

SERIES: I JOHN: HOW TO KNOW YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, WEEK 20

TITLE: PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

TEXT: I JOHN 4:17-21

INTRODUCTION: (1) A PHOBIA IS AN IRRATIONAL, INTENSE AND PERSISTENT FEAR OF CERTAIN SITUATIONS, ACTIVITIES, THINGS, ANIMALS OR PEOPLE.

* A PHOBIA IS A MORBID FEAR, A CRIPPLING FEAR, A DEBILITATING FEAR, A DREAD THAT LEADS PEOPLE TO A COMPELLING DESIRE TO AVOID THAT FEAR, WHATEVER IT MAY BE.

** NOW THE NUMBER OF PHOBIAS ACCORDING TO ONE SITE I LOOKED AT LISTED THAT THERE ARE 530 PHOBIAS.

*** AND SOME OF THEM ARE ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS.

**** FOR EXAMPLE THERE IS PELADOPHOBIA, WHICH IS THE FEAR OF BALD PEOPLE, AND I ASK, WHY WOULD ANYBODY BE AFRAID OF A BALD PERSON?

(2) AND THE ANSWER MIGHT BE BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE FEAR CLOWNS, AND SOME CLOWNS ARE BALD PEOPLE,

BUT THAT IS NOT RIGHT BECAUSE THE FEAR OF CLOWNS IS CALLED COULROPHOBIA.

* AND MY POINT IS THERE ARE A LOT OF PHOBIAS AND SOME OF THESE PHOBIAS ARE JUST OFF THE WALL.

** NOW IT'S INTERESTING THAT THE GREEK WORD FOR FEAR IN THE N.T. IS PHOBOS AND ITS VERB FORM IS FOB-EH-O AND IS THE WORD AS YOU CAN HEAR ITS PHONETIC CONNECTION FROM WHICH OUR ENGLISH WORD FEAR OR PHOBIA IS FROM.

*** AND IN ANCIENT GREEK THE WORD PHOBOS CAME FROM A WORD MEANING TO FLEE OR BE STARTLED.

**** THUS PHOBOS MEANT FLIGHT OR TERROR AND WAS CONNECTED WITH THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN, FEAR OF THE FUTURE, AND FEAR OF AUTHORITIES.

(3) BUT ALSO IN CONTRAST TO THESE PHOBIAS, THE WORD PHOBOS TOOK ON THE MEANING OF FEAR OR REVERENCE OF GOD.

* AND IT WAS THIS KIND OF FEAR, A REVERENTIAL ASPECT OF FEAR WHICH MARKED THE OLD TESTAMENT, THUS THE FEAR OF THE LORD WAS A REVERENCE, AN AWE, A RESPECT, A HIGH VIEW OF OUR GOD, IT LEADS TO VENERATE HIM, FOR HE IS AN AWESOME HOLY GOD.

** AND THAT HIGH VIEW OF HIM LEADS TO KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM, QUOTE PROVERBS 1:7 AND PROVERBS 9:10, PROVERBS 8:13 AND PROVERBS 16:6.

*** SO FEARING GOD BRINGS A PERSON TO SEE LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW WHICH IS TRUE WISDOM AND LEADS ONE TO REMOVE THEMSELVES FROM EVIL AND WRONG, TO FLEE FROM THOSE THINGS.

**** NOW AS WE SHIFT BACK TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, THERE ARE A COUPLE OF BASIC MEANINGS OF FEAR.

(4) AND ONE IS NEGATIVE, TALKING ABOUT A TORMENTING FEAR LIKE THE FEAR OF PEOPLE OR THE FEAR OF CIRCUMSTANCES, OR THE FEAR OF JUDGMENT FOR BELIEVERS.

* BUT THE 2'D MEANING OF FEAR IS POSITIVE, LIKE A FEAR THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE RESPECT OF THOSE IN AUTHORITY IN ROMANS 13:3&7.

** AND THEN PETER EXTENDED THIS CONCEPT TO INCLUDE THE RESPECT OF SERVANTS TO THEIR MASTERS IN THAT DAY, WHICH WOULD BE APPLIED TO EMPLOYEES TO THEIR EMPLOYERS TODAY IN I PETER 2:18.

