

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 4:9-10

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 4:1-6

Someone else read vv7-10

I ended the class last time by asking “how does God manifest His love for us?”

> The incarnation

> And where is the only place we can read about the Incarnation?

Someone read vv 9-10 again.

Dr. H. A. Ironside used to tell the story of a woman who told him: “I have no use for the Bible and all that Christian superstition; it’s enough for me to know that God is love.” He replied: “Do you think everyone in the world know God is love?” “Of course,” she said. “What about the woman in India who is persuaded by her religion that she must sacrifice her own child to appease her gods had any notion that God is love?” “Well, no,” she replied, “but that is mere superstition.” “What about the man in Africa bowing down to his idols of wood and stone, trembling in fear lest they should strike back at him and destroy his crops, take away his family, and even injure his own person, do you think he has any idea that God is love?” “No, but every civilized country knows that God is love.” “Well,” he said, “How do we know that? How do we know that God is love? Let me tell you something: Do you know that the only reason we know that God is love is because He sent His Son to manifest Himself as love? The book that tells about the Lord Jesus Christ is the only book in the world that contains the idea that the God who created all matter is a God of love? Creation reveals His power, His greatness, his might, but there is nothing in nature that says, ‘God is love.’ The only way we know it is that God manifested His love in the giving of His one and only Son.”

And that is what John declares in these two verses.

“By this...” By what?

Sometimes, John uses this phrase to sum up what has come before.

e.g., 1 Jn 4:6, 1 Jn 4:17

But he often uses it to look forward to what he is about to write. And such is the case here. Also, 1 Jn 2:3, 1 Jn 3:10.

“Was manifested...” (Gk = *phaneroō*)

to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way

1a) make actual and visible, realized

1e) to become known, to be plainly recognised, thoroughly understood

What is John referring to, here? When was God’s love most on display?

The Incarnation (translated “appeared” in 1Jn 3:5 NASB)

Cf., Ro 5:8-10

What were we to God before we were saved?

We are now “tamed rebels”

And yet, God still loves us, despite our rebellious past and through our continued present rebellion. John 3:16

“in us ...” NASB, NET

“among us...” NIV, ESV

“toward us...” KJV

What do you think this means?

It could mean an inward experience “in our souls”

But since John referring to a historical event, such an inward, subjective meaning is unlikely.

If it is an objective experience, the meaning may be “toward us” or “among us” as the location where the manifestation took place.

Lenski believes the Greek phrase means that the manifestation was “in connection with us” or “in our case.” Because the recipients of John’s letter were not merely interested spectators, they were active participants in the Incarnation and its salvific results, I tend to hold with the latter view.

“only-begotten Son” NASB, KJV

“one and only Son” NET, NIV, ESV

The Greek for this phrase is literally “the Son of Him, the one and only *one*” – *ton huion autou ton monogenē*

See John 1:14, 18

“Only-begotten”

This is the rendering found in most English Bibles prior to the 20th Century, most notably the King James. The rendering "only-begotten," however, actually predates the Bible in English, going back to Jerome's Latin Vulgate. The Old Latin versions uniformly translated *monogenês* as the Latin *unicus* ("only"). Jerome rendered *monogenês* this way as well, when the word does not refer to Christ. However, in the six verses where it does, Jerome rendered it *unigenitus* ("only-begotten"). Jerome, probably following Gregory of Nazianzus (A.D. 329 - 390), sought to respond to the Arian claim that Christ was a created being by referring to the relationship of the Father to the Son as one of "generation" (the Father = *gennetor* ["begetter"]; the Son = *gennema* ["begotten"]). Following Origen, Gregory (and Jerome) understood the generation of the Son to be an eternal process, one which maintained the unity of the Son in Eternity with His Father, while preserving the Biblical distinction between the Two.

