (II Timothy 3:7). Therefore, they may know their philosophies and sound real knowledgeable. However, when it comes to the truth of God’s Word rightly divided, they are unlearned. Therefore, those, who wrest the scriptures, are unbelievers, which is why they wrest them “unto their own destruction” (3:16). The same applies today, except that they cannot lose their salvation, if they have believed the gospel of grace at one time or another. Since Christianity wants to justify feeding the lusts of their flesh and they “can do nothing against the truth” (II Corinthians 13:8), they will attack Bible believers by calling us heretics following a cult, when the truth is that they are the heretics, not us.

3:17 As long as the little flock maintains the proper perspective, they will do fine. They need to continue to look for the promises of God and not go after the things of man found in the Antichrist’s kingdom. However, since many wrest the scriptures unto their own destruction (3:16), the little flock needs to beware that they do not fall into the trap of using scripture to justify sinful actions. If they do that, they will be “led away with the error of the wicked” (3:17).

3:18 Instead of being led away with the error of the wicked, the little flock should “grow in grace” (3:18). This means that, as trials come their way, they are to meet those trials with faith in God’s Word, approaching God’s throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) by reading and believing God’s Word to them, which will keep them from following the lusts of the flesh. This is not the grace program for us today, as the little flock is under the Mosaic law (Matthew 23:2-3 and 28:20). Rather, it is approaching God through his Word and prayer, asking for God’s grace to endure unto the end of the tribulation period.

Since this involves reading God’s Word, growing in grace means growing “in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (3:18). This means understanding Hebrews, finding out what the crosswork of Christ means to Israel and how His sacrifice atones for their sins. This will be important, especially when the Antichrist is offering polluted sacrifices in the temple. The temptation will be to follow the crowd and go into that religious system. Instead, if they come into the knowledge of Jesus Christ, they will understand that God brought a better sacrifice than what the Levites brought, and so they are still saved if they do not offer sacrifices under the Antichrist’s system.

In Acts 2:36, Peter says that God has made Jesus “both Lord and Christ,” meaning that He is both their Messiah (“the Christ” and their judge (“the Lord”)). However, for those forsaking the religious system and bringing themselves back under God’s law covenant with them, Jesus is also called their “Saviour.” Peter mentioned this also in 2:20. Therefore, Jesus is both Lord and Christ over all; however, He is only the Saviour of those with faith in what God has told them. It is this faith that will cause the little flock to read God’s Word to grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Saviour so that they do not wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (v. 16).

Glory comes to Jesus by knowledge. 2:20 says that the knowledge of Jesus keeps the little flock from following the world, and 3:18 says the same thing. Since it is Jesus Christ, Who causes the little flock to rise above the world in the tribulation period, He receives glory when they do so. This is the glory that is “now” (3:18). Then, in God’s kingdom, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14). This knowledge causes the Gentiles to rise above their flesh, and it causes saved Israel to obey God’s law perfectly under the new covenant. This is the glory that belongs to Jesus Christ “for ever” (3:18). Therefore, the trials of the tribulation period result in Israel being saved and coming into the knowledge of the Lord, such that Jesus Christ gets the glory, both in the tribulation period and for all eternity. Amen!

I John Introduction

Just like there is a progression of doctrine in Paul's epistles, there is also a progression of doctrine in the Hebrew epistles. I Corinthians 13:13 says, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three."

In Paul's epistles, faith doctrine is given in Romans. Corinthians corrects the practical application of that doctrine. Galatians corrects a lack of knowing the faith doctrine in Romans. Similarly, in the Hebrew epistles, faith doctrine is given in Hebrews. James corrects the practical application of that doctrine. Peter corrects a lack of knowing the faith doctrine in Hebrews.

In Paul's epistles, charity doctrine is given in Ephesians. Philippians corrects the practical application of that doctrine. Colossians corrects a lack of knowing the charity doctrine in Ephesians. In the Hebrew epistles, charity doctrine is given in I John, II & III John correct the practical application of the doctrine, and Jude corrects a lack of knowing the love doctrine. Finally, in Paul's epistles, Thessalonians covers the hope doctrine by talking about the rapture of the church for God's kingdom to be in heavenly places. Similarly, in the Hebrew epistles, Revelation covers the hope doctrine by talking about Jesus' second coming to establish His kingdom on earth.

Note that I John uses the plural pronoun of "we" throughout the epistle, except in chapter 2 and in 5:13,16, where "I" is used. As such, the author of the book never identifies himself. It is probably John since the language of the book is similar to the gospel of John. But, it does not really matter who wrote the book. What is important is that, the fact that "we" is used so much, shows the unity of the little flock of believers in Christ that comes about by God's love. Charity is essential for unbelievers to be saved, as Jesus told His disciples, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34). Therefore, it is no coincidence that unity is emphasized by Paul's epistle on charity—Ephesians (see Ephesians 4:3-6)—and by the little flock of Israel's epistle on charity—I John.

Therefore, I John is written to believing Israel to get them to demonstrate God's love to others so that they also may be saved. I John is also written to the lost sheep of Israel, who have not believed yet. I make this statement based on passages, such as 1:8-10, where John says that they have sin that needs to be confessed. A similar emphasis is also seen in John 1:11-13, which says that Jesus' own did not receive Him, but He gave "power to become the sons of God" to those who did receive Him. In other words, Israel as a whole rejected Jesus, but there was a believing remnant who believed, and John's audience—both in John and in I John—is written to this remnant.

I John says that, if a man is born again ("Born again" is a term used exclusively for Israel, since they are God's firstborn (Exodus 4:22). Today, in the body of Christ, we are "a new creature" in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17).), he will put himself under God's law (not the Antichrist's law) and demonstrate God's love to others. This happens under the new covenant in the kingdom, but the little flock can make the

choice to have this happen during the tribulation period as well, so that all of the lost sheep of Israel may be saved. If they have faith in God's provision for them under the law covenant, they will grow up from being children, to being young men, to being fathers in the faith (2:12-14). I John also warns against false prophets and antichrists and says that the little flock will be able to recognize them by comparing what they say with what God says in His Word.

Summary: This epistle concentrates on the love of God that will be shown by the little flock to the lost sheep of Israel, when the little flock obeys God's commandment to love (John 13:34-35).

Key passage: 5:7-9 (7) For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (9) If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

1 Eternal life has been promised to man from the beginning (v. 1), but now Israel has seen that life through the resurrected Jesus Christ (vs. 1-2). John declares that life to Israel, so that they may be part of God's eternal kingdom (v. 3). They need to understand that the message of eternal life involves confessing their sins (v. 9). Otherwise, they will follow the lies of the Antichrist, thinking that the Antichrist's kingdom is really God's kingdom, and they will be lost for ever as a result (vs. 5-10).

1:1 "That" refers to eternal life, and "the life was manifested" (1:2) by the Lord Jesus Christ, i.e., "the Word of life" (1:1). This eternal life is "from the beginning" because the Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). (In fact, Jesus Christ is the corner stone of the earth (Job 38:6; Isaiah 28:16).) Therefore, we should not just look at "the Word" in 1:1 and say, "Oh, this is a reference to Jesus Christ because of the capital 'W'." Rather, we should note that John is concentrating on the facts that the Lord Jesus Christ brought eternal life to man and that life and the Lord are inseparable. We also see this in John 1:4, which says, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" and in I John 5:20, which says, "His Son Jesus Christ....This is the true God, and eternal life." Both are embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ! This is also why "Word" only receives the capital "W" at His first coming, because it is the first time since Adam's fall that eternal life dwells within flesh!

Thus, John 1:1 starts "in the beginning" with the Word of God. John 1:14 then says that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." In other words, when Jesus came, there was a progression in eternal life from being in God's Word to God's Word being married with human flesh. Since we are human flesh, we can now "be made the righteousness of God in [Christ]" (II Corinthians 5:21)!

1:1 goes on to say that Israel has also "looked upon" the Word. How is that different from seeing Him? The difference is that Jesus was "lifted up" on the cross (John 12:32). Those, who believed in the promises God made to Israel under the

law covenant, “looked upon” (1:1) Him on that cross, as Israel looked upon the brass serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:9 and John 3:14). Israel was healed physically when they looked upon the brass serpent, but Israel is healed spiritually when they look upon Jesus on the cross, having faith in God’s promises to them that are accomplished through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Those, who have “looked upon” Him in this matter, are the believing remnant of Israel.

Then, the “handling” of 1:1 refers to after His resurrection. Remember that Jesus said, “Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father” (John 20:17). But, then later, He said, “handle Me and see” (Luke 24:39). The fact, that the apostles handled Jesus after His resurrection, shows that He is “the Word of life” (1:1), because His sacrifice for sins had been accepted by God the Father in the holy of holies in heaven (see Hebrews 9:24-28). Therefore, John is a witness of the life being married to human flesh so that all humans, who believe the gospel given to them, receive eternal life in Christ.

1:2 This parenthetical reference is John’s further affirmation that Jesus brings eternal life to Israel. It is not just Jesus’ life on earth that John is talking about here. Rather, he is talking about the eternal life that “was from the beginning” (1:1). Since we cannot see things in the spirit world, “the life was manifested” (1:2) to man only when the Son of God took human flesh. Since it was not until Jesus’ resurrection that Jesus was begotten by the Father as the Son of God (Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33), Jesus’ eternal life was not manifested to the 12 apostles until they handled Him post-resurrection. They saw His life when Jesus did things with His glorified body that they could not do with their natural bodies, such as appearing behind locked doors and disappearing before their very eyes. Now, after Jesus’ ascension to the Father, the apostles are showing unto Israel that eternal life by God’s love coming from their hearts to Israel via the Holy Ghost. Such love is only possible by having eternal life in Christ. It is by seeing God’s love through believing Israel’s lives that the rest of Israel is saved. (“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have lone one to another” (John 13:35).) This is why John writes this epistle about charity (God’s love). God’s love only comes to others when the little flock believes the Bible and allows Christ to live it out through their lives. This is why the Bible is so powerful (Hebrews 4:12).

1:3 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1:3). They have seen and heard eternal life in Christ. Therefore, **the goal of the book of I John is to declare the “in Christ” life to the little flock of Israel.** In order to see fully this in-Christ life, the apostles had to be with Christ from the beginning, as John 15:27 says, “And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.” This is why, when the twelfth apostle was selected by God to replace Judas Iscariot, he had to “have companied with [the apostles] all the time that Lord Jesus went in and out among [them], beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from [them]” (Acts 1:21-22).

Similarly speaking then, we, in the dispensation of grace, need to allow Christ to live in us (Galatians 2:20) so that others will observe eternal life being lived out in a fallen world so that they also may believe the gospel and have the in-Christ life

lived out through them. This is how God bruises Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20).

1:4 In John 15:10-11, Jesus said that the apostles would abide in God's love and have full joy, if they kept His commandments. Therefore, the fellowship, that the 12 apostles have, comes from obeying God's law covenant with Israel, which is possible by Christ living in them, as opposed to living in the flesh. The way that John now declares this to the little flock is by God's love shining through him. The little flock, in turn, can obey God's commandments, also, and then they will have fellowship with the 12 apostles and with the Godhead. At the same time, because they are obeying God's commandments, their joy will be full. There is no greater possible joy than living the in-Christ life. This is why heaven is so wonderful, and hell is so miserable.

1:5 Jesus never sinned (I Peter 2:22). He also said and did only the things that: 1) His Father taught Him (John 8:28), and 2) He saw with His Father (John 8:38). The summary of this is that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1:5). In other words, God is "the Light" (John 1:7), and He "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). However, "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Therefore, "the light [of men] shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). So, "the true Light" (John 1:9), God Himself in the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ, had to come to earth and show God's light to the world. Only believers bear witness of that light because unbelievers remain in darkness. And so the believing remnant of Israel, by seeing Jesus live out what His Father told Him to say and do, are witnesses (1:2) of the true Light (John 1:9), so that they can conclude from the evidence that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1:5).

1:6-7 Therefore, Jesus' life on earth was the first, definitive proof to the world that God is light and no darkness is in Him. By the time John writes this epistle, Jesus has already ascended to the Father. Therefore, the only way the world will see that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1:5) is if the believing remnant of Israel walks in the light. In other words, the little flock must allow Christ to live in them.

Ultimately, the in-Christ life is seen by God's love coming through them. Romans 5:1-5 gives the details. If we apply these verses to the little flock, we conclude that they first must have faith in the gospel of the kingdom (Romans 5:1). Second, they must learn sound doctrine for their program. Third, they will suffer tribulations for doing so (II Timothy 3:12). Fourth, these tribulations produce the love of God being shed abroad by the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:3-5). In other words, faith + trials = God's love, which is the in-Christ life or the light of God being manifested to others. That is why Jesus told His disciples, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Loving each other as Christ had loved them was a new commandment that Jesus gave them (John 13:34), because it was not possible until the Holy Ghost was poured out on them in Acts 2:4. Now, Christ will live in them to the point that all Israel will be saved at the end of the tribulation period (Romans 11:26).

However, this salvation will not come unless God's love comes through the believing remnant so that unbelievers see the light of God and become believers as a result. Therefore, it is essential that the believing remnant walk in light. However, because they still have their vile flesh (Philippians 3:21) and do not even receive forgiveness of sin until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-20), it will be very easy for them not to show God's light to Israel. (This is seen in the "wise" virgins sleeping until just before Jesus' second coming (Matthew 25:4-5).)

This is why John tells them not to proclaim that they are Christians, i.e., "that we have fellowship with Him" (1:6), if they "walk in darkness" (1:6), i.e., in the lusts of their flesh. This is especially problematic because, in the tribulation period, apostate Israel will make themselves look like sheep because they will claim to be following God and His Word. Jesus even said that "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2)! "Good" will be called "evil," and "evil" will be called "good" (Isaiah 5:20). Therefore, it is absolutely essential that the little flock "walk in the light, as He is in the light" (1:7). This gives them "fellowship one with another" (1:7), which allows the lost sheep of the house of Israel to see the light, come to the light (John 3:21), and have "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son [cleanse them] from all sin" (1:7). In other words, God's love, coming through the little flock, will overcome the evil of apostate Israel so that the lost sheep will be able to see the light of God in the believing remnant and believe the gospel of the kingdom that they preach to them.

Note also that individuals do not lose their salvation by not walking in the light, or else no one would be saved, because the believing remnant will continue to sin until they are under the new covenant in God's eternal kingdom on earth (Ezekiel 36:24-28). That is why Galatians 2:16 says that no flesh is justified by the works of the law. John's audience should already know the doctrine of faith, found in Hebrews – II Peter, such that they are not questioning their salvation. Therefore, the epistle of I John builds the in-Christ life upon that salvation so that others may be saved by seeing them live in Christ.

Therefore, if they walk in darkness, they lose fellowship with Christ, not their salvation. This is seen in that the "wise" virgins slumber and sleep during the tribulation period, but they still enter into marriage with the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:5-11). Note how John says that the blood of Christ cleanseth "US," meaning that he is talking about the believing remnant of Israel as a whole. In other words, all individuals, who repent, are water baptized (Acts 2:38), and have works of faith (James 2:24), will receive cleansing from their sins by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:15) when Israel as a whole receives this cleansing at Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-20). (We will cover this in more detail next.)

1:8 Note that John keeps using the word "we." That is because he is talking to the nation of Israel as a whole. That nation has broken God's law covenant with them. Therefore, they have sinned. The nation, under the Antichrist, will claim to be without sin, as evidenced by their "Christ" bringing them into the kingdom. However, this is deception. Because they have broken God's law covenant with

them, Israel must be forgiven of that sin before they can enter God's kingdom on earth. Therefore, the Antichrist has deceived them into thinking that they are okay. Instead, Israel needs to identify the clear truth that they have sinned against God and are worthy of His wrath.

This is why Jesus told Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). "Ye" is the plural form of "you," meaning that the nation of Israel, as a whole, has sinned. If they say, "we have no sin" (1:8), it means that Israel would be saying that they are self-righteous. They would be like the Pharisee, who proclaimed: "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11). Self-righteousness is as filthy rags to God (Isaiah 64:6). That is why self-righteous people are not forgiven of their sins (Luke 18:14). Instead, Israel needs to confess, along with the Psalmist that, "my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3). They can then believe the gospel of the kingdom and be saved.

1:9 Again, the good news is that Israel can be part of God's kingdom by confessing their sins. Confession for forgiveness is a provision by God under His law covenant with Israel. God told Israel: "I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you" (Leviticus 26:33). This has already happened to Israel, as acknowledged by the Pharisees in John 7:35. However, God said that, in that condition, "if they shall CONFESS THEIR INIQUITY..., then will I remember My covenant with [them]" (Leviticus 26:40,42). In other words, the nation of Israel must confess their sins to God in order for Him to forgive them.

That is why Solomon prayed that, "when Thy people Israel ... have sinned against Thee, and shall turn again to Thee and confess Thy name, and pray ... then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel" (I Kings 8:33-34). That is exactly what Daniel did because of the sins of Israel. Daniel prayed, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity ... O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. ... And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel..." (Daniel 9, 5, 19, 20). Daniel confessed the sins of Israel so that God would heal them. We also see Israel confess their sins in Ezra 10:1,11 and in Nehemiah 1:6 and 9:1-2.

Therefore, when John tells Israel to confess their sins (1:9), he is doing so based upon the covenant promise that God made to Israel in Leviticus 26:40,42. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). How? By Israel confessing their sins under the law covenant that God made with them.

Therefore, I John 1:9 is a plea to the lost sheep of the house of Israel to put themselves back under the law covenant by confessing they have strayed from it, so that God can forgive them and bring them into the kingdom. Note that God's forgiveness of their sins calls upon God's faithfulness and His justness. He is faithful to His covenant with them, and He is just in using the blood sacrifice of His Son as atonement for their sins. That is what this verse means.

People, today, have completely mangled the verse by taking it out of its context. They apply it to today to say that Christians need to continue to confess their sins. Not so! You are saved by believing in Christ's blood as atonement for your sin, such that, once you have that faith, you have NOW been "justified by His blood" (Romans 5:9) and "have NOW received the atonement" (Romans 5:11). If you then confess your sins, God will say "What sins are you talking about?" He does not see your sins any more—past, present, or future—because they ALL have been covered by the blood of Christ. In fact, God would be an unjust God if He did not forgive your future sins until you confessed them, because your salvation today is not based upon the work of confession, but it is based upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and your initial belief of that gospel. People take this verse out of context and use it today because their flesh wants to get some glory, when eternal life is a GIFT (Romans 6:23), "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). That is why Catholics are big on confessing their sins to the priest. They are stuck in their religion and headed for hell, unless they trust in Jesus' blood ALONE to atone for their sins, rather than a religious system of confession.

Christianity objects and says that confession is required today, since Romans 10:9 says that, in order to be saved, you must "confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus." There are two problems with this idea. First, the context is the nation of Israel. Second, the physical has become the spiritual in the dispensation of grace. God gave Israel the Mosaic law and said that the things of that Mosaic law "are a shadow of thing to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:17).

For example, God gave Abram physical circumcision as a covenant between Him and Israel. He said that, "the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from this people; he hath broken my covenant" (Genesis 17:14). However, God says to us today that Christ has circumcised us "with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11). Therefore, we do not practice physical circumcision today.

Similarly, we do not practice physical confession today in order to receive salvation. Therefore, the "confession" of Romans 10:9 that is for the dispensation of grace is the confession that is done by your soul as a result of being spiritually baptized into Christ's death and resurrection as a result of believing Paul's gospel. Note that Romans 10:9 says that, in addition to confessing with your mouth, you also have to "believe in thine heart that God hath raised [Christ] from the dead" in order to be saved. You do not believe with your physical heart. "Heart" is in that verse for your spirit, not your physical heart. Similarly then, mouth means "soul," not your physical mouth.

Romans 10:6-8 is a quote of Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Deuteronomy 30:10 instructs Israel to "hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and [to] turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." In other words, for us today, we are to believe the gospel. Doing so makes us alive in Christ

so that our spirits are now alive (Ephesians 2:1). The spirit cries “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15), which means that you believe the gospel in your heart. Your soul is the mouthpiece of your spirit, such that it confesses the gospel is true. Once you believe the gospel, you are placed into Christ (I Corinthians 1:30), and Christ automatically causes your spirit (heart) to believe and your soul (mouth) to confess the gospel is true, just like spiritual circumcision happens automatically once you are saved.

Therefore, not only is 1:9 not written to us today, but, even if it were, our souls confess our sin to God, rather than our physical mouths, because the body of Christ has come, rather than the shadow of the body (Colossians 2:17).

1:10 The reason that Israel says in 1:8 and in 1:10 that they have no sin is because they believe their religion takes care of their sin, and the Christ’s setting up of the kingdom on earth and having them rule with Him is proof of that. In other words, Israel’s reaction is “No confession necessary. We are already enjoying God’s eternal kingdom on earth based upon our own good works.” The problem is that it is the Antichrist with the kingdom in the tribulation period, not the true Christ. Therefore, they have deceived themselves, as John says in 1:8.

Now, in 1:10, he gives an even better reason that they have sinned, and that reason is that God tells them over and over and over again in the Old Testament that they have sinned. In fact, they are so steeped in sin that God even refers to Israel as Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:10). Therefore, if Israel says they have not sinned, they are calling God a liar (1:10). Since God’s Word is truth (John 17:17) and it is “impossible for God to lie” (Hebrews 6:18), Israel are the ones lying. This means that His Word is not in them (1:10). Since the Word gives life (1:1) and His Word is not in them, they are still dead in their sins. Therefore, without confession of sins, Israel is lost in their sins. This goes right along with what Jesus told the Pharisees in John 9:41, “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” In other words, if the Pharisees recognized their blind status, God would forgive them of their sins, but, because they say they have no sin, their sin remaineth.

1:8-10 is a call by the elders of the little flock to the lost sheep of the house of Israel for them to believe the gospel of the kingdom so that they will live in God’s eternal kingdom on earth, instead of burning forever in hell as a result of following the Antichrist. Therefore, these lost sheep need to “let God be true, but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4). Once they do that, they will be God’s “little children” (2:1), who can then grow up in the sound doctrine of the at-hand phase of Israel’s program.

2 John uses the phrase “little children” 5 times in this chapter (vs. 1, 12, 13, 18, and 28). Thus, he writes this chapter so that the little children will grow into being young men, spiritually speaking, who are strong in God’s Word so that they will overcome the wicked one (v. 14) and then become fathers in the faith (v. 13). They do this by keeping God’s Word (v. 5) and not loving the world (v. 15) so that they do not sin (v. 16). This is not to say that they will live lives of sinless perfection,

but it is to say that they are to abide in Christ (vs. 6, 9, 14, 27, 28) so that they endure unto the end of the tribulation period and so they lead the lost sheep of the house of Israel to be saved.

The Word of God also helps them recognize who is of apostate Israel and who belongs to the true Israel of God. Apostate Israel hates the brethren (vs. 9-11) and goes after the things of the world (v. 15), such that they become antichrists (v. 18). In other words, they deny that Jesus is the Christ and they deny the Father and the Son (v. 22). The little flock can overcome apostate Israel's opposition through the anointing of the Holy Ghost (vs. 20 and 27), Who will help them continue to hold fast the promise of eternal life (v. 25) to the end of the tribulation period so that they can appear before God with confidence (v. 28), knowing that He will give them His righteousness in the kingdom.

2:1 The sin, he is referring to, is the sin of saying that they have no sin (1:8,10). In other words, Israel is in danger of not making it into God's kingdom on earth, because they are following the Antichrist, thinking that they do not need to put themselves back under the law covenant and confess their sins. They think this because they think that the Antichrist has brought them into God's kingdom already.

It is like people today. You start talking to them about Jesus, and they do not want to hear it because they think they will make it to heaven on their own. Similarly, because apostate Israel thinks the Antichrist is really the Christ, they think God's kingdom has already arrived, which means they have already started to enjoy their eternal life. Therefore, they think that they have no sin to admit.

However, first, they need to see that they are lost. That is what John showed them in chapter 1. That way, they "sin not" (2:1) by understanding their need for a saviour. Next, they need to understand that Jesus Christ is their advocate to the Father, so that they understand there is a solution to their sin problem. Note that John calls his audience "little children" (2:1). This means that he is addressing new believers first. (He will address "young men" and "fathers" later (2:13).) Since they are "little children," John must start with the very basics. Jesus is their advocate to the Father by being their high priest (Hebrews 3:1, 6:20), the mediator between God and man (Hebrews 9:15). Since Jesus Christ's sacrifice is "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10), even if they sin after they believe the gospel, they are still saved, because Jesus is their advocate to the Father. (The only sin Jesus' sacrifice does not cover is bowing down to the image of the beast and taking the mark of the beast. We know this because Revelation 14:9-11 and Hebrews 10:26 tell us so. The reason is because Jesus' sacrifice is not applied to their souls until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-21). Therefore, they will be "in Satan" if they worship the image or take the mark before they are placed "into Christ" at Jesus' second coming.) Thus, their salvation is both obtained and maintained by faith.

2:2 Not only is Jesus Christ their mediator or advocate with the Father, but He is also "the propitiation for our sins" (2:2). Jesus brought the blood sacrifice to the Father to atone for Israel's sins (Hebrews 9:24-26), and He also IS the blood

sacrifice (Hebrews 9:28 and 10:10). (He is also the blood sacrifice for the sins of the Gentiles.) This verse makes it clear that I John is not written to us today, since a distinction is made here, between Jew and Gentile. If I John is written to us today, then who are the “our,” as distinguished from “the whole world,” since the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile today is down (Ephesians 2:14)? Only by understanding that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is back up during the tribulation period, does it make sense that John makes a distinction, here, between the Jews and the rest of the world. Today, however, in the dispensation of grace, “there is no respect of persons with God” (Romans 2:11).

This also shows that Jesus’ sacrifice was also to atone for the sins of the whole world, not just Jews, even in Israel’s program. Therefore, John 3:16 is a passage for Israel’s program, just like I John 2:2 is for their program. It is just that, in Israel’s program, “salvation is of the Jews” first (John 4:22), and then God sends them out during the millennial reign (Zechariah 8:23; Matthew 28:19-20) as a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles to reconcile the earth back to God through Israel (Exodus 19:5-6). Therefore, “for God so loved the world” (John 3:16) is not a revelation of the mystery given to Paul (Romans 16:25-26).

We can also see the difference in programs by the mention of “propitiation.” That word appears three times in scripture—twice in I John (2:2; 4:10) and once in Romans (3:25). In the Romans appearance, we are told that Jesus is “a propitiation through faith in His blood.” In other words, we are saved by believing in Jesus’ blood being shed as atonement for our sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4). By contrast, Israel is saved by recognizing their sin, putting themselves back under the law covenant, and being water baptized (Acts 2:38). Thus, the two mentions of propitiation in I John do not mention faith in His blood. They just say that Jesus is “the propitiation for our sins.”

2:3 The way Israel knows that His blood atones for their sins is if they “keep His commandments.” According to Matthew 23:2-3, His commandment is for them to keep the law of Moses. That does not mean that they live sinless lives, but it does mean that they provide the sacrifices under the law if they do sin. That is how Paul was blameless under the law (Philippians 3:6).

How do they give the sacrifices if the Antichrist is controlling the temple in the tribulation period? By prayer. Psalm 141:2 says, “Let my prayer be set forth before Thee AS incense; and the lifting up of my hands AS the evening sacrifice.” Therefore, with all of the lies and deception going on during the tribulation period, the way that the little flock knows they will be in God’s eternal kingdom is simply by keeping God’s law covenant with them. This is the “easy” yoke and “light” burden that God puts on them (Matthew 11:28-30).

That is not to say that they HAVE to keep the commandments in order to maintain their salvation, as John just told them that Jesus is their advocate to the Father (2:1). Rather, 2:3 says that “we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” Knowing Him means to suffer for His sake. We learn this in Philippians 3:10, where Paul says: “That I may know Him.” He goes on to say that

the way that he knows Jesus is by “being made conformable unto His death.” Similarly, if the little flock keeps His commandments, they will suffer at the hands of the Antichrist and apostate Israel (Matthew 10:17-23), because Satan is “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, they will know Christ experientially, because Christ also suffered at the hands of apostate Israel. Jesus said, “The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20).

2:4 By contrast, apostate Israel will claim Jehovah is their God, but they will not keep the law of Moses nor will they suffer for Christ’s sake. They will bow down to a graven image and punish and kill those, who have done no wrong. Jesus said that “many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?” (Matthew 7:22). Note that they claim to know Jesus by their works, while John says they know Him by keeping His commandments. Therefore, to lying apostate Israel, Jesus will say, “I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23).

They are liars for saying that they knew God, when they never obeyed His commandments nor suffered for them. Satan is the father of the lie, which is why Jesus tells them: “Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44).

2:5 Romans 5:3-5 says that, after being justified by faith (Romans 5:1-2), the love of God comes about in a person’s life through suffering. It says that “tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” As we have already established, suffering comes by obeying God’s commandments. Therefore, 2:5 says that the love of God is perfected in the believer who keeps God’s Word. That is why Jesus said, “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (John 14:21). It is by this love that people know that the little flock is Jesus’ disciples, as Jesus also said, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). Therefore, if the little flock obeys God’s commandments, they experience God’s love, and they allow the lost sheep of the house of Israel to see that love so that they also may want to believe the gospel of the kingdom and be saved.

