

SERIES: I JOHN: HOW TO KNOW YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, WEEK 14

TITLE: THE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN

TEXT: I JOHN 3:11-15

INTRODUCTION: (1) FRANCIS SCHAEFFER WROTE A BOOK IN 1970 TITLED: "THE MARK OF THE CHRISTIAN."

* IN IT, HE SAID AND I QUOTE: "THROUGH THE CENTURIES MEN HAVE DISPLAYED MANY DIFFERENT SYMBOLS TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE CHRISTIANS. THEY HAVE WORN MARKS IN THE LAPELS OF THEIR COATS, HUNG CHAINS ABOUT THEIR NECKS, EVEN HAD SPECIAL HAIRCUTS."

** "BUT THERE IS A MUCH BETTER SIGN – A MARK THAT HAS NOT BEEN THOUGHT UP JUST AS A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCY FOR USE ON SOME SPECIAL OCCASION OR IN SOME SPECIFIC ERA. IT IS A UNIVERSAL MARK THAT IS TO CAST THROUGH ALL THE AGES OF THE CHURCH TILL JESUS COMES BACK.

*** WHAT IS THIS MARK?

**** AT THE CLOSE OF HIS MINISTRY, JESUS LOOKS FORWARD TO HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS, THE OPEN TOMB AND THE ASCENSION. KNOWING THAT HE IS

ABOUT TO LEAVE, JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES FOR WHAT IS TO COME. IT IS HERE THAT HE MAKES CLEAR WHAT WILL BE THE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF THE CHRISTIAN.

(2) IT IS FOUND IN JOHN 13:33-35 WHERE JESUS SAID:

V. 33 – “LITTLE CHILDREN, I AM WITH YOU A LITTLE WHILE LONGER. YOU WILL SEEK ME; AND AS I SAID TO THE JEWS, NOW I ALSO SAY TO YOU, ‘WHERE I AM GOING, YOU CANNOT COME.’

V. 34 – “A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER, EVEN AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YOU ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

V. 35 – "BY THIS ALL MEN WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER."

* SCHAEFFER THEN SAID: “THIS PASSAGE REVEALS THE MARK THAT JESUS GIVES TO LABEL A CHRISTIAN NOT JUST IN ONE ERA OR IN ONE LOCALITY BUT AT ALL TIMES AND ALL PLACES UNTIL JESUS RETURNS.” (END QUOTE)

** NOW WHAT WAS THAT DISTINGUISHING MARK OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN THAT OTHER PEOPLE WOULD KNOW THAT WE ARE THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST?

*** IT IS LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER, LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS, LOVE FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST.

**** AND IT IS STRIKING IN JOHN 13:34&35 THAT JESUS COMMANDS US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER SINCE MOST PEOPLE DO NOT THINK OF LOVE AS A RESPONSE TO A COMMAND, QUOTE JOHN 13:34.

(3) AND WE NORMALLY THINK OF LOVE BEING AN INTUITIVE RESPONSE OR AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE, OR AN INCLINATION, SOMETHING FELT.

* BUT JESUS ELEVATES LOVE AS A RESPONSE OF A TRUE DISCIPLE FOR OTHER DISCIPLES OF HIS, THAT ALSO IS A COMMAND OF HIS.

** THEREFORE LOVE IS NOT OPTIONAL FOR A TRUE CHRISTIAN, IT'S NOT JUST DESIRABLE, IT IS NOT TO BE HELD HOSTAGE BY OUR CHANGING FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS.

*** LOVE IS AN ATTITUDE, AN ACTION, A CHOICE AND A FRUIT OF BEING A DISCIPLE, A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST.

**** IN FACT, JESUS AND THE N.T. WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE PRESENTED LOVE AS AN ESSENTIAL MARK

OR EVIDENCE OF A REAL SAVING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

(4) LOVE GAVE CREDIBILITY AND REALITY TO A CHRISTIAN'S WITNESS FOR CHRIST.

* FOR WHEN CHRISTIANS WENT INTO THE WORLD SPEAKING OF CHRIST AND LIVING FOR HIM, PEOPLE LOOKED AT THEM AND SAID, "BEHOLD HOW THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER!"

