

The First Epistle of John

(Week 46 – 1John 5:1-5)

I. Review: (1John 4:19-21)

A. John made three basic points:

1. We love because He loved us first.
 - a. While we were sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8)
 - b. His love compels us to love in return (cf. 2Cor. 5:14-15)
2. If anyone claims to love God yet hates his brother is a liar.
3. Anyone who claims to love God must love his/her brothers.

II. The New Birth

A. 1John 5:1-5 (ESV), “*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith.⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

1. Question: From this passage of Scripture, what is the starting point to having a relationship with God?

- a. The new birth is the starting point (it’s mentioned 3 times)
 - i. A person can be active in church, have a moral lifestyle and be faithful in contribution yet not have a relationship with God.
 1. Cornelius in Acts 10 is an example of a man who feared God, gave to the poor and prayed regularly, yet he was not born again until he heard, believed and obeyed the gospel.
 - ii. Jesus said one must be born again (John 3:3, 7)
 1. You can dress up a corpse in the nicest clothing, it still is a corpse; what’s missing is LIFE.
 - Only God can impart life
 2. In the same manner, spiritually speaking, we were all dead in sin (Eph. 2:1).
 3. Attending more church services cannot impart life, only God can impart life:
 - For this reason, Peter says God, according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again (cf. 1Peter 1:3)

2. First vital sign of the New Birth:

a. Belief in Jesus as the Christ and Son of God (vv. 1, 5)

i. In the context:

1. The Gnostics did not believe Jesus was the Son of the Old Testament God. To them, the Old Testament God was an evil, cruel being.
2. Nor did they believe Jesus was the Christ (the Anointed) sent by the Old Testament God save sinners who would believe on Him.

ii. In principle:

1. Those who are truly born again believe Jesus is the Son of the Old Testament God.
2. To believe Jesus is the Son of God is to imply that He is Eternal God.
 - The Jews of Jesus' day clearly understood that His references to Himself as the Son of God were a claim to deity:
 - a. John 5:17-18 (ESV), *“But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I am working.’¹⁸This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”*
3. The purpose of the gospel is so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, we may have life in His name (John 20:31)
 - The term “believe” is used as a synecdoche:
 - a. A synecdoche is when a part is used to represent the whole
 - b. Example 1: *“Nice set of wheels”* means *“Nice car”*
 - i. Set of wheels (part) = Car (whole)
 - c. Example 2: *“Take a head count”* means *“Take a people count”*
 - i. Head (part) = People (whole)
 - Belief in His name includes obedience to His will (cf. Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:9)
 - Consider Abraham:
 - a. James 2:21-24 says Abraham believed God because his faith was made complete (or perfected) by his action.
 - b. Just as God's love is made complete when we demonstrate love for one another, faith is made complete when we obey God.

4. To believe that He is the Christ is to believe that He is the anointed one of God, sent to be the Savior of the world:

➤ Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the anointed one spoken of by Isaiah in Isaiah 61:1:

a. Lu 4:18-20, “*Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed (Grk. “chrío”) me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, (19) to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.’ (20) Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, (21) and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”*

B. Does the new birth (i.e., regeneration) precede faith?

1. 1John 5:1a, “*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God*”

a. Those influenced by Calvinism use this passage as proof that faith is a result of regeneration.

i. They teach that God regenerates a soul (no free will) prior to belief.

ii. They say that “*has been born*” denotes an action that took place prior the action of “*believes*.”

iii. Does this passage teach that regeneration happens before faith?

1. Biblically speaking, forgiveness is given to those who believe (John 20:31)

➤ If regeneration comes before faith, then that means forgiveness and salvation comes before belief.

2. Colossians 2:13 (ESV) says, “*And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”*

➤ This passage shows “*having forgiven*” as happening before the “*made alive*”

➤ If forgiveness of sins comes before “*made alive*,” then regeneration must come after faith, since “*made alive*” implies “*regeneration*.”