2:6 In John 15:6, Jesus says, “If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” Therefore, the little flock must abide in Jesus in order to have eternal life. However, abiding has to do with faith, not with obedience. This is seen by the fact that 2:6 says that the one, who says he abides in Christ, “OUGHT himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” In other words, he OUGHT to walk as Christ did, but he does not have to in order to stay saved.

However, Jesus also said, “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (John 15:10). Thus, all members of the little flock OUGHT to keep Jesus’ commandments

so that they abide in His love which will keep them from taking the mark of the beast. Jesus' love coming through them will also cause the lost sheep of the house of Israel to be saved, as God's love coming through Jesus caused the 12 disciples to be saved.

2:7-8 II John 5 says that John wrote to the little flock, "not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." (I John 3:11 also says something similar.) Therefore, the old commandment, which John writes unto them (2:7) is that they love one another. It is old in the sense that Jesus already gave it to the little flock (John 13:34).

At the same time, this commandment is new (2:8) in that it is only possible with the in-Christ life. In other words, the commandment was already given by Jesus, making it old, but it was not possible to obey this commandment until the Holy Ghost came upon believing Israel in Acts 2. Therefore, it is old in theory, but new in application. That is why, in 2:7, John says it is old. Then, in 2:8, he turns right around and says that it is new.

The rest of 2:8 tells why the love-one-another commandment is now possible. The reason is because, "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (2:8). When Jesus came, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:4-5). So, when Jesus came, He "was the true Light" (John 1:9). Then, He "lighted" all of His believers with that light, once the Holy Ghost was given unto them, beginning in Acts 2. So, "the true light now shineth" (2:8), in the little flock, which makes it possible for them to love one another. In other words, before Jesus came, Israel was Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25), and they were in darkness. Now, they have life in Jesus, and the gift of the Holy Ghost to empower them to serve God. Therefore, they can obey the commandment to love one another, which is old (2:7) or new (2:8), depending on perspective.

2:9 Jesus said that the little flock "shall be hated of all men for My name's sake" (Matthew 10:22). "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child" (Matthew 10:21), because, in so doing, they will think that they are serving God (John 16:2)! Therefore, apostate Israel will claim to be "in the light," but they will still hate their brother (2:9). John's point, then, is that, by killing members of the little flock, apostate Israel shows that they are in darkness, meaning that they are not of God, even if they claim to be. Therefore, these are unjust killings and show that they hate the believing remnant of Israel. As such, the little flock should not listen to or obey what apostate Israel tells them.

2:10 God's yoke for Israel is easy (Matthew 11:30). They do not have to follow all of the religious rules of the Jewish religious leaders. After they believe the gospel, they abide in the light of God by loving the brethren. Love will keep them from stumbling in the other areas of the law. As Jesus said, loving God and loving your neighbour take care of all of God's commandments under the law covenant (Matthew 22:37-40). It will also keep them "planted" in sound doctrine (Psalm 1:2-3) so that they are not "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of

doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).

In the context of 2:9, if the little flock stands for the truth over their family (Matthew 10:34-37), they will not align themselves with the Antichrist.

2:11 Apostate Israel, on the other hand, hates their fellow Jews, elevating themselves above all others. That is why they make up a bunch of religious rules and follow them so that they appear before men to be righteous, when they really are not. A great example of this is when they had no problem killing their Messiah, but they thought they would defile themselves and could not eat the passover if they went into Pilate’s judgment hall (John 18:28). In other words, in the Jewish religious person’s mind, strict obedience of their own, manmade rules excused them from obeying God’s rules!

Similarly, apostate Israel in the tribulation period will kill the little flock, which shows they are of their father, the devil (John 8:44), yet they will appear righteous before men by obeying rules that they make up themselves. They may say, “Look at how holy I am. I wash my hands before every meal” (Mark 7:2-3). Yet, they are not holy, because they kill the saints. As such, they are guilty of all the righteous blood ever shed (Matthew 23:35). Not only are they not holy, but they also refuse to believe that they are sinners because their religious darkness has blinded their eyes (2:11). They say, “we see,” which shows that their sin remains (John 9:41), because they have not acknowledged and confessed their sin (1:8-10).

A great example of their religious darkness comes from what Jesus said in Matthew 5:43. He said, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.” However, the law said, “Thou shalt NOT hate thy brother in thine heart ..., but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Leviticus 19:17-18). In other words, the Jewish religion added the part of hating their enemy so that they could justify themselves in killing Old-Testament prophets (Hebrews 11:36-38), beheading John the Baptist, killing Jesus Christ, stoning Stephen, and now killing members of the little flock in the tribulation period. But, Jesus told them to “love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44). Thus, love is in Christ, and hatred is of the world. Therefore, apostate Israel is of the world (3:13), having allowed the darkness of their religion to blind their eyes to the truth.

2:12 As in 2:1, John calls his audience “LITTLE children.” Jesus told Israel that, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). By using the phrase, “little children,” John is referring to new believers, who have changed their minds (repented), by putting themselves back under God’s law covenant with them, and have been water baptized. Therefore, their sins are forgiven.

Note that John says that they are forgiven “for His name’s sake” (2:12). God promised to give eternal life in the kingdom. Israel blew it by serving other gods. They became Satan’s lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25) and were worthy of eternity in the lake of fire instead. They had blasphemed the name of God (Isaiah 65:7;

Ezekiel 20:27). However, because God had attached His name to Israel, if He did not redeem them, His name would not be glorified. God says that He will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42:8). Therefore, for His name's sake, and not because Israel deserves it, God will save Israel, through His Son's sacrifice on the cross, and will bring her into His eternal kingdom on earth.

2:13 John identifies three categories of saved people in the little flock. Little children are new believers, young men have learned basic sound doctrine for their dispensation, and fathers know advanced doctrine for their dispensation. John writes to all 3 groups, because they all need God's Word so that they will keep making the proper choice of faith in God, rather than looking at the things of the world and lusting after them.

Jesus said, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). In Revelation 18:21, "a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Therefore, the Babylonian religious system will attempt to overthrow the faith of the "little children" of the little flock during the tribulation period. If the "little children" are not offended by the Babylonian religious system, they "have overcome the wicked one" (2:13), who is Satan working through the Antichrist. It is no coincidence then, that, in each of Jesus' letters in Revelation 2-3 to the seven churches, He makes a promise to the overcomers for them to be in His eternal kingdom on earth (Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21).

"Him that is from the beginning" (2:13) is the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. Specifically, it is the in-Christ life (see 1:1-3) that the fathers have experienced due to having believed the gospel, becoming little children, overcoming Satan, becoming young men, and learning advanced doctrine for their dispensation, becoming fathers. Note that this verse also says that the little children "have known the Father." This shows that, at the time you are saved, you know God the Father (John 14:8-10), while unsaved people do not know Him (John 16:3). However, it takes maturing through sound doctrine and suffering before you know the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because you do not experience the in-Christ life until Christ lives in you (Galatians 2:20) through suffering (II Timothy 3:12).

Jesus was made "perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). Therefore, the little flock should expect the same thing. This is why Paul said that he rejoiced in his sufferings, knowing that, in suffering, he was filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for Christ's body's sake (Colossians 1:24). Therefore, His goal was to know Christ, "and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Philippians 3:10). So, too, the fathers of the little flock have suffered and have overcome the wicked one, maturing in both knowledge and charity, such that they have gone through similar things that Christ went through for faith in God, which means that they now know the Father.

2:14 In 2:13, John says, “I write unto you.” Here, in 2:14, he says, “I have written unto you.” Note that, in 2:13, he writes unto fathers, young men, and little children. In 2:14, the little children are excluded. Why? Because the result of the little children taking in and believing the doctrine of I John is that they are not little children spiritually any more, but they are young men now. The fathers know the doctrine before John’s writing (2:13), and they know it after John’s writing (2:14). The young men overcame the wicked one before John’s writing (2:13), and they should now be mature enough to join the “fathers” category. The little children just had their sins forgiven (2:12) and know the Father (2:13) before John’s writing. After John’s writing, however, they have used the sound doctrine in I John to become strong and have the Word of God abide in them so that they have overcome the wicked one through the trials they faced in the tribulation period (2:14), making them young men. Thus, John’s epistle is important to all members of the little flock, but it is especially important to the little children of the little flock, so that they can learn to overcome the wicked one and make it into the kingdom. If they do not have the sound doctrine built up in their inner man, the danger is that they will “fall away” (Hebrews 6:4-6) and be cast into outer darkness (Matthew 22:13), being offended by the Babylonian religious system.

2:15 Again, God’s doctrine for Israel’s dispensation is simple. If they love the things of the world, they will follow after those things. Then, when the Antichrist sets up the mark of the beast and requires all people to take the mark or lose all their possessions (Revelation 13:16-17), those who love the world will do so, resulting in them denying Christ and losing their place in God’s eternal kingdom on earth (Matthew 10:33).

By contrast, if the little flock learns sound doctrine and is willing to suffer through tribulations, the love of God will be shed abroad in their hearts (Romans 5:3-5). Therefore, men will know that they are Jesus’ disciples (John 13:35) and the lost sheep of the house of Israel will believe the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 10:6-7; Mark 16:20).

2:16 “All that is in the world” tells us that all temptations fall into one of these three categories. That is why Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Obviously, Jesus was never tempted to commit adultery, since He was never married. He was also not tempted with Internet pornography, since the Internet did not exist back then. Rather, the “all points” are: 1) “The lust of the flesh” (tempted to make stones into bread (Matthew 4:3)), 2) “The lust of the eyes” (tempted with the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8)), and 3) “The pride of life” (tempted to cast Himself down (Matthew 4:6)).

Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, “there is no new thing under the sun.” People try to discount the Bible by saying that it is not relevant today, because it is such an old book. However, Eve faced the same three types of temptations as Jesus did: 1) “The lust of the flesh” (“The tree was good for food”), 2) “The lust of the eyes” (“It was pleasant to the eyes.”), and 3) “The pride of life” (“A tree to be desired to make one wise” (Genesis 3:6)). Thus, three types of temptations were faced by Eve 6,000

years ago and by Jesus 2,000 years ago. Eve failed, but Jesus succeeded because He had the Father's love. Because the little flock is in Christ, they can abide in His love (John 15:10) and overcome temptations like Jesus did, since sin is "not of the Father" (2:16).

2:17 The reason that the little flock should want to obey the Father, rather than following after the lusts of the world, is because the world will pass away, but God's kingdom will be for ever on the earth. Therefore, why go for the treasures offered by the Antichrist, when they will pass away, and the treasures of God will last forever (Matthew 6:19-20)? The world passes away at the end of the tribulation period, which means, for Israel in the tribulation period, it will pass away within seven years! Therefore, the time is short.

The will of God is for "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). The one, who does God's will, is Jesus Christ. Therefore, when 2:17 refers to "He that doeth the will of God," it is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. He can do God's will through the little flock, since they are in Christ. As support for the "He" being the Lord Jesus Christ, John 12:34 and I Peter 1:23 say that the Christ and the Word of God "abideth for ever," just like the person in 2:17 does. In addition, Ecclesiastes 1:4 says that the earth "abideth for ever," and Psalm 125:1 says that Mount Zion "abideth for ever." Thus, the way that man has dominion over the earth for ever (Psalm 8:6-9) is by "the man, Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5) abiding for ever by doing God's will (I Timothy 2:4) in Mount Zion on the earth (Psalm 48:2). Thus, the picture that John is painting in 2:17 is of the earth with only what will last forever. Since Christ will abide for ever, the little flock must abide in Christ so that they also will abide for ever with Christ on the earth in God's kingdom.

Therefore, the little flock needs the sound doctrine of I John to stabilize them in the truth. This will result in them preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6-7), and the lost sheep will be saved when they also see God's love shining through the little flock (II Corinthians 4:7) through their obedience of God's commands in spite of the great adversity they face via the Antichrist and apostate Israel.

Also, note that 2:17 says that "the world...AND THE LUST THEREOF" will pass away. The passing away of the world's lust is tremendously good news for all believers. Although the body of Christ has great spiritual blessings in Christ when we are saved today, we still reside in vile bodies until the rapture (Philippians 3:21). Therefore, "we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). This groaning is because of the lust of the world. Therefore, when the lust passes away, there will be no more groaning. That is why Revelation 21:4 says that God wipes away all tears from the little flock's eyes in New Jerusalem because "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." What are the former things? They are "The world...and the lust thereof" (2:17).

2:18 John will talk to the “little children” for the remainder of the chapter, showing that what he will reveal is basic doctrine that they need to know in order to “abide in Him” (2:28).

John now specifically mentions the antichrist. He also says that there are many antichrists now. AN “antichrist” is anyone who does not confess that Jesus is the Christ (2:22) and has already come in the flesh (4:3; II John 7). Jesus said in Matthew 24:24 that “there shall arise false Christs.” From the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, we learn that there is a confederacy of kings in the tribulation period, and there is a lot of confusion, as different people try to rise to power themselves. Then, for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, the Antichrist clearly distinguishes himself from the others. However, the Bible believer will know who THE Antichrist is, when he makes a seven-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:26-27). He will not have to wait for him to sit in the temple and declare himself to be God (II Thessalonians 2:3-4) in the middle of the tribulation period.

John writes this epistle after Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Given the popularity that Jesus had among the Jews, it is not surprising to see that there are already many copycats at the time John writes this epistle. The same thing will happen after the rapture of the church, the body of Christ. In fact, II Thessalonians 2:7 says that it is the body of Christ (the “he” of this verse) that keeps Satan from taking over more than he already has today. Once the body of Christ is gone, all hell will break loose on earth, culminating in the Great Tribulation (the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period), when Satan will have his powers concentrated in the Antichrist and the false prophet. Therefore, when the little flock sees all of this going on, they know not to follow what any false christ says, but to follow God’s Word to them instead.

We should note that, since an antichrist is anyone who does not confess that Jesus is the Christ (2:22) and has already come in the flesh (4:3; II John 7), there are many antichrists today, too. John says that, in Israel’s dispensation, this is a sign that they are in “the last time” (2:18). So, are we, today, in “the last time” of the dispensation of grace? Perhaps so, especially since Paul does say that “in the last days perilous times shall come” (II Timothy 3:1). Based upon how much false doctrine is in religious Christianity, it does appear that perilous times have already come.

2:19 The “us” of this verse probably refers to Israel as a whole, rather than just the little flock, since Romans 9:6 says that, “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” In other words, the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) is only of believing Jews, and not all physical Jews. Therefore, the “they” of this verse would be the wolves in sheep’s clothing. II Peter 2:1 says “there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies.” And, so John speaks of the people, who end up being antichrists. They look like they are of Israel, because they are physical Jews, who talk about the temple, sacrifices, and other things of the Mosaic law. However, they are not part of God’s Israel, because they do not believe God and His Word. They are just part of the process of separating the wheat from the tares that Jesus talked about in Matthew 13. At first, both the

wheat and the tares look the same. But, after awhile, the tares manifest themselves as tares so that, when Jesus comes back, it is clear as to who are the wheat and who are the tares, because the tares have aligned themselves with the Antichrist. That is what the capital punishment of the Antichrist (physically) and of God (spiritually) will do. It will force people to choose what is important to them. If they are concerned about the physical, they will take the mark of the beast and worship the image of the beast. As such, “they went out from us” (2:19). If they are concerned about the spiritual, they will continue “with us” (2:19), remaining part of the Israel of God and not taking part in the Antichrist’s religious system.

2:20 These antichrists follow their father, the devil (John 8:44). By contrast, because of their faith in God’s promises to them, the little flock “have an unction” from God. This means that they are servants of Jesus (Revelation 1:1), rather than being servants of Satan, as the Antichrist is (Revelation 13:2). “Unction” means anointing (see 2:27). Therefore, this means that Jesus Christ has given them the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ reveals the truth to them via the Holy Ghost. This is how they “know all things” (2:20 and John 14:26). Therefore, the little flock does not have to sit in confusion, wondering which people among them to believe. All they have to do is read God’s Word to them and believe that, and the Holy Ghost will make the truth manifest to them. This is how they know all things through their “unction from the Holy One” (2:20).

2:21 Because the little flock is saved and has the Holy Ghost, they know the truth. John writes to them so that they make the distinction between Satan’s lie program and the truth of God, and then reject the lies and believe the truth. That way, they will be strong, the Word of God will abide in them, and they will overcome the wicked one (2:14). They are to remember that “no lie is of the truth” (2:21). God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). Therefore, they should be comparing doctrine with God’s Word, just like the Bereans did (Acts 17:10-11). They will then have the spiritual discernment to catch someone in a lie so that they know not to listen to what that person says.

2:22 Satan “is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). After the resurrection of Jesus, Satan knows that everything that God is doing centers around the cross work of Christ. Therefore, during the tribulation period, he brings up antichrists, who claim to be the Christ, in an effort to deny that Jesus is the Christ. We also see from this verse that antichrists deny the Father and the Son. That makes it easy to identify false christs. The true Christ brought glory to the Father and certainly would not deny the Son, because He IS the Son. Therefore, John has told the little flock that false christs will lie to them, and the way they can tell they are lying is by them denying that Jesus is the Christ and by them denying the Father and the Son.

By the way, people get confused as to why John talks about there being many antichrists (2:18), when other scriptures just mention one. The reason is because an antichrist is simply someone who denies that Jesus is the Christ. In other words, they are against the true Christ, making them antichrists. By this general definition, then, there are many people, even today, who are antichrists. THE

Antichrist is the epitome of someone, who denies that Jesus is the Christ, because he makes himself out to be the Christ. As such, he is selected by Satan, who is the great imitator, to be the greatest imitator of the Christ that the world will ever see; thereby, deceiving many into following him into the eternal lake of fire.

With regard to liars, we should note that Proverbs 19:22 says that “a poor man is better than a liar.” This is an appropriate comparison, especially during the last half of the tribulation, when the believing remnant of Israel will be poor, because they will not take the mark of the beast, which means that they will not be able to participate in the world’s economic system (Revelation 13:16-17). Even if they have millions of dollars in the bank, they will be poor, because they cannot use that money once the Antichrist takes over the world’s economy. Therefore, Jesus commanded the believing remnant of Israel during the at-hand phase of the kingdom to “sell that ye have” (Luke 12:33), and we see the little flock “had all things common” (Acts 2:44), as a result. That is why Jesus said “that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:23). During the last half of the tribulation period, those following the Antichrist will not have to worry about money, but they will have sold their souls to the devil, who is a liar (John 8:44). Therefore, “a poor man is better than a liar” (Proverbs 19:22).

Apostate Israel will claim that they follow the Lord. After all, they will prophesy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in the Lord’s name, yet Jesus will say to them: “I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22-23). They may quote scripture to say they are of God, but they add works to what God says, which makes them out to be liars (Proverbs 30:5-6). Similarly today, so much of religious Christianity adds inviting Jesus into your heart, turning from your sins, water baptism, and a host of other things to the pure gospel of trusting in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sins (I Corinthians 15:3-4). As such, they turn the truth of God into a lie (Romans 1:25) because they love money instead of God (I Timothy 6:9-10). “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

2:23 These antichrists do not have the Father. Therefore, when the Antichrist claims to be representing God, he is really representing his father, the devil. This is why Revelation 13:6 says that the Antichrist speaks “blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name.” The way to blaspheme God’s holy name is to speak unholy things about that name. So, the Antichrist will claim to represent God, but then he will speak of Satan’s lie program; thus, attributing Satan’s lies to God’s holy name, which blasphemes His name. By contrast, those in the little flock, who acknowledge the Son, also acknowledge the Father (2:23). This is because Jesus Christ, who IS the Son, and the Father are one (John 10:30).

2:24 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life” (I John 1:1). These two verses tell us “that,...which ye heard from the beginning” (2:24), is a reference to the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, both His person and the scripture. Therefore, the way that this

abides in them is by believing God's Word to them and allowing Christ to live it out through them. This is how the written Word combines with the living Word in their hearts so that they "shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (2:24) so that God's love (Romans 5:5) is seen coming through the little flock to the lost sheep of the house of Israel so that they may be saved. Therefore, abiding in the life of Christ is what John is talking about (2:28; John 15:4-9).

This does NOT mean that the little flock has to worry constantly that they have lost their salvation, because they are sinning. Rather, if they have faith in what God has told them, they will continue to read and believe His Word, such that they will ignore what the world tells them, which leads to the Holy Ghost empowering them to obey naturally God's commandments. This is very similar to how we walk in the Spirit in the dispensation of grace. Read and believe the Word, and let the Living Word work out the obedience of God's commandments through us. In other words, John shares this information, not for them to maintain their salvation, but so the in-Christ life comes through them to others so that the lost sheep of Israel will be saved.

In fact, according to 2:25, 2:24 is also God's definition of eternal life. Again, that is not to say that they OBTAIN eternal life by doing this, because they have already obtained eternal life simply by believing the gospel of the kingdom. Rather, this verse is the definition of how the little flock lives out the eternal life that they already have. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). This abundant, eternal life is lived out by the little flock by believing Jesus' very words and having Christ live out those words through them (Galatians 2:20). Therefore, Jesus' words ARE life. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they ARE LIFE" (John 6:63). See also Proverbs 4:22, Deuteronomy 8:3, and John 17:3.

A major problem with religious Christianity is that they think that eternal life begins when they get to heaven. However, eternal life is lived today on earth by Jesus' words living through you. Therefore, if you read and believe Jesus' words right now, you experience your eternal life right now. You do not have to wait until you get to heaven. That is why, as far as God is concerned, you are already in heaven right now: "And HATH [past tense] raised us up together, and MADE [past tense] us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). "From whence [from heaven]...we look [present tense] for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20)!

Granted, believing Israel is not in the kingdom yet, because they do not receive forgiveness of sins until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-20). However, they can still experience eternal life by the Word living through them during the at-hand phase of the kingdom.

2:25 Jews become members of the little flock by trusting in God's promise to impute His righteousness unto them by fulfilling the provisions of the law covenant for them. Here, John reminds them to keep their focus on that promise. Continuing "in the Son, and in the Father" (2:24) is not easy with the world around

them following Satan. Therefore, they need to remember that “the world passeth away” (2:17), and their enduring unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13) will allow them to continue in eternal life in God’s kingdom for all eternity.

2:26 Note that John calls those of Satan “seducers.” Seduction means you are offering something attractive. Because the little flock is still living in sinful flesh, the lusts of the flesh are still in them (2:16). That is why, when the Antichrist offers Israel wealth and power, many will be seduced away from God and toward the world. This is why John wrote to the little flock so that they could be aware of the tactics of the seducers and deny their seductions.

As such, Proverbs likens the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist to a prostitute. She says to Israel: “I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows [making her spiritually clean]....Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning [until Jesus’ second coming]....With her much fair speech she caused him to yield....He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter” (Proverbs 7:14,18,21-22). In other words, Israel will be seduced by the Antichrist’s religious system to abandon God’s promise of righteousness in His kingdom and trust in the wealth and power of the Antichrist’s kingdom instead. That is why Revelation says that “they have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Revelation 17:2).

Therefore, John writes to the little flock to let them be aware of these seducers, so that they will “walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7).

2:27 However, the little flock need not worry about the seductions of the devil, because God will help them “overcome the wicked one” (2:14) by “the anointing” that is on them (2:27), which was also called “an unction from the Holy One” in 2:20. So, the Holy One overcomes the wicked one through them.

Note how this verse says that they do not need a man to teach them, because “the same anointing teacheth you of all things” (2:27). This is similar to what happens with us today in the dispensation of grace, in that the Holy Ghost teaches us the things of God by comparing spiritual things with spiritual (I Corinthians 2:9-13), i.e., by using the spiritual Word of God to teach our spirits the things of God, since “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24). Men do not have to be involved, as they were in Israel’s program before Pentecost. However, this process, in Israel’s program, is called “the anointing”, rather than “the Holy Ghost” because believing Israel does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit given to them (Romans 5:8) to seal them unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:14), because their sins have not been forgiven them yet (Acts 3:19). Instead, they have the Holy Ghost Poured out on them (Joel 2:28) to comfort them by bringing to their remembrance the truth of God’s Word (John 14:26). This pouring out of the Holy Ghost, then, is the anointing that teaches them of all things to sustain them in Christ until Jesus’ second coming, when God actually puts the Holy Spirit inside them as part of the new covenant on a permanent basis (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

More specifically, “the anointing” is the Christ life via the Holy Ghost, which leads them through the same path that Jesus followed. This path is to go into temptation (Matthew 3:16 – 4:1) during the tribulation period, so that they might learn obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9). This anointing of the Holy Ghost will get saved Israel through the tribulation period without so much as a single hair of their spiritual body even being singed (Matthew 10:30), just like it did for the three, Hebrews boys who went through the fiery furnace under Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:27)!

2:28 Therefore, the little flock’s work during the tribulation period is to abide in the truth of God’s Word so that the anointing of the Holy Ghost will keep them from succumbing to the seductions of Satan from the Antichrist and his crowd. The little flock will then have confidence when they appear before God on the day of judgment.

Apostate Israel will say to Jesus on that day: “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?” (Matthew 7:22). Although they repeatedly use God’s name, there is no basis in their statement to enter into the kingdom, because they are relying upon what they did for God, rather than what God did for them. When the little flock appears before God, they will make it into the kingdom because they have had faith in God to save them, such that Jesus Christ’s blood sacrifice atones for their sins.

They also will “not be ashamed” (2:28), because they are resting in God’s promise to them to give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32), as opposed to trusting in their own works of the flesh, which always bring shame, because they are worthless. As Paul says, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation.” Therefore, they can confidently appear before God, knowing that they will be part of His eternal kingdom on earth, because of what HE did for them, rather than what THEY tried to do for Him.

We should also note that, because they believe God’s Word, people will accuse them of being arrogant, as Christians do to us today for believing the truth of God’s Word rightly divided. Arrogance is thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Confidence is trusting that you can rely on someone else. Paul cautions against arrogance in Romans 12:3, while he says that we should be confident that we have eternal life with Christ (II Corinthians 5:6,8). Therefore, arrogance is boasting in yourself, and confidence is boasting in Christ. As such, when John tells the little flock that they may have confidence (2:28) at Jesus’ second coming, it shows that their salvation is entirely reliant upon the cross work of Christ, rather than upon their own works.

2:29 Again, because no good thing dwells in Israel’s flesh (Romans 7:18), they are incapable of doing righteousness unless they are born of God (2:29). They are born again by believing the gospel of the kingdom (John 3:3-7), even though Israel’s birth does not actually take place until they receive the atonement at Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20). However, God calls things as they will be, by faith,

rather than how they appear to man in the present (Romans 4:17). That is how He is able to pour the Holy Ghost on all of saved Israel before they technically receive the atonement (Acts 2:17). That is also how the little flock is able to do righteousness, i.e, heal the sick, cast out devils, and walk by faith in God's commandments during the tribulation. That is also how martyrs are able to wait in heaven for Jesus' second coming, even though they do not technically have atonement of sins yet when they are seen waiting beneath the altar in heaven in Revelation 6:9 before the tribulation period is over.

Thus, John gives another proof to determine if someone is of God or not. Jesus said that "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matthew 7:18). "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). Therefore, by the little flock's doing righteousness during the tribulation period, it helps them recognize the ones among them, who are born of God, and the ones, who are not.

Also note how this chapter begins (v. 1) and ends (v. 29) with the statement that Jesus Christ is righteous.

3 This chapter talks about the little flock's position as sons of God (vs. 1-3). They will become like Christ at His second coming (v. 2) and be born of God so that they cannot sin (v. 9). In the meantime, however, the Holy Spirit can work through them (v. 24) in loving the brethren so that the rest of Israel will know God is with them and want to be saved (vs. 14-23). Looking for the love of God in others will also keep the little flock from being deceived by apostate Israel (vs. 7-13). This is how "the children of God...and the children of the devil" are manifest unto them (v. 10).

(So much of Christianity wants people to think they can lose their salvation, so that they can make people feel guilty so that they will give money to the church. Therefore, they will take these verses out of context to say that people can lose their salvation by disobeying the law, which is not even true in Israel's dispensation. We need to approach this chapter with the attitude of believing that God's Word is true and of letting the verses mean what they say, rather than twisting them to fit our preconceived ideas about what they should mean. The reason this chapter is here is so the believing remnant can see that abiding in Christ and having His love come through them is how: 1) They will not be deceived by apostate Israel, 2) They will lead the lost sheep of the house of Israel to be saved, and 3) They can distinguish between true believers and wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). This chapter's purpose is NOT to question their salvation, since the issue of their salvation was settled in the book of Hebrews. We cannot overemphasize this latter point, due to the apostasy of the Christian church today.)

3:1 John goes back to addressing the group of believing Israel as a whole, rather than individuals. This will be important to keep in mind as we go through this chapter.

John started talking about being born of God in the last verse of chapter 2. Now, he talks about what it means to be a child of God. Note, as we mentioned in 2:29, that Israel is not actually born again until Jesus' second coming when they receive the atonement and the permanent, indwelling Holy Spirit. However, because they already have the anointing of the Holy Ghost (2:27), they can now live as sons of God. Similarly, today, in the mystery dispensation, we can walk in the Spirit, even though we also have the choice to live by the lusts of the flesh.

Getting back to 3:1, note that the anointing of the Holy Ghost includes the love of the Father inside them. God's love inside a person, then, is the distinguishing characteristic of sons of God. The god of this world, however, is the devil (II Corinthians 4:4). He does not have God's love in him. Those, then, without faith in God, also do not have God's love in them. Therefore, the world does not know the little flock as sons of God, because they also know not Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:10), as evidenced by them crucifying Him. Therefore, the little flock knows themselves as the sons of God only by having faith that what God has told them is so.