** AND THAT KIND OF LOVE THE WORLD CANNOT IGNORE AND IT GIVES WEIGHT TO OUR WORDS.

*** HOWEVER, UNDERSTAND THIS. LOVING ONE ANOTHER IS PRESENTED BY JOHN IN I JOHN AS AN EVIDENCE OF GENUINE FAITH IN CHRIST, NOT JUST AN ARGUMENT FOR IT.

**** LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS AN EVIDENCE OF PASSING FROM SPIRITUAL DEATH TO SPIRITUAL LIFE, OF TRULY BEING BORN AGAIN.

(5) WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS, NOT TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN. LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS A FRUIT OF CONVERSION, NOT A WORK TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN. WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER NOT TO BE SAVED BUT BECAUSE WE ARE SAVED.

* AND A CLEAR SIGN, A CLEAR FRUIT, A GREAT EVIDENCE OF KNOWING CHRIST AND THEREFORE TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, IS LOVE FOR OTHER TRUE BELIEVERS THAT GOD PROVIDENTIALLY PLACES AROUND US, STARTING IN THE PLACE WHERE TRUE CHRISTIANS ASSEMBLE AS HIS CHURCH AND THEN BEYOND.

** THEREFORE A DISTINGUISHING MARK OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN IS LOVE FOR OTHER BELIEVERS, WHICH IS THE TITLE OF MY SERMON TODAY.

*** AND JOHN JUST COMES AT THIS SOCIAL TEST FROM ANOTHER ANGLE, FROM ANOTHER VANTAGE POINT, IN AN EXPANDED WAY AS JOHN MACARTHUR SAID: "TO PRESENT THE SAME TRUTH IN 'NEW PACKAGES.'"

**** JOHN IS REPETITIOUS AND RELENTLESS IN REPEATEDLY COMMUNICATING THE SAME TRUTH IN FRESH WAYS.

(6) AND WITH THAT SAID, AS WE COME TO THE SOCIAL TEST OF LOVING ONE ANOTHER TODAY, WE WILL LOOK AT 4 POINTS AS WE WORK THROUGH I JOHN 3:11-15.

* NO. 1 THE ADMONISHMENT BY JOHN TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, V. 11; NO. 2 THE ASSASSIN, SPEAKING OF CAIN WHO DID NOT LOVE HIS BROTHER, BUT MURDERED HIS BROTHER, V. 12; NO. 3 THE ASTONISHMENT THAT BELIEVERS HAD IN ASIA MINOR AS THEY WERE

EXPERIENCING HATRED, V. 13; AND NO. 4 THE ASSURANCE WE CAN HAVE TO KNOW WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, VV. 14&15.

** AND WITHOUT FURTHER INTRODUCTION, WE'LL GO TO OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, THE ADMONISHMENT, LOOK AT V. 11 PLEASE.

I. THE ADMONISHMENT, (READ V. 11)

A. NOW THE PHRASE "THE MESSAGE YOU HAVE HEARD FROM THE BEGINNING" MAKES REFERENCE TO THE BEGINNING OF THEIR CHRISTIAN LIVES, FROM THE TIME THEY FIRST BECAME BELIEVERS.

* IT REFERS TO THE BEGINNINGS OF GOSPEL PREACHING WHEN THESE BELIEVERS IN ASIA MINOR FIRST HEARD ABOUT CHRIST.

** AND JOHN HERE IS ADMONISHING HIS READERS TO REMEMBER WHAT THEY WERE FIRST TAUGHT AND NOT ALLOW FALSE TEACHERS TO LEAD THEM ASTRAY WITH THEIR NEW MESSAGE AND NEW TEACHINGS.

*** JOHN IS SAYING, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, GO BACK TO YOUR ROOTS, GO BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE FIRST TAUGHT, GO BACK TO THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE FAITH.

**** AND WHAT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS THAT THESE BELIEVERS HEARD FROM JOHN AND OTHER TRUTH TEACHERS OF THE FAITH?

1. TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER!

* AND WE ARE TO PAY BACK EVERY DEBT, EXCEPT THE DEBT OF LOVE WHICH IS DUE OTHERS, AN OUTSTANDING OBLIGATION THAT CAN NEVER BE REPAID, (QUOTE ROMANS 13:8).

** AND RIGHT BEFORE THAT OBLIGATION THAT PAUL TALKED ABOUT IN ROMANS 13, HE TALKED ABOUT BROTHERLY LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IN ROMANS 12:9&10 (QUOTE THEM).

*** AND THEN PAUL WOULD BE INSPIRED TO SAY IN I CORINTHIANS 13, THAT WITHOUT LOVE, EVEN OUR MOST SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES ARE WORTHLESS. (QUOTE I CORINTHIANS 13:1-3)

**** NOW PAUL AT THE END OF THIS GREAT LOVE CHAPTER SAYS THAT EVEN WHEN FAITH AND HOPE PASS AWAY, LOVE ENDURES FOREVER FOR LOVE IS THE GOD-LIKE VIRTUE, FOR IN HEAVEN, PERFECT LOVE WILL BE THE EXPRESSION TOWARD GOD AND THE REDEEMED, SO LOVE IS THE GREATEST OF THESE VIRTUES (QUOTE I CORINTHIANS 13:13).

2. AND BELOVED BEYOND THAT LOVE IS THE LEADING EVIDENCE OF WALKING IN THE SPIRIT IN GALATIANS 5:22, AND WE ARE GOD-LIKE WHEN WE LOVE, FOR GOD IS LOVE IN I JOHN 4:8 AND I JOHN 4:16.

* AND GOD INCARNATE HIMSELF GAVE US A COMMANDMENT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, NOT ONLY IN JOHN 13:34&35 BUT ALSO IN JOHN 15:12 (QUOTE IT).

** AND ON TOP OF THAT WE ARE TO LOVE GOD FIRST AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES IN MATTHEW 22:37-40.

*** FURTHERMORE LOVE FOR CHRIST IS PRIMARY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ACCORDING TO REVELATION 2:4 AND MATTHEW 10:37.

**** BUT LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR. OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS THE VISIBLE EXPRESSION OF OUR LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST, QUOTE I JOHN 4:20&21.

3. AND BELOVED AS WE GROW IN GRACE, THAT GROWTH WILL ALWAYS LEAD US TO LOVE OTHERS MORE. CHRISTIAN MATURITY WILL NEVER LEAD US IN A RECLUSIVE ISOLATED SELFISHNESS THAT DRAWS US AWAY FROM OTHERS.

* RATHER, THE MORE WE LOVE CHRIST, THE MORE WE WILL LOVE OTHERS AND SERVE OTHERS AND BE AROUND OTHERS.

** THEREFORE THE IDEA OF ISOLATION FROM OTHER BELIEVERS IS NOT A SIGN OF LOVE, BUT A SIGN OF SELFISHNESS. AND THEY WHO ISOLATE THEMSELVES FROM CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY, SERVICE AND CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE FLAT OUT SELFISH. AND SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING LONE RANGERS ARE DEAD RANGERS, WE NEED EACH OTHER.

*** AND ONE MORE THING HERE IN V. 11. JOHN HAVING STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVING ONE ANOTHER, CONTRASTS THE CHILDREN OF GOD WHO LOVE ONE ANOTHER HERE, WITH THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL WHO DO NOT.

4. FOR IF YOU RECALL IN I JOHN 3:10 IN OUR STUDY LAST WEEK, JOHN SAID: "BY THIS THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL ARE OBVIOUS: ANYONE WHO DOES NOT PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT OF GOD, NOR THE ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE HIS BROTHER."

* NOW CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL DO NOT PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL DO NOT LOVE OTHERS.

** THEREFORE THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL, INSTEAD OF BEING CHARACTERIZED BY LOVE ARE MARKED WITH HATRED, BITTERNESS, ANGER, INDIFFERENCE AND EVEN MURDER TOWARD THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

*** AND JOHN WILL ILLUSTRATE THAT FROM THE O.T. AND THE LIFE OF CAIN IN V. 12, WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE ASSASSIN, THE MURDERER-CAIN. LOOK AT V. 12 PLEASE.

