

# From the Beginning

**John      I John**

**Part IV**

**Christians and the Proffered Kingdom  
Fellowship, Forgiveness, Abiding, Overcoming**

(Parts I, II of this article presented mainly foundational material necessary for a proper understanding of that seen in Parts III, IV.

Part III dealt with parallel sections of John chapters one and three, having to do with the Jewish people during the time of the offer of the kingdom [the time when the recorded events occurred] and the subsequent re-offer of the kingdom [the time when these events were recorded by John].

This fourth part will deal with two sections of I John in chapters one, two, and five, having to do with Christians and the same kingdom previously offered to Israel — a kingdom rejected by and taken from Israel, a kingdom presently being offered to Christians.)

John began both his gospel and first epistle after a similar fashion.

He began his gospel by referencing “the beginning” in connection with both a timeless past and subsequent creative and restorative activity within “time.” *And the WHOLE of the matter had to do with REGALITY.*

He *ALSO* began his first epistle by referencing “the beginning” in connection with something which dated back to a timeless past, with God’s plans and purposes relative to the matter being worked out in “time” (cf. Matt. 25:34; Heb. 4:3). *And the WHOLE of the matter, EXACTLY as seen in his gospel, had to do with REGALITY.*

Note the opening four verses in John’s first epistle:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

In the Greek text of the opening three verses there are five identical, singular, neuter relative pronouns.

The first four are in the opening verse (translated, “That which,” beginning the verse, and simply “which” three times in the remainder of the verse). And the remaining relative pronoun begins verse three (translated, as beginning v. 1, “That which”) and reflects back on that referenced by the four relative pronouns in verse one.

*Now, DON’T attempt to do what so many Bible students try to do with these opening verses in I John — ignore the neuter aspect of the pronouns and read references to Christ into the verses (e.g., “He who was from the beginning...” [ref. NLT, CJB]). Even some of the translators made this mistake by the way that they handled the words, “word of life,” ending verse one (capitalizing “Word,” thinking that it referred to Christ [ref. KJV, NKJV]).*

The relative pronouns *DO NOT* refer to Christ Himself, *BUT* they *DO* refer to something which belongs to Christ.

The text *MUST* be allowed to speak for itself, using the *EXACT* wording which John, as led by the Spirit, used 2,000 years ago.

### **“That Which Was from the Beginning”**

As previously stated, the first verse of the epistle contains four identical neuter relative pronouns. The first pronoun begins the verse, translated “That which” (in the heading above) and the other three are simply translated “which.” And if it will help to understand the verse, place the Word “that” before the remaining three pronouns in the translation (a few translations read this way [*ref.* ASV]).

This opening verse calls attention to the things John and others (“we,” “our”) had previously heard, seen with their own eyes, looked upon, and handled with their own hands. And, at the end of the verse, that being referenced is stated to be “the word of life [‘the life’].”

“Life” is articular in the Greek text, pointing to a particular life. And the words calling attention to this life, referenced by the four previous relative pronouns, should read, “concerning the word [the message] of the life.”

That particular life is *THEN* further clarified and defined in John’s continuing statement, in the next verse (v. 2).

Note verse two again, with comments:

“For the life [again, articular, *a particular life*] was manifested [‘made known’], and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life [‘*aionios* life,’ *i.e.*, ‘age-lasting life’ or ‘life for the age’], which was with the Father [‘with’; Gk., *pros*, meaning ‘facing,’ or ‘face to face,’ implying an inseparable relationship; ‘the life’ was *pros* ‘the Father’], and was manifested [‘made known’] unto us.”

“Age-lasting life,” “life for the age,” was at that time and continues today to be the message of the hour, though seldom taught today because of that seen in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen or the letters to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three.

But this epistle, as John’s gospel, was written at another time, a time when “age-lasting life” was universally proclaimed and understood. And John’s writings, in the light of what is clearly stated in them, should be dealt with accordingly, *NOT* dealt with in the eisegetical manner so prevalent today, which attempts to read eternal salvation into almost everything in his writings, particularly seen when dealing with verses in his gospel.

### 1) *That Which Is Really Life*

To illustrate different aspects of the preceding, along with showing that both John and Paul wrote about the same thing and proclaimed the same message (also Peter; cf. II Peter 3:15-18), note two verses in I Timothy chapter six:

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life [*lit.*, ‘take hold of age-lasting life,’ or ‘take hold of life for the age’] whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses...

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life [*lit.*, ‘...take hold of that which is really life’]” (vv. 12, 19).

Note the words “lay hold on eternal life” in both verses, with corrected translations following.

In the Greek text, in both verses, “life,” as seen in the opening verse of I John, is preceded by the definite article, calling attention *to a particular life* which is explained and dealt with in the text and context (again, same as in I John).

*Aionios* is the word translated “eternal” in verse twelve, but not so in verse nineteen. In this latter verse, the word translated “eternal” is *ontos*, which means “real,” “genuine.”

Neither *aionios* (v. 12) nor *ontos* (v. 19) means “eternal,” with the translation going even further awry on the latter word, for *ontos* (an adverb), unlike *aionios* (an adjective), has no relationship to “time.”