"Sons of God" is used 11 times in scripture. It is used four times for devils (Genesis 6:2,4, Job 1:6, and 2:1), once for all angels (Job 38:7), three times for the body of Christ (Romans 8:14,19 and Philippians 2:15), and three times for believing Israel (John 1:12, I John 3:1,2). Since hell was "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41), some of the angelic race will lose their positions as sons of God, which explains why God makes believers into sons of God.

While believing Israel are called "sons of God," apostate Israel are called children of the devil (John 8:44). It is no wonder, then, that the little flock is persecuted (Hebrews 11:36-38)! This also shows that all people belong to someone. You either belong to God and will have eternal life with him, or you belong to the devil and will experience eternal death in hell with him. There is no purgatory or limbo, as the Catholics say. There are not multiple spirit realms, as the Mormons say. There is no achieving of nirvana as the Buddhists say. There is no becoming one with Brahmin as the Hindus say. There are just sons of God and children of the devil, and you either spend eternity with God in His kingdom, or you spend eternity in hell with the devil and his angels.

3:2 Although the little flock are now sons of God, they do not have their glorified bodies yet. They may have an idea of what their glorified bodies will be like by reading of things that Jesus did with His glorified body after His resurrection, such as disappearing and re-appearing (Luke 24:31,36). However, since He went back to the Father, they only have vague ideas of their glorified bodies.

Moreover, they have to see Him as He is, before they become like Him, which means that John is talking about more than just the glorified body. He is also talking about the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ. Right now, they see Him as Jesus, being "crowned with glory and honour" (Hebrews 2:9). They have to wait until His second coming before they can see Him as "Wonderful" (Isaiah 9:6). That is because, right now, He is too wonderful for their mortal flesh to behold. We see

this in God's statement to Moses that "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live." We also see this in Job 42:3, where Job says that the things of God are "too wonderful for me." That is why "it doth not yet appear what we shall be" (3:2). In other words, "Wonderful" is so "wonderful" that mortal flesh is too evil even to understand what it all entails!

However, when believing Israel receives their glorified bodies, they will no longer be mortals. They will then become like Christ, because they are in Christ, and will finally see Him as He is, in all of His "Wonderful" characteristics of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23)! Thus, they will have their spiritual eyes completely opened, but, until then, they have to take God by faith so that they do not yield to the temptations of the Antichrist and apostate Israel.

With regard to being sons of God, Adam was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), which made him the son of God (Luke 3:38). Because of Adam's fall, every one born after him, with the exception of Jesus Christ, has been created in the image of Adam (Genesis 5:3). Jesus' redemptive work on the cross reverses the curse so that believers become the sons of God. According to this verse, this transformation occurs for saved Israel at Jesus' second coming. This makes it clear to John's readers that, although, positionally speaking, they are now sons of God, they will not fully realize their sonship position until Jesus' second coming.

3:3 Believing that they are sons of God means that Israel has faith in God's promises to them. This hope of eternal life should motivate them to godly living (II Peter 3:11). Therefore, they purify the inward man with faith, purging out the lusts of the flesh and the sin nature inside them. That is not to say that those lusts and that sin nature are removed. Rather, they are not followed, because of faith in God. Therefore, the little flock does not yield to the temptations of the enemy during the tribulation period. "Purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (3:3) simply means that purification from the lusts of the flesh comes by Christ's faith given to them, just like becoming a child of God comes by receiving Christ's faith as a result of believing that God will give Israel His promises to them.

3:4-6 Now that the believing remnant knows that they are sons of God positionally, John now covers the practical application of this. Verse 4 establishes the fact that, if they sin, they transgress the law. In their flesh, it is impossible not to sin (Romans 7:18). As sons of God, it is impossible to sin (3:9). Because saved Israel is caught in the middle, so to speak, they have a choice. Verse 5 says that Jesus Christ "was manifested to take away our sins." In other words, Jesus' sacrifice enables the little flock to go from a position of always sinning to a position of always not sinning. However, they are in the transitional phase right now.

(We should also note that Jesus Christ was only manifested to them "in the flesh" (I Timothy 3:16). He was not manifested to them in all His Wonderfulness, as we mentioned in the commentary on 3:2.)

Verse 6 says that the way the little flock chooses not to sin is by abiding in Christ, which we have already seen means to obey God's commandments. Now, the next phrase says, "whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him" (3:6). 3:2 says that Israel will be like Jesus when they shall see Him (at His second coming). Since He has not come yet, Israel will continue to sin in the tribulation period. Therefore, John is not saying that the little flock must live in sinless perfection in the tribulation period in order to maintain their salvation. Rather, he is making the point that Israel will continue to sin until Jesus' second coming, yet they can avoid sin now by abiding in Jesus, which means obeying the law (3:4). The phrase "neither known Him" (3:6) again refers to the knowledge of Him in His glory at His second coming. They will not have that complete knowledge of Jesus until they "see Him as He is" (3:2), which will take place at His second coming.

Note also, from 3:4, that sin is a double whammy. We learn this by the statement that "sin transgresseth ALSO the law." So, sin transgresses the law, but it must do something else, or else "ALSO" would not be mentioned. That "something else" is that it takes away your godliness. In other words, sin keeps you from purifying yourself (3:3). God has given the little flock "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3), but they will not be godly unless they first add virtue, knowledge, temperance, and patience to their faith (II Peter 1:5-6). Thus, the link between faith and godliness can be broken by sin.

3:7-8 Christians tend to look at these verses as supporting conditional salvation. In other words, if you commit sin, then you are of the devil. Therefore, you must have lost your salvation. However, as we have mentioned before, the goal of the epistle of I John is to get believers to operate in Christ's love. The issue of their salvation was already addressed in the book of Hebrews. The fact, that 3:7 starts with "little children, let no man deceive you," shows that these are instructions to believers to keep from being deceived by unbelievers. In other words, in order to identify if a person is following Christ or not, they should look if the person is doing righteousness or sin. Remember, from the commentary on 3:1, that everyone is either of God or of the devil. Since God does righteousness and the devil sins, a member of the little flock only has to look at a person's righteousness or sin to determine if they are of God or of the devil.

In other words, "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). Looking at that passage in Matthew, it is clear that the "fruits" have to do with sound doctrine vs. false doctrine, rather than with works or keeping the law vs. not keeping the law. This is seen in Matthew 7:21-23, where Jesus says to those who prophesied, cast out devils, and did many wonderful works in Jesus' name that "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." They work iniquity because their hearts are corrupt, resulting in them bringing forth evil fruit (Matthew 7:17-18). If this were not the case, Jesus would have been thrilled with those who prophesied, cast out devils, and did many wonderful works in His name. Instead, they are forever cast out of His presence.

This is important to understand because Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 23-24 all warn that "many" will be deceived by false Christs and prophets because they "shew great

signs and wonders.” In other words, because “man looketh on the outward appearance” (I Samuel 16:7), they will be deceived by the works of the devil, thinking they are the works of God. In fact, they will even think that that they “doeth God service” by killing believers (John 16:2)! This grave error comes by not recognizing the corruptness of the false doctrine of the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Only those with the “ears to hear” will understand this, which is why John now warns the little flock to observe whether someone in the public eye is of God or of the devil (Revelation 2:7,11,17,29, 3:6,13,22), not by their deeds, but by their fruit.

Therefore, those, who “doeth righteousness” (3:7), are the ones who preach sound doctrine according to God’s Word rightly divided, while those, who commit sin (3:8), are the ones who preach false doctrine. In other words, they are identified as either righteous or sinners, not by their deeds but by their words.

If the little flock is in sin, meaning that they believe false doctrine because “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23), they know they can get out of sin by placing their faith back in God’s Word to them. They will then do righteousness because the Son of God abides in them through the sound doctrine in their inner man. In fact, the Son of God was manifested unto Israel for the very purpose of destroying the works of the devil. It is up to Israel, then, to believe God’s promises to them in order to allow the power of God to work in their lives to destroy the works of the devil in them right then. This will then have the effect of showing others in Israel the power of God so that they might believe the gospel of the kingdom and receive the gift of everlasting life, as well.

3:9-10 Before a person believes the gospel, he is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). That is why “there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12). Therefore, an unbeliever will always commit sin (3:8). Believers, in Israel’s program in the at-hand phase of the kingdom, receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4), and He teaches them all things (John 14:26). Therefore, they can have sound doctrine built up in the inner man. If they allow that sound doctrine to work through them, they abide in Christ (2:27-28). If they do that, they do not commit sin. So, unbelievers always sin, and believers do not have to sin. Therefore, the way that “the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil” (3:10) is by looking to see if someone does righteousness or commits sin.

Now, 3:9 says that “whosoever is born of God...CANNOT sin.” The little flock can still sin after they believe the gospel. Hebrews 6:4-6 makes this clear. It says that “it is impossible...if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance.” Why? Because they have been “made partakers of the Holy Ghost,” which means that, to renew them would involve crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame. What this means is that, while the little flock does receive the Holy Ghost to teach them all things, they can still sin, which means, by 3:9’s definition, that they are not yet “born of God.” According to Acts 3:19-20, the time when the little flock has their sins remitted is at Jesus’ second coming. They will then be “born again” (John 3:3), which means they will be “born of God” (3:9).

It is at that FUTURE time that they will have the seed of God in them, because they are born of God. By reading Galatians 3:16 and I Peter 1:23, we can determine that “His seed” is a reference to Christ living in them. God will give them His Spirit to cause them to obey the law, and, because “His seed remaineth in [them]” (3:9) by the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26-27), “[they] cannot sin” (3:9).

Then, the little flock will not have to make the choice to abide in Christ (3:6), because God has already made the choice to abide in Israel through Christ, because Israel believed God’s promises to them. Since God is holy (I Peter 1:16) and He is abiding in saved Israel, Israel will, AT THAT TIME, no longer sin. In fact, they are incapable of sinning, as we are told that “he cannot sin” (3:9).

We can see the contrast between Israel in the tribulation period vs. Israel in the kingdom by looking at Revelation. Revelation is written to God’s “servants” (Revelation 1:1), who are the “CHILDREN of Israel” (Leviticus 25:55). Children differ nothing from servants, even though they are lord of all (Galatians 4:1). Once they are adults, they receive the inheritance. The CHILDREN of Israel become adults when Jesus places them under the new covenant in the kingdom. Therefore, AT THAT TIME, God says that they “inherit all things” and become His sons (Revelation 21:7).

However, in the meantime, because Israel has the Holy Ghost and they can still abide in Christ, when the “little children” of the little flock (3:7) look at people who are teaching them, they can compare their teachings to the sound doctrine for their dispensation that is found in God’s Word and they can determine that those people either “doeth righteousness” (3:7) or “committeth sin” (3:8) by the doctrine that they teach.

In the language of the parable in Matthew 13:24-30,37-43, “the children of the wicked one” are tares, while “the children of the kingdom” are “good seed” or wheat (Matthew 13:38). The question is asked, “Wilt Thou then that we go and gather” up the tares so that they may be burned? (Matthew 13:28). The answer is “Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.” THEN, the tares and the wheat will be gathered up (Matthew 13:29-30). Why wait until harvest? Because, since the children of God CAN allow Christ to abide in them, but they MAY not, while the children of the devil cannot have Christ abide in them, it takes the fiery trials of the tribulation period to expose who is of God and who is of the devil (Malachi 3:2-4).

In other words, the fact that believers will be “born of God” and “cannot sin” in the kingdom (3:9) means that they get a “taste” “of the heavenly gift” of the Holy Ghost during the tribulation period (Hebrews 6:4), and that taste will eventually make the children of God manifest by the end of the tribulation period. That is why 3:10 says that “in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.” In other words, the taste of being “born of God” results in the children of God eventually being made manifest to be different from the children of the devil by the end of the tribulation period. That is why the little flock must “endure unto the end” of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 24:13).

The reason they are made manifest is because “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34), which means that time will tell whose side a person is really on.

John also mentions that “he that loveth not his brother” “is not of God” (3:10). Jesus said, “Ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake” (Matthew 10:22; 24:9). This will be another way that the little children of the little flock can determine whether a person is of the devil or of God.

As a side note, we should mention that most Christians, today, think that believing the gospel means they are “born again.” If you ask Christians if they are “born again,” most all of them will say that they are. However, being born again is something that happens only to Israel in their program. They were God’s firstborn son back in Moses’ day (Exodus 4:22), and they need to be born “again,” due to their fall into sin, becoming Satan’s lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25). Today, in the mystery dispensation, we are not born again. Rather, we are “a new creature” in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). If someone claims to be born again, point them to I John 3:9. I John 3:9 says that, even if someone, who is born again, wants to sin, it is physically impossible for him to do so, because the seed of God is in him. Since no one lives in sinless perfect while Satan is the god of this world, the time in which this verse comes to pass must refer to the future. No one is born again today. That future time is for Israel in Israel’s program when God puts them under the new covenant, which does not happen until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-21). Therefore, I John 3:9 is a great verse to show that being born again means living in sinless perfection, which means that no one can be born again until Jesus’ second coming. Also, “born again” is only used of Israel, as God’s firstborn son (Exodus 4:22), which means we are not born again in the mystery dispensation. Rather, we are a new creature, being adopted as sons of God (Galatians 4:5-6), not born as sons of God.

3:11 “The beginning,” here, would be the time when individuals believed the gospel of the kingdom and became members of the little flock. That is when the love of the Father was bestowed upon them via the Holy Ghost, which means that they can now love one another (John 13:34-35). This love, in turn, by its actions, tells unbelievers to believe the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, love among the brethren brings more people into God’s kingdom, which is why the little flock is commanded to love one another.

3:12 Cain and Abel is a great example of how only some Jews will make it into God’s kingdom. Cain and Abel had the same, physical parents. However, spiritually speaking, Cain “was of that wicked one” (3:12), while Abel was righteous (Matthew 23:35). Note that 3:12 says that the reason Cain slew his brother was because “his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.” Therefore, Cain had evil works before he killed his brother, and those evil works resulted in him killing his brother. Those evil works were his religion, and Abel’s righteous works were his faithful obedience of God’s commands. Cain brought fruit, when God said to bring an animal sacrifice (Genesis 4:3). The Lord only accepted Abel’s sacrifice because it

was the only one that met God's requirement (Genesis 4:4). Cain then got angry that the Lord did not accept him, and so he killed Abel (Genesis 4:5-8).

Similarly, the little flock will obey God's commands under the law, and apostate Israel will follow their own traditions and religion (Daniel 8:11; Mark 7:7-9; Revelation 13). The result is that apostate Israel, although born Jewish, is really "of that wicked one" (3:12). To be of that wicked one, it just means that they believe Satan's lies, rather than God's truth. Because apostate Israel is not accepted by God, while the little flock is accepted by God, apostate Israel will be jealous of the little flock and seek to kill them, as Cain did with his brother. Physically, apostate and believing Israel are the same, but, spiritually, they are of two, different seeds: 1) The devil (apostate Israel), and 2) God (the little flock). The same is true of Cain and Abel, which is why they serve as an example for the little flock to avoid apostate Israel during the tribulation period.

3:13 Because the little flock is of God and the rest of the world is of the devil, they should not be surprised when the world hates them and seeks to kill them, even though those pursuing them are the same as they are physically, i.e., they are Jews. Similarly today, churchgoers can be divided into apostates, who refuse to believe the truth of God's Word rightly divided, and a believing remnant, who have believed the gospel of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4). We should not marvel, then, that most churchgoers hate us for believing the truth, because they are believing the lies of the devil, even though they look the same as us, in that they attend a "Christian" church.

Four times, the scripture says to "marvel not." Israel should not marvel at: 1) The poor being oppressed (Ecclesiastes 5:8), 2) The need to be born again (John 3:7), 3) The Son of man (not Jesus as God, but Jesus as man) being the One Who executes judgment (John 5:27-28), and 4) The world hating believers (3:13). The one thing that all of these has in common is that they are all offensive to our flesh.

So, why would the world hate believers? After all, all they are doing is trusting the gospel. It is not like they are committing crimes. The reason the world hates believers is because the world does not know God (John 15:18-21) and God is love (4:8). Therefore, the world does not know love, which means they can only hate. Granted, there is fleshly love that people can express, such as love for family members, especially a spouse, but that is not the love of God. God's love is a spiritual love that is unconditional, while fleshly love is ALWAYS conditional (no matter how hard someone tries to say or prove otherwise). Therefore, when God's love is expressed to unbelievers, their response is to either want that love for themselves by believing the gospel, or it is to reject that love and try to snuff it out through hate. That is why Jesus said that "the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death" (Matthew 10:21). In other words, spiritual hatred trumps fleshly love, even among family members.

Therefore, unbelievers MUST hate believers. They cannot get around it, because in their flesh dwelleth no good thing (Romans 7:18). Just like a cat cannot change a

tire no matter how much you try to get it to do so, an unbeliever cannot love a believer no matter how hard he tries to do so.

As such, believers need to keep in mind II Corinthians 5:14-16. These verses tell believers not to judge after the flesh. In other words, the little flock should ask the question: “Is this person in Adam or in Christ?” If he is in Adam, they need to share the gospel of the kingdom with him. If he does not believe, they need to shake the dust off their feet and move on (Luke 9:5; Acts 13:51), because that person has chosen to hate all believers. If the person is in Christ or chooses to believe the gospel in order to be placed into Christ, the little flock can welcome him into their fold. In other words, believers are to view people, not by their actions, but by their identity—Adam or Christ. Looking at whether a person “doeth righteousness” (3:7) or “committeth sin” (3:8) is John’s way of saying this to the little flock.

3:14 Remember that John is talking about the believing remnant of Israel as a GROUP, rather than talking about individuals. The GROUP has passed from death to life, even though individuals may opt out of the group by taking the mark of the beast or worshipping the image of the beast. Although they do not receive the atonement until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20), God has foreknowledge of the elect’s choice to believe the gospel of the kingdom and endure unto the end (I Peter 1:2). Therefore, John can say that the group of believers has passed from death to life, even though that does not happen until Jesus’ second coming. In other words, because of God’s foreknowledge, He can call “those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17).

However, you may say, “if they know that they are saved because they love the brethren, then, if they do not love the brethren, they must not be saved.” Yes, that is true. However, regardless of if they SHOW love to the brethren or not, if they have believed the gospel and will endure unto the end, then they MUST love the brethren. This means that the little flock’s SOULS can love the brethren, even if their flesh does not show it.

A good way to understand this is by looking at Romans 8:23, which says, “Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” In other words, our souls want to serve God, because we are alive in Christ, but our flesh is vile (Philippians 3:21). Therefore, our souls groan, because they are limited by our flesh. You do not see the love of Christ come through most Christians today, and yet their souls still groan within them. Similarly, the little flock’s souls love the brethren, even if they do not allow their flesh to show it. You can also see this in I Peter 1:22, which says, “Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” Therefore, the little flock has purified souls because they believed the gospel of the kingdom, and those purified souls result in love of the brethren, even if many members of the little flock do not show that love because they are asleep spiritually (Matthew 25:5).

At the same time, individuals can still lose their salvation by their SOULS being led astray, as II Peter 2:20 states: “If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the KNOWLEDGE of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.” All of this shows that it is who they are on the inside that counts. They are saved by believing the gospel and they are led astray by abandoning their belief in the gospel.

3:15 Even if apostate Israel does not physically kill the believing remnant, their hatred of them makes them murderers in their hearts. Jesus said just as much in Matthew 5:21-22. More important than the physical murder that apostate Israel commits, though, is their spiritual murder. By propagating the lies of the devil and forcing people to follow them, they are getting people to kill their own souls by abandoning faith in Christ. That is what the devil did with 1/3 of the angelic realm when he got them to follow him, rather than God (Revelation 12:3-4). That is why Jesus called the devil “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). Since apostate Israel is of their father, the devil (John 8:44), by spreading the lies of their religion and of the Antichrist, they are getting Jews to kill their own souls. That is truly how hating their brothers makes them murderers, and no eternal life abides in them (3:15).

Again, this verse is NOT saying that a hater loses his salvation. Rather, it is saying that he is not living out his life in Christ (2:24-25). Besides, an individual believer does not hate his brethren, as John just established in 3:14.

3:16 In the tribulation period, the little flock will be persecuted and killed. They have placed their faith in God’s promises to them under the old covenant, and it will seem like God has abandoned them. However, they have proof that God loves them in that “He laid down His life for” Israel (3:16). This shows that the crucifixion was not some big mistake that Jesus did. He said that He would lay down His life, and then He would pick it back up again (John 10:18).

Now, in the tribulation period, God wants the little flock to show God’s love to the rest of Israel so that they might be saved as well. John 15:13 says that “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Therefore, the little flock is called to show God’s love to the rest of Israel by following Jesus’ example in being willing to be killed for their faith in Christ. God’s love is perceived in Jesus’ death; therefore, it is also perceived in the death of believers. That is why they must die (Romans 11:26). In this way, unbelieving Israel can see the faith of the little flock and be more likely to believe the gospel themselves. That is how the little flock can “lay down [their] lives for the brethren” (3:16).

3:17 The little flock can also help fellow members of the little flock by using what material wealth they have to help the needs of the brethren. This is not an option, but it is a commandment by the Lord Jesus Christ. He told them to “sell that ye have” (Luke 12:33). We see the little flock obeying this command in Acts 4:34-35. If they are not willing to sell what they have, then they have disobeyed God’s

command, which shows that the love of “this world’s good” is in them, rather than “the love of God” (3:17).

Contrast this with the Antichrist and apostate Israel. They control the world’s economy, and they require people to sell their souls to the devil in order to receive basic food, clothing, and shelter.

3:18 Having to sell all they have in order to help each other out is not an easy thing to do, especially for the rich. That is why Jesus said “that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:23). Loving in word only is not love at all. James 2:16 says there is no profit in telling a hungry man “depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled,” while giving him nothing to eat. Rather, the little flock needs to love their fellow brethren “in deed.” They also need to love them “in truth,” meaning that they give them God’s Word for their dispensation so that they can endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved. This is the true love of God that will bring saved Israel into God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

Loving **in truth** is the fundamental difference between Bible believers and the love of this world. Ephesians 4:15 tells believers to speak the truth in love, while the love of this world is seen in Matthew 7:22-23, where they cast out devils and do many wonderful works in Jesus’ name, and yet they are not of God and will go to hell. That is because their “love” is only an expression of lust. As we learned in 3:13, the world can only hate. Therefore, the “love” of this world is really lust. We learned this in 2:16, which told us that “ALL that is in the world [is] the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” Because these things are “not of the Father” (2:16), the world will pass “away, and the lust thereof” (2:17). The problem is that it is easy for the little flock to allow lust to keep them from showing love to the lost sheep of Israel. As Mark 4:19 says, “The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

When this happens, they “love in word [or] in tongue” (3:18), meaning that they use lust to try to get what they want, rather than allowing God’s love to come through them “in deed and in truth” (3:18) so that others are saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). This is why James gives a strong warning about the tongue, because it is used to send people to hell (James 3:5-6,9) through false doctrine spoken by it as the outpouring of an evil heart to try to obtain the things of this world.

We can define God’s love as doing good unto others unconditionally, and we can define the world’s love as lust and carnal desire. The contrast between God’s love and the world’s love is seen in one’s attitude toward hell. God’s love was perceived and commended toward us in Christ’s death on the cross (Romans 5:8), because God did not want people to go to hell. Therefore, if God’s love comes through the little flock, they will speak the truth to the lost sheep of Israel and the “deed” (3:18) that they will love them in is the deed of preaching the gospel of the kingdom. In doing so, they will be pulling people from the fire of hell, “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 23). Contrast this with Satan, who, after he is thrown

into hell, “shall be comforted over all his multitude” (Ezekiel 32:31) that he tricked into joining him in hell for all eternity. Thus, the love of God is seen in working through believers to keep everyone possible from going to hell, while the love of the world is seen in trying to acquire things in this world and then laughing over those burning in hell with them. (This is why unbelievers love to see others suffer, and why they persecute believers, because they get no joy out of believers.) Therefore, hell is the end result of loving “in word [and] in tongue” (3:18), and eternal life in God’s kingdom is the end result of loving “in deed and in truth” (3:18).

3:19 The tribulation period will be marked by death, famine, and terrible plague. Many people, even if they take the mark of the beast, will be in survival mode, which means they will be selfish. If, by contrast, the little flock freely gives up what they have to help others, it is a way of assuring their hearts that they are of the truth (3:19), i.e., they are of God. If they were not abiding in Christ, then they would be selfish like everybody else. Therefore, their selfless attitude gives them confidence that they will make it into God’s kingdom (3:21).

We even see this with the Gentiles. Jesus gives eternal life to the Gentiles who give food, clothing, and shelter to believing Israel (Matthew 25:34-40), and He gives eternal damnation to the Gentiles, who do not help out believing Israel (Matthew 25:41-46). This is in line with God’s promise to bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel (Genesis 12:3). In other words, the Gentiles show that they have faith in God’s promise by blessing believing Israel, and they get eternal life in the kingdom, as a result.

Similarly speaking, the little flock will know they are of the truth (3:19) if they love “in deed and in truth” (3:18), because “love is of God” (4:7) and is only bestowed by God upon believers (3:1). Therefore, they must be in Christ, which assures their hearts before Him (3:19). The little flock needs this assurance since Hebrews 12:22-25 says that, because of what Jesus did on the cross, they now stand before God Himself (Hebrews 12:22-25) without the intermediary of the law between them and God (Hebrews 12:18-19).

3:20 The heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, it will condemn believers based upon sins they have committed, even though their consciences should be purged from dead works (Hebrews 9:14). Most of Christianity today thinks that they have to obey the law, at least to some extent, in order to maintain their salvation or at least to demonstrate that they have true, “saving” faith. (I did not know that anyone could have “un-saving” faith.) Because of this, nearly all believers have at least some doubt about their salvation. The background for today’s believer is that we were given the law of the conscience (Romans 2:14-15). Once we believed the gospel, God blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us (Colossians 2:14), and put us under grace, rather than under the law (Romans 6:14). Therefore, as Christians, “all things are lawful unto me” (I Corinthians 6:12), and yet many face the self-condemnation of their heart by putting themselves back under the law. This is what God calls “having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4:2).

Contrast this with Israel. They were given both the law of the conscience and “the oracles of God,” i.e., the Mosaic law (Romans 3:1-2). When they believe the gospel, God purges their “conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14), but they are still under the Mosaic law (Matthew 23:2-3). Since most body-of-Christ believers experience self-condemnation even though they are not under the law, how much more will bride-of-Christ believers experience self-condemnation since they are under the law. In other words, if grace believers cannot understand that they are under grace, law believers will have a much more difficult time understanding that Christ has paid the price for their sins under the law—past, present, and future. Therefore, it is easy to see that, even though believing Israel is saved, their hearts may still condemn them.

The point of this verse, then, is to show that, even if their hearts condemn them, they will still have eternal life in the kingdom. Why? Because God knows all things. He knows that the blood of Christ atones for their sins. He is also greater than their heart, which means that the blood of Christ also overcomes the self-condemnation of their heart. What a relief to those who understand this verse, especially to believing Israel, since most of them will be asleep spiritually just before Jesus comes (Matthew 25:5,9-10). This means that they can still enter into God’s eternal kingdom on earth, because God overcomes the condemnation of their own heart!

3:21 John is speaking to the little flock. Therefore, he addresses them as “beloved” (3:21), which means that they are in Christ, because Christ is God’s “beloved Son” (Matthew 3:17). If their heart does not condemn them (3:21), it is because they know that they are of the truth (3:19). Therefore, instead of cowering in fear before the One they killed, Who is both their Lord and their Christ (Acts 2:36), they can have “confidence toward God” (3:21) that they will be born of God (3:9), making them the sons of God (3:1-2).

Christian churches today are very apathetic when it comes to sound doctrine. They think that, as long as they feel good about God, then they must be saved. We just saw from 3:20 that this is not so, because God is greater than their heart. Therefore, self-condemned believers still receive eternal life, and feel-good churchgoers, who have not believed the gospel, still go to hell.

Therefore, Israel (and us today) should not seek after the good feeling, but they should seek after the truth. Jesus said, “If ye continue in My word...; ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). The truth makes them free from being Satan’s captive (Isaiah 49:24-25), and it frees them from the self-condemnation of their heart. Today, we are told that “in [Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him” (Ephesians 3:12). Similarly, Israel is told that they can now “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16).

3:22-23 Not only does this confidence assure the little flock of their salvation, but it also gives them confidence to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel so that they might be saved. In Acts 28:31, Paul is seen “preaching the

kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence.” Why? Because He knows the truth that believing the gospel will save a person.

Similarly speaking, Jesus sent believing Israel to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6). Because “the Jews require a sign” (I Corinthians 1:22), Jesus told them to “heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils” (Matthew 10:8). These are the signs that confirm that the gospel of the kingdom that they preach to the lost sheep is true (Mark 16:20).

However, if they are not in the truth, they will not love each other, and the world will not know that they are Jesus’ disciples (John 13:34-35). This is why they must believe the truth before Jesus will do these miracles through them. This is seen in that the disciples could not cast out a lunatic devil (Matthew 17:15-21), because they did not believe that Jesus would die, be buried, and rise from the dead on the third day (Matthew 16:21-23).