II. THE ASSASSIN, (READ V. 12)

A. NOW THE CONTRAST TO LOVE IS WHAT?

* THE ANSWER IS HATE.

** AND CAIN, THE FIRST CHILD BORN TO ADAM AND EVE, KILLED HIS BROTHER ABEL BECAUSE HATE, ANGER AND JEALOUSY WERE IN HIS HEART, AND CAIN BECAME THE FIRST MURDERER IN HUMAN HISTORY.

*** THEREFORE CAIN IS THE ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT LOVE IS NOT, HE IS THE ILLUSTRATION OF HATE, THE OPPOSITE OF LOVE, FOUND IN GENESIS 4:1-8.

**** AND THAT CAIN MURDERED HIS BROTHER GIVES EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS NOT A CHILD OF GOD BUT A CHILD OF THE DEVIL, HE WAS OF "THE EVIL ONE"

ACCORDING TO V. 12, HE ACTED LIKE HIS FATHER, THE DEVIL.

1. FOR DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT JESUS SAID TO SOME JEWISH PEOPLE THAT WERE RELIGIOUS BUT NOT RIGHT WITH GOD IN JOHN 8:44?

* HE SAID: "YOU ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL, AND YOU WANT TO DO THE DESIRES OF YOUR FATHER. HE WAS A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING, AND DOES NOT STAND IN THE TRUTH BECAUSE THERE IS NO TRUTH IN HIM. WHENEVER HE SPEAKS A LIE, HE SPEAKS FROM HIS OWN NATURE, FOR HE IS A LIAR AND THE FATHER OF LIES."

** SO CAIN WAS OF THE EVIL ONE AND ACTED LIKE HIS FATHER, HE SLEW HIS BROTHER.

*** AND THE VERB SLEW IN THE GREEK HERE SPEAKS OF A VIOLENT DEATH THAT LIT. MEANS TO BUTCHER OR SLAUGHTER AND CAN MEAN TO SLIT THE THROAT.

**** THIS IS VIVID LANGUAGE BUT SHOWS THE VIOLENCE AND ANGER IN HIS HEART DRIVEN BY JEALOUSY.

2. FOR JOHN ASKS A RHETORICAL QUESTION HERE IN V. 12, "AND FOR WHAT REASON DID HE SLAY HIM?"

* AND THE ANSWER IS “BECAUSE HIS DEEDS WERE EVIL, AND HIS BROTHER’S WERE RIGHTEOUS.”

** IT IS TO SAY, CAIN WAS EVIL AND HATED RIGHTEOUSNESS SO MUCH THAT HE EVEN KILLED HIS BROTHER WHOSE RIGHTEOUS DEEDS HAD REBUKED HIM.

*** ABEL’S LIFE CONVICTED CAIN TO THE POINT THAT HE KILLED HIS BROTHER IN AN ATTEMPT TO PACIFY THE HAUNTING CONVICTIONS HE FELT.

**** BELOVED, IT WAS NOT BECAUSE ABEL WAS WICKED THAT HE WAS MURDERED, BUT THE REVERSE.

3. JEALOUSY LAY BEHIND HIS HATRED, NOT THE JEALOUSLY WHICH COVETS ANOTHER’S GREATER GIFTS, BUT THAT WHICH RESENTS ANOTHER’S GREATER RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE ENVY WHICH MADE THE JEWISH RELIGIONISTS DEMAND THE DEATH OF JESUS.

* AND THIS TRUTH SETS UP V. 13 AND WHAT IT WILL SAY. FOR CAIN BELONGED TO SATAN AND ABEL BELONGED TO GOD.

** CAIN REPRESENTS HATE, ABEL REPRESENTS LOVE. CAIN REPRESENTS THE WORLD, ABEL THE BELIEVER.

*** AND THE WORLD AT TIMES HATES BELIEVERS, ESPECIALLY WHEN BELIEVER’S LOVING RIGHTEOUS

DEEDS EXPOSE THE WORLD'S EVIL SELFISH JEALOUS WAYS.

