

I John 3:11-18

- Intro.**
- Explain again the polemic situation that provides the interpretative context for understanding this epistle.
 - Many commentators have divided this epistle into two major sections:
 - (1) 1:5–3:10
 - (2) 3:11–5:12
 - Is there a common expression in the commencement of each section?
 - If we so divide the epistle, what are the major themes of each section?
- 3:11**
- Why does John repeatedly emphasize that what he is writing is “the message you have heard from the beginning”?
 - because tradition was very important to John?
 - because he wanted to connect his message with that of Jesus’ message?
 - because he wanted his readers to remember what they heard when they were converted?
 - because the false-teachers were offering an allegedly “new, higher, more spiritual knowledge” of the gospel?
 - Does John’s admonition to “love one another” relate to what Jesus said, as recorded in the following narratives?
 - Matthew 22:34-40
 - John 13:34,35
 - John 15:12-17
 - Is the emphasis on “love one another” related to the false-teachers’ failure to do so?
- 3:12**
- Is Cain (cf. Gen. 4:1-10) used as an example of one who failed to “love his brother”?
 - Is John indicating that the false-teachers are akin to Cain?
 - What does John mean when he writes that “Cain was of the evil one” when he murdered his brother, Abel?
 - he had a “bad attitude”?
 - he had evil motives?
 - the devil made him do it?
 - he was deriving evil character from the evil one?
 - Is John implying that the false-teachers “derive what they do from the evil one” is the same way that Cain did when he slew his brother? (cf. 2:18,19; 3:8,10)
 - If the false-teachers are likened to Cain who murdered his brother, is there any implication here that the false-teachers were guilty of killing their Christian brothers in the churches of Asia Minor?
 - If the false-teaching defectors were guilty of killing their Christian brothers, is this to be understood...
 - literally? (cf. John 16:2; Acts 26:9-11)
 - figuratively? ...as rejection, ostracism, intimidation?
 - Why were Cain’s actions (and secondarily those of the false-teachers) regarded to be evil?
 - Why were Abel’s actions (and secondarily those of John’s readers) regarded to be righteous?
- 3:13**
- Why should the Christian brethren not be surprised if “the world hates them”?
(cf. John 15:18; 17:14)
 - Is John insinuating that the false-teachers and their brand of “religion” are part of the fallen world-order, the world-system of evil? (cf. 4:5)
 - Is it a truism that “the wicked hate the righteous”? (cf. Ps. 34:21)
 - Is that why Cain hated Abel?
 - Is that why the false-teachers hated John’s readers?

- 3:14**
- Is John contrasting the fact that Abel “passed out of life into death” (physically), and the false-teachers “passed out of life into death” (spiritually), whereas his readers have “passed out of death into life” (spiritually)?
 - Is “passing out of death into life” the same as... (cf. John 5:24)
 - passing from darkness to light? (cf. I Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:13)
 - passing from depravity to the divine nature? (cf. II Pet. 1:4)
 - passing from Satan’s control to God’s control? (cf. Acts 26:18)
 - passing from the unregeneracy of spiritual death to spiritual life in Jesus Christ? (Eph. 2:1,5; I John 5:12,13)
 - Is “love of the brethren”...
 - the cause of of “passing out of death into life”?
 - the evidence and signification of “passing out of death into life”?
 - When John writes that “he who does not love abides in death”, is he implying that...
 - the one who is not loving does not have God’s life and has never been a Christian?
 - the one who is not loving has apostasized and forfeited God’s life in Christ?
 - the one who is not loving is functioning by expressing “dead works”? (cf. Heb. 6:1)
- 3:15**
- Is John’s statement that “every one who hates his brother is a murderer”...
 - an hyperbole of overstatement?
 - a literalistic statement indicating the propensity of those who hate to engage in murderous actions?
 - a metaphorical statement indicating...
 - that hatred is embryonic murder?
 - that hatred is an extinctive desire to deprive another of life? (cf. Matthew 5:21,22)
 - that hatred is a destructive character trait of the Destroyer, “the one having the power of death” (cf. Heb. 2:14)
 - When John writes that “no murderer has eternal life abiding in him”, is he saying that...
 - one who persists in hating evidences character that is contrary to God’s life and character of love?
 - a genuine Christian can never commit murder?
 - those who would seek to deprive another of life do not express the love-life of Jesus?
 - those with murderous intents are not living and functioning out of Christ’s life?
 - all murderers are spiritually dead and will end up in the “second death”? (cf. Rev. 21:8)
- 3:16**
- Is John drawing a contrast between Cain and Christ; i.e. that Cain killed his brother, but Christ laid down His life for the brothers? (cf. John 20:17)
 - If so, is the intended contrast between the action of the false-teachers (represented by Cain) and the advocated action of John’s readers (represented by character indicative of Christ)?
 - What does it mean that “He (Christ) laid down His life for us”?
 - that Jesus was a martyr?
 - that Jesus invested Himself totally for mankind?
 - that Jesus vicariously and substitutionally took our death consequences that we might have His life? (cf. Mk. 10:45)
 - that Jesus sacrificially and intercessorily acted in love on our behalf? (cf. Jn. 10:11)

- What, then, does it mean that “we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”?
 - that we should expend ourselves for humanity?
 - that we must be willing to be martyrs?
 - that we are to sacrificially and intercessorily act in love toward others?
(cf. John 15:13)
 - that we should be willing to give up our time, energy and life to show Christ’s love to others?
 - that Christians should be committed to fellow-Christians?
- 3:17**
- Is verse 17 designed or intended to provide some practical application to the truth laid down in verse 16?
 - What does it mean to “have the world’s goods”?
 - to be regarded as rich or wealthy?
 - to be one of the “haves” of the world, rather than one of the “have-nots”?
 - to have sufficient means to share with another?
 - How does one “behold” a brother in need?
 - by personal, visible observation?
 - by the media images of television?
 - by the reports and pictures of missionaries?
 - How needy does a person have to be to be “in need”?
 - at the poverty level?
 - about to starve to death?
 - somewhere below “middle-class?
 - having less than you have?
 - Is the Christian objective egalitarianism of all people?
 - Are we supposed to respond to “need” or to Christ?
 - Does “closing one’s heart” to a brother in need mean...
 - out of sight, out of mind?
 - suppressing any feelings of compassion or mercy?
 - blocking the constraining and compelling impulse of God’s love in us?
 - a malicious refusal to assist another who is needy (physically or spiritually)?
 - When John questions, “How does the love of God abide” in a person who will not share with another in need, is he...
 - questioning whether such a person loves God?
 - questioning whether God loves such a person?
 - questioning whether divine love dwells within and is functioning through such a person?
 - questioning whether God’s loving character resides within and is functioning in the false teachers?
- 3:18**
- What is the import of John’s admonition to “love not only with word or tongue, but in deed and truth”?
 - love must not be hypocritical, but sincere?
 - love must not be just lip-service, but living service?
 - love must not be mere speech, but action which serves the needs of others?
 - Why did John feel the need to express this?
 - because his readers were being hypocrites?
 - because the defecting false-teachers abstracted love and indicated that behavior was irrelevant?
 - because the defecting false-teachers were flattering speakers with lofty words, but they were bereft of compassionate love in action?