*** AND THEN WE HAVE THE POSITIVE CONNOTATION OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD IN THE N.T. AND LIKE IN THE O.T., THIS FEAR IS THE REVERENTIAL AWE THAT A CHRISTIAN HAS TOWARDS GOD, WE LIVE IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

**** NOW WITH ALL OF THAT SAID, AS WE COME TO OUR TEXT FOR TODAY, THE NOUN FEAR IS USED 3 TIMES AND THE VERB FEAR IS USED ONCE, THE GREEK NOUN PHOBOS AND THE GREEK VERB PHOBEO, WHICH I INTRODUCED THOSE WORDS EARLIER.

(5) AND IN THE CONTEXT OF I JOHN 4:17-21, PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR.

* JOHN WILL SAY THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE. AND THOSE WHO TRULY KNOW THE LORD AND HAVE A MATURE LOVE FOR CHRIST DON'T LIVE WITH ANY FEAR OF FUTURE JUDGMENT FROM THE LORD.

** FOR THE FEAR TALKED ABOUT HERE IS THE NEGATIVE FEAR, A TORMENTING TERRIFYING FEAR OF FUTURE JUDGMENT FROM THE LORD.

*** AND JOHN WILL POINT OUT THAT TRUE BELIEVERS CAN LIVE THEIR LIVES WITH CONFIDENCE, LITERALLY WITH A BOLDNESS AS THEY LOOK TO THE DAY WHEN THEY STAND BEFORE THE LORD.

**** THEREFORE, I'VE TITLED THE SERMON FOR TODAY, "PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR" AS WE WORK OUR WAY THROUGH I JOHN 4:17-21.

(6) AND IN DOING THAT BY GOD'S GRACE, WE'LL LOOK AT 4 THINGS. NO. 1 THE CONFIDENCE WE HAVE IN OUR LORD IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT WITH NO FEAR, VV. 17&18; NO. 2 THE CAUSE OF OUR CONFIDENCE, V. 19, GOD'S LOVE FOR US FIRST; NO. 3 THE CONTRADICTION OF SAYING I LOVE GOD AND HATING OUR BROTHER, V. 20; AND NO. 4 THE COMMANDMENT WE HAVE FROM OUR GREAT GOD THAT IF WE LOVE HIM, WE MUST LOVE OUR BROTHER, V. 21.

* SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE CONFIDENCE, THE CAUSE, THE CONTRADICTION AND THE COMMANDMENT UNDER THE TITLE OF PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR.

** AND WITH THOSE POINTS AND THAT THEME TO DIRECT OUR STUDY, PLEASE LOOK AT I JOHN 4:17 WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, THE CONFIDENCE.

I. THE CONFIDENCE, (READ V. 17)

A. NOW IN REVIEW, IN V. 12 OF I JOHN 4, JOHN DECLARED THAT IF WE LOVE EACH OTHER, GOD LIVES OR ABIDES IN US, IT IS AN EVIDENCE OF HIS INDWELLING PRESENCE.

* BUT LOVING ONE ANOTHER ALSO SHOWS THAT GOD'S LOVE IS PERFECTED IN US, WHICH LIT. MEANS GOD'S LOVE IN US COMES TO RIPENESS, TO FULLNESS, TO FRUITFULNESS IN US.

** IT IS TO SAY, THAT LOVE HAS GROWN, IT HAS MATURED AND IT BEARS FRUIT, THE FRUIT OF LOVING ONE ANOTHER.

*** NOW WITH THAT SAID, AS WE COME TO V. 17, JOHN USES THAT SAME GREEK WORD PERFECTED OR MADE COMPLETE OR PERFECTED, DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE, JOHN USES THAT VERB AGAIN.

*** AND JOHN IS COMMUNICATING THAT GOD'S LOVE COMES TO RIPENESS, TO FULLNESS, TO FRUITFULNESS, HIS LOVE BEARS FRUIT IN US, IT HAS MATURED IN US (BELIEVERS) BY NOT ONLY LOVING ONE ANOTHER, V. 12, BUT NOW HERE IN V. 17 IS MADE MANIFEST BY THE BELIEVER HAVING CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

**** NOW WHAT DOES THAT STATEMENT MEAN?

1. WELL THE WORD CONFIDENCE LIT. MEANS AN ASSURANCE, A BOLDNESS, A FEARLESS CONFIDENCE THAT WHEN THAT DAY COMES, WE WILL NOT BE JUDGED ETERNALLY IN HELL.