This is confirmed by 3:22-23. 3:22 says that they will receive whatsoever they ask of God, IF they keep His commandments. 3:23 says that His commandment is to “believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and [to] love one another.” This is not for salvation, but it is for them to receive what they ask for. Jesus said, “If ye shall ask anything IN MY NAME, I will do it” (John 14:14). Believing “on the name of His Son Jesus Christ” (3:23) means that they believe the truth of God’s Word to them, since He is “the Word” (1:1 and 5:7). Therefore, if they abide in the truth, God will do the signs of the kingdom through them, because the gospel that they preach must be the truth. However, if they are in unbelief, the signs of the kingdom will not be done through them because they would be proclaiming lies.

The second commandment is to love one another (3:23). Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). This second part is key, because the Antichrist will have people performing miracles in the Lord’s name (Matthew 7:22-23) at the same time that the little flock also performs miracles in the Lord’s name. What will let unbelievers in Israel know that God is with the little flock only is the love that they show one for another. The little flock will give of what little they have to help a fellow member of the little flock in need, while apostate Israel will persecute and kill the little flock in order to gain more material wealth. Therefore, the difference between the two groups will be easily identifiable to the rest of Israel (if they choose to see it), even though both groups perform miracles in Jesus’ name. Therefore, Jesus also gives the little flock the commandment to “love one another” (3:23).

As such, “whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him” (3:22) is not a promise for today, nor does it mean that they can ask for God to give them millions of dollars. Rather, it means that God will perform the physical miracles through them that they ask God to perform when they are preaching sound doctrine, so that the lost sheep of the house of Israel will be saved.

At the same time, the miracles are also meant to fend off the attacks of the devil. In Acts 28:3-6, we see Paul bit by a deadly snake, yet no harm came his way. That is why God tells the little flock that a serpent cannot harm them (Mark 16:18). However, the more important fulfillment of this is spiritually, not physically. A snake is a type of Satan's attack to destroy the little flock, since he came to Eve as a serpent (Genesis 3:1-7). That is why it is Satan as "the serpent" who tries to destroy believing Israel during the last half of the tribulation period, and God uses the earth to protect the little flock from his attacks (Revelation 12:15-16). Therefore, God will also give the little flock whatever they ask (3:22), in order to keep them safe, as they are keeping God's commandments and doing the things that are pleasing in His sight, i.e., preaching the gospel of the kingdom. (The laying on of hands to heal the sick, as mentioned in James 5:14-15, is also part of this.) This is the unconditional prayer promise that only happens in the tribulation period and after. This does not work today, because this promise is not given to us today in the mystery dispensation, nor is it for Israel to become physically wealthy in the tribulation period. Therefore, even in its proper dispensational context, 3:22 is NOT referring to physical wealth for believers, as the prosperity-gospel preachers of today would want you to believe.

3:24 The little flock knows that Christ abides in them, and not in apostate Israel, because they have been given God's Spirit (3:24). This is a setup verse for chapter 4, which starts by telling them to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (4:1).

A good example, here, is from Saul in I Samuel 15:13-15. In verse 13, Saul says, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." In verse 14, Samuel provides evidence that Saul has not obeyed the Lord. Then, in verse 15, Saul still thinks he has obeyed the Lord. In this example, Saul is not using the Spirit of God to determine if he has obeyed, while Samuel is. The reason, that this is important for the little flock during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, is because a similar thing will be going on in their time. The Antichrist will declare himself to be God (II Thessalonians 2:4), and he will claim to be obeying God's law, while the believing remnant will be the true followers of Christ, and they will be killed for supposedly going against God's law. In other words, evil will be called good, and good will be called evil (Isaiah 5:20). This is why those, who seek to kill the little flock, will think that they are doing God service in doing so (John 16:2).

The key to understanding all of this is in learning that obeying God means believing God. It does not mean rote obedience of the law. (In this case, God thinks how a wife thinks. If she asks her husband to mow the yard, he could do it and she would be angry with him, because he complained the whole time. However, if the husband tried to mow the yard but only mowed a little patch because that was all he was physically capable of, his wife would be happy with him. Why? Because he obeyed her from the heart.) We get this from Romans 10:15-17, which tells us that those, who have believed the gospel, have "obeyed the gospel." Also, I Peter 1:22-23 says that the little flock is "born again" because they have obeyed the truth through the Spirit. In other words, they believed the gospel. Therefore, God can say of religious people: "I hate, I despise your feast days....Though ye offer Me burnt offerings....I will not accept them" (Amos 5:21-22). By contrast, David's sins

of committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband were not imputed to his account (Psalm 32:1-2). Why? Because “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (I Samuel 16:7).

Therefore, the little flock can use the Spirit of God given to them to discern that they are in Christ and to discern that apostate Israel are children of the devil, even though the world thinks the opposite is true, because the world looks at the outward appearance. Therefore, the little flock must use the eyes of faith, via the Holy Spirit given unto them, in order to see that Christ abides in them.

4 The way that the little flock will know if a person is on the Lord’s side is by their acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ (v. 2) and the Son of God (v. 15), just like Peter did (Matthew 16:16). The way that they show the lost sheep of Israel that they have acknowledged these things is by manifesting God’s love to others (vs. 7-10). This also helps unbelievers see God (v. 12) so that they may believe the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, in this chapter, John’s focus is on showing the little flock that they need to obey God’s commandment to love others, so that others may be saved. At the same time, by trying the spirits of others, meaning that they compare what is said to God’s Word rightly divided, the little flock can tell who is of God and who is of the devil, so that they will not be deceived and be led astray.

4:1 Based upon what we learned in 3:24, the way that they are to “try the spirits whether they are of God” (4:1) is to determine if what is said to them comes from belief in God. In other words, just using God’s name or quoting a Bible verse in support is not enough. The little flock must determine if the words, programs, and actions of others are in line with believing God and what God is doing during the at-hand phase of the kingdom. They will only be able to determine this by the Holy Spirit given unto them.

Since only the Holy Spirit produces good fruit, the little flock can be a fruit inspector (Matthew 7:20) to determine which spirit is of God and which is not. Again, they must look at God’s Word rightly divided. People, who merely state they do great things in God’s name, are said to be workers of iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23). They have the world deceived into thinking they are of God, when they are not. Since they are of the devil by mimicking the little flock, the believing remnant must compare their words with sound doctrine for their dispensation to determine if the doctrine being taught is of the devil or of God.

False prophets are those, who say they speak for God, but they are really of the devil. In the tribulation period, there will be false prophets who come to the little flock “in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). Because of this, these false prophets “shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:11). However, if the little flock believes sound doctrine for their dispensation by rightly dividing the Word of truth, they will be using the Spirit of God to “try the spirits” to determine who are the false, deceptive prophets, and who are speaking truth from the Lord to them.

4:2-3 The deceiving false prophets, warned about in 4:1, will “confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” (II John 7). It is extremely important that the little flock understands what this statement means, or else they will be deceived. Most people probably think that it means that the false prophets will deceive them by denying the historical Jesus. However, that is not what this statement means, since all religions admit that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. In fact, they would all say that He was a good man, prophet, or even miracle worker. The one area, where all religions fail, is that none of them recognize that Jesus Christ’s death on the cross brings atonement for their sins. This is because all religions have some works involved, whereby they go to heaven or become god themselves. In other words, they will say that Jesus was a prophet, but He was not the Saviour because, to admit this, would be to admit that they need saving, which would destroy their religion.

The word “Jesus” means “Jehovah Saviour” or “God is my Saviour.” “Christ” means “Messiah” or “Anointed One.” Therefore, when John says that “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God” (4:3), he means that every spirit, that does not admit that man is not good (Romans 3:12) and that Jesus’ goal at His first coming was to be the Christ to save them from their sins and that salvation comes only by Jesus’ blood alone, is a spirit of the devil. In other words, if religion says, “Jesus Christ was a historical figure,” they have not confessed that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Instead, they need to say, “Jesus Christ’s blood saves people from their sins, and no one is immune from needing the blood of Christ for salvation, because we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Anything less than this admission is NOT a confession that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Therefore, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and all other religions, including most of Christianity, have “that spirit of antichrist” in them (4:3).

The reason this is important is because the antichrist will not die for their sins. Instead, he will rise up, defeat three kings (Daniel 7:8), and make a seven-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27), bringing apostate Israel into his kingdom in their sinful condition. This means that the antichrist will teach that Israel is righteous on their own, rather than teaching that their own righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Thus, the spirit of antichrist’s primary error is to teach self-righteousness, rather than teaching that Jesus Christ would have to bear Israel’s sins because they are not righteous on their own.

John says that “that spirit of antichrist” was to come, but is already in the world. This is similar to Paul’s statement that “the mystery of iniquity doth already work” (II Thessalonians 2:7), even though THE antichrist has not come yet (II Thessalonians 2:3-4,8). The reason this is similar is that the antichrist “will work iniquity” (Isaiah 32:6), and his followers will “work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23). The reason that the “spirit of antichrist” (4:3) and “the mystery of iniquity” (II Thessalonians 2:7) are working now is because iniquity is done in secret. This is seen in the secret abominations of the Jewish religious leaders in Ezekiel 8:7-12, and in Paul’s statement that “it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (Ephesians 5:12). Certainly, groups like Mormons, Masons,

and other secret societies are included here. However, all unbelievers are really included because “all...evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:23), because “the heart is...desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9).

The difference between “before the antichrist is here” and “while the antichrist is here” is only one of revelation. In other words, the spirit of antichrist and the mystery of iniquity work now, but, once the rapture of the church takes place (II Thessalonians 2:7), “THEN shall that Wicked be revealed” (II Thessalonians 2:8). In other words, the pure evil and wickedness of man will be revealed once Israel’s program resumes again. Man’s evil and wickedness will still be bad, but it is at that time that it will be revealed how wicked man is, instead of being kept a secret.

By contrast, Zephaniah 3:13 says that “the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.” Again, this shows that the little flock can compare the words of a person to God’s Word rightly divided in order to determine if what that person says is of the Spirit of God or of the spirit of antichrist, because unbelievers, **no matter how godly they appear to be**, work iniquity and are deceitful while believers do not work iniquity and are not deceitful.

As a side note, everything that God does centers around Jesus. God created the world through Jesus speaking it into existence; God redeemed the world through Jesus’ death on the cross; believers serve God through the power of the cross to overcome the devil’s forces; and God will judge the world through Jesus. The power of God over Satan’s realm is only possible through Jesus’ coming in the flesh, living a perfect life, dying, and rising from the dead. Since God’s power is completely focused on Jesus’ coming in the flesh and Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44), Satan will not admit that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh already. If he did, it would mean that his guy, the Antichrist, is not the true Christ. Then, people would not follow Satan’s leader, and his plan of having an eternal kingdom on earth for himself would not realized. Therefore, you can use this same test of trying the spirits to determine which Bible translation is of God. The one, that always glorifies Jesus Christ, is God’s Word. Among English translations today, the King James Version is the only version that meets this criteria. All of the other translations somehow diminish Jesus Christ’s first coming in the flesh.

4:4 Since the little flock is “of God,” He that is in them is Christ. In fact, they just learned this in 3:24. He that is in them is NOT their inner god, inner strength, or “the real you” that will come through and conquer the world, as New Age philosophy would have you believe.

He that is in the world is Satan. We see this in II Corinthians 4:4, which calls Satan “the god of this world.” A clearer and more applicable reference to Satan being the one in the world is John 14:30, where Jesus says that “the prince of this world” was coming after Him. We know this to be Satan, because, not too long before making this statement, Jesus told Judas Iscariot to go quickly to betray Him, and Satan was dwelling within Judas Iscariot when Jesus told him this (John 13:26-27).

Another reason we know that the one within the little flock is Christ, and not their own will or their own power, is because they are powerless to overcome Satan in their own flesh. We see this from God's statement that "the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he" (Jeremiah 31:11). Jesus did this from the cross, when He called His adversary, Satan, to come to Him and contend with Him (Isaiah 50:7-9). Jesus, then, won the victory over Satan and his forces through His death on the cross (Colossians 2:14-15). How dare ANYONE cheapen Jesus' victory over Satan by saying that he can overcome Satan himself! In essence, such a view is saying that "Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:21)!

Finally, note that Paul said that he is weak (II Corinthians 11:29), yet he could do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him (Philippians 4:13). In other words, the little flock need not worry about Satan's deceptive and vicious attack against them through the Antichrist and apostate Israel, because Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33). Since Christ is in them, all the little flock has to do is enter into the rest that is in Christ (Hebrews 4:10), and His resurrection power will overcome Satan on the little flock's behalf.

Therefore, it is God doing the work for the little flock, although God will not make them overcomers unless they believe the sound doctrine that God has given them for their dispensation. In other words, victory comes by believing, not by striving in their flesh to overcome Satan by their own performance. After all, how can the believing remnant overcome the world themselves, when, spiritually speaking, they are "little children" (4:4)?

4:5 The "they" of this verse are the "false prophets" (4:1) and those having the "spirit of antichrist" (4:3). As such, they follow the devil, who is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4); therefore, "they are of the world" (4:5). Therefore, even though they quote scripture and claim to be following God, they speak, not of the things of God, but of the things of the world. All that is in the world is lust and pride (2:16), and so this is all that they can speak. This is also all that the world can hear; therefore, it is the world that heareth them (4:5).

4:6 By contrast, the little flock is of God; therefore, they do not follow what the world says. They follow what the Good Shepherd (John 10:14), the Lord Jesus Christ, says. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27), Jesus said. Since the little flock has faith in God, they recognize the false prophets, who are speaking lies, and they do not listen to them. Instead, they read God's Word, recognize it as the Good Shepherd speaking to them, and follow what He says, not what the world says.

4:5 and 4:6 show two, completely different realms. 4:5 shows the realm of the things of this world, operated by Satan, and 4:6 shows the spiritual realm, operated by God. Since Christ lives in believers and Satan works through the world, members of the little flock collide with Satan's system once they believe the gospel of the kingdom. All that is in the world is lust and pride (2:16), but "God

cannot be tempted with evil” (James 1:13), because God is love (4:8). Since God is in the little flock through Christ, if the believing remnant allows God to work through them, Christ will win the victory over Satan, because the things of Satan will not tempt them.

It is important to note that only believers have the ear to hear what God tells them (Luke 8:8-10). By contrast, the world has “itching ears” (II Timothy 4:3-4). Itching ears are of the flesh, because the itch only affects the flesh. It does not affect the ear’s ability to hear. The little flock listens for the voice of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 10:2-5), which keeps them from noticing any itch of their flesh. A great example of this is Jesus Himself, who went 40 days and 40 nights without eating or drinking anything, but it was only AFTERWARD that “He was...an hungered” (Matthew 4:2). Why? Because He learned that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). So, too, if the little flock concentrates on the spiritual, they will not notice the lust of the flesh.

However, the world is spiritually dead, which means they cannot concentrate on the spiritual. Therefore, they will “hear” only the things of this world (4:5), and they will have the world scratch their itching ears. Since “the eyes of man are never satisfied” (Proverbs 27:20), they will continue to scratch and scratch and scratch, working “all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:19).

We should also note that, when 4:6 says that, “he that is not of God heareth not us,” it does not mean that the lost will not listen to them. Jesus specifically called the little flock to go to “the LOST sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6). These lost sheep would have faith in God, except that they have been confused by the world. In other words, they are God’s sheep, but they are lost. By going to the cities of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom, these lost sheep will hear what the little flock tells them because they are God’s sheep that need to be found. So, when the little flock speaks the truth of God’s Word for their dispensation, the lost sheep of Israel (“he that knoweth God”) hear and believe God’s Word to them, while the unbelievers of Israel (“he that is not of God”) continue in their unbelief.

The concluding sentence of 4:6 tells the little flock that this concludes the section of 4:1-6 in which they learn how to determine if what is spoken is of God or not. At the root of whatever is said will be the belief or unbelief that Jesus is the Christ to save them from their sins and He has already come in the flesh. If they believe this, the speakers are true prophets, speaking the things of God. If they do not believe Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, they are of the world and are false prophets. That is how the little flock knows if the spirit that speaks is of truth or of error.

4:7-8 Love appears 34 times in the next 18 verses (4:7 – 5:3), which is the greatest concentration of love found anywhere in scripture.

We are told that “God is love.” We are not told that God is loving or exhibits love, but that He IS love. Therefore, the best definition of love is simply “God.” God’s

love is the best thing that exists, because it suffers long, is kind, does not envy, is not prideful, is not selfish, thinks only good, loves only the truth, bears all things, hopes all things, and never fails (I Corinthians 13:4-8). Therefore, God's love is the most desirable thing for your inward man. Since God IS love, you obtain God's love by knowing Him. This is why Paul said, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Philippians 3:10). Paul knew that the only way He would know Christ is by suffering. After all, how can you know a love that bears all things if you do not bear all things yourself? Therefore, the way that the little flock knows God and His love is by suffering through the tribulation period.

This is why the love of God and knowing God are intimately connected in 4:7-8. As simply stated here, if you love, you know God. If you do not love, you do not know God. This is why God says that, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14). In other words, there is no spiritual meaning to words on a page. It takes the Holy Ghost to attach God's love to those words so that you know God, giving you the spiritual meaning of the words (I Corinthians 2:9-13). This is why only believers can understand God's Word, as Ephesians 3:19 says, "the love of Christ...passeth knowledge."

Theologians and seminaries think they have the market cornered on God, but they know nothing about God, because they are in unbelief. Sure, they can quote scriptures, commentators, and original texts, but they do not know the true meaning of the words in the Bible, because they do not believe God.

A great example of this is the Jewish religious leaders vs. the Lord Jesus Christ. At age 12, Jesus sat among the doctors of the law, listened to them, and asked them questions. Apparently, those religious leaders could not answer His questions, because Jesus Himself had to answer them, astonishing all who heard Him (Luke 2:46-47). So, how could a 12 year-old kid know more about the law than the law's "experts"? Because He believed God, and so the love of God taught Him the law on a spiritual level that the unbelieving religious leaders never learned. This is why Jesus said that all the law and the prophets hang on love (Matthew 22:37-40).

Knowledge may be power, but "charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Pet 4:9). This is why "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (I Corinthians 8:1).

Therefore, the little flock's goal, just like Paul, should be to know God. At the same time, they already know God to some extent because they have believed the gospel. Therefore, God has already bestowed His love upon them (3:1), which the world does not have. Therefore, the lost sheep of the house of Israel will see God's love coming through them and believe the gospel they preach, over the message of the antichrist, because apostate Israel does not have God's love coming through them (John 13:34-35).

When the little flock abides in the truth, they will abide in Christ and Christ in them (3:24). Since God is love (4:8) and the little flock is one with the Father, they

will naturally love one another. This love of God coming through the little flock shows that they are born of God and know God (4:7).

4:9-10 The commandment is for the little flock to love one another (4:7). They already have the perfect example of God's love to follow in that God manifested His love to Israel by sending His only begotten Son to them. This shows God's love in two respects. First, sending His Son means that God would forgive Israel's sins by His Son being the propitiation (fully satisfying sacrifice) for their sins (4:10). Second, because His Son was sent "into the world" (4:9), He is a man, just like Israel is, which means that believing Israel can "live through Him" (4:9). Therefore, Israel has both forgiveness of sins and the life of God living through them for all eternity as a result of God's love manifested to them by God sending His only begotten Son to Israel.

It is important to understand that God loved Israel before Israel loved God, because this shows that Israel's love is from God. Therefore, the fruit, of saved and edified souls that comes from Israel sharing that love with others, is the result of God's manifested love, which means that God gets the glory, keeping the little flock from committing the sin of pride. Since God's love covers a multitude of sins, they could not fully experience God's love if they were not first sinners in need of a Saviour. This is why the angels desire to look into salvation (I Peter 1:9-12), because this is the one aspect of God's love that they do not know.

Also, note how similar 4:9 is to John 3:16. A big difference is that John 3:16 ends with "have everlasting life," and 4:9 ends with "that we might live through Him." This tells us that a good definition of everlasting life is living through Him. We also learned this in 2:24-25, where we were told that abiding in Christ is what eternal life is all about. I mention this because most people, when they think of eternal life in heaven, think of certain activities, such as strumming a harp or bowing down before Jesus. However, eternal life is really all about living through Christ. Therefore, eternal life is not about certain activities, but it is about a certain Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, living through you.

In the kingdom, the believing remnant of Israel will live through Christ perfectly. God is "perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16), and He "knoweth all things" (3:20). Therefore, not only will God's love be on display in God's kingdom on earth, but His knowledge will be as well. This is why Isaiah 11:9 says that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." When 4:10 says "herein is love," it means that God's love is in eternal life. Therefore, we again see the intimate connection between knowledge and God's love.

4:11 Since God first manifested His love to Israel before they loved God, the lost sheep of the house of Israel also need God's love manifested to them before they will love God. Since Jesus Christ has ascended to heaven, it is up to the little flock to manifest God's love to them so that they may join the little flock in having eternal life in God's kingdom on earth. Otherwise, how else will the lost sheep of the house of Israel see God's love and believe the gospel (II Corinthians 4:7)?

4:12 The reason it is so important for the little flock to love others is because, since “God is love” (4:8) and “no man hath seen God at any time” (4:12), the only way unbelievers can “see” God before judgment is by seeing His love perfected in the little flock. The reason God’s love is perfected in the little flock is because some of the qualities of God’s love can only be displayed upon sinners. For example, if not for humans, God’s love would not suffer long, bear all things, and endure all things (I Corinthians 13:4,7). Therefore, not only can the lost sheep of Israel see God’s love in believers, but they can also see God’s love in them in its perfected form.

The same is true for us today in the mystery dispensation. The difference, though, is that, since we are sealed with the indwelling Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14), God dwells in us, regardless of if we walk in the Spirit or we fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). In the prophecy dispensation, however, because they do not receive the atonement until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20), God only dwells in them if they love one another (4:12). It is important, therefore, that they learn and believe God’s Word to them, not only so that others may be saved, but also so that they endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved themselves (Matthew 10:22).

Their believing God’s Word so that God’s love is seen in them is vitally important, as it is God’s love in the little flock that differentiates them from the rest of Israel (John 13:35). Think of today. Christians, as a whole, are not getting people saved, because they do not know and believe God’s Word. Therefore, when life’s toughest questions come up, believers are not able to give unbelievers “a reason of the hope that is in” them (I Peter 3:15). Since Satan’s deception is at its strongest during the tribulation period (Matthew 24:24), it is even more important for the little flock to show forth God’s love when the counterfeit Christ is fooling the world into thinking that he represents God. The world will not know “God is love” (4:8), unless the little flock shows them. Since we have already seen that God’s love and knowledge are intimately connected, the little flock needs to know and believe God’s Word to them or else the lost sheep of Israel will not see God’s love in them.

4:13 His Spirit is to teach them all things (John 14:26). This links the Holy Spirit with God’s love and knowledge. Since they have the Holy Spirit, they know that God dwells in them, which means that they can have confidence that they can know the Word of God. This is important because apostate Israel will align itself with the Antichrist, and it will appear to most people that the little flock is a cult, because they are not following what all of Israel believes. However, because they have His Spirit and apostate Israel does not, it does not matter how many degrees or accolades that apostate Israel has from man. They do not have God dwelling in them; therefore, they cannot know God. This means that the little flock can be confident that the doctrine they believe is correct over all of the “accepted views” in Israel because the Holy Spirit taught them the things of God. The same is true for the body of Christ today vs. Christian denominations and seminaries.

Note also that God has given the little flock “OF His Spirit” (4:13), as opposed to us today in the mystery dispensation, where God “hath ... given unto us His Holy

Spirit” (I Thessalonians 4:8). In other words, the last days for the prophecy dispensation has the pouring out of the Spirit (Acts 2:17) so that the little flock has the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, but the mystery dispensation has the Holy Spirit physically dwelling inside all believers. It is not a pouring out of the Holy Spirit; it IS the Holy Spirit, Who we receive. If the little flock does not dwell in God (4:13) by having faith in God’s promises to them, then the Holy Spirit leaves them, showing that they do not “dwell in Him, and He in us” (4:13). Thus, we can see the conditional filling of the Holy Spirit based upon the conditional covenant (the Mosaic law covenant) that God made with Israel, as opposed to the permanent sealing of the Holy Spirit that we have today in the dispensation of grace (Ephesians 1:13-14).

4:14 Peter said about Jesus, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus responded that “flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:16-17). Therefore, the way that the little flock knows “that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (4:14) is because God had revealed this truth unto them. This goes back to my statement in 4:2-3 about confessing that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Everyone alive at the time of John’s writing knew that a man named Jesus Christ lived and died recently. However, they had to recognize their sin and need for a Saviour before they could know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, because this is a truth that is only spiritually discerned. They “do testify” (4:14) to this by God’s love being perfected in them (4:12).

4:15 In 4:2, John said that “every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.” Now, he says that God dwells in you and you in God if you confess that Jesus is the Son of God. As we learned in 4:14, this is a truth that is only discerned spiritually. What this means is that John is now digging deeper. In other words, 4:2 tells you if a person is saved or not, while 4:15 tells you something that is learned as a result of salvation. Since all of the believing remnant of Israel knows that Jesus is the Son of God, they should desire to read and believe God’s Word to them so that the Son of God can live in them.

Some people, because they do not rightly divide the Word of truth, will use this verse to support Lordship salvation, meaning that you must confess that Jesus is Lord in order to be saved. However, this verse is written as part of Israel’s program. It is not written to us today in the mystery dispensation. Also, this verse does not even support Lordship salvation for Israel. The little flock of Israel is not saved because they confessed that Jesus is the Son of God. Rather, they learned that Jesus is the Son of God once they were saved. In other words, they had to believe the gospel of the kingdom before they learned this, because this truth is spiritually discerned.

4:16 God manifested His love to Israel by sending “His only begotten Son into the world” (4:9). Because the little flock has believed in the promises that God made to them under the law covenant, they have believed God’s love to them. This caused God to pour out the Holy Spirit upon them so that they know God’s love. By believing God’s Word over Satan’s lie program in the Antichrist and apostate Israel,

they dwell in God's love. Since God IS love, that means that they also dwell in God, and God dwells in them (4:16).

4:17 God's dwelling in them makes the little flock's love perfect. God's perfect love gives the little flock "boldness in the day of judgment" (4:17). The context shows that the judgment talked about is not God's judgment. Rather, it is when the little flock is brought before the Antichrist and told to deny Jesus as the Christ or be killed. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29). Therefore, in the flesh, any man would bow down to the image of the beast and deny Jesus to save his own skin. But, with God dwelling in him, He gives him boldness to stand up for God, even if it means being killed in the flesh, because he knows that his salvation is condition upon confessing Jesus before his accusers (Matthew 10:32-33). God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, makes the little flock to be as He is, so that they will endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 24:13).

Being as God is in the world is an equally stunning statement as having boldness in the day of judgment. After all, God is holy (I Peter 1:16), and man does not do any good (Romans 3:12). This shows the complete transformation that God makes of the believer. The world does not look at believers and see them as merely being better than they are. Rather, they see the believers as being like God is! This is a great shock to the world. After all, the world wants to use its own flesh to become like God (Genesis 3:5-6), and they worship the Antichrist (Revelation 13:4) for supposedly succeeding in this endeavor (II Thessalonians 2:4). Meanwhile, the little flock has succeeding in becoming like God, because they simply let God do this work in them, making them complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10). This shows that the believer does not even participate in this process. He does not do good works to maintain his salvation or to prove that he is saved. He simply rests in the work that God does in him through Christ.

This infuriates the world even more, which is why all those who live godly shall suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12). The world is especially infuriated because they see the little flock is like God is, even though they are "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). In other words, the little flock did not work at becoming like God, like the world has worked at it, yet the little flock has succeeded where the world has failed. Therefore, the world wants to kill them, just like they did with Jesus (Matthew 10:24-25). This makes the world unworthy of believers (Hebrews 11:38), just like they are unworthy of the blood of Jesus to atone for their sins (Acts 13:46), which is why all unbelievers go to hell.

4:18 By giving the little flock His perfect love, God gives the little flock a taste of what eternity with Him will be like. God's "perfect love casteth out fear" (4:18). Therefore, there will be nothing but joy for all eternity in God's kingdom. The little flock can joyfully go to be executed by apostate Israel, abiding in God's perfect love as they breathe their final breath. What makes the lake of fire so miserable is not the burning fire, but it is the absence of God and His love. What makes eternity with God so blissful is always experiencing the perfect love of God. Believers will

work in God's kingdom, but work will be fun because of God's love in us and not having to deal with sin.

The little flock will face the ultimate temptation in the Great Tribulation, which will be to deny God in order to save their own necks. But, God's love even overcomes death. It did so through the cross of Calvary, and it will do so for the tribulation saints. Their being martyred for their faith, then, will be an example of God's love to unbelievers so that they might believe the gospel of the kingdom and receive eternal life, as well. Thus, God's love overcomes death so that death has lost its sting for believers (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

The process is as follows for those who believe the gospel of the kingdom during the at-hand phase of the kingdom in Israel's program: 1) They recognize they are sinners, which means that their own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), 2) They fear the Lord over the Antichrist, knowing that God can destroy both soul and body in hell, rather than just destroying the body on the earth (Matthew 10:28), 3) They believe the gospel of the kingdom for eternal life (Mark 16:16), 4) God gives them His love (3:1), 5) God's perfect love casts out their fear (4:18), and 6) They now preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, saying, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118:6).