Note what has been done by the translators, followed by Bible students, in the preceding. And the matter could easily be enlarged upon by referencing other passages in Paul’s epistles. But these should suffice to illustrate that the problem in I John is far from peculiar to John’s writings.

## 2) *WHEN and WHERE*

Now, in these opening verses of John’s first epistle, *WHEN* and *WHERE* was “the life,” having to do with the coming age, shown and made known to John and others (“we,” “us”) after the manner described?

John and others had “heard,” “seen,” “looked upon,” and “handled” that identified at the end of the verse as “the life” (v. 1), further clarified in the next verse as “*age-lasting life*,” “*life in the coming age*.”

The referenced, unnamed others would have to be understood as limited, in fact, quite limited. This would have to be understood as something beyond what John and the other eleven disciples (later, the Seventy also) had experienced through the proclamation of the message pertaining to this “life” to Israel.

*John and those he referenced had actually “seen and heard,” they had PERSONALLY experienced, what they had been proclaiming.*

All twelve disciples, or even the Seventy in later time, *could ONLY have been quite familiar with this message.*

*BUT*, a familiarity and proclamation of this message, as

seen in the gospels, *does NOT, at all*, capture the full scope of *the multifaceted, personal way* John referenced this subject as he opened his first epistle. That experienced by John and the unnamed others could *ONLY* be something relative to “the life” *BEYOND what could be seen in their previous proclamation of the message to Israel.*

And, understanding the evident reference of the text along these lines — something beyond their previous proclamation of the message to Israel — *CAN* we know, from other Scripture, *WHAT* John was referencing as he began his first epistle? And, *CAN* we know, from these same Scriptures, *WHO* John was referencing as also having *this multifaceted, personal experience* with him?

The answer to both questions *can ONLY be, “YES!” BUT*, let’s begin at a base point and work into that being referenced in I John 1:1-3.

Note that there was a smaller group within the Twelve, which included John, which, as will be shown, *could ONLY have been those whom he was referencing — Peter, James, and John.* These three men are singled out several different ways, at different times, as comprising somewhat of an inner circle among the Twelve.

There are four lists of the disciples in the N.T. (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13). And in all four of these lists, Peter, Andrew (Peter and Andrew are brothers), James, and John (James and John are brothers) are always listed first. Peter is always listed first, with Andrew listed after Peter in Matthew and Luke and after James and John in Mark and Acts. And Judas is always listed last in the gospels.

Then note Peter, James, and John singled out in Mark 5:37; 13:3, or in Mark 14:33 and Luke 8:51 where Christ took these three men apart for particular purposes.

Then in Acts, Peter and John are seen ministering together for a time (3:1, 3, 11; 4:13, 19; 8:14).

And, as will be shown, it is evident that John — opening his first epistle by referencing something through different means (“That which...”) and using the pronouns “we” and “us” (vv. 1-3) — was referring to *THAT* seen in Matt. 17:1-5, with the pronouns referring to himself, Peter, and James.

When Christ went up into the Mount in this passage, He *ONLY* took three disciples with Him — Peter, James, and John — leaving the other nine at the foot of the Mount.

*Aside from the fact that these three are singled out on other occasions, WHY ONLY these three at this particular time?*

The evident reason is twofold:

1) The lasting impact of *THAT* which *these three ALONE* were allowed to see and experience.

2) In connection with the preceding, *THAT* which *EACH* would later be called upon to accomplish.

While on the Mount, Peter, James, and John, on the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period, saw “the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Matt. 16:28-17:5).

They *DIDN'T* see a foreview or see something like “the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” Rather, *the whole of the matter was moved ahead 2,000 years, and they saw it actually happen, at a time before it would happen* (Eccl. 3:14, 15).

Now, having seen the proffered kingdom actually unfold in this manner, each was later called upon to write one or more books in the Canon of Scripture.

John was called upon to write five books, James one book, and Peter two books.

Matthew is the only other one of the Twelve later called upon to write a canonical book. And, in this respect, it seems that he should have been included with the other three on the Mount, but the Lord chose to do it another way.

But, in connection with *THEIR* present ministry and *THAT* which lay ahead, the Lord, by taking Peter, James, and John

up into the Mount with Him, *wanted JUST THESE three men to see, with their OWN eyes, WHAT they had been proclaiming.*

Then, note Peter's comments on the matter years later, *comments which he was able to make ONLY because of that which had previously occurred, recorded in Matt. 17:1-5:*

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting [Gk. *aionios*, 'age-lasting'] kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (II Peter 1:11-18).

Peter, James, and John, on the Mount with Christ in Matt. 17:1ff, had seen "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (16:28), they had been "eyewitnesses of his majesty," *i.e., the greatness of His regal magnificence.*

*And years later, Peter COULDN'T get away from this.*

Peter was well aware that those to whom he was writing *already knew* the things that he was writing about and *were well established* in them (v. 12). *BUT*, he considered



*these things* to be of such import that he was going to keep on repeatedly proclaiming them *UNTIL these truths were so ingrained within their minds that they could NEVER get away from them, EVEN after he was dead and gone* (vv. 13-15).

*This is the type impact that the scene on the Mount had on Peter, and, from that seen in the writings of James and John, it could ONLY have evidently had a similar impact on them as well.*

(Note something about the Gk. word *aionios* in II Peter 1:11, which should be translated “age-lasting,” not “everlasting.”

