

“We Are The Word Herd”

1 Peter 1:22-25

June 25, 2023

INTRO: Let's explain how 1st Peter's chapter 1 and a biblical worldview go together

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- ~ We are in 1st Peter: *“No Matter What!”*
- ~ Picking up where we left off...
- ~ Today... **finally finishing chapter one**
- ~ Will be tying in 1st John 2:28-3:10

BIG IDEA: God's Word defines and shapes God's family.

PREVIEW:

1. More on **PARALLELISM**
2. More on **PURITY**
3. More on **PEOPLE**

I. More on **PARALLELISM**

TEXT: [1st Peter 1:22-25](#)

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24for

“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

II. More on **PURITY**

- A. God's Word is consistent throughout...
- B. God's purity is "OBVIOUS"

III. More on **PEOPLE**

VIDEO: *"Biblical Birthmarks Are Obvious"*

WORSHIP: *"The King Will Come" & "I Will"*

STUDY NOTES:

(1) A Call to Love (1:22–25)

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

**“All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever.”**

And this is the word that was preached to you.

1:22 The theme of the paragraph is found in the exhortation to love, and this command is bounded by two perfect participles, both of which give reasons or grounds for the command to love. The first participle uses the language of the cult and purification (v. 22), while the second participle uses the image of begetting and fatherhood (v. 23). The NIV translates the first clause, “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth.” More literally the phrase could be translated, “Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth” (NRSV).¹⁵⁶ Both of these translations appear to understand “purified” (*hēgnikotes*), a perfect participle, as referring to conversion. The perfect tense of the participle supports this view, signifying a past action that has ongoing consequences. Moreover, the phrase (lit.) “by obedience to the truth” (*en hypakoē tēs alētheias*) probably refers to “the truth of the gospel.” Often in the New Testament the gospel is designated as “the truth.” We should not understand the phrase as “true obedience” (an adjectival genitive) but “obedience to the truth” (an objective genitive).¹⁵⁹ The word “obedience” (HCSB) describes conversion elsewhere in the New Testament, signifying submission to the gospel (Rom 1:5; 15:18; 16:19, 26), and I have already argued that Peter had conversion in mind in 1:2 (cf. also 1:14) when he spoke of “obedience to Jesus Christ.” Grudem argues vigorously, on the other hand, that the reference is to the ongoing process of sanctification. First, he thinks obedience in every instance in the New Testament is postconversion. Second, he argues that obedience in 1:2 and 1:14 follows new life. Third, the verb “purify” describes the everyday life of discipleship in Jas 4:8 and 1 John 3:3. Fourth, the context is one of holiness. Fifth, Christians are never agents of their conversion but are agents in sanctification. Every one of these arguments fails to convince. The first two arguments are refuted by the evidence presented in v. 2. Both in the New Testament and in Peter obedience is used to refer to conversion. The third argument is not decisive since the issue is not whether other writers use the language of purification in other contexts to refer to one’s ongoing life in holiness. In any case, two texts used elsewhere are insufficient to determine Peter’s usage here, and so they can be set aside. The Petrine context suggests that conversion is in view since Peter clearly referred to the conversion of believers in v. 23, and in both this instance and in v. 23 the call to love would be rooted in their conversion. Probably the most important argument is the last one. Actually believers are called upon to repent, believe, be baptized, and confess Christ to

be saved (e.g., Acts 2:38; 3:19; 13:39; 16:31; Rom 10:9). It is not surprising, therefore, that the notion of obedience is used as well. Of course, the New Testament clarifies elsewhere that faith, obedience, and repentance are the gift of God (Eph 2:8; 2 Tim 2:25; cf. esp. the commentary on 1 Pet 1:2), and so no idea of synergism is involved, nor was Peter suggesting that believers are the ultimate agent of their salvation.

The goal or purpose of their conversion is a genuine love for fellow believers. The NIV translates the clause as if the goal has already been reached, “so that you have sincere love for your brothers.” Peter’s intention was not to comment on whether they were actually fulfilling the purpose.¹⁶³ Instead, he simply communicated the purpose for which they were converted, and so the RSV’s translation is preferable, “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren” (similarly ESV, HCSB, NASB). The term *philadelphia* indicates that fellow believers are in view (cf. 3:8; 5:9).

Since love is the goal of conversion, the injunction to love from the heart follows naturally. We should not draw distinctions between the verb “love” (*agapēsate*) and “love of the brethren” (*philadelphia*) here since they overlap semantically. In no way did Peter fall prey to works righteousness since the command to love is rooted in their conversion, in the purification of their hearts that enables love. The characteristic of a Christian community is fervent or constant love for one another. Probably the latter idea is intended here. Peter emphasized the ideas of permanence, endurance, and incorruptibility in the near context. We should note that in vv. 21–22:

Peter spoke of faith, hope, and now love. He did not summon a suffering church to anything other than the mainstream Christian life, to love...
for one another.

And...

the flames of such (Christian) love should not be extinguished by the winds of persecution.

1:23 The command to love, it is now explained, is rooted in God's prior saving work.

Christians have been begotten (*anagegennēmenoi*) by the seed of God's word. Most versions translate the term as the NIV, "born anew." **We saw previously in 1:3** that "begetting anew" rather than "born anew" is more precise.

The emphasis is on God as the one who granted them new life.

This is particularly evident here since **the means by which God begat them was the seed of his word.** God begetting his children by the seed of the word is likened to a father begetting a child by the seed of his sperm. The idea of new life is present here as well since those who are begotten are born as a result of the divine begetting. Unfortunately, the RSV and the NRSV translate the verse in such a way that the relationship of v. 23 to v. 22 is completely obscured. The participle should be understood as causal.

Peter's argument is that they should love one another because they have been begotten by God.