Contrast this with Christianity today. People come to them to become better people. Christianity fills them full of fear of going to hell. Rather than giving them the solution, which is the gospel, Christianity then exploits that fear by causing them to work for or to maintain their salvation. The result is that the person feels even worse about himself. He now lives in constant fear of going to hell. Yet, 4:18 says that God has perfect love that casts out fear and torment. This shows that Christianity is part of the problem, because they do not know the love of God. All they know is how to exploit people for money and power.

4:19 Since God is love and man is not love, the only way that the believing remnant loves God to the point of being willing to die for Him is because God first loved Israel. So many people today think that they must turn from their sins and become "good" people before God will save them. However, 4:19 says that we can only love by accepting God's love first. Romans 5:8 says that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, Christ died for us."

4:10 says a similar thing, showing the same is also true for Israel's program. Israel must humble themselves, acknowledging that they cannot make it into the kingdom without God's imputed righteousness. Only then can they love God and love others. This is vitally important for the little flock to understand, because the Antichrist will offer them the kingdom without doing anything; thereby saying that Israel is righteous on their own. Only if Israel recognizes that their own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) will they reject the Antichrist's offer of the kingdom and trust God to give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32) in His timing.

4:20 The man, who says he loves God but hates his brethren, is the Antichrist. Apostate Israel will fall right in his footsteps. We see this in Matthew – John in the Jewish religious leaders. They said they loved God, yet they killed the Christ. Jesus said that the tribulation of the great tribulation period will be the worst ever (Matthew 24:21). Therefore, during that time, the little flock will be hated even more by the Jewish religious leaders than Christ was at His first coming. This means, that this scenario of saying that they love God but they really hate their fellow Jews, will be seen many times in the Great Tribulation period. John warns the little flock that these people are liars. Their words contradict their actions. If Jews kill other Jews when those other Jews have done no moral wrong, they must be killing them because they hate them.

Yet, these same people claim to have a love for God. In fact, Jesus said that “the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2). Therefore, they claim to love God, but they hate their brethren. As John points out, it is impossible to love God, Whom they have not seen, and hate their brethren, whom they have seen. John’s statement is very logical, but the world will think illogically, because their pride will cause them to hate believers. As we pointed out in 4:17, God freely gave His life to believers, while the world is trying to become like God by their own works. Believers, then, are an example to them that they are wrong. Therefore, the world wants to kill them. However, the world needs to appear to be like God in doing so. Otherwise, their work of killing believers will cause them to appear to fall farther away from their goal of becoming like God. Therefore, they will kill believers in the name of loving God. In this way, they appease their guilty conscience in the name of loving God, and they even feel like they have become more like God by killing those who are actually like God because God has made them that way. Therefore, the little flock needs to recognize apostate Israel for the religious hypocrites that they are and avoid them, lest they become a victim of their hatred.

4:21 The truth is quite logical. If you love God, you will love your brother, also. This is for the little flock to understand so that they will take care of each other in their times of need in the tribulation period. This is why loving God is the greatest commandment, and loving others is like it, and all of the law is based upon these commandments (Matthew 22:36-40). Thus, the little flock will naturally obey God’s law by loving God and their brothers. Meanwhile, apostate Israel will claim to obey the law, but they actually disobey it, because they hate their brothers by killing them. Therefore, they also hate God. Therefore, the appearance to man is that apostate Israel is serving God and the little flock is disobeying God, when the opposite is actually true. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20).

5 If the little flock believes that Jesus is the Christ (v. 1) and He is the Son of God (v. 5), they will overcome the world (vs. 4-5), avoid idols (v. 21), and endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 24:13). Their belief, that Jesus is the Son of God, is based on fact, as witnessed by three in heaven and three on earth (vs. 6-8). Therefore, they should not fall prey to the religious superstitions of the Antichrist and apostate Israel, but they should believe the

official record that God has given them eternal life in His Son (v. 11). Staying away from an emotional response to the pressure put on them by apostate Jews will keep them dwelling in God, all the way into God's eternal kingdom for Israel on earth.

This chapter is all about the in-Christ life for the little flock of Israel. What is so wonderful is that they can live the in-Christ life, even though they live during the greatest time of tribulation this world will ever see (Matthew 24:21). This shows "the excellency of the power" (II Corinthians 4:7) to give believers abundant life (John 10:10), even when the world is controlled by Satan, the prince (John 14:30) and god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4).

5:1 The line in the sand is drawn. It is very simple. If a Jew believes that Jesus is the Christ, he is born of God. So many people will say that Jesus came from God, or they will recognize that Jesus Christ died on a cross. However, that is not what this verse is talking about it. Believing that Jesus is the Christ means that a person believes that Jesus is the Messiah. If He is the Messiah, then that means that it was part of God's plan for the Messiah to die for Israel's sins. Therefore, acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ does not simply mean that a man recognizes there was a historical man named Jesus who lived 2,000 years ago. Rather, believing that Jesus is the Christ means that a Jew has already recognized his own sin, looked to God for a solution, and trusted the gospel of the kingdom, which includes water baptism (Acts 2:38), to save him. He was then born of God, and God then, in the man's new, spiritually-alive state, gave him the understanding that Jesus is the Christ.

To see this, look at Matthew 16:16-17. Peter said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." In other words, Jesus Himself said that it takes the Father to reveal to man that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In 5:1, we see John saying that anyone, who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. Then, in 5:5, John says that the person, who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, overcomes the world. Therefore, the believing remnant of Israel had to believe the gospel of the kingdom first before they could believe that Jesus is the Christ. Then, they learned that Jesus is the Son of God, which causes them to overcome the world. By contrast, someone, who believes that the Antichrist is the Christ, believes that he does not need God's imputed righteousness to save him. Therefore, he does not have faith in God, is not born of God, and will not be part of God's kingdom on earth.

The terms "begot" and "begotten" are used, here, to show how those loving God the Father also love God the Son. The two go together since Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30). By having faith in God, the little flock loves God because God is love (4:8), and He dwells in them (4:12). Therefore, they "loveth Him that begat," i.e., God the Father, and they loveth ... Him also that is begotten of Him" (5:1), i.e., God the Son (John 3:16).

Believing Israel are also begotten themselves by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Peter 1:3). So, how can believing Israel, and the body of Christ for that matter (I Corinthians 4:15), be begotten of God when Jesus Christ is “the only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14)? Because their lives are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Therefore, they live through God’s only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (4:9). Thus, when God looks at believing Israel, He only sees His Son, Christ, which means that they are one with Jesus Christ, the only begotten of God.

5:2 Since the little flock loves God and is born of God (5:1), this means that the little flock also comes from God. By extension, this means that the little flock also loves other members of the little flock, called “the children of God” here (5:2). Therefore, believing Jesus is the Christ begins a chain reaction that results in a natural love for the brethren. Of course, they are not under the new covenant until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-21), which means that they can still fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Therefore, their love of God and loving fellow members of the little flock is only realized when they “keep His commandments” (5:2). However, this goes to show that it is possible for the little flock to enjoy the benefits of the kingdom, even in the midst of persecution, when they make the decision to have faith in God over the things of the world, such that they obey God’s commandments to them, regardless of what the world says and does to them.

By the way, keeping His commandments simply means to love God and love your neighbour, because all of the commandments hang upon these two things (Matthew 22:37-40), which is why these two things are mentioned in this verse. Therefore, the little flock, even though they are still under the Mosaic law, need not worry about and fear not obeying it, as we just learned, in 4:18, that “perfect love casteth out fear.” They should love God and others as a natural expression of Christ living in them so that the lost sheep of Israel are saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. Their consciences have been purged from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). Therefore, the believing remnant is to keep God’s commandments, not to maintain their salvation, but so that others are drawn to God’s love by seeing Christ live in them.

5:3 It is only by God’s love working in them that the little flock is able to keep God’s commandments. By faith in God’s promises to them, they receive the power of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). God then dwells in them (4:12). Since God is love (4:8), they now have the love of God in them, which enables them to keep God’s commandments (5:3). Without that faith in God, it would be impossible for them to keep God’s commandments, because no good thing dwells in their flesh (Romans 7:18). Since the Holy Spirit is working through them, God’s commandments, then, are not grievous (5:3). In fact, keeping God’s commandments is simply a natural flow of the Christ life coming through them.

Contrast this with the commandments of the religion of apostate Israel. “They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders” (Matthew 23:4). Jesus, however, says that, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). If Israel is struggling with obeying God, then they are trying

to obey Him through their own flesh, instead of having faith and obeying Him through the Spirit. Since apostate Israel does not have the Spirit, all they do is in their flesh, and the tendency will be for the little flock to follow that pattern. Therefore, John warns them that the keeping of God's commandment is not grievous. All it takes is simple faith in God's promises to them under the law covenant, and the rejection of the religious system of apostate Israel and the Antichrist.

(When you look at religious Christianity today, it is easy to see that they fall into the apostate category, rather than the believing category. They bind people under the law, when "all things are lawful unto me" as a member of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 6:12). Why? Because God trusts me to be responsible with His love. What if I am not responsible? Oh, well! There is plenty of God's love to go around through others.)

5:4 Being born of God gives the little flock the power to overcome the world and the lusts thereof. Note that the victory is by faith (5:4), which is what we talked about in the commentary on 5:3. By faith, they are born of God, which gives them the Holy Ghost to overcome the temptations of the flesh that the Antichrist and apostate Israel will use to lead people astray.

Note that 5:4 says, "WHATSOEVER is born of God overcometh the world," while 5:5 says, "HE that overcometh the world." "Whatsoever" is a reference to "that holy thing" (Luke 1:35) that was born at Jesus' birth, which ends up being believing Israel in the Son of God. "He" is a reference to individual believers within believing Israel. Therefore, 5:4 refers to the group of believers in Israel, while 5:5 refers to individuals within that group. This is also seen by the use of "our" in 5:4 and "he" in 5:5.

5:5 Again, the gospel of the kingdom for the little flock does not include believing that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God (see the commentary on 5:1). Rather, the gospel is to recognize they have sinned and trust in God to fulfill His promises to Israel by putting themselves back under the law covenant and trusting in God to give them His righteousness. However, the great temptation of the tribulation period by Satan is to get the world to think that the Antichrist is the true Christ by offering Israel the kingdom right then. However, if the little flock believes that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, they will not believe the Antichrist, and they will overcome the world's temptations. But, if they believe that the Antichrist is the Christ and the Son of God, they will end up serving him. Therefore, believing the gospel of the kingdom brings them salvation, but they will not overcome the world if they do not recognize Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, rejecting the Antichrist's claims in the process.

As mentioned before, I John 5 is about the in-Christ life for believing Israel. Jesus stated: "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). 4:4 says that believers "have overcome them." It is stated in past tense. Why? Because "greater is He [Christ] that is in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world" (4:4). In other words, because

Christ overcame the world and Christ is in the believers, then believing Israel has also overcome the world through Christ.

5:6 “This is he” shows how the believer and Christ are one. In other words, “he,” in 5:5, refers to the believer. Then, 5:6 starts with “this is he,” which has to be qualified shortly thereafter with “even Jesus Christ.” Why? Because the believer, who allows Christ to live in him, is inseparable from Christ Himself! We can scroll up 10 verses, where John confirms this by saying: “As He is, so are we in this world” (4:17). In fact, Jesus’ prayer to the Father about believing Israel also confirms this: “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they all may be one in Us...I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17:21-23). This is the in-Christ life, expressed by Jesus Himself!

5:6 tells us twice that Jesus Christ “came by water and blood” and makes a point of saying that He came “not by water only.” Therefore, it is important to recognize what these terms mean. “Water” represents the flesh. John 3:5-6 says, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” “Spirit,” in 3:5, matches “Spirit,” in 3:6. Therefore, “water,” in 3:5, must match “flesh,” in 3:6. This is also why water baptism is necessary for the little flock, i.e., to purify the flesh in order to receive their glorified bodies (“When He shall appear, we shall be like Him” (3:2)). This is also shown by God’s statement of what He will do to believing Israel when He puts them under the new covenant in the kingdom: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezekiel 36:25). This is also seen in Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet with water (see John 13:5-11). Thus, Jesus came by water by coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3). (Christ did not have sinful flesh, but He came IN THE LIKENESS of sinful flesh. In other words, in order for His sacrifice to be accepted, it had to be perfect flesh, not sinful flesh.)

Blood represents the soul, as seen in Leviticus 17:11, where God says, “The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the SOUL.” In other words, the reason, that the blood atones for the soul, is because the blood represents the soul.

Hebrews 10:4 says that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Why? Because they only have flesh and a spirit. They do not have a soul. This is why 5:6 says that Jesus Christ came “not by water only, but by water and blood.” In other words, because flesh alone is not sufficient to atone for believers’ sin, Jesus also had to have the blood in order to atone for believers’ souls. In other words, He had to “make his SOUL an offering for sin” by pouring “out His soul unto death” (Isaiah 53:10-12).

Just like Christ’s flesh had to be perfect and sinless, His blood had to be, as well. Therefore, it was “the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered

Himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14. Also, see I Peter 1:19). The reason that Christ’s blood was pure and spotless was because He “did no sin” (I Peter 2:22).

Thus, Jesus had to come by water (flesh) and by blood (soul) in order to atone for the sins of believing Israel. This is seen by the fact that, after He had already died on the cross, “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19:34). Theologians like to use some medical reason why this happened, but the reason has already been given in this commentary, i.e., Jesus came “by water and blood” (5:6). In fact, it is so important that you understand this that John 19:35 goes on to say that, “He that saw it bear record, and His record is true.”

Since the context of 5:6 is overcoming (5:4-5), we can now conclude that Jesus Christ overcame Satan by water (perfect flesh) and by blood (perfect soul decisions), making Him the perfect man (without sin). (“Triumphing over [principalities and powers] in [the cross]” (Colossians 2:15).) We cannot do this ourselves, because our flesh is vile. Only the Lord Jesus Christ could do this because He did not have the sin nature and He did not sin, making His resurrected flesh glorious (Philippians 3:21).

Who is “the Spirit” (5:6) of this verse? 5:7 begins with “for,” and 5:8 begins with “and,” which connects it with 5:7. Therefore, 5:7-8 explains who “the Spirit” of 5:6 is, which means that “the Spirit” encompasses both the three in heaven (5:7) and the three in earth (5:8). If so, this means that Jesus Christ’s Spirit, as fully God and fully man, bore witness. This brings us back to John 19:35, where we were told that “He that saw it bear record, and His record is true: and He knoweth that He saith true, that ye might believe.” Everyone assumes that John is talking about himself. However, when John referred to himself bearing record, he said “John” or “I,” not “he” or “his.” This is seen in John 1:32,34: “And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit...,and I saw, and bare record.” Also, note Romans 8:16 which says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,” and this is the Spirit of Christ, since it cries “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15. See also Mark 14:36.).

Since the Spirit of Christ bears witness that we are the children of God, why can’t the Spirit do the same thing with regard to Jesus? In fact, Jesus says as much in John 8:14: “Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go.” Therefore, I believe that the reasonable conclusion is that Jesus Himself is the One Who bore witness of the blood and water coming from His side at the cross. You may say, “How could He have done that, since He had just died.” My reply is, “I have no idea. I just know that the Bible is true (John 17:17), and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Therefore, based on the verses, I believe that the Spirit of Christ bore witness to Jesus’ Own water and blood coming from His side to redeem man of His sin. Otherwise, John 19:35 would have said that “John” or “I” bore witness, instead of “He bear record, and His record is true.” (“Bear” is used, instead of “bore,” to show that the Spirit of Christ is always bearing witness to His Own water and blood so that Israel can

believe the gospel of the kingdom and be saved at any time during their dispensation. Also, “His record is true” goes along with Jesus’ statement that “My record is true” (John 8:14), while John never says that John’s record is true (John 1:32-34). (John does say that “our record is true,” in III John 12, but that is a reference to John in Christ.)

Also note that Jesus told the Pharisees in John 8:14 that the reason, that His record is true, is because He knows where He came from and where He is going, but the Pharisees do not know these things. This leads us to Hebrews 9:24-26, which says that Christ entered into the holy of holies in heaven in the presence of God for us to offer His blood as the sacrifice to appease God’s wrath regarding our sins. Christ did this as the Melchisedecean priest (Hebrews 7:17). In other words, it took a higher priesthood than the Levitical priesthood in order to offer the higher sacrifice of Christ’s blood in the temple. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ is the God-man who bore witness both in heaven (5:7) and in earth (5:8) that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was pure flesh and pure blood that is worthy to be offered in the heavenly temple as atonement for sin.

“Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go” (John 8:14). As Hebrews explains, the Lord Jesus Christ is both the sacrifice for sins and the Melchisedecean high priest to offer that sacrifice in the temple. This makes Him “the Spirit that beareth witness” of 5:6, because only the Spirit, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ, embodies the perfect God, i.e., the Godhead of 5:7, and the perfect man, i.e., “the spirit, and the water, and the blood” of 5:8.

In other words, just like the Levitical priest needed to make sure that the sacrifice he brought into the holy of holies would cover Israel’s sins, Jesus, as the Melchisedecean high priest in the heavenly temple, also had to make sure that His sacrifice was sufficient to atone for Israel’s sins. Since this involved both flesh and soul atonement, rather than just flesh, the Melchisedecean priest had to be fully God for the soul and fully man for the flesh in order to verify this. Therefore, only the Spirit of Christ, Who is “the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9), is qualified to perform such an inspection before offering the sacrifice to God Himself. Therefore, 5:7-8 is not just a statement of Who is in the Godhead, but it is also a statement that Jesus Christ embodies all three members in order to bring the atoning sacrifice to God in heaven Himself.

5:7-8 Deuteronomy 19:15 says that a matter is established by two or three witnesses. Therefore, Jesus has three witnesses in heaven and three witnesses on earth to attest that He is the Christ (5:1), the Son of God (5:5), and that His sacrifice is fully satisfying as the atonement for sin. In heaven, the three witnesses are “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (5:7). This is the clearest declaration of the Godhead in the Bible, i.e., that God is three in one, which is why Satan has had all modern translations remove this verse from the scripture.

The way that the Father bears witness is that He “fathered” the redemption plan. He is the One Who “possessed [wisdom] in the beginning of His way, before His

works of old. [Wisdom] was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Proverbs 8:22-23). We see this in the statement that "the Lamb [was] slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Thus, the Father is "the Father of glory" (Ephesians 1:17).

The Word is a reference to God the Son. He is called "the Word" because He is the plan Himself, by which everything was made (John 1:1-3).

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. He is the One Who made it possible for "the Word" to be fulfilled. How? First, He is the member of the Godhead Who caused the virgin birth of Jesus to take place (Matthew 1:18,20). Second, when it was time for Jesus to begin His ministry, "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him" (Luke 3:22). Third, He made it possible for Jesus to learn the things of God (John 14:26).

Jesus said in John 8:28, "I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things," and the Holy Ghost is known as breath (John 3:8), which would be the breath to speak (Acts 2:2-4). Thus, the Father is the wisdom of the Word, the Son is the Word Itself, and the Holy Ghost is the performance of the Word. All three are seen in John 8:28, and all three are necessary in order to "bear record" in heaven that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the fully satisfying sacrifice for sin.

Then, there are also three witnesses on earth (5:8) that Jesus is the Son of God, and they all come from Jesus again. First, we have His spirit. When He died, Jesus commended His spirit into His Father's hands (Luke 23:46). His spirit then rose from the dead three days later. If He was not the Son of God, His spirit would have remained dead. The fact, that His spirit went back into His body and lived, shows that He is the Son of God. Otherwise, the justice of God the Father would have required that His spirit stay dead. Then, the water testifies He is the Son of God, as the Father spoke from heaven at the time of His baptism: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Finally, His blood witnesses that He is the Son of God, because only His blood remained alive to cleanse people from their sins. No other blood had such cleansing power. When Cain killed Abel, God said to Cain that "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Blood can cry, because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Jesus' flesh could not live again without pure blood. Since "the blood [of Christ made] an atonement for [Jesus'] soul" (Leviticus 17:11), the fact, that Jesus was resurrected, means that His blood is a live witness. Thus, "the spirit, and the water, and the blood" "bear witness in earth" (5:8) "that Jesus is the Son of God" (5:5). The spirit represents Jesus' spirit, the water represents His flesh being purified at water baptism, and the blood represents His soul.

In summary, Jesus' flesh was clean via water baptism (Matthew 3:14-15), His blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28), and His spirit was commended to the Father in life (John 8:28 – Jesus as God) and in death (Luke

23:46 – Jesus as man). The water (flesh) and the blood (soul) witness that Jesus Christ is the perfect man, and these two elements worked with His spirit to commune with God (Isaiah 50:4 for Jesus; I Corinthians 2:9-16 for believers). As we learned in 5:6, the Spirit, which encompasses all three witnesses in heaven and all three witnesses in earth, bears record that Jesus' water and blood are pure, making His body the only acceptable sacrifice for sin. Then, Jesus' spirit worshipped the Father in truth (John 4:24), and so all three—water, blood, and spirit—agree in one that Jesus Christ was the perfect man.

Thus, both heaven and earth have the number of witnesses required under the law to establish as fact that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), whose sacrifice ALONE is sufficient to atone for man's sins. Therefore, being a Christian does not mean you have got to “feel God” or feel good about your church. Faith in God is not a blind faith; it is established on fact. After all, your atonement was verified by all members of the Godhead and by Jesus as the perfect man. You cannot be any surer of anything than that!! It is unbelievers, rather, who depend on their emotions to ignore the fact of Christ's propitiation for our sins.

The three witnesses in earth (5:8) also show how the Godhead can be in man. God the Father can be in man by man worshipping Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). God the Son can be in man by eating His flesh and drinking His blood (John 6:53-56). God the Holy Ghost can be in man by believing the gospel so that rivers of living water flow from his belly, which is a reference to the Holy Ghost (John 7:38-39). Thus, in 5:8, water = Holy Ghost, blood = God the Son, and spirit = God the Father (John 4:24). This means that the entire Godhead dwells within the believer!

This is also seen by the statements, in 5:7-8, about three in one. When it comes to the Godhead in heaven, the “three ARE one” (5:7). When it comes to the three witnesses in earth, “these three AGREE in one” (5:8). The earth witnesses are not three in one, but they agree in one. This shows that the three—body, soul, and spirit—agree in the Godhead, since the Godhead dwells within the believer. This is what Jesus meant by His statement to the Father: “I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17:23), and this is what is meant by the in-Christ life.

5:9 The witnesses in heaven and earth are God's witnesses that believers overcome the devil by being in Christ. Note that all of these encompass “the witness of God” (5:9), which tells us, again, that Jesus Christ is the combination of the Godhead in heaven in Spirit and the Godhead in earth in flesh. Thus, Jesus is “the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9), which also includes the Godhead spiritually.

Now, Satan will copy God and have his own witnesses that the Antichrist is the Christ. In the flesh, his unholy trinity is the dragon (Satan), the beast (Antichrist), and the false prophet (Anti Holy Ghost). When the spirits come out of them, they manifest themselves as frogs (Revelation 16:13). What this shows is that there is no unity in Satan. He is not three in one. The best he can do is get two people to

mimic the Christ and the Holy Ghost to appear to be the Godhead, and it takes three frogs to manifest his spirit witness. By contrast, it took one man, the Lord Jesus Christ, to manifest God's Spirit witness.

It is obvious, then, that "the witness of God is greater" than the witness of man (5:9), because God is three in one. Therefore, Israel should jettison what man tells them and believe what God tells them instead. They should reject the Antichrist and believe that Jesus is the Christ. Of course, in spite of God's greater witness, man would rather be guided by his own emotions, rather than by fact, because fact shows him as a sinner, and his pride does not want to accept this. Therefore, most people will set aside this greater witness and follow the Antichrist, who helps them fulfill the lusts of their flesh (II Peter 2:18).

5:10 For those, who do believe the witness of God, they "have the witness in" themselves (5:10), which is another proof that the "Spirit," of 5:6, that is explained in 5:7-8, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Godhead dwells in members of the little flock through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The rest of 5:10 says that unbelieving Israel makes God out to be a liar. Obviously, God did not lie, because He "cannot lie" (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2). Rather, Israel makes God out to be a liar by their unbelief, because God promised to bring them into His kingdom if they obeyed Him, and now they will not make it into the kingdom due to their unbelief. So, by believing the lies of Satan, apostate Israel makes God look like He is lying Himself. As such, God's name "continually every day is blasphemed" (Isaiah 52:5) by apostate Israel.

5:11-12 Note that God's record IS eternal life. In other words, eternal life is not some abstract concept that is doled out only at Jesus' second coming. 1:1-2 says that God's eternal life was on display in the Lord Jesus Christ while He was on earth. 5:6-8 says that the Spirit of God encompasses the Godhead in heaven and the flesh, soul, and spirit in earth through the Lord Jesus Christ. 5:10 says that, if Israel believes the gospel of the kingdom, they have the witness in themselves which means that they have the Spirit of God in them, testifying or bearing record that eternal life is in the Son. Since Christ is in them (5:12), eternal life is in the little flock RIGHT NOW.

While Christ was on the earth, His eternal life was manifest to Israel (1:1-3). However, now, God's eternal life is manifest to Israel through ALL the members of the little flock. This is why, when the believing remnant was grieved over Jesus going back to the Father, Jesus told them: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7). In other words, while Jesus was on earth, God's eternal life only bore witness to Israel through Jesus. However, after He sent the Holy Ghost, God's eternal life bore witness through ALL believers who allowed Christ to live in them. This is why, when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 souls were added to the church (Acts 2:41). Then, a little later, 5,000 more souls believed (Acts 4:4). 8,000 souls were added to the church in just two sermons, while Jesus' entire ministry only yielded 120 believers (Acts 1:15). Why? Because Christ was in ALL of the

believers in early Acts, when He was only in one man in Matthew – John. God’s record of eternal life is much more effective when it comes through a group, rather than through just one person (Technically, even in the group, it still just comes through one person—the Lord Jesus Christ.). This is why the in-Christ life is so vital for the salvation of Israel in the tribulation period. Only by God’s eternal life, that is in Christ, coming through the little flock, will all Israel be saved (Romans 11:26).

This is because God’s record is both in heaven and in earth. God’s record of eternal life has always been in heaven, but it did not come to earth until “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), and “in Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). Because His words are spirit and life (John 6:63), when the little flock believes the gospel, they have the Son (5:10). As such, abundant, eternal life (John 10:10) dwells in them from that moment on.

Thus, in this epistle, the little flock has gone from seeing eternal life in Christ (1:2) to actually having that eternal life being lived out by Christ through them. This life is then seen by others as God’s record that the gospel of the kingdom that the little flock proclaims is true, and all the lost sheep of the house of Israel see this eternal life, believe the gospel, and are saved by the end of the tribulation period.

5:13-15 5:13 gives the purpose of the book of I John. The gospel of John was written to unbelievers in Israel so that they may believe and have life through Jesus’ name (John 20:31). I John was written to those in Israel, who have already believed. They need to know that God’s eternal life dwells in them right now in the person of Jesus Christ. By knowing this, their consciences will be purged from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). Then, instead of worrying about their own salvation, they can go the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel and perform signs so that they will believe (Matthew 10:5-8).

Satan’s ploy is to make their righteousness based upon their performance, rather than upon Christ’s performance for them. The result is that believers are so worried about themselves that others are not saved. We see this today, as most “Christians” go to church just to keep in good standing with God. Doing so prevents the in-Christ life from coming through them to others, keeping others from hearing the gospel and being saved. Since all of the lost sheep of the house of Israel need to be saved by the end of the tribulation period, it is of the utmost importance that believing Israel know that God’s eternal life is already working through them so that they may share that life with others and reach them with the gospel. They will only do this when they are confident about their own eternal life. Therefore, John wrote this epistle to them.

As we just mentioned, believing Israel is to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom, and this gospel is confirmed with signs following them (Mark 16:20). If they live out the in-Christ life, the signs will come. If they do not, the signs will not come. An example of the former is in Luke 10:17-19, and an example of the latter is in Matthew 17:15-20. In order for God to work signs through them, they need to have confidence, not that they can perform the

signs, but that they have eternal life right now, and that that life is only found in Christ (Luke 10:20). This is summed up in John's statement that they "believe on the name of the Son of God" (5:13).

When they believe on the name of the Son of God, they have confidence in their eternal life in Him. Then, the signs are done by Christ through them, rather than them trying to do them in the energy of their own flesh. This is because the signs, done through Christ, are signs that the gospel of the kingdom that they preach is true, while signs, done in the flesh, would be signs to trust in the flesh. Thus, only signs done through Christ will cause people to believe the gospel. God's will is for all to believe the gospel (II Peter 3:9). Thus, if they ask in Christ's name, believing that their eternal life in Christ is working through them, then they are asking according to God's will (5:14), and Christ has promised that He will do whatever they ask in those circumstances (John 14:13-14). Mark 16:17-18 gives a list of some of the things they will ask Christ for and receive.

5:16 The "sin unto death" (5:16) is bowing down to the image of the beast or taking the mark of the beast. We know this because Revelation 14:9-11 says that those, who do this, will be tormented for ever in fire and brimstone.

Now, remember that the context is the believing remnant going to the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel. Time is of the essence. The believing remnant is to put their hand to the plough and not turn back (Luke 9:62). Even so, Jesus' second coming will take place before they finish going over all the cities of Israel with the gospel (Matthew 10:23). Therefore, they need to preach the gospel and then move on to the next city if it is not accepted there.