And then note something about James, the brother of John, as the writer of James, something often questioned.

First, the word *aionios* in II Peter 1:11...

*Aionios in this verse, textually, CAN'T possibly be translated other than “age-lasting,” for the contextual setting has to do with the seventh day — “After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John...” [Matt. 17:1a].*

The word has to do with *ONE age associated with the present heavens and earth, NOT with endless ages [“everlasting”], which would have to be associated with the new heavens and the new earth as well.*

As previously shown, the *SAME* thing can also be seen in the eight signs in John's gospel. *ALL* have to do with events which move toward and end on the seventh day, yet *aion* and *aionios*, used in connection with these signs, have been translated in the sense of “eternal” throughout the gospel.

Now to James and the Epistle of James...

There are four individuals named “James” in the N.T., but, because of various things, only two could be considered for the authorship of the epistle — James, the brother of John, and James, the half-brother of Christ.

James the half-brother of Christ is usually regarded as the probable author of James, for James, the brother of John, was martyred early in the Acts period [Acts 12:1, 2], a martyrdom which occurred under Herod Agrippa I, who ruled from 37 to 44 A.D. And James' epistle is usually dated later than 44 A.D.

*BUT*, this epistle could easily have been written shortly after the martyrdom of Stephen at the end of Acts chapter seven [about 34, 35 A.D.], before Herod Agrippa I had even come to power. There is *nothing* in the epistle, or elsewhere, which would militate against thoughts of James having been written this early.

The epistle was written to believing Jews *in the diaspora* [1:1], a scattering which had begun shortly after Stephen's martyrdom [Acts 8:1ff].

And James, the brother of John, who had been with Christ on the Mount — in view of what Peter and John, also there with him, were later called to do — would undoubtedly be the writer of the epistle which bears his name rather than James, the half-brother of Christ.

As well, the Epistle of James — as John's gospel and epistles, and Peter's two epistles — deals heavily with material drawn from what all three men had seen while on the Mount with Christ [note indented data on pp. 28, 29 of this article].

Also, an interesting feature of the writing of these three men has to do with the use of the expression, "born from above," or "brought forth from above." All three use the expression, and they are *the ONLY* N.T. writers who do use this expression.

The latter will be developed more fully when dealing with I John chapter five later in this fourth part of the article.)

### 3) *Reason for Relating That Seen and heard*

Note the reason which John gave for relating that which he and others (two others in this case) had seen and heard:

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (vv. 3, 4).

The first two verses in John's first epistle form the basis for a purpose statement as he opens his epistle.

Then, in verses three and four, John states that he was relating this information to other Christians so that they could have "fellowship" and "joy" with him, Peter, and James.

And, near the end of his epistle, in the fifth chapter (vv. 10-13), a purpose statement for making things known in preceding material is seen once again. And, in a respect, the opening purpose statement in chapter one introduces and deals with the *SAME* material set forth in a different manner in the closing purpose statement in chapter five.

Thus, the opening purpose statement will be dealt with in this and the next section covering the first twelve verses in the epistle. And the closing purpose statement will be dealt with in the subsequent sections covering parts of the fifth chapter.

Both have to do with *EXACTLY* the *SAME* thing introduced at the beginning, with that which Peter, James, and John saw and experienced while on the Mount with Christ in Matt. 17:1-5.

John's opening statement regarding the subject matter to which he had called attention (the coming kingdom of Christ) had to do with "fellowship," and this thought is continued throughout the epistle, though not necessarily in so many words as seen at the beginning.

The word "fellowship" is a translation of the Greek word *koinonia*, which literally means "*commonly held*," "*to be of the same mind*."

And John used the word in a manner quite different than how it is often used today. John drew from that which he had made known, and he used the word in connection with the Christians' relationship to God and His Son relative to that which he had made known, *NOT* the Christians' relationship to other Christians relative to the matter.

*Fellowship is IN the Word, and true Biblical Fellowship CAN-NOT exist APART from the Word.*

Note again *HOW* John worded this in verses three and four. He related things pertaining to his, and others, experience, seen in Matt. 17:1-5, *for ONE two-fold purpose:*

*1) Fellowship: John wanted other Christians to be able to do EXACTLY what he, Peter, and James were doing relative to the subject at hand, the coming kingdom of Christ. They, having seen with his own eyes "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," could hold the entire matter in common, be of the same mind about it, as God and His Son.*

And in this respect, they could have "fellowship... with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," *about something which would NOT ONLY have been uppermost in their minds BUT also uppermost in the minds of the Father and His Son.*

These verses in I John are Scripture's Own teaching about and definition of "fellowship." "Fellowship" is *NOT* about one Christian being of the same mind as another Christian. Rather, it is about Christians being of the same mind as God and His Son on matters.

The complete thrust of the way John opened his first epistle had to do with his wanting other Christians to have what he, Peter, and James had. He wanted other Christians to be of the same mind about the subject at hand as they were, which would allow other Christians to also have true "fellowship" *WITH the Father and His Son.*

Two Christians can be of the same mind relative to something in the Word and have a common bond in that respect, *BUT, STILL, fellowship is IN the Word, WITH the Father and His Son.*

*THEN*, there is a purpose involved in the preceding, which is seen in the word "joy" in verse four.