The NIV captures the nuance by introducing v. 23 with the conjunction "for." In vv. 22–23, then, **conversion is described from a twofold perspective—the act of human beings in purifying their lives and God's action in begetting them to a new life.**

The means by which God begat his people is “imperishable” rather than “perishable seed.” The terms used here are among Peter’s favorites. The heavenly inheritance of believers is “imperishable” (*aphthartos*, **1 Pet 1:4**), and God is pleased when women have the “imperishable” (*aphthartos*) qualities of a “gentle and quiet spirit” (**3:4**). On the other hand, believers are redeemed with Christ’s precious blood, not with “perishable” (*phthartos*) things like silver or gold (**1:18**). The human sperm of a father is perishable and earthly, and even if it produces children, they too will die eventually. **The seed God uses to beget his people, on the other hand, is invincible and incorruptible.** The term Peter used (*spora*) can be translated as “sowing” or “origin,” and some scholars understand it to have this meaning here. It makes better sense in the context, however, if the term refers to that which is sown, namely, seed, and so we should not distinguish the meaning from the usual term for “seed” (i.e., *sperma*).

But what is this seed? Some identify the seed as the Holy Spirit. Against this the Spirit is not mentioned elsewhere in the context. **Most agree that the seed is the divine word (*logos*), which is immediately mentioned.** According to this view we should not distinguish sharply between the prepositions “of” (*ek*) and “through” (*dia*), since both communicate the instrument by which God begat his children. A few scholars think the “word” (*logos*) refers to Christ as the divine Word, a meaning that clearly is found in John (John 1:1, 14). We can be almost certain, however, that Peter used the term **“word” (*logos*)** to refer to the gospel. It often has this meaning in the New Testament (e.g., Eph 1:13; Phil 2:16; Col 1:5; 4:3; 1 Thess 1:8; 2:13; 2 Thess 3:1; 2 Tim 2:9; 4:2; Titus 1:3; 2:5; Heb 13:7; Jas 1:21) and bears this meaning elsewhere in 1 Peter (2:8; 3:1). Grammatically we could translate the last phrase as “the word of the living and enduring God.” But context indicates that the NIV is correct, “the living and enduring word of God” (cf. also Heb 4:12).

Verse 25 confirms our judgment here, for the word “endure” (*menō*) appears again (though this is not evident in the NIV translation), “the word of the Lord stands forever.” In both v. 23 and v. 25, then, the abiding character of God’s word is featured. And to say that something “abides” is another way of saying it is “imperishable.”

That the spotlight is on God’s word (and hence not the Spirit) is also conveyed by the last part of v. 25, where the word is identified with the gospel “that was preached to you.”

The means by which God begets his people is the seed of God’s word, the preaching of the gospel.

Peter’s theology matches Paul’s here, for the latter teaches that *“faith comes from hearing the message” (Rom 10:17)*. Similarly, in Galatians 3 the reception of the Spirit is mediated through believing the preached message (**Gal 3:2, 5**).

Perhaps Peter used the word “living” because the word produces life, and he used the word “enduring” because the life once activated will never cease.

1:24 The word **“for”** introduces the Old Testament citation ([Isa 40:6–8](#)), though Peter did not give any introductory formula, such as “it is written,” but plunged immediately into the Old Testament text. Typically the word “for” (*dioti*) signifies “cause,” but it is difficult to see how the Old Testament quotation grounds what preceded. *Contextually, it makes better sense as an explanation or restatement of v. 23, showing from the Old Testament that the word of God endures forever.*

The Old Testament citation continues into the first part of v. 25. Peter probably cited the Septuagint here (LXX), for it omits part of Isa 40:7 from the Hebrew text (MT), and Peter did the same. Some minor differences exist between the Septuagint and Peter: Peter added “like” (*hōs*), instead of “man” he used “their” (*autēs*, lit. “its”), in v. 25 the word “our” from Isa 40:8 is omitted by Peter, and contrary to both the Septuagint and the MT he replaced “God” with “Lord” (*kyriou*).

The quotation comes from Isaiah 40, where comfort is proclaimed to Israel because God will work once again and restore them from their exile in Babylon.

The “good news” for Israel (Isa 40:9) is that God fulfills his promises and that the nations of the world that seem strong cannot resist his promised word to deliver them from exile (Isa 40:6–8). Such nations are like grass and the flower of the grass, which perish when the Lord’s wind blows upon them. **Perhaps Peter thought of the persecutors of his day, who seemed invincible but whose glory was short-lived.** Grass and flowers are beautiful in the springtime, but when fall arrives, one would never know that they thrived (**cf. Jas 1:11**).

1:25 The main point from the Old Testament quotation now emerges,

“The word of the Lord endures
forever” (NRSV).

Isaiah therefore supports Peter’s argument in v. 23 that the word of God is “living and enduring.”

It is an imperishable seed according to v. 23.

Isaiah 40 emphasizes that no nation, regardless of its strength, can thwart his promises.

Does Peter’s use of the word “Lord” (*kyriou*) refer to Jesus Christ? In Isaiah the text shifts between “Lord” (*kyrios*) and “God” (*theos*), and Yahweh is clearly the referent in each case (e.g., Lord: vv. 2, 3, 5[2x], 10 and God: vv. 1, 3, 5, 8, 9).

Probably Peter applied this text to Jesus Christ, as is the case with other New Testament writers when they cite Isaiah 40 (e.g., Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 1:76; John 1:23; 1 Cor 2:16, but cf. Rom 11:34). If this is the case, is the genitive subjective (the word spoken by the Lord)¹⁷⁶ or objective (the word spoken about the Lord)? Both are sensible, but the next clause points us to the latter. **The word of the Lord that stands forever was preached to them.**

The historical Jesus did not proclaim the gospel to believers in Asia Minor, and so the word of the Lord is the word about the Lord Jesus, the gospel that was preached when these churches believed.

Verse 25 concludes with Peter's commentary on the Old Testament citation.

The word of the Lord in Isaiah, which represents the promise that God will restore his people from exile and fulfill his promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3), is ultimately fulfilled in the gospel proclaimed (*euangelisthen*) to the churches in Asia Minor.

The new exodus, the return from exile, and the fulfillment of all God's promises to Israel have become a reality through the gospel.

Peter's use of the word (*euangelizō*) almost certainly comes from Isaiah as well since in Isa 40:9 (the very next verse from the section Peter cited) "the good news" for Zion and Jerusalem is that God will come and fulfill his promises to Israel.