**** FOR LIKE CAIN, THE WORLD RESENTS SAVED PEOPLE, RESENTS THE RIGHTEOUS (BELIEVERS) BECAUSE THROUGH THEIR RIGHTEOUS ACTIONS, THEY EXPOSE THE FALSE BELIEFS AND WICKED PRACTICES OF THE WORLD, AND THEY DON'T LIKE THAT.

4. THE WORLD CALLS FOR TOLERANCE, EXCEPT WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR HATRED OF TRUE BELIEVERS, WHICH LEADS US TO OUR THIRD POINT, THE ASTONISHMENT. LOOK AT V. 13 PLEASE.

III. THE ASTONISHMENT, (READ V. 13)

A. NOW JOHN GIVES BELIEVERS, THE BRETHREN, A COMMAND HERE IN V. 13, FOR THE PHRASE MARVEL NOT, OR DO NOT BE SURPRISED, OR DO NOT MARVEL, DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE IS IN THE IMPERATIVE MOOD AND THUS IS A COMMAND.

* AND THE COMMAND IS DON'T BE ASTONISHED, DON'T BE IN WONDER IF THE WORLD HATES YOU. AND THE WORD "IF" IN THIS SENTENCE IS ACTUALLY EQUIVALENT TO THAT. DO NOT BE SURPRISED THAT THE WORLD HATES YOU.

** AND IT APPEARS THAT THE BELIEVERS IN ASIA MINOR IN THE CHURCHES JOHN WAS WRITING TO WERE SHOCKED BY THE HATE, PERSECUTION AND OPPOSITION THE WORLD, UNSAVED PEOPLE WERE GIVING THEM.

*** AND JOHN IS JUST SAYING IN CONTEXT HERE, THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH CAIN'S DESCENDENTS WHO WILL EXPRESS THEIR HATRED TOWARD THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

**** THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL WILL HATE THE CHILDREN OF GOD. THEREFORE CAIN WAS THE PROTOTYPE OF THE WORLD, WHICH STILL MANIFESTS THE HATEFUL QUALITIES HE FIRST DISPLAYED.

1. AND A WORLD THAT IS FILLED WITH PRIDE, SELFISHNESS, ANGER AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS WILL HATE THOSE WHO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY. LIGHT REPROVES DARKNESS AND THE WORLD LOVES DARKNESS BECAUSE ITS DEEDS ARE EVIL.

* HENCE JESUS SAID IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: (QUOTE MATTHEW 5:10-12).

** AND THEN IN HIS UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE, JESUS TOLD HIS APOSTLES THE WORLD WOULD HATE THEM.

*** HE SAID IN JOHN 15:18&19 AND JOHN 15:23-25 THESE WORDS:

V. 18 – “IF THE WORLD HATES YOU, YOU KNOW THAT IT HAS HATED ME BEFORE IT HATED YOU.

V. 19 – “IF YOU WERE OF THE WORLD, THE WORLD WOULD LOVE ITS OWN; BUT BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, BUT I CHOSE YOU OUT OF THE WORLD, BECAUSE OF THIS THE WORLD HATES YOU.”

V. 23 – “HE WHO HATES ME HATES MY FATHER ALSO.”

V. 24 – “IF I HAD NOT DONE AMONG THEM THE WORKS WHICH NO ONE ELSE DID, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE SIN; BUT NOW THEY HAVE BOTH SEEN AND HATED ME AND MY FATHER AS WELL.

V. 25 – “BUT THEY HAVE DONE THIS TO FULFILL THE WORD THAT IS WRITTEN IN THEIR LAW, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.’”

**** NOW GUESS WHAT? THE WORLD WOULD HATE THE APOSTLES JESUS WAS TALKING TO IN JOHN 15, FOR THEY WERE ALL MARTYRED EXCEPT FOR JOHN, WHOM WAS EXILED TO THE ISLAND OF PATMOS FOR HIS FAITH.

2. AND THE POINT IS ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL HAVE ALWAYS PERSECUTED THOSE WHO LOVE AND LIVE THE

TRUTH. FOR EVEN TODAY, BELIEVERS AROUND THE WORLD DIE UNDER THE HATEFUL MURDEROUS HANDS OF THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL.