This unfortunate (though perhaps well-intentioned) theological rendering of *monogenês* influenced the King James translators, and they in turn, most English Bibles produced since then. In the last century, however, scholars and translators have recognized that *monogenês* is not related to the verb *gennaō* ("begotten"), but to *ginomai* ("to be"). Thus, the Old Latin and Jerome (in the verses not referring to Jesus Christ) are correct to render *monogenês* as *unicus* ("only") - literally, "one of a kind." And this practice has been followed by many modern versions, rendering it variously as "only," "unique," or "one and only." Some scholars and translators, however, argue that *monogenês* - when used of persons - carries the sense of an only offspring. Thus, translations such as the ESV, ISV and the RSV render *monogenês* in John 1:14 and Hebrews 11:17 as "only Son," even though it appears in these verses absolutely (that is, by itself, without an accompanying noun).

“So that we might live through him”

Hina clause = so that = purpose for God sending His Son into the world.

This statement implies those for whom Jesus was sent were spiritually dead (cf., Eph 2:1,5). But Christ came to give us life. The Greek tense suggests that we actually live through Christ right now, with the ongoing result of living eternally.

“Through Him” declares that the Son Himself is the mediating agent of the bestowal of eternal life, imparted when we first accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. As one commentator (Morgan) puts it: “It includes the removal of the sentence of death, the return of spiritual life of the soul, and the final enjoyment of eternal life in heaven.”

Do not measure love by the warm affection of your heart toward God, the gratitude you feel toward God. Naturally, if God has blessed you, helped you, and strengthened you, you will feel a warm affection toward him arising within you, but that is not the measure of love. God is altogether lovable, so do not define love as that quality of warmth and gratitude which rises up when you meet a lovable and lovely person. That is not love. "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiration for our sins." That is the sign of love. Stamped forever in human history, the greatest sign of love is a bloody cross. If you have ever been to that cross and seen the love of God manifested there, you never can go back to a life of selfish indulgence and quarreling behavior.

Read v10.

Notice who takes the initiative. Who takes the lead?

Will you notice, in Verse 10, the linking of love and propitiation? There are those who tell us that God's love is comparable to that of an indulgent grandfather, that he loves us so much that he will let us get away with anything. He will forgive it solely on the basis of his kindness to us. He will not demand an accounting, nor will his love ever insist on any punishment, but it is of the kind that says, "That's all right, just forget it." No, no. "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us, and" What? -- "sent his Son to be the expiation [a propitiation] for our sins." He came to satisfy justice, to meet the demands of a broken Law, to pay the full debt, to satisfy the penalty. It all must be met; it cannot be ignored. God's love is also just -- love must be just -- and therefore, the only love that is worth talking about is a love that satisfies justice

Someone define "propitiation." (NASB, ESV, NET, KJV)

Satisfy divine wrath

Contrast this with "expiation" (RSV)

Annul divine wrath.

Both are possible renderings of the Greek *hilasmos*

There is a difference -- "Propitiation" has to do with atonement to appease; "Expiation" has to do with a remedy that opens the way for reconciliation and forgiveness.

Which do you think fits the context better?

Both concepts are in view. The true meaning of *hilasmos* may not be conveyed adequately by a single English word.

Here, the NIV might well be the truest to the original:
“Atoning Sacrifice”

Atonement is something made for sin; a sacrifice is something offered to God.

Christ was not merely sent to be propitiator for our sins, like the OT high priest under the Mosaic Law. He was sent to be the propitiation for our sins. His blood was shed for the remission of sin. He is *both* propitiator and propitiation for human sin. Christ’s willing self-sacrifice made full atonement for all sins, enabling God to pardon the sins of those who believe in Him to restore them to acceptance and fellowship with Himself.

In the words of Dwight Pentecost, “The death of Jesus Christ did not change the heart of God, as if One who hated us now loves us, rather if opened the floodgate so that the love of God could be poured out to them through Jesus Christ.”

The words “our sins” bear witness to the awareness John and his readers have for their personal need to such a sacrifice.