As previously observed, Peter argued that the promises preached by the prophets were not intended for the prophets but for Christian believers.

Similarly, he argued here that the promises in Isaiah are fulfilled in the proclamation of the gospel. Such are the privileges of Peter's readers.

We should add **one more** comment to this verse.

The word of God is identified as ***logos*** in v. 23 and ***rhēma*** in v. 25.

The latter term is likely used in v. 25 because it occurs in the citation from Isa 40:8. Therefore we should not try to establish a different meaning for the two terms.

They are synonyms, both referring to the gospel.

It is this gospel that God has used to beget them to new life, and on the basis of that life they are to love one another fervently and constantly.

New American Standard Commentary
- Thomas Schreiner

Love one another, now and for ever (1:22–25)

22. *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth* might be understood to refer either to conversion (where ‘obedience to the truth’ would mean ‘believing the gospel’) or to growth in moral purity subsequent to conversion (where ‘obedience to the truth’ would mean ‘obedience to God’s commands in daily living’).

Having purified (*hēgnikotes*, perfect participle) could refer to initial conversion as a completed event in the past with continuing effects, but since Peter elsewhere uses the perfect tense of events in the process of sanctification (4:1; 2 Pet. 1:12), we cannot be certain that this is in view.

More persuasive are arguments in favour of the view that Peter has post-conversion growth in moral purity in mind: (1) *obedience* (*hypakoē*) occurs fifteen times in the New Testament, and never clearly means initial saving faith; (2) Peter uses *obedience* (*hypakoē*) in verses 2 and 14 of obedience in conduct; (3) *purify* (*hagnizō*) when employed figuratively elsewhere in the New Testament is used of moral cleansing subsequent to conversion (Jas 4:8, 1 John 3:3); (4) the context is the apostle’s call to holiness in 1:15, which suggests that the purifying obedience he has in view results from an active response to that call; (5) this ‘purification’ is something the readers have themselves done (‘having purified your souls’), but Christians are never in the New Testament said to be active agents in God’s initial cleansing of their souls at conversion. On the other hand, they are said to be active in the progressive work of sanctification (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1; Jas 4:8; 1 John 3:3).

This ‘purification’ then signifies some clear progress in gaining more purity from the moral pollution of sin, a concept very similar to that of James 4:8 and 1 John 3:3.

Your souls emphasizes the inward, spiritual nature of this purification. Though ‘soul’ (*psychē*) is used of the whole person (e.g. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:14), had Peter meant this he would have most probably used *heatous* ‘yourselves’ (as in 1 John 3:3). *Psychē* can also mean ‘inward spiritual nature’ (Matt. 10:28; 2 Pet. 2:8; cf. BAGD, p. 893, c.). That this is how it should be understood here is suggested by its proximity to a call to love ‘from the heart’.

By your obedience to the truth might also be translated ‘in [your] obedience to the truth’ (NASB)—both ‘by’ and ‘in’ (NASB and also AV) are linguistically acceptable and theologically true. But ‘by’ is preferable here since it is by means of a process of active obedience that a Christian ‘purifies’ his or her soul. (‘The truth’ here carries a sense of the true way pleasing to God, including not merely the gospel message but the whole of Christian teaching on doctrine and life—cf. 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4; 2 Pet. 1:12; 2:2.)

This ‘purification’ is not likely to be a completed stage in the sanctification process, for the New Testament knows of no such unique stage in growth, nor could Peter assume that any one level of holiness had been attained by so many Christians in several different churches.

It is better to understand the phrase as the next logical step in the development of Peter’s argument. *Obedience* would then mean ‘obedience to the exhortations just mentioned’. We could paraphrase, ‘Then, having purified your souls by your obedience to these true commands to holiness ... love one another earnestly.’ Peter thus expects that growth in holiness will lead to deeper love among Christians. (Indeed, this conclusion would be true no matter which interpretation one adopted for the phrase ‘having purified your souls’.)

A sincere love of the brethren means love that is genuine, not simply an outward appearance or profession of love. This ‘love of the brethren’ (*philadelphia*) is probably seen by Peter as somewhat less intense than *agapē* (note the progression in this verse, and the discussion of *agapaō* in the next phrase; cf. also 2 Pet. 1:17, which suggests some distinction).

By translating this phrase *for a sincere love of the brethren*, the RSV understands it to indicate purpose. But love for fellow Christians is seen in the New Testament more as a component or a result of sanctification than its goal. So it is preferable to understand this construction (*eis* with accusative) to indicate result (so NIV, NEB, Phillips; cf. 1:3; 2:9, 21 for the same construction used this way): ‘Until you feel sincere affection towards your brother Christians’ (NEB).

Love one another earnestly from the heart commands something which goes beyond the sincere brotherly affection of the previous phrase. Peter switches from a *phileō*—root (‘affection, love’) in the previous phrase to *agapaō* (‘love, especially strong, deep love’) here. He adds *ektenōs*, ‘earnestly’, a term used elsewhere of strong, deeply felt, even fervent, emotions or desires (LXX, Joel 1:14 and Jon. 3:8; also Acts 12:5; 26:7).

From a ‘pure heart’ (AV, NIV MG.; cf. NASB mg.) seems to be a better reading, since most of the earliest and best Greek manuscripts include the adjective *katharos*, ‘pure, clean’, and since it is natural in a sentence that earlier speaks of inward purification.

The sense of the verse is therefore, ‘Once you have begun to grow in holiness so that you have a genuine affection for one another, make your love for each other earnest, deep, and strong.’ This is Peter’s first specific application of the general commands to holiness in verses 13 to 21. It is a reminder that one of the first marks of genuine growth in holiness in individuals and in churches is earnest love for fellow Christians. It also gives encouragement that human personalities, far from being immutably fixed early in life, can be dramatically and permanently changed through the power of the gospel.