2) *Joy*: In the first three verses, John dealt with the importance of the coming kingdom in the eyes of God and His Son and with Christians being like-minded about the matter, allowing true “fellowship.”

Then John provided the reason *WHY* he had made all of this known — “...that your joy may be full.”

The word translated “joy” (Gk. *chara*, “joy,” “gladness,” “delight”) is the same word translated “joy” in Matt. 25:21, 23 in the parable of the talents, which has to do with the future judgment of Christians, with the kingdom of Christ in view.

As well, note “joy” in Heb. 12:2 (same word, referencing the same thing): “...who for the ‘joy’ that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame...”

As seen in the parable of the talents, some Christians *will be allowed* to enter into “the joy” of their Lord, *which has to do with occupying a REGAL position in His kingdom* (vv. 14-23). And other Christians *will NOT be allowed* to enter into this “joy,” which, contextually, *can ONLY have to do with the opposite, with being denied a REGAL position in His kingdom* (vv. 14, 15, 24-30).

Something relative to entering or not entering this “joy” at a future time is seen in I John 1:4 *to have a present, preliminary aspect in the lives of Christians as well*.

The word “full” ending the verse (Gk. *pleroo* [same word used in Acts 2:2; Eph. 5:18]) is in the perfect tense in the Greek text, pointing to action completed in past time and existing during present time in a finished state.

Their “joy,” having been made “full” in past time through believing that revealed by John about the coming kingdom — allowing fellowship with the Father and His Son — should and could continue throughout present time into future time, being realized in its fullness at the judgment seat and beyond.

*BUT*, what about Christians separated from all of this, *NOT* having understood what John was talking about, *NOT* having “fellowship” with the Father and His Son, *NOT* having present “joy”?

What about their lot during present time? And what about their lot during future time?

Note two self-answering questions about the matter:

a) What should Christians who have believed and understood that which John called attention to (which had to do with fellowship and joy pertaining to the coming kingdom) — allowing fellowship and joy, and continuing in this fellowship and joy during present time — expect to hear at the judgment seat (which will have to do with the kingdom realized, that which is really “life,” really “joy,” realized)?

b) On the other hand, what should Christians who have disregarded what John called attention to (which, again, had to do with fellowship and joy pertaining to the coming kingdom) — voiding fellowship and joy during present time — expect to hear at the judgment seat (which, again, will have to do with the kingdom realized, that which is really “life,” really “joy,” realized)?

And this part of I John chapter one (vv. 1-4) will be concluded with a few thoughts on “fellowship” and “Joy” (vv. 3, 4) from verses referenced in the preceding two main sections:

Note the inseparable place which that being referenced by “joy” occupies in relation to “fellowship” within God’s economy.

Or, that could be stated another way...

Note the place which "the coming kingdom of Christ" occupies in relation to being "like-minded with the Father, and with His Son" within God's economy.

Christ, at Calvary, being crucified as "the Son of man" (*a Messianic title [cf. Ps. 8:4-6; Dan. 7:13, 14; John 3:13-16]*), looked toward "the joy that was set before him" (*the day when He, with His co-heirs, would take the kingdom and rule and reign*); and He, in *THIS* manner, "endured the cross [the sufferings involved], despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2a).

The word "despising" is a translation of the compound Greek word, *kataphroneo*, meaning "to think little of," "to look down upon." The word, contextually, has to do with viewing "the joy that was set before him" in relation to the "shame" that He was enduring.

*The "shame" was NOT something small! The Son of the God of the universe, and, in this respect, God Himself, was being "shamed"; BUT, in relation to the "joy" set before Him, God's Son could ONLY have refused to consider the "shame."*

The "joy" was so far removed from the "shame" that any comparison between the two, which would normally have been referenced through the use of *kataphroneo*, *COULDN'T, in actuality, in THIS case, even exist.*

Then, note continuing, in Heb. 12:2b: "...and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Following the sufferings and shame of Calvary, the Father told His Son, "Sit on my right hand, *UNTIL...*" (Ps. 110:1a).

And *THAT "UNTIL"* awaits a future day, *WHEN* the Son's enemies have been made His "footstool," *which will be the day when the Son realizes the "joy" set before Him at Calvary and rules this earth, with His co-heirs, for 1,000 years "after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:1b-4).*

Since *ALL Scripture* (Both Testaments) moves toward a seventh day, a seventh 1,000-year period (*ref.* the author's article, "Seven Thousand Years," Part I), *HOW* important is a proper understanding of the coming kingdom of Christ to a proper understanding of God's work throughout "time," within His economy?

Answering the preceding question will be left to the reader.

#### 4) *Forgiveness of Sins*

I John 1:5-2:2 forms the continuing next complete section in the epistle. And it is evident that this section, and actually the epistle as a whole, is to be understood in the light of the layout of the Divinely structured Tabernacle.

Note these eight continuing verses in I John:

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."



It is a simple matter to see the structured layout of the Tabernacle in what is stated in these verses. And understanding them in this respect *is the ONLY way* that they can be properly understood in a completely Scriptural framework, through going back to the foundation and comparing Scripture with Scripture.

