

1 John 4 - Live Christ. Live forever.

The Story so far: In **1 John 1** we are introduced to Jesus Christ as a real man, **the Word of Life**. His life was one of **action**, a perfect reflection of the **living God**. It wasn't fake. It wasn't a play act. It was **real**. We learnt that this story was not new. We began back in **Genesis**, when God created darkness and light.

Then in **1 John 2** some **new concepts** are presented. We saw the importance of **knowing Christ, abiding** in him, and **loving** our brother - walking in the **light**. But also we saw the **wicked one**, the **world** and the **antichrist** - all relating to a life of **darkness**. In **1 John 3**, **new concepts** are again introduced. Those who are **born of God** are those who walk in **the spirit**. But those of **the devil** follow in the footsteps of **Cain**.

We have seen a continual unfolding of God's purpose and the age old struggle between good and evil. In the life of Abel, his **actions spoke louder than words**. Not one word is recorded from the mouth of Abel in the Bible. He was a lamb led to the slaughter - as was our Lord: **Isa 53:7**. Though dead, Abel yet speaks: **Heb 11:4**.

In **1 John 4**, more **new concepts** are introduced. It's still the same story, but we now get to the heart of everything God is, and who we should be. We are warned of **false prophets** and the **spirit of error** which are of the world. If we **overcome** these influences through faith in God's Son, we find life - now and in the future. If we **live** Christ now, we will **live** forever then. On the day of judgment, God will see **Christ in us**.

There is nothing more wonderful than God's love. This was perfectly revealed in Christ's life: "**Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends**" **Jn 15:13**

v1-6 A Warning about false prophets

The apostle Paul warned of a falling away from the Truth in the first century: **2Thess 2:1-12**

v1 Try the spirits: Spirit here refers to **teachings**, eg. **1 Jn 5:6**. Contrast with the spirit of God in **1 Jn 3:24**. We should put to the test everything we hear taught: **Acts 17:11**. The ecclesia at Ephesus headed the warnings: **Rev 2:2**.

False Prophets: Predicted by Jesus in **Mt 24:11**. Revealed through the ages in **the** false prophet: **Rev 16:13; 19:20**.

v2-3 Antichrist: See the **Antichrist** notes. **v3 Even now already:** Paul warned of grievous wolves in sheep's clothing: **Acts 20:29-31**. The mystery of iniquity was alive in 1st century: **2Thess 2:7; Rev 2:18-22**. **The lesson = Discernment!**

that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

4 Ye are of God, **little children**, and have overcome them: because ^bgreater is he that is in you, than ^dhe that is in the world.

5 They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and ^ethe world heareth them.

6 We are of God: ^hhe that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we ^fthe spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not ^gknoweth not God; for ⁱGod is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that ^jGod sent his only begotten Son into the world, ^kthat we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, ^lnot that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be ^mthe propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, ⁿwe ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, ^oGod dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And ^pwe have seen and do testify that ^qthe Father sent the Son to be ^rthe Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess ^sthat Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed ^tthe love that God hath to us. ^uGod is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is ^vour love made

Verses 1-6 dispel the myth that love tolerates evil. Real love does not accept false teaching.

v4 Overcome them: See **2:13,14; 5:4**. Overcoming the world is a major theme of the 7 letters in **Rev 2-3**. **Greater is He:** Very encouraging words! **Rom 8:31**

v5 The world: See notes on **2:15-17**. False teachers are often very clever at appealing to the flesh.

v6 Spirit of Truth / Error: The defining characteristic of the seed of the woman is **faith** in God's word. Those who are **born of God** are receptive to the Word: **Lk 8:15**. It really **does** matter what we believe.

v7 Love one another: Being **born of God** and **knowing** God are intimately connected with God's love: see **2:3-4; 3:1-2**.

v8 God is love: A simple but very powerful statement. This involves God's **goodness** and **severity**, both of which are aspects of His love: **Rom 11:22**, cp. **Exod 34:6-7**.