23. **Though the RSV begins a new sentence here, *You have been born anew ...*, the Greek text continues the sentence of verse 22 with a participle, ‘having been born anew’**, which probably gives a reason or ground for the previous verse: ‘for you have been born again ...’ (NASB). This ‘new birth’ initiates new spiritual life (see John 3:3–15; cf. John 1:12–13; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13; Titus 3:5; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3). Here

Peter uses the same verb (*anagennaō*) as in 1:3

(see notes there).

The verb form here (perfect participle) emphasizes the continuing results of that previous new birth.

Not of perishable seed but of imperishable affirms the permanent, even indestructible character of the ‘seed’ that started this new life within the readers. (See notes on the words *perishable* and *imperishable* at 1:4.) ‘Seed’ (*spora*) can mean either ‘sowing’ (the activity) or ‘seed’ (the thing planted or sown; see 1 Macc. 10:30; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.306; BAGD, p. 763), but ‘seed’ is much more likely here, since it makes little sense to speak of an activity as ‘imperishable’ (cf. 1 John 3:9).

The living and abiding word of God is either the spoken word of God (in gospel proclamation) or the written word of God (in the Bible), or both, since the quotation from Isaiah 40:6–8 in the following verse refers to the words of God spoken and/or written through the Old Testament prophets. We should probably not try to distinguish too sharply here, for **the Isaiah passage is a statement about the character of God’s words generally**, without reference to any particular form in which they occur.

Was the ‘imperishable seed’ the word of God (cf. Luke 8:11)? Or did Peter mean that the ‘seed’ was the working of the Holy Spirit with and through the word of God? He says they have been born again ‘of’ (*ek*, ‘out of, from’) imperishable seed ‘through’ (*dia*, ‘through, by means of’)

the living and abiding word of God. The change of prepositions may indicate a change in nuance, but the distinction is not of great significance theologically, for *in any case the Holy Spirit is active in causing regeneration (cf. John 3:5–8; Titus 3:5)*, and *the word of God is the means God uses to awaken new life in an unbeliever (cf. Rom. 10:17; Jas 1:18)*. Yet in this text there is no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, Peter's emphasis on the fact that *the word of God is living (cf. Heb. 4:12)* suggests its power—unlike any merely human words—to awaken new life. And the fact that it is *abiding* (cf. Mark 13:31) reinforces the idea of the permanence of the new life generated by it. Finally, verses 24 to 25 continue to hammer home the theme of the *permanence of God's word*, which would be irrelevant if the permanence of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit were the point of verse 23, but not if the permanence of the effect of the life-giving word of God is meant. While we should never try to separate the word of God from God who speaks that word, these considerations indicate that Peter is thinking specifically of the word of God as the life-giving 'seed'. **The implications for evangelism are obvious: ultimately it is neither our arguments nor our life example that will bring new life to an unbeliever, but the powerful words of God himself—words which we still have preserved today in Scripture.**

It is in reading or hearing these words that people are given new life. The argument is therefore:

- (1) *love one another earnestly (v. 22)*
- (2) *because you have been born anew of imperishable seed (v. 23)*

But how does verse 23 provide a ground for verse 22? Perhaps Peter is affirming that their new birth gives them power to love one another. But that would not explain his emphasis on the

‘imperishable’ and ‘abiding’ nature of God’s word. Moreover, while power to love might serve as a convincing reason for an affirmation that they are *able* to love (e.g. ‘You are able to love one another, for you have been born anew’), it is much less a convincing reason for what verse 22 actually contains, namely, a command to love.

A correct understanding of verse 23 must explain its function in a way that accounts for Peter’s stress on the permanent nature of the new life given through the word of God. This emphasis makes it most likely that Peter is stressing the eternal nature of the fellowship which his readers have come to share—‘Love one another (v. 22), for you have all been born anew into a fellowship of God’s people which will last eternally (v. 23).’

Christian growth cannot be self-centred and individualistic,

for it occurs in the context of fellowship, a fellowship which must deepen and remain for all eternity.

24–25. The permanency of the word of God, mentioned in verse 23, is emphasized in these two verses. Peter quotes **Isaiah 40:6–8** to contrast the frailty of human nature with the permanence of God’s words. *All flesh* means ‘all natural human existence’ or perhaps ‘every person’—the sense is nearly the same. *Grass* is a general word for grass (Matt. 6:30; 14:19) or hay (1 Cor. 3:12) which lasts for a season and is gone. *All its glory* refers to all human beauty, splendour, or fame. As the *grass withers* and the *flower* fades and dies, so man’s glory and greatness quickly disappear (cf. Jas 1:10–11). What then can give hope of permanence or significance? The *word* (*rhēma*, the actual spoken or written word) *of the Lord abides for ever*, and it is *that word* which Peter’s readers have heard and believed. That word—apparently including Old Testament Scriptures, New Testament apostolic proclamation, and the presentation of both in the message of first-century evangelists—is the word which quickened new life within them. Therefore, in contrast to the temporality of the withering grass and the fading flower, believers have an eternally abiding nature (cf. 1 John 2:17). (Peter here uses *rhēma*, ‘word’, to refer to the same thing as *logos*, ‘word’, in v. 23, suggesting that he saw little difference between them in meaning.)

These verses intensify the idea of the permanence of God's word by contrasting it with the fading glory of human achievement. Strength, power, wealth, beauty, fame—all the 'glory' of man—will quickly fade. Christians who have been 'born anew' (v. 23) will live with God for ever.

The New Testament Commentary
- Wayne Grudem

Warren Wiersbe: BE Commentary

We Are Children in the Same Family (1 Peter 1:22–2:3)

When you consider the implications of this fact, you will be encouraged to build and maintain unity among God's people.

We have experienced the same birth (vv. 23–25).

The only way to enter God's spiritual family is by a spiritual birth, through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:1–16).

Just as there are two parents in physical birth, so there are two parents in spiritual birth: the Spirit of God (John 3:5–6) and the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

The new birth gives to us a new nature (2 Peter 1:4) as well as a new and living hope (1 Peter 1:3).