* AND FOR A TRUE CHRISTIAN, HE HAS A REVERENTIAL AWE TYPE OF FEAR FOR GOD, BUT NOT A TORMENTING PHOBIA TERROR FEAR.

** WE ARE SONS AND DAUGHTERS WHO RESPECT AND ARE IN AWE OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, WE ARE NOT PRISONERS WHO CRINGE BEFORE A JUDGE WITH A TERRIFYING SENTENCE THAT WILL BE HANDED OUT.

*** AND BELOVED THE GREAT TRUTH OF V. 17 IS WE WILL NOT BE CONDEMNED IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE OF GOD'S WORK OF SAVING GRACE IN OUR LIVES THAT HAS MADE US RIGHT WITH GOD FOR CHRIST WAS THE PROPITIATION, THE SATISFACTION, THE DIVINE APPEASEMENT FOR OUR SIN, I JOHN 4:10.

**** NOW WITH THOSE THINGS BEFORE US, THE TRUTHS OF ROMANS 8 COME INTO VIEW HERE. QUOTE ROMANS 8:1. (ALSO QUOTE ROMANS 8:35-39).

2. AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, BECAUSE WE ARE IN CHRIST BY GOD'S DOING, WE HAVE ASSURANCE AND CONFIDENCE AND A BOLDNESS ABOUT THE FUTURE DAY OF JUDGMENT, WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE CONDEMNED OR JUDGED, AND THIS BOLDNESS IS NOT A

BRASHNESS OR A BRAZENNESS, BUT A CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST'S WORK.

* FOR JESUS WAS JUDGED FOR OUR SINS. AND BECAUSE THE BELIEVER'S SINS WERE JUDGED IN THE PAST ON THE CROSS IN CHRIST, WE WILL NOT BE JUDGED IN THE FUTURE.

** AND THUS OUR CONFIDENCE (LIKE OUR OBEDIENCE) IS A FRUIT THAT GOD'S LOVE FOR US WHICH WAS THE ACTION OF THE CROSS IS PERFECTED, MADE COMPLETE, OR HAS MATURED IN US, BRINGING FORTH THE FRUIT OF CONFIDENCE, AGAIN NOT IN OURSELVES, BUT IN CHRIST AND GOD'S LOVE FOR US.

*** A FRUIT OF MATURE LOVE IN US IS A CONFIDENCE THAT WE WILL NOT BE JUDGED IN THE FUTURE, SO WE NEED NOT LIVE IN FUTURE FEAR OF JUDGMENT.

**** BUT NOTICE THE LAST PART OF V. 17, THAT JOHN ENDS THIS VERSE BY SAYING: "BECAUSE AS HE IS, SO ALSO ARE WE IN THE WORLD."

3. NOW THE PERSONAL PRONOUN HE IS TALKING ABOUT CHRIST. AND WHERE IS CHRIST NOW? HE IS IN HEAVEN

AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER, HE IS EXALTED IN HEAVEN, HE IS GLORIFIED IN HEAVEN.

* AND AS ONES THAT HAVE EXPERIENCED GOD'S ELECTING LOVE, POSITIONALLY RIGHT NOW WE ARE "AS HE IS."

** MEANING WE ARE SO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST AS MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, THAT OUR POSITION IN THIS WORLD IS LIKE HIS EXALTED POSITION IN HEAVEN.

*** AND WE ARE NOT THERE YET, GLORIFIED, BUT WE ARE AS GOOD AS THERE, THERE IS CERTAINTY, AS IS COMMUNICATED IN ROMANS 8:28-30, THAT BECAUSE HE FORELOVED US IN ETERNITY PAST AND PREDESTINED US AS A RESULT OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US, IN TIME HE WOULD CALL US TO HIMSELF, JUSTIFY US AND IN ROMANS 8:30 BECAUSE OF THAT CHAIN REACTION FROM HEAVEN SET IN MOTION IN ETERNITY PAST BECAUSE OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE IN PREDESTINATING US AS SONS, "HE ALSO GLORIFIED US."