v9 Only begotten Son: It was fundamental for Christ to be God's Son. This enabled him to defeat sin. It made sinlessness possible: **Psa 80:17; Rom 8:3**. It was not possible for others to be sinless: **Isa 41:28; 59:16; 63:5; 1 Jn 1:10; Rev 5:3,4**. **Live through him:** See **Col 3:1-4**. See notes on top RHS.

v10-11 God sent His Son: **Jn 3:16**. The love of Christ affected John personally and he wants to pass this on to his readers. **Propitiation:** See notes on **2:2**. **v12 Love one another:** John constantly refers to

Jesus' words: **Jn 5:42; 8:42; 13:34-35; 15:12-17; 14:23; 17:26**. **God dwelleth in us:** Same word often translated *abide*. See notes on **2:6**. **v13 His Spirit:** God's Word, Christ in us, "the truth": **Jn 6:63; Rom 8:10-15; 1 Jn 5:6; Rev 2:7,11,17**. Contrast false spirits in **4:1**.

v14 The Father / the Son: This relationship is emphasised all through John's epistles. In **Gen 44:17-34** Jacob is described 14x as the **father** just prior to Joseph revealing himself to his brethren. We enter into that story emotionally, that we might develop a personal relationship with God and His Son.

v9 Live through him: Live Christ. Live Forever. When Christ appears, we will be made immortal like him, because we are **in him** and we **abide in him**: **1 Jn 2:28; 3:1-2; 5:11-13**. If we live Christ now, we will live forever when he comes. God's word is **living**: **1 Pet 1:23**. Jesus knew that we do not live by bread alone, but by God's living Word: **Mt 4:4**. God is a **living God** because he lives in people: **Jn 6:51,57,58,69**. The theme **Live Christ, live forever** is woven all through John's gospel, eg. **Jn 4:11; 5:25; 7:38; 11:25,26; 14:19**. Living forever with Christ is also a key theme in **Revelation: 1:18; 4:9,10; 5:14; 7:1; 10:6; 20:4**.

Christ rising to immortality is used as encouragement for those who suffer now: **Rev 2:8**. **v17** We have boldness at the judgment because **Christ** is in us.

v12-13 The way others see God is by seeing His love in us. The power in the gospel message is in the one who brings it: **Rom 10:15**. **v14 Saviour of the world:** **Jn 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 12:47**

v15 Confess Son of God: Those who confess Christ to others will be confessed to the Father: **Mt 10:32; Rev 3:5**.

perfect, that ^awe may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but ^cperfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, ^dhe is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, ^eThat he who loveth God love his brother also.

v17 Judgment: Love will reap its reward before our Lord. Like Christ, we are not of this world: **Jn 5:22-23,27; 17:14-16**.

v18 No fear: Godly fear is a fear of upsetting one whom we love, but the fear of **4:18** is dread from being in darkness. **Love perfect:** **Jn 17:23-26**.

v19 He first loved us: **Jn 3v16; 15v16**. Our response to God's love for us should be to love our brother. **v20 If a man say:** The 7th test, see notes **1 Jn 1**. **v21 God's commandments** are for our benefit: **Deut 6:23-24**. See **Jn 13:34-35; 15:12**.

The love of God: We read of **Agape** love 53x in **1,2,3 John**. On love hangs all the law/prophets: **Mt 22:36-40**. See notes on **1:5**. Christ's life is the greatest expression of God's love: **2 Cor 5:14** "**The very spring of our actions is the love of Christ**" JBPV

Key verses: **Gal 5:14-26** Ecclesial life presents us with a test of character. How do we respond in difficult situations? The love of God is intimately connected with the forgiveness of our bro's and sis's and restoring those who have fallen: **Gal 6:1-2**. See notes: **1 Jn 3:11**. **Lack of love in the last days:** A careful read of **1 Cor 13** and **2 Tim 3:1-13** reveals some remarkable contrasts.

v1-6 Does it really matter what we believe?

Acts 8:12; Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 13:6-7; 15:1-2; Eph 1:12-13; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 2:16-19; Heb 11:6; Jude 3,4; Rev 2:2.