Our first birth was a birth of “flesh,” and the flesh is corruptible. Whatever is born of flesh is destined to die and decay. This explains why mankind cannot hold civilization together: it is all based on human flesh and is destined to fall apart. [Like the beautiful flowers of spring, man’s works look successful for a time, but then they start to decay and die.](#) All the way from the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, to “Babylon the Great” in Revelation 17–18, man’s great attempts at unity are destined to fail.

If we try to build unity in the church on the basis of our first birth, we will fail; but if we build unity on the basis of the new birth, it will succeed.

Each believer has the same Holy Spirit dwelling within (Rom. 8:9). We call on the same Father (1 Peter 1:17) and share His divine nature.

We trust the same Word, and that Word will never decay or disappear. We have trusted the same Gospel and have been born of the same Spirit.

The externals of the flesh that could divide us mean nothing when compared with the eternal of the Spirit that unite us.

Barnes New Testament Notes:

22. *Seeing ye have purified your souls.* Greek, 'Having purified your souls.'

The apostles were never afraid of referring to human agency as having an important part in saving the soul (cf. [1 Cor. 4:15](#)).

No one is made pure without personal intention & effort

— any more than one becomes accomplished or learned without personal exertion.

One of the leading effects of the agency of the Holy Spirit is to excite us to *make* efforts for our own salvation; and there is no true piety which is not the fair result of culture, as really as the learning of a Porson or a Parr, or the harvest of the farmer.

The amount of effort which we make 'in purifying our souls' is usually also the *measure* of our attainments in religion.

No one can expect to have any true piety beyond the amount of effort which he makes to be conformed to God,

...any more than one can expect wealth, or fame, or learning, without exertion.

In obeying the truth. That is, your yielding to the requirements of truth, and to its fair influence on your minds, has been the means of your becoming pure. The *truth* here referred to

is, undoubtedly, that which is revealed in the gospel—the great system of truth respecting the redemption of the world.

Through the Spirit. **By the agency of the Holy Spirit.** It is his office to apply truth to the mind; and however precious the truth may be, and however adapted to secure certain results on the soul, it will never produce those effects without the influences of the Holy Spirit. **Comp. Titus 3:5, 6. Notes on John 3:5.**

Unto unfeigned love of the brethren.

The effective influence of the Holy Spirit
in applying the truth has been to
produce sincere love to all
who are true Christians.

Comp. Notes on **John 13:34; 1 Thess. 4:9**. See also **1 John 3:14–18**.

See that ye *love one another with a pure heart fervently*. **Comp. Notes on Heb. 13:1; John 13:34, 35; Eph. 5:2.**

The phrase ‘with a pure heart fervently,’ meant

(1) that it should be **genuine love**, proceeding from a heart in which there is no guile or hypocrisy; and

(2) that it should be **intense affection**, (ἐκτενῶς;) not cold and formal, but ardent and strong. If there is any reason why we should love true Christians at all, there is the same reason why our attachment to them should be intense. **This verse establishes the following points:**

(A) That truth was at the foundation of their piety. They had none of which this was not the proper basis; and in which the foundation was

not as broad as the superstructure. There is no religion in the world which is not the fair development of truth; which the truth is not fitted to produce.

(B) They became Christians as the result of obeying the truth; or by yielding to its fair influence on the soul. Their own minds complied with its claims; their own hearts yielded; there was the exercise of their own volitions. **This expresses a doctrine of great importance.**

(a) There is always the exercise of the powers of the mind in true religion; always a yielding to truth; always a voluntary reception of it into the soul.

(b) Religion is always of the nature of *obedience*. It consists in yielding to what is true and right; in laying aside the feelings of opposition, and in allowing the mind to follow where truth and duty lead.

(c) This would always take place when the truth is presented to the mind, if there were no voluntary resistance. If all men were ready to yield to the truth, they would become Christians. The only reason why all men do not love and serve God, is that they refuse to yield to what they know to be true and right.

(3.) The agency by which this was accomplished was that of the Holy Ghost. Truth is adapted in itself to a certain end or result, as seed is adapted to produce a harvest. But it will no more of itself produce its appropriate effects on the soul, than seed will produce a harvest without rains, and dews, and suns. In *all* cases, therefore, **the proper effect of truth on the soul is to be traced to the influence of the Holy Spirit,** as the germination of the seed in the earth is to the foreign cause that acts on it.

No man was ever converted by the mere effect of truth without the agency of the Holy Ghost, any more than seed germinates when laid on a hard rock.

(4.) The *effect* of this influence of the Holy Spirit in applying the truth is to produce love to all who are Christians.

Love to Christian brethren springs up
in the soul of every one who is
truly converted:

and this love is just as certain evidence that the seed of truth has germinated in the soul, as the green and delicate blade that peeps up through the earth is evidence that the seed sown has been quickened into life. Comp. Notes on **1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 3:14.**

We may learn hence,

(a) that *truth* is of inestimable value. It is as valuable as religion itself, for all the religion in the world is the result of it.

(b) Error and falsehood are mischievous and evil in the same degree. There is no true religion which is the fair result of error; and all the pretended religion that is sustained by error is worthless.

(c) If a system of religion, or a religious measure or doctrine, cannot be defended by *truth*, it should be at once abandoned. Comp. Notes on **Job 13:7.**

(d) We should avoid the places where error is taught. Prov. 19:27, 'Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.'

(e) We should place ourselves under the teachings of truth, for there is truth enough in the world to occupy all our time and attention; and it is only *by truth* that our minds can be benefited.

23. *Being born again.* See Notes on John 3:3.

Not of corruptible seed. ‘Not by virtue of any descent from human parents.’—*Doddridge.* The result of such a birth, or of being *begotten* in this way—for so the word rendered *born again* more properly signifies—is only corruption and decay. We are begotten only to die. There is no permanent, enduring life produced by that. It is in this sense that this is spoken of as ‘*corruptible seed,*’ because it results in decay and death. The word here rendered *seed*—σπορά—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

But of incorruptible. By *truth*, communicating a living principle to the soul which can never decay. Comp. 1 John 3:9: ‘His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.’

By the word of God. See Note on James 1:18: ‘Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.’ Comp. Notes on John 1:13. It is the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures that Divine *truth* is made the instrument of quickening the soul into spiritual life.