This means that, as a member of the little flock goes from city to city, if he sees a "brother sin a sin which is not unto death" (5:16), he should ask him if he has taken the mark or worshipped the image of the beast. If he has not, then he can present the gospel to him. If the man believes the gospel, the little-flock member can pray for him. In so doing, his sins will be remitted, since the little flock has the power to remit or retain sins (John 20:23). This person now has the gift of eternal life. (This is seen, in type, with Job praying for his three friends (Job 42:7-9).) However, if the man has already committed the unpardonable sin, the little-flock member can move on to someone else, since there is no forgiveness for that person, since "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" for him (Hebrews 10:26).

(Romans 11:26 says, "And so all Israel shall be saved," yet Matthew 10:23 says, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." What this tells us is that not all cities in Israel will have saved people in it. There will probably be whole cities that take the mark or worship the image of the beast. This shows the power of persuasion.)

5:17 This verse starts off with "all unrighteousness is sin." Then, this statement is defined by saying that "there is a sin not unto death." So, I would take this to mean that all sins or all unrighteousness come from your sin nature, except the unpardonable sin. That sin is a deliberate, willful act of pledging allegiance to

Satan and having “trodden under foot the Son of God” (Hebrews 10:29). In other words, just like believing the gospel goes against your sin nature to receive eternal life in Christ, taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast also goes against your sin nature to receive eternal death in Satan. Therefore, what I think this verse is saying is that all unrighteousness done through the sin nature can be forgiven by the blood of Christ. However, if you choose to align yourself with Satan by committing the unpardonable sin, you cannot receive forgiveness of sins, seeing that you have crucified to yourself the Son of God afresh (Hebrews 6:6), meaning that His crucifixion cannot count for your sin atonement.

5:18 When believing Israel gets into God’s kingdom, they will be born of God. God, being outside of time, sees things as they are in the end (Romans 4:17). Therefore, although Israel is not yet born of God in the tribulation period, God knows who will be part of believing Israel. These people do not sin, meaning that they do not take the mark of the beast or worship his image. Rather, they keep themselves, meaning they keep themselves pure by not denying Christ (Matthew 10:33) and not aligning themselves with the Antichrist. Therefore, “that wicked one,” i.e., Satan, does not touch them. Also, based on what people do with the Antichrist and the image of the beast tells the little flock which of them are believers and which are not. Over the seven years of the tribulation period, the wheat (the saved) and the tares (the unsaved) manifest themselves (Matthew 13:29-30), so that the little flock can recognize the false teachers among them (II Peter 2:1).

5:19 Knowing that they are of God shows the confidence that the little flock has in knowing that they have eternal life, due to Christ living in them. They also see Satan dwelling in the world and the works of Satan that are manifest in the Antichrist and in apostate Israel. Therefore, they can see the contrast between God dwelling in them and the wickedness that is in the world.

5:20 Since the little flock has faith in God, they believe that God’s witness is true, meaning that they believe that Christ’s eternal life dwells within them. Therefore, they know that their souls are saved and they will enter the kingdom. As such, they can distinguish between the lies of Satan and the truth of God’s Word. Therefore, they know that God the Father “is the true God” (5:20), and that eternal life comes through Jesus Christ. This is in contrast to the lies that will be told in the tribulation period that Satan is God and the Antichrist is the Christ. Faith in God gives the little flock the knowledge of the truth so that they will not be deceived by the lies of Satan so that they will endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 10:22).

5:21 5:20 is a good summary verse of the epistle for those who have already learned the sound doctrine of Hebrews – II Peter. However, there are still some “little children” in their midst, who do not have the sound doctrine from those previous epistles built up in their inner man. For them, John has four words of instruction: “Keep yourselves from idols.” In other words, if you have not learned anything else from this epistle, at the least you need to learn to “keep yourselves from idols.”

The reason being is that, if they worship the idol of the beast, it means that they have sold their souls to the devil (Revelation 14:9-11). If they believe that eternal life dwells in them right now in the person of Jesus Christ, which is the purpose of this epistle (5:13), then they will have no trouble keeping themselves from idols, because they will not follow the idolatrous system of the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Thus, they will endure unto the end of the tribulation period and enter God's eternal kingdom on earth. However, if they are "little children," they just need to obey this command until they grow in the doctrine to become "young men" and then "fathers" (2:12-13).

II John Introduction

This epistle contains instructions for the Lord Jesus Christ's millennial reign on earth (Revelation 20:4-6). Truth is now with Israel forever (v. 2), because they are now under the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26-27). They have experienced the grace, mercy, and peace of God (v. 3) and can now share these things of God with the Gentiles "in truth and love" (v. 3). The result is that their children, i.e., the Gentiles, can walk in truth (v. 4), as believing Israel walks in love (vs. 5-6). In spite of Jesus Christ's world rule from Jerusalem with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:8-9), many deceivers try to lead the Gentiles astray (v. 7). However, if the Gentiles abide in Christ's doctrine, they will have God with them forever (vs. 8-9). Therefore, if deceivers come to them, they should not even bid them God speed (vs. 10-11). It is so important that they not be led astray by these deceivers, that John will personally visit them to encourage them to walk in the doctrine of Christ (v. 12).

Summary: This epistle gives encouragement to believing Israel in the millennial kingdom to reach all Gentiles with the Mosaic law, and it gives instruction to Gentiles to believe what Israel teaches them during this time.

Key passage: 10-11 (10) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: (11) For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

1 This epistle is addressed "unto the elect lady and her children" (v. 1), and it ends with a greeting from "the children of thy elect sister" (v. 13). We are not told who these two sisters are. However, based upon what is said in II John and upon what other scriptures say, these "ladies" are probably Judah and Israel. Israel was divided into two during King Rehoboam's reign in Israel (I Kings 12:16-17), and God promises to bring the two back together in His kingdom (Ezekiel 37:15-22). In fact, God refers to them as sisters in Ezekiel 23:1-4. There, He says that "there were two women, the daughters of one mother....Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah." (Samaria is the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Jerusalem is the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah.) Therefore, "the elect lady" (v. 1) and "thy elect sister" (v. 13) probably refer to Judah and Israel, respectively.

The word "elect" is appropriately given to Israel, because God calls them "elect" in other places. For example, in Matthew 24:22,24, Israel is warned that "for the elect's sake those days [of the tribulation period] shall be shortened," and that Satan's deception will be so strong during that time "that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." I Peter 1:1-2 also calls believing Israel "elect."

Israel is considered to be a lady because she is called "the Lamb's wife" or "bride" in passages such as Revelation 21:2,9. In a marriage, the two become one flesh (Genesis 2:24), and marrying Israel is how Christ becomes one with her. This is why there is a "marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7-9) between the Lord Jesus Christ and Israel, and why the land is said to be "Beulah," meaning "married" (Isaiah 62:4).

In writing this epistle, John calls himself “the elder” (1:1). Jesus told the twelve apostles that “in the regeneration,” meaning the kingdom, they “shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28). Revelation 4:4 and 5:8 talk about there being “four and twenty elders” around God’s throne. Believing Israel’s promise is to rule with Christ forever on earth (Revelation 22:5; 5:10). In today’s dispensation of grace, the body of Christ is promised to rule with Christ forever in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5-7). Since God’s governmental structure on the earth has twelve thrones, it makes sense that God’s governmental structure in heaven would also have twelve thrones. Thus, the 24 elders around God’s throne would be 12 from each program. Since we know that the 12 for Israel’s program are the 12 apostles, we know that John is one of those elders. Thus, John rightly calls himself “the elder” to begin II & III John. This is not John being conceited. Rather, he uses this term because these are the only two letters written to believing Israel for the millennial reign. Therefore, he uses the name of his position during that time. He does not use his name, because, according to Revelation 2:17, he will receive a new name in the kingdom, which he must not yet know at the time that he wrote II & III John. Therefore, by addressing himself as “the elder,” John is telling believing Israel that they are to listen to and obey the words that he writes them here.

“Her children” (v. 1) is a reference to saved Gentiles in the millennial kingdom. God set Israel as a nation to be “above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 4:6-8; 7:6). In the millennial kingdom, Israel’s job is to be “a kingdom of priests” to all other nations to reconcile the earth back to God (Exodus 19:5-6). As such, they go out to the nations. Because the Lord Jesus Christ rules the world from Jerusalem, the people of the nations take hold of the Jews at a ratio of 10 to 1 saying, “We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zechariah 8:23). They then go to Jerusalem to hear God’s law (Isaiah 2:2-4). As a result, those, who follow God’s law, are considered to be “her children” or the children of believing Israel.

Therefore, this epistle is for the millennial kingdom, comes from John, the elder, and is written to believing Israel and her spiritual children, who are Gentiles.

Side note regarding the millennium: Most Christians believe that, once believers are united with Jesus, the work is done, and it is one, big party for all eternity. However, for believing Israel, the work is just beginning. “Ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew” (Zechariah 8:23). This means that believing Israel is far outnumbered by Gentiles. Granted, the devil is in the bottomless pit during this time (Revelation 20:2-3), and the beast and the false prophet have been destroyed (Revelation 19:20). However, there is still a great, Satanic rebellion during this time, due to the earth operating by Satan’s “course of this world” (Ephesians 2:2) ever since Adam sinned. Although the Gentiles left on the earth for the millennial reign did not worship the beast or take his mark, they also did not believe God and His Word. They probably were pretty upset that the Lord Jesus Christ won the

victory over the beast and the false prophet, because they let them do whatever they wanted to do and Jesus will not let them cater to the lusts of the flesh.

As such, the Lord Jesus Christ and Israel are probably dealing with a few billion people, who are at least semi-rebellious against Him. This is why Jesus Christ has to “break them with a rod of iron” and “dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psalm 2:9). The Lord Jesus Christ gives them 100 years to learn and follow the law. If they rebel, they are accursed at that time (Isaiah 65:20). This is not to say that the Gentiles have to obey the law perfectly. But, they will have to appear before the Lord and worship Him (Isaiah 66:23). If they sin, they need to provide the appropriate sacrifice for sin, as prescribed in the Mosaic law. They will then be given leaves from the Tree of Life to heal them (Revelation 22:2).

As they go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, they will see the people, who God has cast into hell for their unbelief (Isaiah 66:24). This is meant to cause them to “serve the Lord with fear” (Psalm 2:11), since “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7). Then, they will continue to grow in their knowledge of the Lord, since “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). Then, when the millennial reign is over, Satan “shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations” (Revelation 20:7-8). Because man’s pride is so great and he wants to do his own will, rather than God’s will, the number of those, who end up following Satan, will be “as the sand of the sea” (Revelation 20:8). Thus, the Satanic rebellion is not put away until after the millennial reign. This means that the millennial reign is a great time of work for Israel, which is why II Peter 3:8 gives believing Israel the warning that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” In other words, “work hard the whole time, Israel, so that more people may receive the knowledge of the truth and not be deceived by Satan at the end of the millennial reign.” Therefore, although this epistle is short, it is a very critical one for the time of the millennial reign.

2 The fact, that believing Israel has the truth dwelling in them for ever at this point, shows that they are already under the new covenant. In other words, they have “a new heart” and God’s Spirit is within them so that they dwell in truth for ever (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

3 Mercy is not getting the punishment that you deserve. Because Israel has sinned, just like everyone else, they deserve death (Romans 6:23). Yet, God has given them eternal life in God’s kingdom, which means that “His mercy endureth for ever” to them, as God tells them 26 times in Psalm 136!

Grace is getting blessings that you do not deserve. Israel receives eternal blessings in the kingdom, such that God’s throne on earth is even called “the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16).

Israel also has peace with God in that they have been reconciled back to God through Jesus’ shed blood being applied as the propitiation for their sins (I John

4:10), as seen by the fact that Jesus is called “King of peace” (Hebrews 7:2) and God is “the God of peace” (Hebrews 13:20).

However, note that grace, mercy, and peace are to “be WITH you,” while the other Hebrew epistles say they are to “be UNTO you” (I Peter 1:2; II Peter 1:2; Jude 2). This is because Israel is under the new covenant in II and III John in the millennial reign, while they are still under the old covenant in the other Hebrew epistles. Therefore, grace, mercy, and peace are coming UNTO them in the other books, while they are already with them in II and III John. In the millennial reign, believing Israel can then impart grace, mercy, and peace to the unsaved Gentiles by teaching them the Mosaic law (Matthew 28:19-20).

This is also seen in the phrase “in truth and love.” God’s love will come from believing Israel to the Gentiles as they give them the truth of God’s Word to them, i.e., the law. This is also something the body of Christ should be doing today in order to grow up into Christ as our head. (“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).)

4 Sharing the truth in love is what results in Gentiles (“thy children” in this verse) following the Lord Jesus Christ in the millennial kingdom. As mentioned previously, ten Gentiles take hold of one Jew (Zechariah 8:23) and go to Jerusalem. In fact, when Israel goes to the Gentiles with the law, “the mountains and the hills shall break forth before [them] into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isaiah 55:12). You then see the Gentiles encouraging each other to “come, and...go up to the mountain of the Lord” (Micah 4:2). In other words, the whole earth rejoices over the thought that the Gentiles have the privilege to travel to Jerusalem to know the Lord. Such rejoicing also causes the elder, John, to rejoice greatly (v. 4), as he sees God’s plan of reconciling the earth back to Himself through the nation of Israel being fulfilled (Exodus 19:5-6).

5-6 “I beseech thee,” as opposed to “I command thee,” is the language of love under the new covenant, because, under love, no commandment is necessary. This is why Jesus said that “ALL the law and the prophets” hang on the commands to love the Lord and love your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40), and Paul said that “he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8). A great example of this is Paul’s statement to Philemon that “I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love’s sake I rather beseech thee” (Philemon vs. 8-9). In other words, under love, commandments are not necessary. Thus, believing Israel will “love one another” (v. 5), not because they are commanded to, but because their elder, John, wants them to. They will gladly do what John wants them to do because they are abiding completely in Christ’s love. Just like love shows the lost sheep of Israel that believing Israel’s gospel is correct in the tribulation period, love shows unbelieving Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ in the millennial kingdom (John 13:34-35).

Now, you may wonder, why John even has to beseech them to love one another and walk in love, when Israel will obey God’s commands perfectly under the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26-27). The reason is because they only have 1,000 years to

reach the Gentiles with the law and the knowledge of God before Satan comes and tries to deceive them into following him. You may think that 1,000 years is a long time. However, God says that a thousand years with the Lord is as one day (II Peter 3:8). When you are rejoicing evermore and living completely out of the bondage of sin, time goes by quickly. Everyone can relate to this by the saying that “time flies when you’re having fun.” Therefore, John beseeches them to hasten their outreach to the Gentiles, because they have to reach an innumerable amount of people (Revelation 20:8) in just 1,000 years (Revelation 20:6).

7 Now, you may wonder why there are “many deceivers...entered into the world” (v. 7) during the millennial reign, when the Lord Jesus Christ rules the world with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:9). Well, “all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26) during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, even though many come in Christ’s name and deceive many (Matthew 24:5) and many false prophets rise up and deceive many (Matthew 24:11). This shows that the greatest time of Jewish salvation takes place during the greatest time of deception. In other words, when things are going good, people become prideful and think they do not need God. Therefore, it makes sense that the Lord Jesus Christ would allow many deceivers to enter into the world (v. 7) during the millennial reign so that many Gentiles will be saved.

This also explains why God has allowed Satan to be the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4) for 6,000 years and counting, instead of throwing him into hell at the moment that he sinned.

This also shows how bad man’s pride can be. In Luke 16:27, a rich man, in hell torment, asks that Lazarus be raised from the dead to warn the rich man’s five brothers to believe the gospel or else they will end up in hell. Abraham tells the rich man, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31). Lazarus did rise from the dead (John 11:43-44), and they still crucified Jesus (Matthew 27:25,35). In other words, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Faith does NOT come by seeing physical miracles.

The reason I bring all of this up is because, during the millennium, the Lord Jesus Christ, like Lazarus, has already risen from the dead and is now ruling the whole world. Yet, the deceivers, during the millennial reign, say that Jesus Christ is not come in the flesh (v. 7). They claim that the Lord Jesus Christ is an imposter! Thus, during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, the spirit of antichrist tells Israel that Jesus Christ has not come in the flesh (I John 4:2), and, during the millennial reign, this same spirit is around to tell the same thing to the Gentiles! During the at-hand phase, deceivers will say, “Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (II Peter 3:4). In other words, just before Jesus’ second coming, deceivers deny that Jesus even came the first time. Therefore, it makes sense that they will also say the same thing about Jesus after His second coming.

Note also that Jesus Christ combats this deceptive spirit of antichrist by giving the Gentiles the Mosaic law (Isaiah 2:2-3)—not by physical miracles—because faith does not come by physical miracles. Faith comes by the Word of God.

Just like with Israel in the at-hand kingdom phase, Gentiles can determine who is deceiving them and who is not deceiving them by examining what they say about Jesus. Thus, as always, before the dispensation of the fulness of times begins, where you spend eternity is determined by if you believe God’s true word (John 17:17) or you follow Satan’s lie program (John 8:44).

8 In Isaiah 17:7-8, God tells Damacus to “look to [their] Maker” and stop looking “to the altars” that they worship. This shows that salvation only comes to man by looking to God and believing what He says. However, here, believing Israel is told to “look to yourselves” (v. 8). This is because God is within them, since they are under the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

The way that individuals within believing Israel can lose a reward is if they do not work for the Lord during the millennial reign. For example, Matthew 13:23 says that the person, who believes the word and understands it, “also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” The more that believing Israel works for the Lord, the more Gentiles are saved, i.e., the more fruit they bring forth, resulting in a greater reward in the kingdom.

At the Tower of Babel, God divided the Gentile nations into 12 regions, each of which is to be ruled by a tribe of Israel (Deuteronomy 32:8). If no Gentiles believe in the millennial kingdom, there will be no Gentiles for believing Israel to rule. Therefore, the full reward for Israel is a full group of Gentiles to rule over. If believing Israel looks to themselves, they will allow the Holy Spirit to work through them throughout the millennial reign so that as many Gentiles as possible are saved, resulting in them receiving “a full reward” (v. 8). Thus, while believing Israel does not sin in the millennial kingdom, they will receive either a full reward or a partial reward depending upon how much they work, much like an employee receives a full or a partial paycheck depending upon how much he works for his employer.

9 Zechariah 8:23 says that “ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew.” This tells us that there are many more Gentiles in the millennial kingdom than there are Jews. We also learned, from verse 7, that “many deceivers are entered into the world.” What this means is that it is important for believing Israel to cover as much ground as they can. If members of believing Israel are already in an area, another member of Israel should probably go somewhere else to present the law to the Gentiles. But, how will they know if true believers from Israel are in an area, or if they are deceivers? The answer is in this verse. If they abide in the doctrine of Christ, they are of God. If they do not, they are not of God. Note how the standard is abiding “in the DOCTRINE of Christ.” The standard is not who LOOKS godly or who is doing miracles, as man often uses as a standard today. Rather, it is all about the doctrine.

If they do abide in the doctrine of Christ, they have “both the Father and the Son” (v. 9). The reason is because the Son and the Father are one (John 10:30).

10-11 In the tribulation period, God told believing Israel to come out of the Babylonian religious system and be separate (Revelation 18:4), because “what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (II Corinthians 6:15). If believing Israel receives deceivers into their houses or bids them God speed in the millennial reign, Gentiles may think that the deceivers’ doctrine is correct and follow it instead of God’s law. As such, believing Israel “is partaker of [their] evil deeds” (v. 11). Therefore, they are warned against doing so. This warning would also apply to people coming into the Gentiles’ houses, since these deceivers could lead them astray. This shows the severity of teaching false doctrine. Eternity is at stake here for the Gentiles!

12 The only two epistles written to those in the millennial kingdom—II and III John—are cut short, making them the shortest books in the Bible (v. 12 & III John 13-14). The reason is because, since John is “the elder” (v. 1 & III John 1) in the millennial kingdom with them, he can go to the kingdom of priests, i.e., Israel, and give them instructions in person, rather than having to write them down here.

Also, note that, if they follow his instruction then their joy is full” (v. 12). In John 15:10-11, we learn that full joy is the result of obeying God’s commandments. This is important to note because most people think that joy comes from doing what you yourself want to do. They call this self-fulfillment. However, because we were made to serve God, true joy only comes by doing God’s will. Therefore, if believing Israel, in the millennial reign, and the body of Christ today want to have full joy, they/we will allow Christ to live in them/us.

13 As we mentioned in 1:1, the elect lady of 1:1 and the elect sister of 1:13 are probably Judah and Israel, respectively, since God calls them sisters in Ezekiel 23:1-4. The two will be joined together as one at this time. Apparently, they operate separately since they are addressed separately in this epistle. A type of this may be seen in that Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, had two wives, Leah and Rachel, who were also sisters. With their vile flesh being taken out of the way under the new covenant, there will be no fighting between Judah and Israel as there was between Leah and Rachel!

III John Introduction

Gaius (v. 1), Diotrephes (v. 9), and Demetrius (v. 12) are real people John wrote about. However, as this epistle is written to new Gentile believers in the millennial reign, they also stand for types of people. Diotrephes is a leader of a Gentile church, and he has gone apostate. Therefore, John writes to Gaius, who, as far as John is concerned, is now the true elder of the church, even though Diotrephes is in charge, because Diotrephes is leading people astray (vs. 9-10). Then, Demetrius is an example of a believing Gentile, who is walking in the truth, obeying God's commandments, and leading fellow Gentiles to have faith in what God has given them, i.e., the Mosaic law (v. 12).

This epistle, then, shows Gentiles, during Christ's millennial reign, that they need to examine carefully the doctrine taught to them to determine if it is sound doctrine or false doctrine (vs. 3-4,11). If it is false doctrine, they know not to listen to those teachers (vs. 9-10). Rather, they should find a member of believing Israel and go with him to learn the truth (Zechariah 8:23). They can also look to men, like Demetrius (v. 12), who can guide them into the truth, when others are teaching bad doctrine.

Summary: This epistle is a warning to Gentile believers in the millennial reign not to listen to false doctrine so that they are not deceived.

Key passage: 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

1 As with II John, this epistle is written to Gentiles in the millennial reign. We see this in John calling himself "the elder" (v. 1), representing his position in that millennial kingdom (Revelation 4:4). There are also various other clues in this epistle to lead us to this same conclusion. We will point to them as we come across them.

Who is Gaius? There was a Gaius in Corinth, who was a ruler in the Jewish synagogue until he believed the gospel that Paul preached (I Corinthians 1:14). He then travelled with Paul on his apostolic journeys (Acts 19:29, 20:4). Since Paul's gospel is different from the gospel that John preached (Galatians 2:7), we must conclude that the Gaius, to whom John writes III John, is a different Gaius from the one mentioned by Luke (the writer of Acts) and by Paul (the writer of I Corinthians).

These instructions to Gaius are meant to help all new Gentile believers in the millennial reign, just like Philemon is meant to help all members of the body of Christ today.

2 John starts verses 2, 5, and 11 with the word "beloved," showing that God extended His love to man first, as opposed to us loving God first (I John 4:10). Because believing Gentiles are "beloved" of God, they should "love one another" (I John 4:11). However, the main thing is that they walk in the truth (1:4). This is how their "soul prospereth" (1:2).

Health-and-wealth gospel proponents are quick to use this verse to say that God wants you to be healthy and wealthy. However, the context is the millennial reign. During that time, the Lord Jesus Christ is the God of this world. If the Gentiles are sick, they can go to Jerusalem and be healed by eating of the leaves of the tree of life (Revelation 22:2). Believing Israel, in the tribulation period, is told that they will receive “an hundredfold” (Matthew 19:29) in the kingdom of what they had to give up during the tribulation period. Therefore, it should not be surprising to see that believing Gentiles will have riches in the millennial kingdom, as well (Isaiah 61:6).

However, today, Satan is “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, those, who live godly, are promised to suffer persecution, rather than receiving health and wealth (II Timothy 3:12). Today’s believers are troubled, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down (II Corinthians 4:8-9). In the tribulation period, believers are told that they will be hated of all men for Jesus’ sake (Matthew 10:22). Therefore, when health-and-wealth preachers use this verse, they are applying it to the wrong time period. As long as Satan is the god of this world, believers will suffer. It is only when Jesus becomes the God of this world in the millennial reign that believers will finally have some health and wealth. As such, this is another proof that III John is written to Gentiles in the millennial reign.

Now, in relation to Gaius specifically, it is very important that he remain well, since Diotrephes is the leader but will not receive the truth (v. 9). Therefore, Gaius is needed in the church to counteract the lies of Diotrephes. This is why John says that “above all things,” he wishes that Gaius will prosper and be healthy (v. 2). **It is NOT a promise to believers today to be rich materially!**

3-4 In order to understand these verses, we first need to define a couple of terms. “The brethren” would be believing Israel under the new covenant. “My children” would be believing Gentiles in the millennial reign. (Isaiah 49:21 is a good verse to support these definitions, as it is written about Israel having children in the millennial kingdom.)

Therefore, verses 3-4 are saying that John “rejoiced greatly” when believing Israel reported to him that the Gentiles, who have heard the Mosaic law from them, are walking in the truth. Note that these verses talk about the truth three times. This shows its importance. For if the Gentiles are to believe God at the end of the millennial reign and not be deceived by Satan when he is loosed from the bottomless pit (See Revelation 20:7-10), they need to know the truth well. Therefore, walking in the truth has eternal consequences for them, which is why John has no greater joy than hearing that they are walking in the truth.

5 Gaius is needed in the local church because Diotrephes has the preeminence in the church, but he does not receive the truth (v. 9). Therefore, John instructs Gaius that, regardless of the unfaithfulness of others, he needs to be faithful to everyone in the church—both the brethren and the strangers in the church.

“The strangers” would be Gentiles who have not put their trust in God yet by seeking to obey the Mosaic law. As mentioned before, “the brethren” would be believing Israel under the new covenant. They have come to the Gentiles as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6) to teach them to obey the Mosaic law. The way I know they are teaching the Mosaic law is that Jesus commands believing Israel to “Go..., and teach all nations.... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus had commanded them to obey the law of Moses: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do” (Matthew 23:2-3). Therefore, Israel, as a kingdom of priests, must be teaching the Mosaic law to the Gentiles in the millennial reign. We also see this in that the Gentiles say they will go with the Jews because God is with them (Zechariah 8:23). When they do go to Jerusalem with the Jews, Isaiah 2:3 says that they learn the law in Zion.

6 Probably what happened was that there were problems in the Gentile church due to Diotrephes. So, John wrote a letter to them, but Diotrephes discarded it (v. 9). Then, John sent “the brethren,” i.e., believing Israel to the church, to restore order in the church. The brethren sent word back to John that Gaius was very charitable to them, and so John now writes this letter to Gaius so that he will know how to lead the church so that it does not go back into apostasy. With that being done, the brethren can return to John so that he can send them to some other Gentile church that has problems.

Deuteronomy 16:16 says that all males must appear before the Lord three times each year. Isaiah 66:23 says that all flesh shall come and worship before the Lord in God’s kingdom on earth. Therefore, since Gaius will be coming to Jerusalem soon anyway, John requests that the brethren return with him.

Note that the brethren’s journey was “after a godly sort” (v. 6). This is in line with Israel being a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles (Exodus 19:5-6). They did not come to Gaius’ church just to be social. Rather, they came to restore sound doctrine to the church.

7-8 When believing Israel went to the lost sheep of Israel during the tribulation period, they were to take no money or extra clothing with them because “the workman is worthy of his meat” (Matthew 10:9-10). Similarly, now that believing Israel is going to the Gentiles in the millennial kingdom, they should do the same thing. The Gentiles can show their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is sitting on the throne in Jerusalem, by giving believing Israel food, water, clothes, and lodging (Matthew 25:35-40). They will then receive positions in God’s eternal kingdom on earth (Matthew 25:34), if they do not side with Satan at the end of the millennial reign. This is why believing Israel went forth, “taking nothing of the Gentiles” (v. 7). In other words, they did not use their authority, as part of ruling Israel, to take money from the nations when they came to them. Rather, they relied upon the charity (v. 6) of believing Gentiles to take care of them. By doing so, the Gentiles became “fellowhelpers of the truth” (v. 8). In other words, by Israel taking nothing with them when they go to the Gentiles, the Gentiles have the opportunity to bless

Israel, according to Genesis 12:3. This gives Jesus the opportunity to bless the Gentiles for all eternity.

By the way, “taking nothing of the Gentiles” also shows us that III John is for the millennial reign, since believing Israel only goes to the lost sheep of the house of Israel during the tribulation period (See Matthew 10:5-6,23). Since Diotrephes would not obey this commandment of the Lord, John has written to Gaius, in hopes that he will rally the church behind supporting these brethren, who impart sound doctrine to Gentiles in the millennial reign. Gaius will then do well, unlike Diotrephes.

9 Thanks to the bad leadership of Diotrephes (He must be one of the deceivers warned about in II John 7.), Gaius’ church previously turned away the brethren, who came from John. Note that he “loveth to have the preeminence” (1:9), so, he took charge. Instead, “the preeminence” should be going to Christ (Colossians 1:18). As such, Diotrephes is following Satan, who also wants to usurp God and be like Him. This is a bad example that Gaius should not follow.

