

## CHURCH HISTORY LITERACY

### *Chapter 7 - Supplement* Heresies: Gnosticism and 1 John

There is something tantalizing about “secret” knowledge.

Our now thirty-year-old son Will was about 13 when the book, *The Bible Code* first came out. He quickly devoured it. He came to me as an inquisitive young teenager and asked me, “Dad, what do you think about this book?”

The book was written by a journalist who claimed to have found secret hidden messages in the Hebrew Old Testament. These messages were supposedly prophetic of future events. The way the book did it was by taking all the Hebrew letters in the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) and putting them in succession (removing the spaces between the words). Then a computer would take every *n*th letter to see if there were any secret words revealed.

The theory was that God gave Moses those exact letters with no spaces between them, so the code was secret knowledge from God.

I told Will to always be suspicious of such “secrets.” God is in the revealing business, not generally in the secret business! Further, this is something that just statistically happens with anything. We can do the same with the English Bibles. Consider Genesis 31:28 in the King James Version:

And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.

We can take a section of that verse starting with “daughters,” and use the Drosnin Bible code technique to get:

daughtersthouhastnowdonefoolishlyinsodoing

Now start with the “r” in daughters and use every fourth letter. You get: “R-O-S-W-E-L-L.” Ahhh...

Now Drosnin doesn’t end there. He then takes the number used and sets up a matrix by rearranging the letters into what looks like a modern “Find-a-word” puzzle. After this he looks for vertical insights to the message. Here we do it with our KJV passage:

S A N D M Y D A U G H T E R S T H O U H  
M Y D A U G H T E R S T H O U H A S T N  
U G H T E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O  
E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O  
H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S  
A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y I  
O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y I N S O D  
N E F O O L I S H L Y I N S O D O I N G  
O L I S H L Y I N S O D O I N G I T I S  
H L Y I N S O D O I N G I T I S I N T H

Now the task of the analyst is to find the word vertically and look for other key words around it. We can do it below, marking the four-letter box in a dashed line around “ROSWELL” only to discover the next key words to the right!

S A N D M Y D A U G H T E R S T H O U H  
M Y D A U G H T E R S T H O U H A S T N  
U G H T E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O  
E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O  
H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S  
A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y I  
O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y I N S O D  
N E F O O L I S H L Y I N S O D O I N G I T I S  
H L Y I N S O D O I N G I T I S I N T H

In truth, with thanks to Dave Thomas for the above example, “hidden messages can be found anywhere, provided the seeker is willing and able to harvest the immense field of possibilities.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, Dave, “Hidden Messages and the Bible Code,” *The Skeptical Inquirer*, Vol. 21.6, Nov./Dec. 1997. He goes on to find “Hitler” and “Nazi” in *War and Peace*, along with a lot of other combinations.

Secrets tickle something within humans. Something in me *wants* to believe in such mysteries, even when my mind knows better. What is it that makes secret knowledge so alluring? Whatever it is, it has been around for a long time! One of the earliest Christian heresies involved the idea of “secret knowledge.” Today we call this heresy “Gnosticism.”

## WHAT WAS GNOSTICISM?

“Gnosticism” is a label scholars attach to a broad area of heresy in the early church. It comes from a Greek word γνωστικός (*gnostikos*) that means “capable of attaining knowledge.” At its core, Gnosticism taught that there was secret knowledge (γνῶσις - *gnosis*<sup>2</sup>) held by a select few, which was not available or known to the church at large. The Gnostics were, literally, those “in the know.” They claimed to be the ones with true insight for their day, the true knowledge that explained the cosmos, God and man. This true insight was distinct from the apostolic faith taught by the ordinary church to the ordinary person.

At its root, Gnosticism was dualistic. People were not whole in what we would call body, mind, soul, etc. Instead, people were seen as a composite of two distinct wholes, that of the body or flesh, and that of the soul or spirit. This meant that people were made up of a physical feature that contained within it a spiritual/soulful feature that was often seen to be purer and even entrapped in the physical. This radical dualism found roots in teachings from Plato as well as other religious thought.