**** AND PAUL USES THE PAST TENSE HERE, HE ALSO GLORIFIED US, TO TALK ABOUT A FUTURE EVENT, TO STRESS ITS CERTAINTY.

4. WE ARE NO LONGER IN SIN, BUT THE SON. AND WE ARE AS GOOD AS GLORIFIED, IT'S THAT CERTAIN THAT PAUL CAN SPEAK OF IT IN THE PAST TENSE.

* SO AS BELIEVERS, WE DO NOT HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF THE FUTURE BECAUSE OUR SINS WERE JUDGED IN CHRIST WHEN HE DIED FOR US.

** AND SO, AS JESUS IS IN HEAVEN, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD. WE ARE AS GOOD AS THERE THROUGH GOD'S GREAT LOVE AND THAT IS OUR CONFIDENCE. WE DO NOT NEED TO LIVE IN FEAR BECAUSE OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

*** AND JOHN EXPANDS ON THIS IN V. 18, LOOK AT V. 18 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 18. NOW JOHN BEGINS IN V. 18 WITH THE GREAT TRUTH THAT "THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE."

* AND THE REASON FOR THAT IS FEAR AND LOVE ARE INCOMPATIBLE, THEY CANNOT COEXIST.

** AND AS HATE AND LOVE CANNOT COEXIST AND AS FAITH AND DOUBT CANNOT COEXIST, SO LOVE AND FEAR CANNOT COEXIST, FOR THEY HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON.

*** FOR THE MATURE LOVE THAT BRINGS FORTH CONFIDENCE BANISHES FEAR, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR FEAR IN LOVE, THE TWO ARE AS INCOMPATIBLE AS OIL AND WATER.

**** NOW THE REASON WHY LOVE CANNOT COEXIST WITH FEAR IS GIVEN IN THE NEXT PHRASE, BECAUSE PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR FOR FEAR INVOLVES PUNISHMENT.

1. AND THAT MEANS A PERFECTED LOVE, WHICH IS A MATURE LOVE, A LOVE THAT HAS RIPENED THAT HAS GOOD FRUIT, THE FRUIT OF LOVING ONE ANOTHER AND THE FRUIT THAT HAS NO FEAR OF JUDGMENT.

* THAT KIND OF LOVE CALLED PERFECT OR PERFECTED USED TWICE HERE IN V. 18 AND ONCE IN V. 17 AND ONCE IN V. 12, BRINGS CONFIDENCE WITH NO FEAR.

** MATURE LOVE DEFEATS FEAR, IT CONQUERS FEAR, BECAUSE FEAR INVOLVES PUNISHMENT, AND IF YOU LIVE IN FEAR OF PUNISHMENT OR FUTURE JUDGMENT, YOUR LOVE IS NOT MATURE, THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG, A DISCONNECT.

*** FOR BEING PERFECTED IN LOVE MEANS BEING ASSURED, NOT SO MUCH ABOUT OUR LOVE FOR GOD, BUT HIS LOVE FOR US.

**** AND WE DO NOT FEAR FUTURE PUNISHMENT BY THE LORD FOR WE ARE LOVED BY HIM.

2. THEREFORE THE CAUSE OF OUR ASSURANCE IS GOD'S LOVE FOR US. AND WHEN GOD'S LOVE COMES TO MATURITY IN OUR LIVES IT DRIVES OUT FEAR OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

* WE DON'T LIVE IN TERROR OR DREAD OF IT. WE HAVE A HOLY BOLDNESS AND CONFIDENCE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US.

** THEREFORE PUNISHMENT IS ALIEN TO US, FOREIGN TO US. WHY? BECAUSE WE ARE FORGIVEN OF OUR SINS THROUGH GOD'S LOVE FOR US.

*** SO FEAR HAS TO DO WITH PUNISHMENT, BUT IN GOD'S LOVE FOR US, JESUS BORE OUR PUNISHMENT, SO WE HAVE NO PUNISHMENT TO BEAR. GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST IS OUR ASSURANCE.