Which liveth and abideth for ever. This expression may either refer to God, as living for ever, or to the *word* of God, as being for ever true. Critics are about equally divided in the interpretation. The Greek will bear either construction. Most of the recent critics incline to the latter opinion—that it refers to the word of God, or to his doctrine. So Rosenmüller, Doddridge, Bloomfield, Wolf, Macknight, Clarke. It seems to me, however, that the more natural construction of the Greek is to refer it to God, as ever-living or enduring; and this interpretation agrees well with the connection. The idea then is, that as God is ever living, that which is produced directly by him in the human soul, by the instrumentality of truth, may be expected also to endure for ever. It will not be like the offspring of human parents, themselves mortal, liable to early and certain decay, but may be expected to be as enduring as its ever-living Creator.¹

¹ Albert Barnes, [Notes on the New Testament: James to Jude](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 129–131.

CHAPTER 1: Called to Be Holy (vv.13-25)

13Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **14**As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, **15**but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, **16**since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” **17**And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, **18**knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19**but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. **20**He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times

for the sake of you **21**who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

22Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, **23**since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; **24**for

“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
and the flower falls,
25but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

CHAPTER 2: *A Living Stone and a Holy People*

1So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. **2**Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— **3**if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **5**you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **6**For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

7So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

8and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

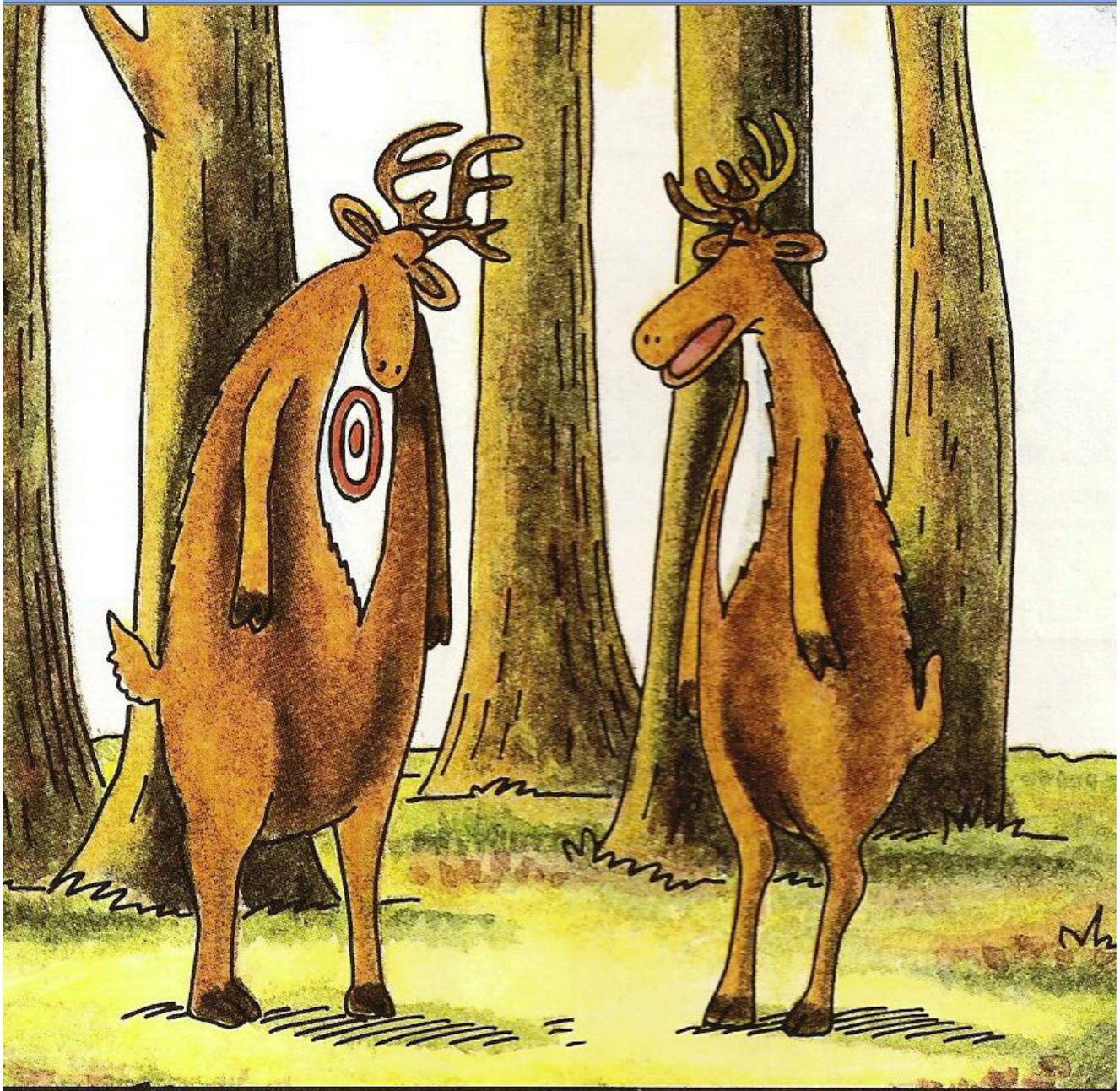
9But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. **10**Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

“Biblical Birthmarks Are Obvious”

1 John 2:29 – 3:10

November 3, 2013

Intro: Today we’re going to learn about biblical birthmarks...



“Bummer of a birthmark, Hal.”

Big Idea: Children will BE & SEE the obvious!

Preview Pillars:

1. Some Children Abide (2:28)
2. Some Children Obey (2:29 - 3:3)
3. Some Children Deceive (3:4 - 3:9)
4. All Children Reveal (3:10)

T/S: Illustration: **"Blocks"**

- simply piling up a weighty mess?

OR

- building blocks of intentional disciples?

1 John 1:1 - 2:27 = **Basis for koinonia...**
= *abiding in God's LIGHT*

1 John 2:28ff = **Behavior from koinonia...**
= *abiding in God's LOVE*

Characteristics of koinonia

Consequences of (or the lack of) koinonia

1st John “BLOCKS” thus far: An Exegetical Flow...