Gnosticism took a number of different forms, depending on whose “secret insights” one might ascribe as truth.<sup>3</sup> But, most of the teachings taught similar basic core ideas:

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<sup>2</sup> In Greek, there are two different words for knowledge. This word, (γνῶσις - *gnosis*) means an acquaintance, as when two people have met each other. The other word, (οἶδα - *oida*) meant what we would call propositional knowledge, as in Acts 24:22, “But Felix, having a rather accurate *knowledge* of the Way, put them off, saying, ‘When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.’” Gnostics were those capable of attaining, and in fact actually attaining acquaintance, with a previously unknown god. In fact, certain Gnostics would use Paul’s sermon about the unknown god to the Athenians (Acts 17:23) as a text supporting their special knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> There are a number of Gnostics’ writings available today. These writings include those discovered across the river from Nag Hammadi, Egypt, as well as numerous other scraps and fragments. Frequently, some set of these writings gets published as “hidden” or “lost” books of the Bible when, in reality, they never had anything to do with Orthodox Christianity. One might read, for example, *The Secret Book According to John*, but the book was never written by John, and the secrets have nothing to do with our Biblical truth! This book gives a creation account

- There is more than one “god.”
- Our spirits are eternal and good while the earth and our physical bodies are temporal and evil (or at least, lesser in goodness than our spirits).
- Our need in life is to free ourselves from the physical and get our spirits through the heavens back home where they belong. Salvation is seen as the liberation of the spirit and its return through the heavens.
- Jesus was the messenger to teach the spirit’s liberation and the keys to return.
- As a holy messenger, Christ was not flesh and blood himself. Some taught he was an apparition. Others taught that Christ was a spirit that descended upon the man Jesus at or near his baptism, removing himself in liberation before the man Jesus was crucified.<sup>4</sup>

The first Christian reference to Gnosticism is found in Paul’s first letter to Timothy. As we read it in the English Standard Version, 1 Timothy 6:20-21 says,

O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” (*gnosis* - γνῶσις) for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

Scholars have more recently determined that Gnosticism can be found emanating from Jewish roots as well as Greek roots. The Dead Sea Scrolls illustrate a number of ideas that can be seen as roots of gnostic thought. The ideas of a “God of Knowledge” warring against a “God of Ignorance,” present terms and concepts that can be seen to evolve into some of the dualism prominent in later Gnostic heresies.<sup>5</sup>

Different “schools” of Gnosticism bore the names of their originators or major teachers. Earlier we discussed Valentinus. In this supplement we consider Cerinthus, putting his teachings and larger gnostic ideas against the New Testament writing called 1 John.

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that allegedly predates the Genesis account. Genesis is then retold in this book. The differences are compelling. In *The Secret Book According to John*, the creator of the material world from Genesis 1:1 (“In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth”) is not the true god, but is actually Satan himself whose true name is given as “Ialdabaoth” and “Saklas” (SBJn 10:19f, 11:15f). This mystic truth was claimed to have been told by Jesus after his resurrection when he was supposedly hanging around earth for another 18 months teaching the secret truth!

<sup>4</sup> *The Story of Christian Theology*, Roger Olson (IVP 1999), p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> “Gnosticism,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (Doubleday 1992), Vol. 2, at 1036.