In short, when studying the Scriptures, *ALWAYS simply allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. Otherwise...*

The word picture seen in these verses has to do with Christians, with their sin nature (vv. 7-10), in relation to the typology of the brazen laver in the courtyard of the Tabernacle (vv. 5, 6). Christians can be on either side of the laver, depending on whether they *HAVE* availed themselves of cleansing or *HAVE NOT* availed themselves of cleansing.

“Light” is associated with the area on one side of the laver (the side toward the Holy Place with its seven-leaved golden candlestick), and “darkness” is associated with the area on the other side (the side away from the Holy Place with its seven-leaved golden stick).

The laver had upper and lower basins filled with water, which was for the cleansing of the hands and feet of the priests as they ministered between the brazen altar and the Holy Place.

A once-for-all washing of the complete body had occurred upon their entrance into the priesthood (Ex. 29:4; 40:12). This washing of the complete body had its association with a blood sacrifice at the brazen altar in the courtyard (foundationally, the year-by-year offering of the paschal lamb). And, in this respect, in the word picture presented, this washing placed them beyond the brazen altar, ministering between the brazen altar and the Holy Place.

*BUT*, the brazen laver lay in this area between the brazen altar and the Holy Place. And the priests, ministering between these two places, *could NOT* bypass the laver.

Over and over the priests had to stop at the laver to wash their hands and feet, which had become soiled during the course of their ministry (Ex. 30:17-21; 40:30-32).

They had to keep themselves clean to minister in the Holy Place, where there was *light* (the seven-leaved golden candlestick), *bread* (the table of shewbread), and the altar of incense back against the veil (speaks of *prayer* [Luke 1:5-10]).

And, as there was *NO* power in the water upon their entrance into the priesthood (but in the blood shed at the brazen altar, pointing to Christ “slain from the foundation of the world”) there was *NO* power in the water at the brazen laver either (but in the shed blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies [placed there on the Day of Atonement], pointing to Christ’s shed blood on the mercy seat).

Through Christ, having been “slain from the foundation of the world,” there could *ONLY* have been a counterpart in the heavenly Tabernacle to that seen in the earthly Tabernacle. That is to say, since animal sacrifices *CANNOT* take away sin (Heb. 10:4), Christ’s death and shed blood, as seen in Rev. 13:8, would have had to be associated with both blood shed at the brazen altar in the courtyard and blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

Apart from the preceding, washings by water and the complete sacrificial system, both preceding and during the Mosaic Economy *could ONLY have been meaningless*. In short, apart from that seen in Rev. 13:8, with that blood placed on the mercy seat in the heavenly Tabernacle, *there could have been NO salvation or forgiveness of sin throughout the 4,000 years from Adam to Christ*.

It was this complete sacrificial system, seen in the priest’s ministry at the Tabernacle, that Christ drew from as He took a basin of water and washed the disciples’ feet in John chapter thirteen.

And one thing above all else about that seen in John chapter thirteen, in connection with I John 1:5-2:2, should capture the Christians' attention.

Note the latter part of verse eight:

“...If I wash [Gk., *nipto*] thee *NOT* [referring to washing parts of the body at the laver], thou hast *NO part with me.*”

The message being proclaimed by Christ and His disciples had to do with the kingdom, *and the PART with him could ONLY have had to do with this kingdom. It could ONLY have had to do with having a PART with Him IN His kingdom.*

*ONLY* Christians who allow cleansing at the laver in the courtyard, on the basis of His blood on the mercy seat of the heavenly Tabernacle, *will occupy positions as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.*

Thus, if I John 1:5-2:2 (or John 13:8b) is understood in the light of the Tabernacle and the ministry of the O.T. priests, these verses explain themselves. This is simply Scripture interpreting Scripture, allowing Scripture to interpret itself.

A Christian, as the O.T. priests upon their entrance into the priesthood, has had a complete washing, based on *the SAME thing* that the O.T. priests' washing was based on — Christ's death and shed blood.

However, today it is *NOT* through animal sacrifices first; rather, today, it is *DIRECTLY* through the One to Whom *ALL* O.T. sacrifices pointed.

And a Christian, as the O.T. priests at the laver, can keep himself clean from his continual contact with sin. Though today, it is *NOT* through washings at the laver per se; rather, today, it is through that typified by washings at the laver. *Today it is DIRECTLY through the rent veil into the Holy of holies, based on the shed blood of Christ on the mercy seat (I John 1:9; 2:2).*

The preceding is *HOW* I John 1:5-2:2 is structured, drawing from the O.T. priesthood in connection with the Tabernacle. *And that is HOW the passage MUST be interpreted and understood.*

A Christian can find himself on *EITHER* side of the laver in the courtyard, walking in the light on one side (vv. 5a, 7) *OR* walking in the darkness on the other side (vv. 5b, 6).

A Christian can find himself on the right side of the laver (having washed his hands and feet through confession of sin [1:9], receiving forgiveness on the basis of Christ's shed blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly Tabernacle [2:2]). And such a Christian can walk in the light of the golden candlestick in the Holy Place (1:7).

Or a Christian can find himself on the wrong side of the laver (not having washed his hands and feet through confession of sin [1:9]), walking in darkness (separated from the light in the Holy Place by the laver in the courtyard [1:6]).