10 Diotrephes’ behavior is representative of religious behavior with regard to believers of the truth, regardless of dispensation. Because the truth of God’s Word rightly divided cannot be disproved and it breaks down the stronghold over men of Satan’s lie program, those propagating Satan’s lie program, i.e., religious leaders, will cast “them out of the church” (1:10).

So, here is God’s kingdom of priests. They arrive at the church and try to get Gentiles out of bondage to Satan by believing and following the Mosaic law. Diotrephes sees that, if people believe the truth, they will stop believing his lies, which means no money for Diotrephes. Therefore, he accused the brethren with malicious words. However, he was not content with just trying to discredit them, because others in the church may be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth if these gospel preachers are allowed to stick around, which, again, would hurt Diotrephes’ cash flow. Therefore, he “casteth them out of the church” (1:10). This is always the response of religion to God’s truth. They will cast God’s truth out, lest people hear the glorious gospel (II Corinthians 4:4), believe, and receive eternal life with God. Satan cannot have that. Therefore, Satan gets his false ministers (II Corinthians 11:13-15) to cast God out of the church. Why, then, should it surprise us, today, when Christianity, as a whole, calls right dividers “heretics” and casts us out of their midst?

11 I John 4:12 says, “No man hath seen God at any time,” yet III John 11 says that “he that doeth evil hath not seen God.” This is another clue that III John is written for those in the millennial reign. In other words, Jesus’ second coming had not taken place yet in I John, but it has taken place for John’s audience in III John. Therefore, believing Israel has seen God in the millennial reign. This is in fulfillment of God’s promise in Matthew 5:8 that “the pure in heart... shall see God.” Because they are pure in heart, God has put them under the new covenant, and they go to the Gentiles to give them the Mosaic law. As such, they “doeth good” (v. 11).

Since those, who do evil, have not seen God, it shows that not everyone will approach the Lord Jesus Christ's throne in the millennial reign. Those, doing evil, have 100 years to reform. If they do not, they are accursed (Isaiah 65:20), being sent to hell by the Lord Jesus Christ (Psalm 2:12). (A saying in the United States from the 1960s was, "Don't trust anyone over 30." Well, a more accurate saying during the millennial reign will probably be, "Don't trust anyone under 100.") All those obeying God's law covenant will come to Zion to worship the Lord, and they will see the souls of these evildoers and abhor them (Isaiah 66:23-24). Therefore, it should not be difficult for the Gentiles to distinguish who is of God and who is not. Believing Israel has seen God and obeys God perfectly. Unbelieving Gentiles disobey God and have never seen Him, because they "doeth evil."

Gaius, then, should not follow the bad example that Diotrephes has set. Rather, he should follow what God commanded, which is to help the preachers of the truth so that the truth of God may spread throughout the whole world. This is how "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9) during the millennial reign.

12 By contrast, Demetrius is an example of a Gentile believer, who is serving the Lord by obeying His commandments. (This would not be the same Demetrius mentioned in Acts 19:24.) Believing Israel has already reported to John that Demetrius can be trusted, because he stands for the truth. Therefore, the church should listen to Demetrius and not to Diotrephes.

13-14 John keeps III John short, just like he did with II John. The reason, as mentioned in II John, is because he will see them shortly. Since the epistle is for the millennial reign, John is one of the elders (v. 1) sitting on a throne to judge Israel (Matthew 19:28). He sends this letter to get the Gentiles in line, and then he will follow up with a face-to-face visit, provided that they respond positively to the letter. Therefore, he only needs to include a few instructions in this letter. The rest can be given in person.

The speaking "face to face" (1:14), that John mentions, is how we read the Word of God today since it is now complete, and we have the indwelling Holy Spirit to tell us the meaning ("For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" (I Corinthians 13:12).).

When Jesus was on earth the first time, He told His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). Since Jesus revealed to the little flock what the Father was doing, "our friends" (v. 14) probably refers to believing Israel in Jerusalem. Then, "the friends" (v. 14) probably refers to the kingdom of priests going to the Gentiles. Thus, "friends" would be all of believing Israel. They are the friends of God, like Abraham was (James 2:23), and they are friends of each other. If the Gentiles believe God and side with Jesus at the end of the millennial reign, Jesus

will call them “friends,” as well, in “the dispensation of the fulness of times” (Ephesians 1:10).

Jude Introduction

Jude and II Peter 2 are similar passages that warn the little flock that there are “certain men,” who have “crept in unawares” (v. 4) among the little flock. They appear to be saints, but they are really part of apostate Israel, trying to lead the little flock astray. The little flock needs to “earnestly contend for the faith” (v. 3) by keeping these people from being in their midst.

What makes the situation particularly tricky is that these “certain men” appear to be godly. They are “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God” (v. 4). This means that they take God’s free gift of eternal life and interpret it as “easy-believism,” meaning that they add works to salvation. They then add the works of the Babylonian religious system, that apostate Israel will follow, so that they have “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (II Timothy 3:5). As such, they use the cloke of religion as an excuse to fulfill the lusts of their flesh.

Jude gives Old Testament examples, in verses 5-11, to show the damage they can do. He reveals their ungodliness in verses 12-13. He reveals God’s judgment of them in verses 14-15. Then, he concludes with their bad character in verse 16. In verses 17-19, Jude shows that the Lord Jesus Christ prophesied that the last days would be full of these men, showing that the little flock should not be surprised by their presence. Then, in verses 20-25, he shows how the little flock can keep themselves pure during the last days (vs. 20-21) and how they can keep other members of the little flock from falling prey to them (vs. 22-23), recognizing that it is God Who brings the victory and will bring His saints into His eternal kingdom (vs. 24-25).

Summary: Jude is written to believing Israel during the at-hand phase of the kingdom to defend salvation by faith alone in Christ alone and to condemn the Babylonian religious system of apostate Israel.

Key passage: 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Not that it matters, but my guess is that Jude is the brother of James the son of Alphaeus, who is one of the 12 apostles (Luke 6:16). He is also called Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3). Whoever he is, we can be assured that God is the writer of this epistle, since it is in the Bible.

Jude is writing to the believing remnant of Israel in the tribulation period. They “are sanctified by God the Father” (v. 1), meaning that God has set them apart as holy from the rest of apostate Israel. The means by which they are sanctified is “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

They are “preserved in Jesus Christ” (v. 1), meaning that the blood of Christ will atone for their sins and has enabled the Holy Ghost to be poured out on them so

they will not succumb to the temptations of worshipping the Antichrist and his image. I Thessalonians 5:23 says that the body of Christ is “preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Therefore, “preserved” means that all those in the faith cannot lose their salvation. This is not to say that they are eternally secure, because they must endure unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13) by not taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11) because they receive the gift of eternal life (Acts 3:19-20). However, it is to say that they do not have to keep the Mosaic law, or any other law, in order to be saved, because the blood of Christ will preserve them until atonement day. In other words, just because they are under the Mosaic law, it does not mean that they have to obey the Mosaic law to maintain their salvation, because they are “preserved in Jesus Christ.”

Finally, they are “called” (v. 1) out of darkness into light (I Peter 2:9), and they are called unto God’s eternal glory (I Peter 5:10). They will receive more of God’s eternal glory if, during the tribulation period, they perform the signs of the kingdom and preach the gospel of the kingdom so that the lost sheep of the house of Israel will be saved (Matthew 10:6-8).

2 Mercy is not receiving the punishment they deserve. They deserve God’s punishment because they have broken the old covenant by sinning, and they are still under that covenant during the tribulation period (Hebrews 8:13). Since they are preaching the gospel of peace with God to Israel (Isaiah 52:7), they also need God’s mercy to give them whatever they ask for (John 14:13) so that others might be saved. They need peace so that they can continue to go from city to city in Israel, preaching the gospel, without being troubled. They also need God’s love, because, without that love, men will not see that they are God’s disciples (John 13:35). Therefore, the effectiveness of the gospel they preach depends upon others seeing God’s love in them so that “all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26). Therefore, a multiplication of mercy, peace, and love (v. 2) are needed for the little flock to reach the lost sheep of Israel with the gospel.

3 “The common salvation” (v. 3) means that God’s offer of eternal life is to “all flesh” (Acts 2:17-18), not just rulers. “There is no respect of persons with God” (Romans 2:11). This idea is also supported by Paul’s statement to Titus that he is “mine own son after the COMMON faith” (Titus 1:4). It is vital that Israel see that salvation is a free gift offered to everyone, because Israel will see the religious leaders exalted under the Antichrist, and the contention will be that Israel needs to join apostate Israel’s exclusive club by taking the mark of the beast in order to be saved. (All clubs have some kind of initiation.) The truth, however, is that God offers salvation to all flesh. All Israel has to do is believe God’s law covenant with them.

This “common” salvation is to be expressed physically, as well, by the little flock selling what they have and giving alms to the believing remnant (Luke 12:33), such that the believers have “all things common” (Acts 2:44). Therefore, just like physical miracles are a representation of the spiritual healing that God wants to give to Israel, physical, communal living is also a representation of the spiritual

commonality that God wants Israel to have in Christ by believing the gospel of the kingdom. (If someone, in the dispensation of grace, expects God to perform physical miracles today, then why is he also not living in a commune with other believers?)

The believing remnant is told to “earnestly contend for the faith” (v. 3). Churchianity today has redefined this phrase to say that we must defend the pillars of the faith against cults, such as Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Christian Scientists. However, the context is of people coming into the church during the tribulation period and teaching false doctrine from the Word of God. The little flock is to be earnest about keeping these false teachers out. The only way to know that they are false teachers is if the little flock knows the Word of God well, rightly divided.

Therefore, the defense is not against some off-the-wall beliefs, but the defense is against the subtle tactics of Satan WITHIN THE CHURCH, trying to turn the truth of God into a lie. This requires more knowledge and standing on the truth of God’s Word than merely defending scripture against easily identifiable cults that are outside the church. In fact, it is a lot easier to get an evil unbeliever saved than it is to get a religious person saved, because the religious person is brainwashed into thinking that his beliefs are okay. Therefore, arguments with cults are generally a waste of time. The church today is generally mired in these arguments, which keeps them from learning the truth of God’s Word.

As such, earnestly contending for the faith does not mean to contend for church teachings, doctrinal statements, or popular “Christian” ideas. Rather, it means to contend for salvation by faith alone. However, because today’s church is in false doctrine, they reinterpret this to mean that they need to contend for church doctrine, rather than for the sound doctrine of God’s Word rightly divided. The result is that this verse is actually used AGAINST right dividers, as churches take a stand against the Bible and for their doctrines of men. Similarly, in the tribulation period, this verse will be used by apostate Israel to take a stand against the truth of God’s Word taught by believing Israel. This is why Jesus told His disciples that “the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2). “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20).

Note that the faith was “once delivered unto the saints” (v. 3). Since salvation is by the faith OF Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22), “ONCE delivered” may mean that the faith of Christ was delivered to all believers at the time of Jesus’ death on the cross. In other words, the justice of God may demand that the faith of Christ, which is what saves us, not be delivered to anyone until it was actually developed by Christ, which would have been by the time of His death on the cross. Without this faith applied to believers before the cross, they could not be in heaven with God. Therefore, the word “once” may give us an explanation as to why Abraham’s bosom was in the earth until Jesus’ death. Once He died, Jesus could “descend into the lower parts of the earth” and bring paradise into heaven (Ephesians 4:8-

11), because all of those in Abraham's bosom now had the faith of Christ imparted unto them.

Finally, we can note from the past tense of this verse that Jude has written a previous letter to the little flock. Apparently, that letter has not been heeded, which is why Jude writes this reminder to them. Since this is a reminder, this letter is short.

4 There are two types of people in the world—those in Adam (unsaved and going to hell) and those in Christ (saved and receiving eternal life with God) (Romans 5:14-21). Those in Adam are called the “generation of vipers” (Matthew 23:33), while those in Christ are called “the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matthew 1:1). Therefore, when Jude talks about men, who are part of the generation of vipers, as being “of old ordained to this condemnation” (v. 4), he is merely saying that “there are certain men” (v. 4), who are in unbelief. As a result of this unbelief, they are part of the generation of vipers, having come from the serpent, Satan (Genesis 3:1), which is why Jesus said to these people: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:44). As a result, they will not “escape the damnation of hell” (Matthew 23:33). Therefore, they are “of old ordained to” the condemnation of hell as a result of their choice to be in unbelief, becoming part of the generation of vipers. Thus, an individual's free-will choice is maintained.

This warning in Jude of men creeping in unawares has II Peter 2 as its parallel passage. Since they have crept into the little flock without anyone noticing them, it means that they look like members of the little flock. They are really “ravaging wolves” “in sheep's clothing” (Matthew 7:15), identifiable as such by the false doctrine they teach. In fact, II Peter 2:1 calls them “false teachers.”

The first thing to notice about them is that they take half-truths of the mystery dispensation and apply them to the prophecy program they are living in, just like people, today, take half-truths of the prophecy dispensation and apply them to the current, mystery dispensation. (When I say they take “half-truths,” I do not mean that part of the Bible is a lie. Rather, I mean that they take a truth from God's Word and turn it into a lie (Romans 1:25) by adding their own “private interpretation” (II Peter 1:20).) That way, what they teach appears to be correct, since they are using scripture, but the scripture is twisted and misapplied, due to a failure to rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15) and a failure to understand what faith is all about.

In the tribulation period, apostate Israel under the Antichrist will say, “We ‘are not under the law, but under grace’ (Romans 6:14). Therefore, we do not need to obey the law of Moses, as the elders in the church teach. We can do whatever we want under grace.” However, this is not true for Israel's dispensation. As such, they turn “the grace of our God into lasciviousness” (v. 4).

Here is what will happen during the tribulation period. (The same thing happens today except with different circumstances.) Everyone knows he is worthy of death for his sin (Romans 1:32). Man has a desperately wicked heart (Jeremiah 17:9),

and wants to do all the evil desires of his heart without any consequence. The Antichrist will come on the scene, declare the Jews to be God's people, and say that he will give them whatever they want, i.e., they can sin as much as they want, as long as they bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:8-9).

After all, the Lord has promised to give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4), and "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). Of course, receiving the desires of your heart is only when you delight yourself in the Lord (Psalm 37:4), and "God forbid" that I should sin after being made free from sin (Romans 6:1-2). In other words, God's grace is to give you the liberty, ONCE YOU ARE SAVED, to allow Christ to live in you so that God's will is done in your life. Grace is only for believers, because unbelievers will use it to fulfill their animal desires. So, the Antichrist will quote scripture out of context and apply God's grace to unbelievers, which results in "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" (v. 4).

Members of the little flock, who believe this message of apostate Israel, will end up forsaking the law. As such, they will not endure unto the end of the tribulation period, and they will lose their salvation (Matthew 24:13). This shows the seriousness of these wolves in sheep's clothing, which is why both II Peter 2 and Jude are devoted to identifying them.

When the little flock goes into lasciviousness, they are not following the Holy Ghost's leading in their lives. Verse 1 talked about the little flock being "preserved in Jesus Christ." This is done by Christ's blood enabling the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon the little flock so that they can be overcomers of the Antichrist (Revelation 2-3). When the little flock forsakes God's law covenant with them, they are denying the power of Christ's blood to preserve them through the tribulation period. This is how they deny "the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 4), while, at the same time, proclaiming to do many wonderful works in the Lord's name (Matthew 7:21-23)!

You see, when people read about "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," they think this applies to easy-believism people. In other words, they think that this means that people use who they are in Christ as an excuse for sin. They then say that we need to obey the law in order to demonstrate that we have true faith. They then impose their rules upon us. The result is: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9). Then, the faith of Christ has been replaced by the works of men for their salvation. When they do that, they get believing Israel to stop believing, and they are turned over to lasciviousness, i.e., following the lusts of their heart.

The lusts of the heart can be evil things such as fornication, murders, thefts, etc., but they can also be rules that men follow. Colossians 2:18 says that, when you follow men's rules, you are "vainly puffed up by [your] fleshly mind." These rules may include the "neglecting of the body," but that neglect actually results in "the satisfying of the flesh" (Colossians 2:23) because you are following YOUR rules, rather than GOD's rule of faith in Him. Moreover, you think you are okay with God

because you are trying to do good. However, as far as God is concerned, “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23), whether it be raping someone or living a life of celibacy in order to work your way to heaven. Remember, from John 16:2, that those, who deliver the little flock up to be killed, will think that they are doing God service. They are trying to please God.

What the Antichrist and apostate Israel will do is that they will twist scripture in order to base salvation upon worshipping the Antichrist by bowing down to the image and taking the mark of the beast. He will get the world caught up in religious rules and ceremonies as the way for them to be absolved of their sin (Isn't that what the Catholics do today?).

In summary, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness does not necessarily mean doing the most heinous, evil things imaginable. Rather, it means abandoning faith in God and His Word for the traditions and commandments of men, whatever those may be. Men will do this because their flesh is puffed up by their religious performance, while having faith in God starves the flesh, and “no man ever yet hated his own flesh” (Ephesians 5:29). Therefore, by following the Antichrist's religion, man thinks he is serving God, and he does not have to suffer in the flesh because he is actually satisfying his own flesh. This is why religion is BIG business, and it will be its biggest under the Antichrist during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period!

5 Now, you might think, “What does Egypt have to do with the tribulation period?” The stories of the Old Testament are examples for believers (I Corinthians 10:6). As such, deliverance from Egypt is a type of God delivering Israel from sin. So, God delivered Israel from sin and wanted to bring them into eternal life in the Promised Land. However, they “believed not” (v. 5). Therefore, due to their lack of faith in Him, God destroyed them (Hebrews 3:17-19). Similarly, Jude's audience has been delivered by God by believing the gospel of the kingdom that was preached to them. However, if they later turn away from God's law covenant with them and trust in the mark or the worship of the image of the beast, God will destroy them before they enter God's kingdom (Hebrews 6:4-6), just like God destroyed Israel before they entered the Promised Land.

“Ye once knew this” should remind us of the Galatians. The Galatians were saved by grace through faith, but then they were “so soon removed...unto another gospel” (Galatians 1:6-9), because they allowed a false Jewish religion to change their beliefs. Similarly, the little flock knows sound doctrine, but they can be soon removed from faith in God's Word when they listen to the Antichrist and apostate Israel's Babylonian religious system. God's call to believing Israel is to “come out of her [the Babylonian religious system], My people” (Revelation 18:4).

6 Revelation 12:3-4 tells us that 1/3 of the angels rebelled with Satan. These are “the angels which kept not their first estate” (v. 6). Due to their unbelief, these angels fell, and God had to set boundaries on them. However, they rebelled against those boundaries also, by having sex with women and creating giants (Genesis 6:2,4). This is what is meant by the phrase: “Left their own habitation” (v. 6). We

also see confirmation of this in II Peter. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness" (II Peter 2:4), and this is stated in the context of God saving Noah from the flood (II Peter 2:5). Therefore, we can conclude that the angels leaving their first estate refers to devils leaving the spiritual realm and entering the physical realm so that they could have sex with women, creating "giants in the earth,... men of renown" (Genesis 6:1-4). Because of this God has reserved them "under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (v. 6). From Revelation 9:13-16, we can conclude that there were 200 million of these fallen angels!

The point is that, if the angels can fall, so can Israel. When the angels fell, God put them in chains of darkness to reserve them until the day they would be judged. Similarly, then, God has taken all unbelievers, who have died, and have sent them to torments in hell (See Luke 16:23-24), waiting to be judged into the lake of fire for all eternity (Revelation 20:15). ("Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:33).) Therefore, during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, when apostate Israel says, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Peter 3:4), the lost sheep of the house of Israel can say, "The Lord shall judge His people" (Hebrews 10:30). The reason they can say this is that they have the fallen angels as an example of God's everlasting judgment into hell for those in unbelief. In fact, to the people who say God will not judge them, God says, "This they WILLINGLY are ignorant of" that "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (II Peter 3:5,7). Since they WILLINGLY are ignorant of this, this means that God has revealed His judgment to them, but they ignore it so that they can continue in their sin, as Romans 1:32 says, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Thus, there is no excuse for the ungodliness of the Antichrist and apostate Israel during the tribulation period.

7 A third example of destruction is now given for those who abandon faith in Christ. Sodom must have served God at one time, since the King of Sodom was present when Abram offered sacrifice to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God (Genesis 14:17-18). Yet, 5 chapters later, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, by raining brimstone and fire down upon it (Genesis 19:24), because of their wickedness. As such, they are "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (v. 7). It is eternal in the sense that those cities will never be rebuilt (Isaiah 13:19-20). Those, who follow their example, will suffer eternally in the lake of fire, as well.

Note also the progression of judgment in the three examples given in verses 5-7. In verse 5, Israel does not enter the Promised Land (loss of reward). In verse 6, the devil's angels are in destruction, awaiting judgment (loss of position). In verse 7, Sodom and Gomorrah are suffering in eternal fire (punishment away from God).

Also, note how “in like manner” is used in verse 7 to show that the sin of Sodom is like the sin of the devils in verse 6. This means that the sin of lying with mankind is equivalent to devils having sex with women. This shows how serious lying with mankind is to God! That is why God says, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:13).

8 The people, who cause Jews to follow these three, bad examples and spend eternity in the lake of fire, do so by preaching God’s Word! They are “filthy dreamers” (v. 8), because they want to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, but they do so by pretending to preach the truth, by changing what the scriptures say, re-defining Biblical words, and taking verses out of context to make the scriptures fit their fleshly lusts. In other words, they have changed the truth into a lie (Romans 1:25) to deceive the little flock into thinking they can satisfy the lusts of the flesh and still please God at the same time. (It is no different today, as preachers in the dispensation of grace have “a form of godliness, but [deny] the power thereof” (II Timothy 3:5).)

Note that this verse starts with “likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh.” “Likewise” tells us that the sins of the Antichrist and apostate Israel will be similar to the sins of Israel coming out of Egypt (v. 5), devils having sex with women (v. 6), and abusers of themselves with mankind by going after strange flesh (v. 7).

Therefore, it makes sense that the sin of the Antichrist and apostate Israel will be sexual, as well. Furthermore, I Corinthians 6:18 says that the only sin a man can commit against his own body is fornication. Since Jude 8 says that they “defile the flesh,” this is another clue that fornication will be rampant during the Antichrist’s day. We also see this in I Timothy 1:10, where God describes men lying with men as: “Them that DEFILE themselves with mankind” (I Timothy 1:10).

I do not believe it is a coincidence that Leviticus 20 mentions three, progressive, sexual sins that are all worthy of death: 1) Men with women (Leviticus 20:10-12), 2) Men with men (Leviticus 20:13), and 3) Bestiality (Leviticus 20:15-16).

Sexual sin can be linked with religion with sexual acts taking place in the temple. Many religions have people, known as temple prostitutes, and their adherents go to the temple to have sex with them. In doing so, they somehow appease the anger of the god they worship. We even see this in scripture with Israel. Amos 2:7-8 says that “a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane My holy name: And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.”

Therefore, when the Antichrist establishes the one, world religion of Babylon, that religion will probably involve sex. Revelation 17:5 calls that religion: “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” We are also told that it is with this “great whore” that “the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk

with the wine of her fornication” (Revelation 17:1-2). By contrast, the 144,000 sealed believers from Israel (Revelation 7:3-8) “were not defiled with women; for they are virgins” (Revelation 14:4). In other words, they were not defiled with Babylon, the mother of all harlots.

The Antichrist will enforce his one, world religion for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period (Revelation 13:5). During that time, he will be a “beast...like unto a leopard” (Revelation 13:2). All the world will wonder after the beast and worship him (Revelation 13:3-4). Therefore, it makes sense that the sexual sin of the Antichrist’s kingdom will be bestiality.

This may seem far-fetched. However, if 200 million devils in Noah’s day had sex with a lower creation than themselves, i.e., woman, why wouldn’t millions of people have sex with a lower creation than themselves, i.e., beasts, as well? This would be a way of worshipping and serving “the creature more than the Creator” (Romans 1:25). If bestiality is too gross to enter into man’s imagination, then why would God even have to mention it in Leviticus 18:23 and 20:15-16? Also, sex with beasts has already taken place in Israel’s history: “Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. For she doted upon their paramours [lovers], whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses” (Ezekiel 23:19-20).

Verse 8 calls these people “filthy DREAMERS.” Perhaps the way that man degenerates into having sex with beasts is through virtual reality. Pictures, movies, and television have already led to many people having sexual fantasies about their dream person. Technology is such now that you can act out your fantasy by creating a digital representation of yourself in virtual reality. The name of such a creation is called an avatar. It is interesting that the word “avatar” is also a Hindu term referring to the manifestation of a god on earth in bodily form. As such, those creating avatars think of themselves as god. What is to stop them, then, from making those avatars to include the body parts of beasts to fulfill their demented sexual fantasies? It is then just a small step from fantasy to reality. “As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Perhaps this is why, when God promises to bring judgment upon all the “proud and lofty,” He will also bring judgment “upon all pleasant pictures” (Isaiah 2:12,16). Therefore, the “strange flesh” (v. 7), that the world will go after during the great tribulation, will probably be beasts, which is probably why God calls them “brute beasts” in Jude 10.

Even if man does not resort to bestiality, he must at least resort to sex with devils and defiling himself with mankind during the at-hand phase of the kingdom. The reason for this is not only found in the examples of Jude 6-7, but it is also found in Jesus’ warnings of the last days in Luke 17. There, Jesus says, “as it was in the days of Noe [Noah], so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man,” and “likewise also as it was in the days of Lot [Sodom]” (Luke 17:26,28). This includes “two men [being] in one bed” (Luke 17:34), which sounds a lot like lying with mankind to me!

“Despise dominion” (v. 8) may refer to despising the Lord Jesus Christ by taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast. I say this because Hebrews 10:29 says that believers, who have done this, have “done despite unto the Spirit of grace” and “have trodden under foot the Son of God.” Since eternal dominion belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ (I Peter 4:11, 5:11, Jude 25; Revelation 1:6), man can “despise dominion” by taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast. In other words, they align themselves with the Antichrist when dominion really belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember also that Jude 4 says that they turn God’s grace into lasciviousness (v. 4). As such, I believe it is reasonable to conclude that these men “fail of the grace of God,” which means that they are now defiled, according to Hebrews 12:15. From a spiritual perspective, they are fornicators, who sell their birthright (Hebrews 12:16) by taking the mark and/or worshipping the image of the beast, and will be consumed by fire from God (Hebrews 12:18-29).

We mentioned that their filthy dreams are sexual perversions via virtual reality. Ultimately, however, their filthy dreams are to “be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:12-14), which is what Lucifer’s will was. These “natural brute beasts” (II Peter 2:12) are “selfwilled” like the devil (II Peter 2:10). As such, they are children of the devil (John 8:44), who worship the dragon (Revelation 13:4), perhaps thinking that Satan will give them power as beasts (v. 10), which is probably why they have sex with beasts—to get Satanic power! That is because Satan is a beast himself (“The serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field” (Genesis 3:1). “And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field” (Genesis 3:14).) Therefore, sex with beasts is a combination of man with Satan in an attempt to overthrow God from being the possessor of the earth.

Note also that the three descriptions—“filthy dreamers,” “defile the flesh,” and “despise dominion”—match the three examples from verses 5-7. The people of Israel were “filthy dreamers” by wanting the pleasures of sin that they left behind in Egypt (v. 5). The devils defiled the flesh by having sex with women (v. 6). Sodom and Gomorrah despised dominion by refusing to obey the conscience in that men were lying with mankind (v. 7). Thus, filthy dreamers = Israel in Egypt (v. 5). Defile the flesh = angels having sex with demons (v. 6). Despise dominion = Sodom going against the dominion of their conscience and sinning (v. 7).

Finally, they “speak evil of dignities,” meaning that they speak evil of God’s governmental structure, i.e., believing Israel, Jesus, etc. (We also see this in II Peter 2:10, where they are said to “despise government.”) The way they do this is by blaspheming the elders of the little flock. They speak evil of the elders in order to discredit their message to the little flock so that the little flock will believe them over the dignities that God has appointed.

9 In this example, the devil wants the body of Moses. The devil’s claim is that, because Moses disobeyed God and would not enter the Promised Land while he was alive (Numbers 20:12), his body belongs to the devil. However, God’s future

redemption of Moses through the shed blood of Jesus Christ means that Moses' body belongs to God. What is at stake, then, is not just Moses' body, but the bodies of all believers. Since "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), all deserve to go to hell. However, because Christ rose from the dead and all believers are baptized into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4), "the dead [in Christ] shall be raised incorruptible" (I Corinthians 15:52). This is what is at stake. If the devil can get possession of Moses' body, he can keep him from being raised incorruptible. He can then keep all of Israel from being raised incorruptible, and the devil will possess the earth, rather than God. The reason is because God gave dominion of the earth to man, and God would have no humans with which to rule the earth. (Jesus Christ ends up being the man through Whom God will rule the earth for all eternity (Hebrews 2:7-9).) Therefore, the devil's dispute over Moses' body is ultimately a dispute over God's ability to give eternal life as a free gift to all those who believe the gospel God has given them.

