

## The First Epistle of John

...so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1John 1:3)

### 1John 4:18

#### Review

Where is John writing from?

What heresy was he addressing?

What flavor of Gnosticism was John specifically dealing with?

What did the heretics teach?

How does John deal with this false teaching?

1John 1:6-10

Someone read 1Jn 4:7-12

Someone else read vv13-21

I understand you only got 1 phrase into v18 last week. Let's take a deeper dive into that verse:

**There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear involves punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. {1 Jn 4:18 RSV}**

The truth, stated positively in v17, is repeated negatively here.

“Perfect love” What do you think John means by this phrase?

There is such a thing, perfect because it has been perfected – AT Robertson

“casts out” – Thayer definition:

to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls

It is related to the Greek word for ‘devil’ *dia ballos* literally ‘to throw through’ That’s what Satan wants to accomplish – to disrupt our walk with Christ.

And what is cast out? FEAR (Greek: *phobos*)

Again, Thayer defines as:

fear, dread, terror

This word is preceded by the definite article in Greek. Did Dennis mention last week that the word ‘Love’ is also preceded by the def. article?

What do you think is the significance of this fact?

The love (of/for God) casts out the fear of God's judgment.

When is "the" fear cast out? Now, or in the Day of Judgment?

V17 points to Judgment Day.

But castS is present tense.

I think it refers to both now and the coming Day. Perfect love accomplishes something, not only for the future, but now. It casts out fear *now*. It gives us complete freedom from fear. NOW!

The present tense verb underlies that whenever fear grips our hearts, perfect love acts to cast it out. Throw it outside. "Love must altogether banish fear from the enclosure in which her work is done" – A E Brooke.

For what reason does love cast out fear?

Because it "Involves punishment"

Literally, this reads "has punishment." To have or hold as a possession. The Greek word is *exw*. Metaphorically, it can be rendered "involves" (NASB, NKJV) or "has to do with" (NIV, ESV, NET). Only the old KJV renders it HATH, which is the most literal.

The word for 'punishment' is the Greek *kolasin*. Which originally meant to prune or cut off. By NT times, it meant "punishment" or "torment." All languages evolve over time, and Greek is no different. The word appears in numerous extra-biblical texts, but the only other instance in Scripture is Matt 25:46. Somebody read that please.

Notice that it is contrasted the everlasting life (*aiwnion zoe*).

The the NWT (Jehovah's Witnesses) renders this verse: "everlasting cutting-off." It is not only an atrocious translation (everlasting pruning literally makes no sense), it is also guilty of a verbal anachronism. They render it this way to preserve their idiosyncratic doctrines of soul-sleep and annihilationism.

Fear "HAS" punishment. Fear imprisons us. Anxieties, tensions, worries, apathy -- all these things are forms of fear, and they literally imprison us, they limit us.. Fear imprisons us, narrows us in, binds us up, limits our life, pushes us into corners and keeps us there, and we cannot live as God intended us to live.

This is a common experience of life, is it not?

John puts his finger right on it. "He who fears is not perfected in love." That is the trouble - that is the analysis. Love may be in the person who fears, if the life of God is there, but it is not

perfected, it is not coming out, it is not expressing itself, it is not manifest, it is not taking the form of deeds and words, it is all inside. That is the trouble. Love, perfected, casts out fear.

I would respectfully challenge you to try letting God perfect His love in you today. What a dramatic solution to the problems of fear and anxiety, and yet, how wonderfully true it is. There are those who have the life of God and yet never let it out; their pride and self-pity bind them up and they do not want to show love, they are afraid to. They are afraid it will open them up to be hurt, or that it will give someone an advantage over them, and so they bottle it up, keep it in, and then they wonder why they are oppressed by anxieties, tensions, and problems of nervousness. They are limited, unable to move and do as they ought to. But love, perfected, casts out fear. John is not talking about a perfect kind of love; it is love that is made perfect, love that is perfected, love that comes to its end and accomplishes its purpose.

I'm trying to put this into practice with my wife. I'm trying to show her love, not expecting or needing her to reciprocate. I'm trying do it to please God, which we're commanded to do at all times, no matter how we feel. (2 Cor 5:9).

Let's move on to V19.

We love, because He first loved us.

Now take a look a couple verses back at 4:10.

Very similar language is used in v10 and v19. Why do you think John repeats the concept here?

- It is important
- It's one of John's favorite literary devices

“We love” (NASB, NIV, ESV) vs “We love HIM” (KJV, NKJV)

Why the difference?

KJV is based on an older ENGLISH text. The more modern translations are based on an older GREEK text (that was not discovered until the late 1800's).

Do you think it makes a difference?

Without a stated object, the love is unrestricted in its scope. What follows makes clear that while our love originates in God's love for us, it cannot be limited to that. True love, perfected love, must be expressed towards others, in addition to God.

“WE” love – in the Greek the word ‘we’ is emphatic. There is an implied contrast in this verse: WE love” is contrasted with what?

- A. With those who do not love
- B. With those who fear and thus have an imperfect love.
- C. With God and His love for us.

The word HE is also emphatic.

WE love, because HE first loved us.

The adverb “first” stresses the divine initiative in bringing love into our lives. The verb “loved” recalls the historic manifestation of God’s Love in the atoning death of His incarnate Son. As the commentator D. Edmond Hiebert writes: “He displayed His love in order to waken love in us.”

Fear dwells with us by nature, and needs to be cast out. Agape, godlike love, on the other hand, does not reside in our fallen nature. Our very capacity to love – whether God or our neighbor – is entirely due to His prior love for us and in us.

His love is the incentive, the motive, and moral cause of ours. We cannot but love so good a God, who was first in the act and work of love, who loved us when we were both unloving and unlovely, who loved us at so great a rate, who has been seeking and soliciting our love at the expense of his Son's blood; and has condescended to beseech us to be reconciled unto him. Let heaven and earth stand amazed at such love! - Mat. Henry