## CERINTHUS

One of the earlier known Gnostics was Cerinthus. We do not have any of his writings today, but we know about him through the writings of others, notably Irenaeus and Eusebius. As such, we are uncertain about his birthplace or date of birth, but we are told he received training from Egypt and lived and taught in the later days of the Apostle John in Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

Cerinthus taught a heresy that blended aspects of Gnosticism with his perception of the gospel. For example, Cerinthus believed in one Supreme God, but taught that he was unknown until the time of Jesus Christ. The world and the law (Old Testament) were made and given by lesser angels who themselves did not know or understand the Supreme God. Jesus was born, not miraculously of the Virgin Mary, but through common relations between Mary and Joseph. Jesus was a holy man, but not in any way divine. That status, however, changed with his baptism. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit, or what some would call the “Christ,” was sent by the Supreme God in the shape of a dove and dwelt within Jesus the man. This indwelling Christ taught Jesus about the Supreme God in ways and with secrets not known by even the angels of creation. When the passion came, Christ bailed out from Jesus, leaving Jesus alone to suffer (hence the cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”), but Cerinthus assured his students that while Jesus the man died and was buried, he either was resurrected or will be resurrected with all men on the coming resurrection day.<sup>6</sup>

This major deviation from the work of God in Christ brought about strong reaction within the church. Irenaeus (c.130-202) would record later a story from Polycarp (c.69-c.155), John’s disciple. Irenaeus wrote,

But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by Apostles in Asia, appointed Bishop...whom I saw in my early youth, for he lived a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffered martyrdom, departed this life. There are those that heard from him [Polycarp] that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, ‘Let us fly, lest even the

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<sup>6</sup> These teachings come from Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 1, at 26:1.

bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is within.’<sup>7</sup>

Some scholars believe that John wrote his gospel or 1 John, at least in part, to dispel any suspicion of truth about this story. This is certainly the teaching of Irenaeus:

John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that “knowledge” falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word; and not, as they allege, that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another; and that the Son of the Creator was one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impossible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma [heavenly realm]... and that this creation to which we belong was not made by the primary God, but by some power lying far below Him... The disciple of the Lord therefore desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one Almighty God, who made all things by His Word, both visible and invisible; showing at the same time, that by the Word, through whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation; thus commenced His teaching in the Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made. What was made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.”<sup>8</sup>

Irenaeus gives insight into John’s writings as prompted not simply by Cerinthus, but also others including the Nicolaitans, who ascribed to a view of Jesus as something less than fully God and fully man. He also write to set aside any idea that there was authority for a succession of gods involved in the creation of this world or humanity.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 3, at 3.4. See also, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, at 28.6; Book 4, at 14:6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 3, at 11.1.

As we read I John, and the Gospel According to John, we see easily how these issues affected the writings. We focus more narrowly on 1 John here, but the same ideas are seen in the gospel as well.

## 1 JOHN

We should be careful to say that it is unfair to say 1 John was written to combat Cerinthus. It is clear from the writing that it was written to address a church situation where some members had left the church to form another. John discusses these events in 1 John 2:19,

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

Cerinthus was not likely to have ever been in church fellowship with John, so the idea that he was the sole impetus of the book is also unlikely. That said, the Gnostic concepts that Cerinthus exemplified certainly seem to be front and center in John's writing. This includes the teaching of Cerinthus as well as similar teachings about special "knowledge" or revelation that the false teachers claimed. We can see that throughout the letter, including the very next verses to that quoted above.

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son (1 Jn. 2:20-22).

Here John uses the word "*oída*" (οἶδα) for "knowledge."<sup>9</sup> This is not mere acquaintance ("gnostic" knowledge), but much more. It is grasping the meaning and significance of something. The readers did not need someone acquainted with a secret message to impart the meaning to them. They already had intimate understanding of the truth. The truth was centered on Jesus *being* Christ. It was not that Christ came upon Jesus at his baptism, departing before the suffering began. Jesus and Christ were one and the same – one being, both fully human and fully divine. It was the one singular God/man Jesus Christ who was the Savior of the world.

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<sup>9</sup> John refrains from using the Greek *gnosis* (γνῶσις) in any form. Instead, as he wrote of the "knowledge" of the saints he always uses *oída*. Similarly, when he wrote of the *lack of knowledge* of the Gnostics, he wrote of those who lacked *oída*.