So, why dispute over Moses' body? Why didn't the devil dispute over Abraham's body or someone else's body? The devil may have disputed over Abraham's body. We do not know. We only know about the dispute over Moses' body. Here are some good reasons for doing so: 1) God said that He would reconcile the earth back to Himself through Israel as a kingdom of priests, and Moses was the leader of Israel (Exodus 19:5-6). 2) While God did promise that all families of the earth would be blessed through Abraham, Israel was not birthed as a nation until they went through the Red Sea. So, going after Moses would be appropriate. 3) God said that "the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). Pride is what caused Lucifer's downfall (Isaiah 14:12-14). Therefore, the meekest people are the most godly people, as Jesus says, "the meek...shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). This may mean that Moses was the godliest man to come along. Therefore, if the devil could stop Moses from being raised from the dead, he could stop all others, since others would perhaps need more mercy from God than Moses did. Stopping the resurrection of the dead would also include stopping Jesus' resurrection, since He is "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29).

As mentioned previously, what is at stake with the dispute over Moses' body is that the devil was disputing God's justice in raising someone from the dead and giving him life when that someone had sinned. In other words, the fight was probably over the resurrection of Moses' body to new life in Christ (Deuteronomy 34:5-6), and, by extension, the resurrection of all of believing Israel (Ezekiel 37:1-6) and all of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 15:51-57) made possible by Jesus' victory on the cross (Colossians 2:13-15).

Although the Lord rebuked him, the devil has not given up on this fight, as "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" during the dispensation of grace (II Timothy 3:13). Satan's fight against the body of Christ will culminate in a "war in heaven," halfway through the tribulation period, between Michael and his angels and the devil and his angels, resulting in the devil's forces being permanently kicked out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). With regard to the earth, the devil is not

removed for all eternity until his final battle with God after the millennial reign is over (Revelation 20:7-10). Therefore, this dispute over Moses' body is really the devil trying to stake a claim on every man who has ever sinned!

We also should note that the point of this verse is not to learn that the devil disputed over Moses' body. The point is to note that although God is always in the right, even Michael the archangel, the highest ranking angel of God's forces, will not speak evil of the devil, because the devil is still a dignity or someone of authority in God's governmental structure. Therefore, Michael leaves it up to the Lord to do the rebuking. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). Therefore, speaking against powers, EVEN IF THE POWERS ARE IN THE WRONG, is resisting God (Romans 13:2)! This shows that, even if the certain men who have crept in unawares among the little flock are in the right (v. 4), which they are not, they still have no right to speak against the elders of the little flock. Therefore, by the very fact that they "despise dominion and speak evil of dignities" (v. 8), these men should not be listened to, regardless of whether they are right or not.

Another good example of this is in Acts 23. There, Paul is standing before the Jewish council to be judged. The high priest commands that Paul be smitten in the mouth (Acts 23:2). This is in direct violation of God's law that, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment" (Leviticus 19:15). Therefore, Paul says, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall" (Acts 23:2). When he is told that the high priest gave the order, Paul said, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people" (Acts 23:5). In other words, "two wrongs don't make a right." Just because the high priest broke God's law in judgment, it does not mean that Paul can break God's law in responding to the lawbreaker.

Similarly, just because the devil goes against the Lord, it does not mean that Michael the archangel can speak against him, because the devil is "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) and "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, Michael said, "The Lord rebuke thee" (v. 9). (The reason that Michael disputes with the devil is because Michael is Israel's prince (Daniel 12:1). So, this dispute was between two princes, and so Michael referred the devil to the ultimate authority—God.) Similarly, the little flock should not listen to the false teachers in their midst by the very fact that they speak evil of God's governmental structure. In summary, if Michael would not speak evil of the devil, how much more should children of the devil not speak evil of God's people!

We should also note that the parallel passage in II Peter tells us that angels, "which are greater and power in might" would not bring "railing accusation against [these false teachers] before the Lord." I Timothy 5:19 says that, in the body of Christ, we are not even supposed to receive an accusation against an elder, unless there are two or three witnesses. Otherwise, that would be going against God's ordained powers. You may say, "Wait a minute! Jude just contradicted himself. He said that the false teachers are wrong in speaking bad of God's governmental structure, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ and believing Israel, but Jude calls the false teachers "filthy dreamers" (v. 8), "brute beasts" (v. 10), "raging waves of the sea" (v.

13), etc. By doing so, isn't Jude guilty of making a railing accusation himself? First, he is not speaking against God's governmental structure. Second, these are not Jude's words, because God is speaking through him. Even if they were his words, he still has the authority to do so because it would still be Christ speaking through him, just like it can be for believers today. That is why Paul says that "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (I Corinthians 2:15). Therefore, when the world tells you, "You have no right to judge me if I lie with another man instead of a woman," it is they that have no right to judge you, because they are not spiritual. Therefore, they are the ones breaking God's command by telling you that you cannot judge them, when you are obeying God by judging them. In other words, when we give sound doctrine to someone else, we are saying, as Michael said to the devil, "The Lord rebuke thee." On the flip side, unbelievers have no right to rebuke us with "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1), because they are not spiritual.

As a side note, Jude 9 is the only verse in the Bible that tells us that Michael is the archangel. I Thessalonians 4:16 says that the Lord's coming at the rapture is announced by "the voice of the archangel." Therefore, by comparing verse with verse we know that Michael will announce the Lord's coming at the rapture of the body of Christ (I Thessalonians 4:16).

10 These "certain men crept in unawares" (v. 4) by speaking about spiritual things that are contrary to sound doctrine for the little flock. Since these men are unsaved, they do not have the power of the Holy Ghost to teach them the things of God (I Corinthians 2:12-16). Therefore, they are speaking evil "of those things which they know not" (v. 10). The only things of God that they know, then, are the things of the conscience, that are written in their hearts (Romans 2:14-15). This is "what they know naturally, as brute beasts" (v. 10). Jude uses the term "brute beasts," just like Peter does in II Peter 2:12, to signify that, what they do know, is of the flesh. It is not from the Holy Ghost, because they do not have the Holy Ghost.

Now, because no one can do good in his flesh (Psalm 53:1-3), the reason God gives the conscience is so that man sees his need for God's imputed righteousness, rather than relying on his own righteousness, which is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). However, these "brute beasts," instead of using that conscience to see their need for faith in God, use their conscience to create their own religion, in which they can declare themselves to be righteous. Romans 1 calls this becoming "vain in their imaginations" (Romans 1:21); becoming fools while professing themselves to be wise (Romans 1:22); and changing "the truth of God into a lie" (Romans 1:25). All of this is the detail of the summation in Jude verse 10 that they use their consciences to "corrupt themselves" (v. 10). Therefore, not only are these certain men incorrect in the doctrine they are trying to teach to the little flock, but they are also making themselves "twofold more the child of hell" (Matthew 23:15) than they were before they corrupted themselves with their own religion. Why, then, would the little flock listen to anything that they say? This should also be a warning to us today, not to even listen to preachers, who do not rightly divide the Word of truth.

“God so loved the world” (John 3:16), but He also says that He hates Esau (Malachi 1:2-3). The way that both can be true is that He considers unbelievers to be beasts, rather than people. This is because they follow the lusts of the flesh. So, because Esau was “a profane person” (Hebrews 12:16), Esau is considered to be a beast, spiritually speaking. Therefore, God can love the world, but still hate unbelievers (Hosea 9:15). This is how God can tolerate billions of people burning in hell for all eternity.

11 Three examples from the Old Testament are used in this verse to show the progression of the corruption of these certain men, who are among the little flock in the tribulation period. First, they “have gone in the way of Cain” (v. 11). Cain was the father of religion, since he thought he had the better way to approach God than what God had commanded. Therefore, the first error is to get away from the truth by not rightly dividing the Word. Instead, they twist God’s word to fit their religion.

The second step is to seek after the rewards of the flesh, rather than the rewards that God offers for those with faith in Him. Balaam started out by saying that he would obey God, but then filthy lucre was flashed in front of him, and he turned his back on God to follow money. That is what these religious people will do. They will see the riches that the Antichrist offers them in the tribulation period, and they will seek after those riches, rather than the eternal riches of God in the kingdom.

Finally, the third step is to form a coo in an attempt to take over the leadership of the little flock so that Satan even controls God’s people. The Old Testament example of this is “the gainsaying of Core,” which is referring to Korah. Korah was so corrupt that he convinced 250 princes of Israel to rebel against God’s leadership (Numbers 16:1-3). Numbers 16:3 shows them using religion to say they are in the right. That is what these “certain men” will do in the tribulation period. They will become so strong in their religion that they will convince elders of the little flock to abandon faith in God for their religion. The result for Korah and his men was that the earth swallowed them up (Numbers 16:31-33). Similarly, the members of the little flock, who become part of these men, will lose their position in God’s kingdom and gain eternal damnation in the lake of fire.

Note the progression in these 3 examples. First, people follow the lust of their flesh by believing religion that is contrary to God’s Word rightly divided (Cain’s example). Second, they follow their own lusts to the point of pursuing the rewards of this world (Balaam’s example). Third, they follow their own lusts to the point of trying to destroy the things of God (Core’s example). Thus, the pronouncement of “woe unto them” (v. 11).

Therefore, these false teachers have rebelled against God by following Babylon, rather than God’s law (Revelation 17:1-2) (Cain). They have sold their souls to the devil in order to get reward in the devil’s kingdom (Matthew 4:8-9) (Balaam). Therefore, they speak against God’s people and try to put the Antichrist on the

world's throne as the Christ (Core). They even stoop to changing the Bible in order to do this.

For example, compare the KJV and the NIV in Luke 11:2-4. The NIV: 1) Takes "our" out of "Our Father" so that you do not associate the Christ with God the Father, 2) Removes "Which are in heaven" so that you will think that Satan is God, 3) Removes "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth" so that you do not know that God is the possessor of heaven and earth, because Satan is only god of the earth during the tribulation period, and 4) Removes "But deliver us from evil" so that you do not see that the Antichrist's kingdom is evil.

12 These "certain men crept in unawares" (v. 4) appear holy to men, but they are really "ravening wolves...in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15). The sheep's clothing is their "form of godliness" (II Timothy 3:5) of the religion of the Antichrist. The danger is that these ravening wolves are among the "little flock" of believing Israel (Luke 12:32).

Therefore, God calls them out for who they are so that the little flock will go to the Good Shepherd so that they are not eaten (John 10:11-14). First, we need to understand that the little flock, because they have all things in common during the tribulation period (Acts 4:32-35), are eating together. These are "feasts of charity" (v. 12), because them having all things in common is a demonstration of God's love bringing them together. However, because these certain men are of the devil, they do not have God's love in them. Therefore, they are "spots" (v. 12), meaning that they are not clean and holy like the little flock they dine with. Because they are self righteous, they have so much pride that they do not even fear taking the food of the little flock. This is amazing in light of the punishment of death that the Holy Ghost gave to Ananias and Sapphira for lying (Acts 5:10), during this time of having all things in common in early Acts.

This shows that religious people like this have no hope of being saved, because they have corrupted themselves so badly that they actually think they have eternal life. The little flock can pray for them "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Timothy 2:25-26). But, as long as they have the attitude of "I am not as other men are" (Luke 18:11), they will continue in the lie program of Satan because they have no fear of God's judgment. At some point, when they are so mired in their own unbelief that they will never be saved, God gives "them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28).

These men are further described as "clouds ... without water, carried about of winds" (v. 12). "Clouds without water" means that they look great, but they have no spiritual substance or "latter rain" (Job 29:23; Zechariah 10:1) to refresh the weary souls of the little flock in the tribulation period. They are "carried about of winds," because their doctrine is based on lies. Therefore, there is no standing in the truth like "a tree planted by the rivers of water," but they "are like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Psalm 1:4).

Maybe they believed the gospel at first, but their denying of Christ for the things of this world has made their fruit wither. They are now without fruit, and are “twice dead” (v. 12), because they have taken the mark or worshipped the image of the beast. This means they were dead in their sins once, and they have now died again, having rejected God’s promise to them for the things of the world instead, selling their souls to the devil, making them worthy of “the second death” in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Hebrews 6:4-6 warns that it is impossible for such people to be saved, since they have crucified “to themselves the Son of God afresh”, making Jesus’ crucifixion worthless to them. In other words, because they are now “twice dead,” they would need Jesus Christ to die twice. Since He died only once, “it is impossible...to renew them again unto repentance.”

Therefore, being “twice dead,” they are to be “plucked up by the roots” (v. 12) at the end of the tribulation period to be cast into the fire and burned (John 15:6) in the lake of fire forever. When someone believes the gospel of the kingdom, he is placed into the vine as a branch of Christ. He should then abide in Christ and bring forth much fruit (John 15:5). However, if he leaves Christ and joins himself to the devil by taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast, he abides not in Christ and “is cast forth as a branch.” He is then rooted in himself, and God says that he will be “plucked up by the roots” (v. 12), and be cast into the lake of fire and burned (John 15:6). This is the baptism with “unquenchable fire” that John the Baptist warned about in Matthew 3:11-12. Therefore, this plucking up by the roots is an allusion to death in the lake of fire for apostate Israel, who has taken the mark or worshipped the image of the beast, which stands as a great warning to believing Israel not to listen to these “brute beasts” (v. 10).

13 Verse 13 goes on to describe them as “raging waves of the sea.” Satan’s realm is pictured in the Bible as the sea or the deep (See Revelation 13:1,17:1). Therefore, by being part of the sea, they are part of Satan’s kingdom. However, they are not just a part of it, but they are “raging” and “foaming” (v. 13). They make a lot of noise and stir up a lot of trouble by taking others with them into the lake of fire.

“Foaming out their own shame” speaks of how pure evil puts sin on display. II Peter 2:13 calls it, “Sporting themselves with their own deceivings” (II Peter 2:13). To give you an example, “foaming out their own shame” is when the abusers of themselves with mankind of Sodom blatantly commanded Lot to bring two men outside so that they could have sex with them. When he refused, they accused him of judging them and they tried to force their way into the house (Genesis 19:5-9). In other words, not only did they not feel bad about their sin, but they flaunted their sin for all to see. In the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist’s day, this will be seen in the sex acts tied to religion, where they proudly have sex with beasts, people of the same sex, and/or adultery with the opposite sex and actually claim their debauchery is a good thing!

These “certain men” (v. 4) are also called “wandering stars” (v.13). This is interesting because stars, in the Bible, refer to the angels, e.g., Revelation 12:4.

God also told Abraham that He would make his seed as numerous as the stars in heaven (Genesis 15:5). These men should be Abraham's seed, but they have wandered away from the truth. Therefore, instead of being in God's kingdom, as they claim to be, they will be in "the blackness of darkness for ever" (v. 13) because the Lord is not there (John 1:7-9). Therefore, the darkness is so black that it is "darkness which may be felt" (Exodus 10:21).

Note also the progression of these men in verses 12-13. First, they are just out of place among the little flock ("spots in your feasts of charity" (v. 12)). Then, they are preachers, not preaching the truth of God's Word rightly divided ("clouds ... without water" (v. 12)). Then, we see they produce no good fruit or no saved or edified people. Verse 13 then shows them for what they really are. They are dangerous members of Satan's kingdom ("raging waves ... foaming" (v. 13)), and their end is eternal darkness, as opposed to eternal light in God's kingdom (v. 13 vs. Revelation 22:5). The point of these verses is to expose these false teachers for who they really are, so that the little flock will not be duped by them.

14-15 Enoch is said to be "the seventh from Adam." II Peter 2:5 calls "Noah the eighth person." However, the genealogy of Genesis 5:21-29 shows that Enoch begat Methuselah, Methuselah begat Lamech, and Lamech begat Noah. This means that, as far as God is concerned, the generations of Methuselah and Lamech do not exist. (The oldest man recorded in scripture, Methuselah, is not even recognized by God. This shows how we should "set [our] affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).) Why? Because they were polluted by women having sex with devils and creating superhumans (Genesis 6:1-4). Before Enoch was raptured up, he warned that God would bring judgment upon man for being ungodly (v. 15).

Similarly speaking, the body of Christ today has warned that God will bring judgment upon man for being ungodly. We will be raptured up when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11:25). Then, all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26) by enduring the tribulation period, as Noah endured through the flood. In the middle of this are the generations of Methuselah and Lamech which are a type of the ungodly people of apostate Israel and the Antichrist that Jude warns believing Israel about here. Thus, mentioning Enoch is very appropriate, since the condition of the earth at that time is a type of the condition of the earth during the at-hand phase of the kingdom (Matthew 24:37).

Note how Jude says that Enoch "prophesied of THESE" (v. 14), showing that Enoch was not just talking of the men who perished in the flood, but he was ultimately prophesying of all ungodly men who would receive God's judgment at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)! After all, Enoch said, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (v. 14). The judgment of Noah's day came with a flood that killed all living things not on the ark. There is no mention of the Lord coming or any of His saints coming with Him. (This also could not refer to the flood because there were not ten thousands of saints in the history of the earth yet!) Therefore, Enoch's warning was really of the Great White Throne Judgment, not the flood. That is because the only thing that matters is

where you spend eternity. All the flood did was destroy the physical lives of those not in the ark. God's judgment of ungodly men destroys their eternal souls, which is much bigger stakes! Although Enoch was talking about all unbelievers of all time, as far as Israel's program is concerned, he was specifically talking about the Antichrist and apostate Israel during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, as Jude points out here.

When you hear the phrase, "the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (v. 14), you may envision this massive group of saved people who will be with God for all eternity. However, when you consider that the world has been going on for 6,000 years with over 100 billion people being born during that time, "ten thousands" of saints is a VERY SMALL group. God says that He has "an innumerable company of angels" (Hebrews 12:22), yet He only has "ten thousands of saints!" Granted, this may not be all of His saints. It may just refer to the 144,000 sealed of Israel (Revelation 14:1). Still, it is obvious from scripture that, relatively speaking, very, very few people believe the gospel, when God can only gather "ten thousands of his saints," while a similar number of people will gather in a stadium to watch a college football game, and that is just one of many games taking place on the same day in just one country on the earth!

This is also a good passage to show that Jesus' second coming is about judgment first. When people read, "in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left" (Luke 17:34), they think it means they are taken to heaven. However, when the disciples ask where they are taken, Jesus says, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together" (Luke 17:37). In other words, they are taken away in judgment. Enoch's statement in these verses confirms this.

Note that the word "ungodly" is used 4 times in verse 15 to describe the generation of vipers. Because they follow their own religion and seek the riches and power of the Antichrist's world in the tribulation period, they do not have faith in God's promises to them, which makes them ungodly. Since they are ungodly at their core, everything about them—their deeds and their speeches—are also ungodly.

When we see "ungodly" used 4 times, our natural reaction is to think of physical murderers, rapists, and other "horrible" people that we lock up in prisons. However, they are ungodly, spiritually speaking. To man, they appear to be executing God's judgment and leading people to God. (They think that they do God service (John 16:2), and do "many wonderful works" in God's name (Matthew 7:22).) However, it is just the opposite. II Peter 2:18-19 says that "they speak great swelling words of vanity," which get people to stop trusting what God has said to them and start following the lusts of the flesh. Thus, they are SPIRITUAL murderers, rapists, and other horrible things. Of course, they also do these things physically in the name of God's justice by physically persecuting and killing members of the little flock. What is sad is that, in making their ungodly speeches and doing their ungodly deeds, they think they are godly. It will take God's judgment against them to convince them that they are ungodly (v. 15). (God convinces them by looking at two books. One book lists all of their works, and the

other book is God's law. The works are compared to the law, and they are found lacking, resulting in their eternal damnation in the lake of fire (See Revelation 20:11-15.) Since they may sincerely think that their ungodly deeds are really godly, their sincerity makes them even more deceptive and better able to steer people away from the truth of God's Word rightly divided. Only those, who have faith in God and His Word rightly divided, regardless of what man says, will see their ungodliness and flee from it.

16 Murmuring and complaining should remind us of all of the murmuring and complaining that Israel did for 40 years in the wilderness under Moses. That generation did not do evil deeds, as we think of them. They just were in utter unbelief of God's promises to them. This unbelief results in men complaining about their situation, because they want to be able to sin without consequences. They then decide to trust in their own flesh and allow their flesh to deceive them into thinking that they are righteous on their own (Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, they walk "after their own lusts" (v. 16), trying to build up great things for themselves on this earth, rather than simply trusting God to give them eternal blessings in His kingdom on earth. Then, because they have completely abandoned God and are trusting in themselves, they become prideful.

All the ungodly, then, start a pride contest, speaking "great swelling words" (v. 16) to get ahead. They speak great things to get people to follow them, and they speak flattering things to those over them to gain favor from them (v. 16). All of this means respecting "men's persons" (v. 16) to gain power, wealth, and prestige. So, they complain about God not fulfilling promises, they seek to fulfill those promises themselves, and they move up in the world to feel good about themselves. Therefore, when they are within the little flock, they are easily identifiable by their doing these things.

17 However, most people are not interested in the truth and in serving God. Instead, they are interested in allowing their hearts to deceive them into thinking they are okay with God when they are not. This is why people follow pastors, rather than God, because following men gives them justification for sin. "When they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error" (II Peter 2:18). This is why Paul said that those who measure themselves by themselves are not wise (II Corinthians 10:12). Instead of listening to the words of the ungodly, the little flock needs to listen to the words of the Lord, spoken by Christ's apostles. These words are permanently recorded for them in Hebrews – Revelation.

18 The first time mocking is mentioned in the Bible is Genesis 19:14, when Lot was accused by his sons-in-law of mocking when he told them to leave Sodom. Since "there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), Jude says that the same thing will take place by unbelievers during the last days of Israel's program, when conditions will be "as it was in the days of Lot" (Luke 17:28).

These mockers will say, “Where is the promise of His coming” (II Peter 3:4)? The evidence of the flood of Noah’s day shows that God does, indeed, have the power to judge the world (II Peter 3:4-6). These mockers also know internally that they are worthy of death (Romans 1:32). However, they ignore all evidence and try to get the little flock to abandon faith in God in exchange for the pleasure of sin and the riches of the world. But, Jesus said that it does not profit a man if he gains the whole world and still loses his own soul (Matthew 16:26). The generation of vipers ignores this, mocking the promises of God in order to gain the things of this world, as they “walk after their own ungodly lusts” (v. 18). But, “God is not mocked.” For sowing to the flesh, these ungodly people will reap corruption in an eternal lake of fire (Galatians 6:7-8).

19 Those, following their own lusts, are sensual. That is, they follow the senses of their own flesh, and have their flesh change their souls so that they are spiritually dead. James 3:15 tells us that this is devilish wisdom. Those, with faith in God, allow God to use their spirits to make their souls alive, and then have their saved souls control their flesh, yielding their flesh to God as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13). Therefore, they are spiritual, and not sensual. They are separated by God to live for Him, rather than separating themselves to live for themselves, as these ungodly men do.

20 The ungodly build themselves up in the world, but everything they build up will be destroyed at God’s judgment of them (v. 15). In order to build yourself up into something that will truly last forever, you must build yourself up “on your most holy faith” (v. 20), which is “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” (James 2:1) that is given to all believers as a free gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). The little flock should read God’s Word rightly divided and then pray in the Holy Ghost in order to understand what God’s Word says. God is a Spirit (John 4:24). Therefore, His Word is spiritual, meaning that the natural man cannot understand it (I Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, they need to pray in the Holy Ghost in order for God to build up their inner man to recognize and avoid the ungodly and to do God’s will on earth during the tribulation period.

“Praying in the Holy Ghost” does not mean speaking in tongues, speaking in your private prayer language, or moving in the Spirit, as Pentecostals would have you believe. A good example of praying in the Holy Ghost is found in Ephesians 6:17-18. There, we are told to “take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” In other words, you read and believe God’s Word and talk it over in your mind, i.e., praying the Word, so that you use the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16) to make decisions. The result is that you mind the things of the Spirit, rather than the things of the flesh (Romans 8:4-5).

After all, look at the context of Jude 20. Jude is talking about ungodly people trying to pull them away from the truth. Am I honestly supposed to believe that the little flock will stay in the love of God (v. 21), have compassion on others (v. 22), save people from hell fire (v. 23), and have the Lord Jesus Christ present them

faultless to God (v. 24) by having them shake uncontrollably and speak jibberish? That does not sound like the plan of “the only wise God our Saviour” (v. 25)!

21 They keep themselves in God’s love by standing on sound doctrine in the midst of trials. II Timothy 3:12 says that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” This persecution builds patience, experience, hope, and the love of God (Romans 5:3-5). I John 2:5 says that the love of God is perfected in those who keep God’s Word, and the way they keep God’s Word is by reading and believing sound doctrine and allowing Christ to live the doctrine through them as they go through trials (II Corinthians 4:10-11).

Note that, when they do this, they are to look “for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 21). That is because, as long as they are in their vile flesh (Philippians 3:21), the little flock will not allow Christ to live in them perfectly. Therefore, verse 21 is telling them to read and believe God’s Word and use the mind of Christ to allow Christ to live in them. In the areas where they fail to do this, instead of feeling guilty about their sin, they should know that the blood of Christ has purged their conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). Therefore, they can look for the Lord Jesus Christ to show them mercy in forgiving them of all their sins and giving them eternal life, which, for Israel, takes place at Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20). If they do this, they will not go further into the flesh to try to stop sinning. Rather, they will continue to abide in God’s love and rely upon “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 21), and not upon the flesh, to take care of that sin for them at Jesus’ second coming.

22-23 God’s will is for “all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4). Coming unto the knowledge of the truth will keep the little flock in the love of God throughout the tribulation period (vs. 20-21). The result of this is that God’s will can be accomplished through them. For those, who are unsaved, they are to “have compassion” on them, “making a difference” (v. 22). This means that the little flock should show God’s love to them so that they see the difference between the love of God in the little flock and the hatred of Satan in apostate Israel. Seeing this will make the difference for the lost sheep of the house of Israel to believe the gospel of the kingdom that the little flock preaches, so that they may be saved, instead of believing the lies of apostate Israel and being condemned to hell.

Matthew 24 says that many will be deceived in Israel (Matthew 24:4-5), almost to the point of deceiving the very elect (Matthew 24:24). So, there will be many in the little flock, who get caught up with what apostate Israel and the Antichrist are doing, such that they are in the fire and will go to the lake of fire if they continue down that path. The little flock, then, needs to fear that these people will lose their salvation to the point that they are willing to pull “them out of the fire” (v. 23). They do this by helping them “come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4), which is the second part of God’s will. Now, it is a lot harder to pull someone out of a fire than it is to keep someone from making the decision to enter the fire, because the former does not see the dangerous situation he is in. This is why the little flock needs to see the spiritual condition of these people and save them out of

fear of what will happen to them if they continue to follow Satan's lie program and not come unto the knowledge of the truth.

This fear is only possible if the little flock hates "even the garment spotted by the flesh" (v. 23). Based on Revelation 19:8, the garment is the righteousness, with which they are clothed. They first clothed themselves with the garment of God's righteousness by believing the gospel of the kingdom, but then they started following the religion of apostate Israel to keep their salvation. This caused their garment to be "spotted by the flesh" (v. 23) with self-righteousness, which is "as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). By hating even a spotted garment, the little flock will not get mixed up with Satan's lie program that is operating through apostate Israel, and they will help save other members of the little flock from getting mixed up in that by bringing them into the knowledge of the truth.

24-25 The power to stay away from the false religion of apostate Israel comes from "God our Saviour" (v. 25). Sure, He has saved their souls, but the context of God being their Saviour in these verses is Him saving them from Satan's lie program and the false religion of apostate Israel and the Antichrist. If the little flock reads and believes the truth of God's Word rightly divided, then "God our Saviour" will keep the little flock from falling by the sound doctrine that is built up in their inner man that will cause them to endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 24:13).

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." In other words, "God our Saviour" will keep the little flock from falling. Falling DOES NOT mean that they broke the Mosaic law or committed any other sin after they believed the gospel. If it did, then no one would be saved. Rather, falling means taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast. We know this because Hebrews 6:4-6 says that it is impossible for those who fall away to be saved, and the only unpardonable sin mentioned in the Bible is to take the mark or worship the image of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11).

Therefore, all other sins will not send them to hell. Rather, "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 21) will wash believing Israel from their sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5) so that, when Christ presents His bride to the Father, He will present a "faultless" (v. 24) bride. That bride will, then, withstand "the presence of His glory" (v. 24) and be accepted by Him, which will bring "exceeding joy" (v. 24) to the little flock.

Withstanding the presence of His glory is no small task, as Hebrews 12:22-24 says that they are come to Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, an innumerable company of angels, the church, God the Judge, spirits of just men, and to Jesus. The ONLY way they will not receive punishment in hell is if the blood of Christ has atoned for their sins.

It took "the only wise God" (v. 25) to concoct such a plan whereby He could give eternal life to sinners (Romans 3:23). (Note that "wise God" is only found here and

in I Timothy 1:16-17, and both passages have salvation as their context.) Wisdom is why God's plan works and Satan's plan does not work. "The Lord possessed [wisdom] in the beginning of His way....[Wisdom] was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Proverbs 8:22-23). By contrast, Satan's plan was concocted as a response to God's plan. Since God knew Satan would come up with his rebellious plan, God used this knowledge to make sure that His plan would work and that Satan would be brought down to hell (Isaiah 14:12-15).

Not only did God come up with a wise plan, but He also brought it to pass Himself by sending His Son to die on the cross. Thereby, winning the victory over death in order to bring His plan to fruition. Therefore, He is also the little flock's Saviour. God's wisdom brings Him eternal "glory and majesty" (v. 25), as all of the saints in all dispensations worship him forever. His victory over Satan by his perfect life lived in the flesh and His death on the cross give Him eternal "dominion and power" (v. 25) to keep Satan and his forces from ever disturbing His creation again.