**** AND FEAR OF PUNISHMENT AND FUTURE JUDGMENT FOR TRUE BELIEVERS PREVAILS ONLY WHEN GOD'S LOVE IS NOT UNDERSTOOD. FOR THE FRUIT OF UNDERSTANDING IT IS CONFIDENCE, ASSURANCE.

3. WHICH LEADS US TO OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE CAUSE OF OUR ASSURANCE. LOOK AT V. 19 PLEASE.

II. THE CAUSE, (READ V. 19)

A. NOW THE GREAT CHARACTERISTIC OF TRUE BELIEVERS IS THAT WE LOVE, WE DO NOT LIVE IN FEAR.

* AND THE REASON WE LOVE IS HE (GOD) FIRST LOVED US.

** SO JOHN MAKES A GREAT AFFIRMATION ABOUT GOD'S PEOPLE. OUR GREAT CHARACTERISTIC, HE SAYS, IS NOT THAT WE FEAR, BUT THAT WE LOVE, AND THE REASON WE LOVE IS GOD FIRST LOVED US.

*** AND PLEASE UNDERSTAND, PEOPLE CAN NEVER CLAIM THAT THEIR LOVE FOR GOD WAS PRIOR TO GOD'S LOVE FOR THEM. GOD'S LOVE ALWAYS COMES FIRST IN LOVING US AND WE RESPOND BY LOVING HIM AND OTHERS.

**** OUR LOVE, THEN, IS A COPY OF HIS LOVE. HE ORIGINATES LOVE AND WE FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE. GOD'S LOVE WAS FIRST, SO ALL TRUE LOVE IS A RESPONSE TO HIS DIVINE SOVEREIGN INITIATIVE.

1. AND IN THE CONTEXT OF I JOHN 4:17-21, IF WE CONTINUE TO LIVE IN FEAR, GOD'S LOVE FOR US, HIS PRIOR LOVE FOR US, HAS NOT MATURED OR RIPENED, HIS LOVE FOR US HAS NOT FULLY FLOODED EVERY CORNER OF OUR LIVES AND FULLY PERSUADED US.

* FOR IF WE LIVE IN FEAR, WE ARE NOT ALLOWING THE LOVE OF GOD TO TAKE CONTROL OF OUR MINDS. WE ARE KEEPING GOD'S LOVE AT A DISTANCE.

** WE ARE TRYING AS JOEL BEEKE SAID: "WE ARE TRYING TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE COMBINING THE LOVE AS SONS WITH THE FEAR OF A SLAVE."

*** BUT MATURE LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR. HE LOVED US FIRST, HE LOVED US FIRST WITH A SACRIFICIAL, ETERNAL, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, UNDESERVING LOVE AND WE NEED TO EMBRACE, THINK ABOUT AND ALLOW THAT KIND OF LOVE TO DRIVE OUT FEAR AND BRING CONFIDENCE AND NO FEAR OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

****THEREFORE GOD FORELOVING US SHOULD BE A SPIRITUAL TRANQUILIZER, GIVING US PEACE.

2. FOR AS CALVIN SAID AND I QUOTE: "THE LOVE OF GOD TRANQUILIZES THE HEART, AND CHRISTIANS CAN GO TO

GOD'S TRIBUNAL CONFIDENTLY AND CHEERFULLY BECAUSE THEY FEEL ASSURED OF HIS PATERNAL LOVE."

* SO UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GREAT ELECTING LOVE IN LOVING US FIRST SHOULD LEAD US TO A MATURE FRUITFUL UNDERSTANDING OF THAT LOVE, SO THAT THE TORMENT OR PUNISHMENT OF JUDGMENT RECEDES INTO THE BACKGROUND. MATURE LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR.

** SO IN V. 19 THE CAUSE OF OUR LOVE AND THE CAUSE OF OUR ASSURANCE IS SET BEFORE US, BECAUSE GOD FIRST LOVED US. AND V. 19 IS A KIND OF BRIDGE FROM GOD'S GREAT LOVE THAT LEADS US AWAY FROM FEAR, BUT IT LEADS US TO LOVING OUR BROTHER, THAT RECURRING RELENTLESS THEME OF I JOHN 4:7 AND ON. FOR WE LOVE GOD, AND WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AND THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE, BECAUSE, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.