The former position is an absolute necessity for the Christian to realize "fellowship" and "joy," seen in the verses leading into this section in I John (note "fellowship" referenced in vv. 6, 7), along with *ALL* that is involved therein.

The latter position will void *ALL* association with "fellowship" and "joy," along with *ALL* that is involved therein.

*And there is NO middle ground. It is EITHER one OR the other.*

## **Brought Forth from Above, Forgiveness of Sins (5:1-13)**

Note the first thirteen verses in I John chapter five:

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

As previously seen, in the opening part of I John (1:1-2:2), a purpose statement (1:3, 4) precedes the verses which draw from the typology of the Tabernacle (1:5-2:2).

In the closing, corresponding part of I John (5:1-13), a purpose statement (vv. 9-13) follows the verses which draw

from the typology of the Tabernacle (vv. 6-8).

And, viewing John's purpose statement in chapter five of this epistle in the light of his purpose statement for the eight signs in his gospel (20:30, 31), his reference to "these things" (v. 13) would seemingly refer particularly to material in the previous twelve verses (5:1ff), though in a larger respect back to all previous material (1:1ff).

Note that material in parts of these thirteen verses in I John 5:1ff (having to do with *the belief of Christians, in relation to the kingdom*) is identical to wording in John 20:30, 31 (having to do with *the belief of Jews, in relation to the kingdom*).

The whole of the matter in both passages (John 20:30, 31 and I John 5:1-13) has to do with effecting belief (the Jews in John, Christians in I John) "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (cf. John 20:31; I John 5:1, 5, 10, 12, 13).

*And belief in BOTH instances has to do with the saved and "life" in the kingdom, NOT with the unsaved and salvation by grace.*

(For comments on believing "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," refer to Part II of this article, pp. 7, 8.)

As also previously seen, in the opening and introductory part of his first epistle, John drew heavily from that which he and two others (Peter and James) had experienced while on the Mount with Christ in Matt. 17:1-5.

In the closing part of this epistle, preceding dealing with material drawn from the typology of the Tabernacle, John deals heavily with something seen in the N.T. *ONLY* in the writing of the three men introduced at the beginning — "born from above," "brought forth from above." Peter, James, and John are the only N.T. writers using this expression in material which they wrote, with John using it far more than both of the other two combined (sixteen times, in two books — six in his gospel, ten in His first epistle).

### 1) Brought Forth from Above

As previously seen, the absolute necessity of being “brought forth from above” appears in two parallel sections of John’s gospel (chs. 1, 3), a book built around eight particular signs, signs seeking to bring about Israel’s repentance and belief during the re-offer of the kingdom.

NOW, with the kingdom taken from Israel, John in his first epistle, directs matters relative to the absolute necessity of being “brought forth from above” to Christians (NOW the repository of the kingdom previously taken from Israel).

Apart from Christians being “brought forth from above” — *EXACTLY* as the Israelites during the time of the offer and re-offer of the kingdom — *they CANNOT enter into child-training as sons* (John 1:10-13; cf. Matt. 18:1-4), *and, consequently, they CANNOT see/enter “the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3-8).

Thus, in the light of what he had been led to write in the first three chapters of his gospel, is it any wonder that John used this expression ten times in his first epistle to Christians?

In I John, the expression is used once in chapter two, twice in chapter three, once in chapter four, and six times in chapter five.

In chapters two (v. 29) and four (v. 7), the expression is used relative to “righteousness” and “love” coming from above, from God.

And in both places, note the contextual usage.

In chapter two, the contextual usage has to do with abiding in Christ and not being ashamed before Him at His coming. And in chapter four, the text and context have to do with brotherly love and different facets of God’s love.

In chapter three (v. 9) the expression is used twice in a verse relative to the inability of Christians to sin who are being “brought forth from above.” Also, the same thing is seen in the last usage in chapter five (v. 18), with the ex-

pression used twice in this verse as well.

Christians being “brought forth from above,” abiding in Christ (ch. 2) *CANNOT sin*. Sin arises in the lives of Christians when they cease being “brought forth from above,” cease abiding in Christ, and allow themselves to be brought forth from below.

*Again, NO middle ground exists. It is EITHER one OR the other.*

(The popular translations and thought in these two verses that Christians cannot “practice” sin or “continue” sinning *can ONLY* be seen as incorrect any way one views the matter.

These translations are based on a misuse of a tense structure in the Greek text, a mistranslation of a word, and a misunderstanding of the text.

Thus, the words “practice” and “continue” in 3:9 and 5:18 are improper and misleading translations. Christians, with the old sin nature, *can and do practice sin, they continue sinning.*)

Then, in the first part of chapter five (vv. 1, 4), the expression “brought forth from above” is used four times (three times in v. 1, once in v. 4). And it is used in these verses relative to believing “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (cf. John 20:31) and, through this means, through faith, overcoming the world (note vv. 1-5 together).

All ten of these passages, having to do with being “brought forth from above,” should be understood as an inseparable unit, much like the seven overcomer promises in Revelation chapters two and three. *ALL of them together present the complete word picture on the matter.*

(Rather than attempt to deal with the matter further in this book, the reader is referred to the author’s book, *Brought Forth from Above.*)



## 2) Forgiveness of Sins

The most extensive use of “brought forth from above” in I John (5:1-4) is seen immediately preceding another reference to cleansing through that seen in the typology of the laver in the courtyard of the Tabernacle (5:6-8).