* SO JOHN'S COMMAND: BELIEVER, DON'T BE SURPRISED, DON'T BE ASTONISHED IF THE WORLD HATES YOU.

** AND I'M NOT SUGGESTING THAT WE LOOK FOR TROUBLE, OR WE SHOULD BE HARSH OR UNKIND, AND TRY TO TICK PEOPLE OFF, BUT THE REALITY IS, WE WILL BY LIVING AND TELLING THE TRUTH AND HAVING INTEGRITY IN A WORLD OF LIES.

*** AND IT MAY BE, WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE HATING US BECAUSE WE ARE NOT VERY CHRISTLIKE. I MEAN HIS RIGHTEOUS LIFE LED PEOPLE TO HATE HIM, PERSECUTE HIM AND KILL HIM AND HE WAS PERFECT.

**** AND WALKING IN AND LIVING LOVE WILL BRING A RESPONSE. THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL, OF THE EVIL ONE WILL HATE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, ILLUSTRATED BY CAIN AND ABEL.

3. BUT REGARDLESS OF THE RESPONSE WE ARE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND TO LIVE LOVE AND LOVE THE TRUTH AND TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

* AND WHEN WE LOVE THE BRETHREN, WHEN WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, WE SHOULD HAVE ASSURANCE THAT WE ARE BELIEVERS, BUT IF WE LIVE IN HATE LIKE THE WORLD, WE SHOULD NOT HAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT WE ARE THE LORD'S.

** WITH THAT SAID, LOOK AT V. 14 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE ASSURANCE.

IV. THE ASSURANCE, (READ V. 14)

A. NOW THE THEME OF I JOHN IS HOW WE CAN "KNOW" THAT WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND KNOW IS A KEY WORD IN I JOHN USED 36 TIMES IN MY BIBLE.

* SO JOHN BEGINS IN V. 14 BY SAYING "WE KNOW." WE KNOW WHAT? WE KNOW THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, THAT WE HAVE PASSED OUT OF SPIRITUAL DEATH TO SPIRITUAL LIFE, THAT WE ARE BORN AGAIN, BECAUSE, BECAUSE WE LOVE THE BRETHREN.

** TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY, THE MARK OF SPIRITUAL LIFE IS LOVE.

*** BELOVED, THE NEW BIRTH WHICH GRANTS LIFE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAD IN THEIR TRESPASSES AND SINS, TURNS HATEFUL AND MURDEROUS ATTITUDES INTO LOVING ONES.

**** JOHN THEREFORE REMINDED HIS READERS AT THE END OF V. 14 THAT ANYONE WHO DOES NOT SO LOVE HAS NOT RECEIVED SPIRITUAL LIFE BUT ABIDES IN THE CONDITION OF SPIRITUAL DEATH, THAT THAT PERSON HAS NOT BEEN BORN OF GOD AND THUS A CHILD OF GOD, THEY ARE STILL CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL.

1. AND I WANT YOU TO SEE ANOTHER IMPORTANT TRUTH IN V. 14: BECOMING A CHILD OF GOD IS NOTHING LESS THAN A RESURRECTION OUT OF SPIRITUAL DEATH INTO ETERNAL LIFE. IT IS SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

* AND THIS IS PICTURED AND TAUGHT BY JESUS IN JOHN 5:24 WHERE IT SAYS: (QUOTE IT).

** NOW HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE? WELL HERE'S WHAT THAT PERSON DOES, THEY HAVE A PARTICULAR LOVE FOR THEIR BRETHREN.

*** AND WHEN DID THE BRETHREN MEET? IN THE ASSEMBLY IN THE CHURCH, AS THE CHURCH. SO IT STARTS IN LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN WE ARE AROUND A LOT, AND IT PROCEEDS TO TRUE BELIEVERS THE LORD WILL PROVIDENTIALLY BRING ACROSS OUR PATHS.

**** BUT IN CONTRAST, ANYONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE GIVES EVIDENCE THAT THEY REMAIN IN DEATH. LOVE IS A FRUIT, A SIGN OF HAVING SPIRITUAL LIFE.