- a. 1:1-2 = We KNOW this TRUTH... Jesus is the eternal Light!
- b. 1:3-4 = Real LOVE... is “koinonia,” vertically & horizontally
v.3 = *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*
- c. 1:5,7,9 = Proclaiming the “who & how-to” of the good news!
- d. 1:6,8,10 = Warnings are declared... Somebody’s lying!
- e. 2:1-2 = Don’t sin... Don’t worry... Don’t forget!
- f. 2:3-6 = **Beware the Liars!** = *We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. **4**Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. **5**But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: **6**Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*
- i. 2:15-17 = *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.*
- j. 2:18-27 = Watch out! ...for your old antichrist friends who left

I. 1 John 2:28 = Some Children ABIDE

k. **2:28** = Confident assurance comes by abiding vs. shrinking

*“And now little children, **abide in Him** so that when He appears we may have confidence and NOT shrink (back) from Him in shame, at His coming.”*

Abiding = BE-ing

- Vertically
 - Horizontally
 - Joyfully
 - Prayerfully
 - Obediently
 - SUPERNATURALLY!

Children of God

Children of Satan

2:28	Abide (in Christ alone) Confident (into eternity)	Disconnected & disobedient... Will shrink back in shame
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NOTE: The final outcome of “the day of the Lord” will be that “**the arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day**” ([Isaiah 2:17](#)).

T/S: When God's Word speaks about "**abiding**" (whether it's John or Jesus), the message is **ALWAYS** underscoring 3 points:

1. **Authentic Christianity**

2. **Healthy Christianity**

3. **Reproducing Christianity**

As Jesus said: "*Seek first the kingdom of God
 AND
 His righteousness...*"

II. 1 John 2:29-3:3 = Some Children OBEY

2:29 = *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

*** *If*

*** *Know*

*** *Righteous (vs. Religious)*

*** *Practices*

*** *Born of Him*

*** Behavior begins with birth!

*** Connect “*born of Him*” with **John 3**... “born again”

“Righteous behavior ALWAYS begins with re-birth.” - JDP

Illustration:

Ask people to demonstrate that they "know" something; while simultaneously proving that “knowing *about* something” means NOTHING when it comes to actually doing/BE-ing that very thing!

- ie. brain surgery..
- ie. hit a golf ball like Tiger Woods...

- ie. **“Just because you can rightly spell ‘righteous’... it does not mean you are rightly living righteously.”** - JDP

Children of God

Children of Satan

2:29

KNOW He is righteous
KNOW all His are righteous

Don't know the righteous God
Think holiness is optional...

John 3:21 = “But he **who practices** the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

3:1 = See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called **children of God**; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Family of God

Romans 8:14-17 = For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. **15**The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. **f** And by him we cry, "Abba, **g** Father." **16**The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. **17**Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:1	In AWE of God's love	Takes God's love for granted
	See God's love as gift of grace	Takes God's grace for granted
	God calls them His children	Call themselves God's children
	We truly are His children	Are actually Satan's children
	The world does not know us	Known & embraced by world

3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:2

“Beloved”

Be warned...

New children of God

Unchanged children of Satan

We know Jesus is coming

May also expect His return
(fact vs faith)

“We will see & be like Him”

Will be going south w/ Satan

3:3 *And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

“A believer’s behavior is purely purifying.” - JDP

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:3

Our hope is fixed on Jesus

False hope is found in self...

Committed to Christ-likeness

Compromised easy-believism

“Biblical Christians commit to living perpetually purifying, Christ-like lives. Therein, **belief & behavior** are also known as **faith & fruit**... seen together, spiritually speaking, these are twin theological truths.” - JDP

To those who would minimize human response & responsibility:

1 Timothy 5:22 = "...keep yourself pure (free from sin)."

James 4:8 = "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

1 Peter 1:22 & **2 Corinthians 7:1**

III. 1 John 3:4-9 = Some Children Deceive

3:4 = *Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness ; and sin is lawlessness.*

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:4 "Practices" righteousness Practices sin & lawlessness

KEY to UNDERSTANDING:

Focus on differences between:

- a. **Committing a sin**
- vs**
- b. **Continuing in sin**

Quote Life Application notes:

“There is a difference between committing a sin and continuing in sin. Even the most faithful believers sometimes commit sins, but they do not cherish a particular sin or continually choose to commit it. A believer who commits a sin can repent, confess it, and find forgiveness. A person who continues to sin, by contrast, is not sorry for what he or she is doing. Thus, this person never confesses or repents, and therefore, never receives forgiveness. Such a person is in opposition to God, **NO MATTER WHAT RELIGIOUS CLAIMS HE OR SHE MAKES.**”

How to STOP Sin Patterns (a.k.a. “Practice”)

S = *SPIRIT*

T = *TRUTH*

O = *OBEY*

P = *PEOPLE* (of God)

3:5 *You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.*

1 Peter 1:17-21 = *Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:5 Jesus came to forgive sins

Christ came to condone sin

Strives for sinlessness

Marginalizes holiness

3:6 *No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows (GINOSKO) Him.*

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:6 Practices "abiding in Him"

Practices unrepented sin

Christ changed their life

Don't really KNOW Christ yet

3:7 *Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;*

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:7	Identified by God as His...	Are still children of Satan
	Shrewd...; fighting deceit	Is deceived and/or deceiving
	Practices righteousness	May practice religion (only)

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

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:8	Practices R & is of God Destroys the devil's work	Practices sin; is "of the devil" Spreads the devil's work
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3:9 *No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:9 “Is born of God”
Fights against sin
Seed of God abiding inside
Cannot live a pattern of sin

God-hating child of the devil
Practices patterns of sin
Spreads the seed of Satan...
Complacent in sin practices

IV. 1 John 3:10 = ALL Children Reveal

3:10 *By this the children of God (Tek-non ThA-os) and the children of the devil (Tek-non dE-ob-O-los) are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.*

Children of God

Children of Satan

3:10 Is an obvious child of God:
- Practicing righteousness
- Practicing “koinonia”

Is an obvious child of Satan:
- Practicing unrighteousness
- Practicing not loving others

God’s “obvious children”:

Great Commandments

LOVE the LORD your God with ALL...