And, comparing this closing section with the opening section in I John, “brought forth from above” in chapter five would parallel the section dealing with “fellowship” and “joy” in chapter one (vv. 3, 4), *with BOTH having to do with the SAME thing — THAT which Peter, James, and John saw while on the Mount with Christ in Matt. 17:1-5, the coming kingdom.*

Note the verses dealing with typology drawn from the Tabernacle in chapter five once again:

“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (vv. 6-8).

Attention has often been called to the order of “blood and water” seen in the gospel accounts at the time of Christ’s crucifixion. Shortly following Christ’s death, *a Roman soldier pierced His side, and “blood and water” flowed out* (John 19:34).

*BUT*, in the text, in I John 5:6, the order is reversed. Here it is “water and blood.”

(The corresponding part of v. 6, in v. 8, [where “water and blood” are also seen], is often thought, due to lack of manuscript evidence, to be a scribal insertion into the text.)

In both instances (John 19:34 and I John 5:6), the text *can ONLY* be dealing with material drawn from the typology of the Tabernacle. *BUT, WHY these differences?*

That question though would actually answer itself, from the two different textual usages of the expression (“blood and water,” “water and blood”) when seen in the complete typology of the Tabernacle.

On John 19:34, Christ is still on the Cross.

The typology seen in this passage has to do with sacrifices before God on the north side of the brazen altar in the courtyard, preceding successive washings at the brazen laver. Thus, the order is as seen, “blood and water” — “shed blood” at the brazen altar *FIRST, THEN*, subsequent “washings” at the brazen laver.

In I John 5:6, Christ is *NO longer* on the Cross; *NOR* is He still in the tomb. Christ has risen and placed His blood on the mercy seat in the heavenly Tabernacle.

And, with *THAT* as the setting in I John, *the order can NOW ONLY* be “water and blood.”

Those being depicted — Christians — have applied the “blood” shed at the brazen altar (on the Cross), through belief. *The order at THAT time was “blood and water” — “blood” at the brazen altar, THEN subsequently “water” at the brazen laver.*

*NOW*, once beyond the brazen altar, the order is reversed. *NOW* it is “water and blood,” *EXACTLY* as seen in I John 5:6.

Cleansing occurs through washings at the laver, and these washings can effect cleansing *on ONE basis ALONE, on the basis of Christ’s blood on the mercy seat of the heavenly Tabernacle.*

*ONE* closing thought on the laver:

Again, note Christ’s words to Peter in John 13:8b:

“...If I wash thee *NOT* [referring to washings at the laver], thou hast *NO part with me.*”

Then, note a few closing thoughts on the purpose statements in I John:

Opening his epistle, John's stated purpose had to do with "fellowship" and "joy" relative to "*aionion* life," (1:1-4). And this was followed by material drawn from the laver (1:5-2:2).

Now near the close of his epistle, the purpose is still seen having to do with Christians one day realizing "*aionion* life," "the life," which is what the entire epistle deals with.

Note how this is summed up in 5:11-13, with Greek or literal renderings in brackets:

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life [*'aionion* life'], and this life [*'the life*'] is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life [*'the life*']; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life [*'the life*'].

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life [*'aionion* life'], and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God [cf. John 1:12]."

These verses follow thoughts on being "brought forth from above," believing "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (cf. Matt. 16:15-17; John 11:25-27; 20:31; I John 5:1-5), "overcoming the world" (vv. 4, 5), and keeping oneself clean at the laver (vv. 6-8).

Then, following this, note *HOW* John concludes his epistle in verses eighteen through twenty-one:

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.

This is the true God, and eternal life [*'aionion life'*].

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

John begins his concluding thoughts in these four verses by once again, and for the final time, calling attention to being "brought forth from above."

A Christian, through this means, is protected, Satan cannot touch him, and he remains free from sin.

The opposite position has to do with being brought forth from below, associated with Satan, the present world, and sin, with the whole world lying in wickedness.

And God, through His Word, has given Christians an understanding of the whole of that which presently exists and the "*aionios life*," "*the life*," which lies out ahead.

And, with respect to this, John's closing exhortation has to do with Christians keeping themselves from "idols," referring to *ANYTHING* which would keep Christians from realizing the goal of their calling, having a part in that "*aionios life*," "*the life*," which Peter, James, and John saw while on the Mount with Christ.

(Very little has previously been stated in this article about James and his part in the things later drawn from what he, Peter, and John had witnessed while on the Mount.

In this respect, note the Book of James as a whole and let James speak for himself regarding the matter.

James, as John, though he only used the expression "brought forth from above" once in his epistle, *not only explained EXACTLY what was meant by the expression but dealt TIME and AGAIN with the matter throughout his epistle.*

In that respect, James is an epistle which deals *EXTENSIVELY* with Jesus' statement, "*Except a man...*," in John 3:3, 5.

Note the use of the expression in 1:18, preceded by a clear explanation of *HOW* Christians are brought forth from above [vv. 2-17], along with stating that this has to do with *regality* [v.