*** AND IN V. 20&21, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US SHOULD TRANSLATE TO LOVE FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. LOOK AT V. 20 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR THIRD POINT TODAY, THE CONTRADICTION.

III. THE CONTRADICTION, (READ V. 20)

A. NOW MATURE LOVE NOT ONLY EXPRESSES ITSELF IN A CONFIDENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD, DEVOID OF FEAR, BUT IN A LOVING CONCERN FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

* TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY, THE PERFECT LOVE THAT DRIVES OUT FEAR, DRIVES OUT HATRED ALSO.

** FOR IF WE SAY WE LOVE GOD AND WE HATE OUR BROTHER, WE ARE A LIVING CONTRADICTION. FOR IT IS ABSURD TO SAY I LOVE THE INVISIBLE GOD BUT AT THE SAME TIME NOT SHOW LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE THAT ARE VISIBLE, RIGHT BEFORE US.

*** FOR LOVE FOR GOD CANNOT REMAIN A WARM FUZZY IN OUR HEARTS THAT MOVES VERTICALLY TOWARD GOD IN HEAVEN, BUT FAILS TO REACH HORIZONTALLY TOWARDS OUR FELLOW BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

**** VERTICAL LOVE FOR GOD LEADS TO HORIZONTAL LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE. GENUINE LOVE FOR GOD AND THE BRETHREN EXTENDS BOTH WAYS.

1. AND JOHN WILL NOT MINCE HIS WORDS HERE, IN FACT HE WILL USE A VERY STRONG WORD AND SAY THAT IF A PERSON SAYS I LOVE GOD AND HATES HIS BROTHER HE IS A LIAR, A FRAUD, SOMEONE THAT DOES NOT SPEAK THE TRUTH.

* FOR TO LOVE GOD AND HATE YOUR BROTHER IS A CONTRADICTION.

** AND JOHN JUST USES SOME BASIC LOGIC HERE TO COMMUNICATE THE ILLEGITIMACY OF THAT KIND OF LOVE.

*** FOR HOW CAN YOU SAY YOU DON'T LOVE YOUR BROTHER WHO IS VISIBLE, WHO IS IN THE FLESH BEFORE YOU, BUT LOVE GOD WHO IS INVISIBLE.

**** FOR WE LEARNED LAST WEEK, NO LIVING HUMAN BEING HAS EVER SEEN GOD IN HIS SPIRIT ETERNAL HOLY STATE IN V. 12, NO ONE HAS SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME.

2. SO IT IS DISINGENUOUS TO SAY I LOVE GOD WHOM WE HAVE NOT SEEN AND TO HATE OUR BROTHER WHOM WE HAVE SEEN. WE'RE LIARS IF WE SAY THAT.

* SO EVERY CLAIM TO LOVE GOD IS A DELUSION IF IT IS NOT ACCOMPANIED BY UNSELFISH AND PRACTICAL LOVE FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. THAT KIND OF LIVING IS THE EPITOME OF FOLLY. THAT PERSON IS DECEIVED. IT'S A FALSE BOAST.

** AND IF WE DO NOT LOVE THE BRETHREN, WE DO NOT LOVE THE GOD WHO CREATED THEM AND SAVED THEM. CERTAINLY THAT KIND OF LOVE IS IMMATURE OR NON-EXISTENT.

*** SO JOHN DOES NOT PULL ANY PUNCHES HERE, HE CALLS THEM LIARS.

**** AND THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME JOHN HAS CALLED A PERSON A LIAR HERE IN I JOHN.

3. FOR IN I JOHN 1:10 JOHN SAID: (QUOTE IT).

* SO IF WE SAY WE DON'T SIN WE'RE LIARS.

** AND THE OTHER TWO REFERENCES BEFORE OUR TEXT TODAY ABOUT LYING HAVE TO DO WITH THE TWO OTHER SPIRITUAL TESTS OF TRULY KNOWING GOD.