...your HEART

...your SOUL

...your MIND

...and STRENGTH

LOVE your NEIGHBOR as yourself.

Great Commission

Follow Christ & Fish for men (Find the Lost, Grow the Found)

Go make disciples...

...TEACHING them to OBEY

...EVERYTHING Jesus COMMANDED

Spirit-empowered witnesses of Jesus the Christ!

Beatitudes

Poor in Spirit

Mourn

Meek

Hunger/Thirst after Righteousness

Merciful

Pure in Heart

Peace-makers

Persecuted

Salt & Light (Matthew 5)

Zealous Servant (see the Parable of the Talents)

The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)

The “FEW” on the “NARROW path” (Matthew 7:13-14)

“Good Trees” proven by “good fruit” (Matthew 7:15-20)

Build on the Rock vs. the sand (Matthew 7:24-27)

Fruit of the Spirit:

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

Forgives others as Christ forgave them

Wearing the Full Armor of God

Belt of Truth

Breastplate of Righteousness

Footgear of Gospel Peace

Shield of Faith

Helmet of Salvation

Sword of the Spirit (Bible)

KOINONIA!

John 17:21 = *I pray that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

They will know... by your love for one another!

***** Ephesians 4:14 – 5:11** (*hear the truth again*)

17So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. **18**They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. **19**Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

20That, however, is not the way of life you learned **21**when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the

truth that is in Jesus. **22**You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23**to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24**and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

5:1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children **2**and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

5For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—for such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. **6**Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. **7**Therefore do not be partners with them.

8For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light **10**and find out what pleases the Lord. **11**Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

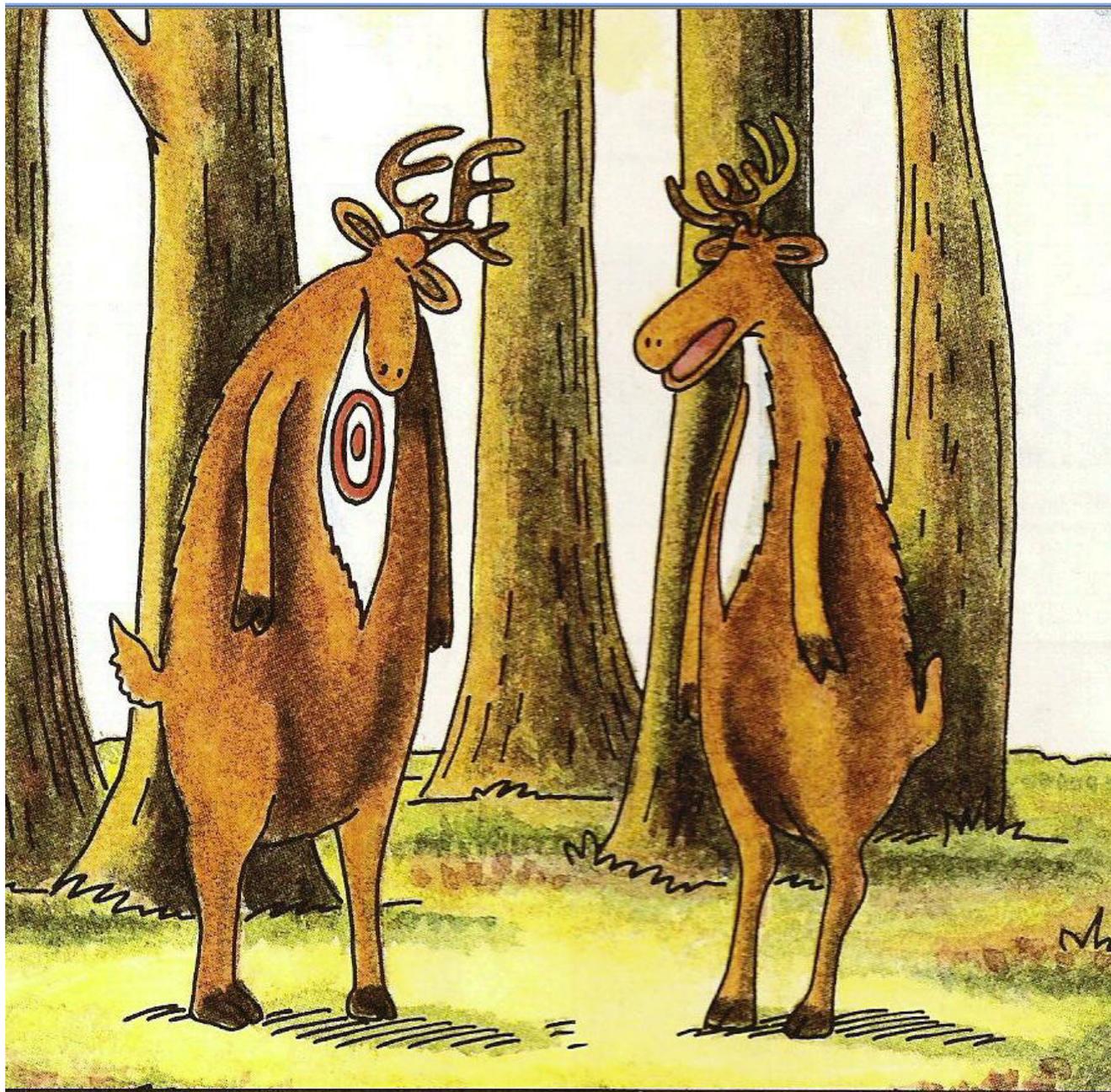
NOTE:

Children of the Devil = ALL others (even the look-a-likes)

CLOSE:

What do your birthmarks look like?
TIME TALENT

Be sure to look at your:
TREASURE



“Bummer of a birthmark, Hal.”

*Show me your relationship with the world...
and I'll show you your “D/daddy!”*

Your life's birthmarks make your love... obvious! -JDP

Let's PRAY