12] and *the saving of the soul, the life* [v. 21].

In that respect, note the way that the book continues in 1:22ff. Or, note particularly 3:10-18 and 5:19, 20 where a number of distinctions are drawn between being brought forth from above or from below, along with a closing reference to the saving of the soul, reflecting back on 1:2-21.

Thus, the Book of James forms *an instruction book dealing with an indispensable subject in an extensive manner*, easily explaining why Jesus had included James among the three disciples allowed to witness that seen in Matt. 17:1-5.)

Accordingly, the importance of properly seeing, understanding, and using the expression “born from above,” *i.e., brought forth from above, SHOULD be clearly evident to anyone. BUT...*

### **Christ's Bride, His Co-Heirs**

Note corresponding things about teachings drawn from the typology of the Tabernacle in I John, which would have to do with the formation of Christ's bride, seen in the typology of Gen. 2:21-24.

And this would have to do with the completion of the Spirit's work during the present dispensation, drawn from the typology of Gen. 24:1ff:

Eve was created *in Adam* at the very beginning, but was not brought into existence as a separate entity until a later point in time.

Adam was put to sleep, his side opened, and from this opened side God took one of his ribs and formed Eve.

Eve was taken out of Adam and then presented back to Adam for “an helpmeet.” Eve was a part of the very being of Adam; and, resultingly, separate from Eve, Adam was *incomplete*.

In this respect, Eve, being presented back to Adam

for “an helpmeet,” *completed Adam and provided completeness for Eve as well*. And, in the highest sense, God looked upon the existing union as “*one flesh*.”

Note this account in Gen. 2:21-24):

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

The bride of Christ *HAS existed in the Son* from eternity. The bride’s existence and salvation date from “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8).

The bride, however, *could NOT* be brought into existence as a separate entity *UNTIL after the Son had been put to sleep and His side opened*.

This occurred at Calvary. The Son was put to sleep (the Son died), and His side was opened. “Blood” and “water” flowed forth from this opened side — the two elements necessary *to bring into existence the bride*, separate from the body, but still part of the body (John 19:34).

Then, once the complete, redeemed bride has been brought into existence through the means which God has provided, the bride will be presented back to the Son, *completing the Son and providing completeness for the bride as well* (Heb. 2:10).

And, in the highest sense, God will look upon the existing union as “*one flesh*” (Eph. 5:26-32).

God's past work having to do with bringing Eve into existence and His present work (to be completed in the future) having to do with bringing His Son's bride into existence *MUST be studied in the light of one another.*

In Gen. 2:22 God took a rib from Adam's side and "made he a woman." The Hebrew word translated "made" in this verse is *banah*, which means, "to build."

As previously seen, *Eve was created in Adam at the beginning, later taken out of Adam, built into a bride, and then presented back to Adam.*

In Matt. 16:18 Christ said, "...upon this rock I will build my church." The Church (in the sense in which the word is used in Matt. 16:18), created in Christ from eternity, is presently being called out of the body and built into a bride. And the time when this process will be completed and the bride presented back to the Son lies in the future.

(The word "Church" comes from a compound Greek word [*ekklesia*], which means, "called out" [*ek*, 'out'; *klesis*, 'to call'] And this word is used in the N.T. more than one way.

It is used during the present dispensation relative to *ALL of the saved* [e.g., Rev. 2, 3], for the bride has yet to be *singled out* and *set apart* from the remainder of the saved. That is to say, the bride, though presently being "called out" of the "called," has yet to be *set apart as a separate entity.*

However, looking beyond this present dispensation [following that time when the bride will have been set apart in the preceding manner], the use of the word *ekklesia* becomes *more RESTRICTIVE* in the way that the matter is looked upon in the N.T. [cf. Heb. 12:23].

Referring to *time* beyond the present dispensation, the word *ekklesia* is used *relative to those who will be placed as firstborn sons, adopted* ["adoption" (Gk., *huiiothesia*)

means “son-placing”) — placed in a position to rule and to reign [adopted into, placed in a “firstborn” position].

Within the human realm, firstborn sons ALONE can rule. And these sons, forming a third firstborn son [corporately, as Israel] following the adoption, will rule as consort queen with God’s Son, Jesus. THESE will be the ones who, in accord with Genesis chapter two, will be removed from Christ’s body, forming the bride of the second Man, the last Adam.

[For more information on the preceding, refer to the author’s book, *God’s Firstborn Sons*].

Remaining within the future scope of the matter and the exact meaning of the word *ekklesia* [called out], the clear teaching of Scripture attests to the fact that those who will form the Church in that coming day are NOT those presently being removed from the world.

Those taken from the world are the “called.” ALL Christians are “called,” removed from the world. BUT NOT ALL Christians will be among the “called out,” which will be taken from the called, the saved, the body, forming the Church as it will be viewed yet future.

In the preceding respect, the Church in that coming day will be the body of Christ [cf. Col. 1:18] in the same sense that Eve was the body of Adam.

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh...” [Gen. 2:23a].

ALL of Eve was of Adam’s body, BUT she was NOT ALL of his body.

“We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” [Eph. 5:30].

ALL of the bride will be of Christ’s body, BUT NOT ALL of His body.)