***** AND JOHN WILL AGAIN GIVE US A VERY CLEAR CONTRAST AGAIN IN V. 15 BY TALKING ABOUT THE OPPOSITE OF LOVE WHICH IS WHAT? HATE. WE HAVE AGAIN THE CONTRAST OF LOVE AND HATE. LOOK AT V. 15 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 15. NOW IN GOD'S HOLY EYES, HATRED, THE OPPOSITE OF LOVE IS THE MORAL EQUIVALENT OF MURDER.

* HENCE JOHN SAYS: EVERYONE WHO HATES HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER.

** HATE IN THE HEART IS THE ROOT, IF NOT PUT IN CHECK BY THE LAW OF MAN AND THE LAW OF GOD, CAN PRODUCE THE FRUIT OF MURDER.

*** IT IS TO SAY THE ROOT OF HATE CAN PRODUCE THE FRUIT OF MURDER AS IT DID WITH CAIN KILLING HIS BROTHER ABEL.

**** JOHN LINKS HATE WITH MURDER AS JESUS DID IN A SENSE IN MATTHEW 5:21&22. THEREFORE THE ONLY OUTWARD DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MURDER AND HATE IS THE DEED ITSELF – BUT THE ATTITUDES ARE THE SAME,

IT COMES FROM THE SAME HEART OF ENVY, JEALOUSY AND HATRED.

1. AND THAT KIND OF PERSON, WHO HAS THAT KIND OF HEART IS STILL SPIRITUALLY DEAD AND DOES NOT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

* FOR JOHN SAYS, YOU KNOW THAT NO MURDERER HAS ETERNAL LIFE ABIDING IN HIM.

** AND JOHN DOES NOT MEAN THAT A MURDERER CANNOT BE SAVED, PAUL WAS.

*** JOHN SIMPLY MEANS THAT A PERSON WHO CHARACTERISTICALLY HATES IS A POTENTIAL MURDERER AND IS NOT SAVED, HE OR SHE IS STILL DEAD IN THEIR TRESPASSES AND SIN.

**** MURDERERS IN HEART CAN BE SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD, BUT MURDERERS OF THE HEART WHO REMAIN THAT WAY SHOW BY ATTITUDE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN BORN OF GOD AND THUS ARE A CHILD OF THE DEVIL.

IN WRAP UP: (1) LORD WILLING NEXT WEEK IN VV. 16-18, WE WILL SEE THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF LOVE IN CHRIST AND HOW HE LOVED, AND HOW WE SHOULD LOVE, NOT WITH WORDS, BUT ACTIONS.

* BUT FOR TODAY, DO YOU PASS THE SOCIAL TEST OF LOVE? DO YOU GIVE EVIDENCE THAT YOU HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE BY LOVING THE BRETHREN?

** DEAR FOLKS: THE MAN OR WOMAN WHO DOES NOT LOVE HIS BROTHER AND SISTER IN CHRIST STILL LIVES AND MOVES IN THE REALM OF SPIRITUAL DEATH; AND HIS OR HER FAILURE TO LOVE SHOWS THAT THE LIFE OF GOD DOES NOT ABIDE IN THEIR SOUL.

*** JOHN IS REALLY BLACK AND WHITE ISN'T HE IN I JOHN? HE TELLS THE TRUTH AS THE APOSTLE OF LOVE. DO YOU PASS THE DOCTRINAL TEST ABOUT WHO THE BIBLE SAYS JESUS IS?

**** DO YOU PASS THE MORAL TEST OF NOT LIVING IN SIN AS THE NORM OF YOUR LIFE?

(2) AND DO YOU PASS THE SOCIAL TEST OF LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN?

* IF NOT, REPENT. TURN FROM YOUR SIN TODAY AND TURN TO CHRIST ALONE. HE IS THE ONLY SAVIOR, CALL UPON HIM IN REPENTANCE AND HE WILL SAVE YOU AND CHANGE YOU.

** THEN YOU WILL PASS THE TESTS OF A TRUE BELIEVER.

*** AND REMEMBER THE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN IS LOVE. I CLOSE AGAIN WITH WORDS OF JESUS IN JOHN 13:34&35 (QUOTE THEM AND PRAY).