*** THE MORAL TEST IN I JOHN 2:3&4 (QUOTE THEM).

**** AND THEN IN I JOHN 2:22&23 WE SEE THE DOCTRINAL TEST (QUOTE THEM).

4. AND NOW HERE IN I JOHN 4:20, WE SEE THE SOCIAL TEST, LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

* AND LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS A CLEAR COMMANDMENT FROM GOD REPEATED IN I JOHN AND IS

THE CONCLUSION OF THIS SECTION ON LOVE IN OUR LAST VERSE TODAY, AND THE LAST VERSE OF THIS CHAPTER. SO LOOK AT V. 21 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL QUICKLY SEE OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE COMMANDMENT.

IV. THE COMMANDMENT, (READ V. 21)

A. NOW THE FOLLY OF THE LIAR'S POSITION IN V. 20 IS SEEN NOT ONLY IN ITS INCONSISTENCY AND ITS CONTRADICTION, BUT ALSO IN THE FACT THAT LOVE FOR GOD AND LOVE FOR OUR BROTHER FORM ONE SINGLE COMMAND.

* AND FROM THE O.T. TO THE N.T. WE ARE COMMANDED TO LOVE GOD FIRST AND TO LOVE OTHERS, TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF I JOHN 4 TO LOVE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

** AND WE REMEMBER THE WORDS OF OUR LORD IN MATTHEW 22:37-40 WHEN A LAWYER ASKS JESUS A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT IN THE LAW, QUOTE MATTHEW 22:37-40.

*** NOW WE NOT ONLY HAVE THOSE WORDS OF JESUS, BUT CHRIST'S WORDS TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS HE HAS LOVED US IN JOHN 13:34&35 AND JOHN 15:12 (QUOTE JOHN 15:12)

**** AND HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US TAKES US BACK TO THE CROSS AND GOD'S GREAT MANIFESTATION OF LOVE FOR SINNERS.

1. AND SINCE GOD LOVED US FIRST, IF WE LOVE GOD, WE WILL WANT TO KEEP HIS COMMANDS AND HIS COMMAND FOR US IS TO LOVE THE BRETHREN. IF WE LOVE GOD, WE'LL LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

IN WRAP UP: (1) BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AS WE INCREASINGLY GRASP THE WONDER OF GOD'S UNDESERVED, GRACIOUS, SACRIFICIAL LOVE FOR US, WE ARE COMPELLED TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

* AND WHEN WE FIND IT HARD TO LOVE OTHERS, OUR GREAT NEED IS TO RETURN TO THE CROSS AND BE HUMBLLED AGAIN BY THAT "LOVE SO AMAZING, SO DIVINE, (THAT) DEMANDS MY SOUL, MY LIFE, MY ALL."

** AND IF WE FAIL TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER WE BRING REPROACH TO JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL, WE CLOUD IT, WE BLUR IT, FOR PEOPLE NO LONGER SEE GOD OR CHRIST IN US.

*** MAY WE SHOW THE GOSPEL BY OUR LOVE.

(2) BUT LASTLY MAY WE BE CONFIDENT TODAY ABOUT OUR FUTURE, WE THAT ARE TRULY IN CHRIST, FOR

MATURE LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR. MAY WE NOT FEAR THE FUTURE, BUT BE BOLD AND HAVE THE ASSURANCE THAT JOHN WANTS AND THAT OUR GREAT GOD WANTS, THAT IS THE THEME OF I JOHN, TO KNOW WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

* AND MAY WE NOT ALLOW ANY FEAR TO PARALYZE US, TORMENTING TERRIFYING FEARS, FOR I REMIND YOU OF II TIMOTHY 1:7 (QUOTE IT).

** BELOVED, IT IS NOT GOD'S WILL FOR US TO LIVE IN FEAR, BUT TO FEAR GOD FIRST, WHICH IS TO REVERENCE HIM, TO BE IN AWE OF HIM, TO RESPECT AND VENERATE HIM.

*** BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT BE PARALYZED BY PHOBIAS, BUT HAVE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY THROUGH OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST. AND WHY DO WE LOVE? BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US. (LET'S PRAY)