Beyond Cerinthus, there was a large Gnostic school of thought that scholars term “Docetism.” “Docetism” comes from the Greek *dokeo* (δοκέω), which means, “to seem” or “suppose.” This word is used for those Gnostics who believed Jesus to be just an apparition who *seemed* to be a human. John set aside this Gnostic heresy as well in many verses, beginning at the start of his writing. John emphasized that Jesus was not simply seen, but was touched and heard. Jesus was no apparition; he was real! Consider the words emphasized in italics:

That which was from the beginning, which *we have heard*, which *we have seen with our eyes*, which *we looked upon and have touched with our hands*, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which *we have seen and heard* we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 1:1-3).

We see in John’s first words, a decimation of much Gnostic thought. Jesus was no creation of a later aeon of god. He was no apparition. He was no distant relative of a “Father God.” Jesus was:

- **“from the beginning”** – he was at the very start of everything.
- **“heard...seen...touched”** – he was corporeal and real.
- **“his Son Jesus Christ”** – he was the Father’s Son.

Furthermore, John tells his readers that there is no greater knowledge or secret with which they need to be acquainted. They have fellowship with each other, with the apostles, and with the Father and his Son because of the truth of the apostolically proclaimed gospel.

The idea that people need to escape from the darkness of human physical existence into a greater light of knowledge, of spirit, or of some similar panacea misses the truth. Light is not found in ideas, knowledge, or the soul. It is found in God.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all (1 Jn 1:5).

Light shines and guides us in the path of life. Darkness is found in the *way we live* (i.e., in “sin”), not in the shackles of a physical body. We cannot simply allow the body to wallow in sin, thinking that enlightenment can co-exist.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin (1 Jn. 1:6-7).

This is what the light really is. It is not the soul's escape from the sinful body. It is not based on some platonic or Gnostic escape of the soul into a greater intellectual or purified state. It is based on salvation from sin. It is the redemption of mankind from real sin (found in all people, not simply in the body, but in the heart and mind as well!). This redemption comes from the real sacrificial death of a real Jesus. It comes from his "blood."

John returns to these themes the way a classical composer returns to a theme in a symphony. We read it over and over, sometimes the words only slightly changed. For example, in 1 John 2:22 and 5:1, 5 we read again John's countering of the idea that Jesus was not the Christ, the Son of God (as Cerinthus taught).

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son... 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... Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Furthermore, we read repeatedly proclamations against the Docetists who taught Jesus was not "really flesh," but simply an apparition:

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already (1 Jn. 4:2-3).

He also repeatedly returns to his theme of real forgiveness from real sin by Jesus.

You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin (1 Jn. 3:5).

This verse is a great example of John's anti-Gnostic message. He speaks of the people "knowing" (*oida*, not *gnosis*) that Jesus *appeared* (a physical revealing) to take away *sins*.

## MARCION

Although some would not term Marcion a Gnostic, he is certainly worthy of consideration in this heresy section.

Marcion was born in Sinope, Asia Minor somewhere toward the end of the first or beginning of the second century. A wealthy ship owner and merchant, he moved to Rome around 135 A.D. Some early authorities indicate that Marcion's home church (where his father was Bishop!) had already expelled him for heresy or moral misdeeds. Arriving in Rome, Marcion became a major player in the Roman church (and donating a large sum of money.) The Roman church eventually returned the money and also expelled Marcion for his heretical teachings and ideas.

Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna whom we studied earlier, reportedly had run into Marcion in Asia Minor.<sup>10</sup> As Irenaeus reports the account, Marcion asked Polycarp, "Do you recognize me?" Polycarp responded, "I recognize you for the firstborn of Satan!"<sup>11</sup> What would cause such a blunt response from as devout and caring a man as Polycarp? The fact that Marcion was teaching doctrine that denied the work of God and Jesus, deceiving multitudes from the truth.

Marcion taught that the church wrongly used and supported the Old Testament. For Marcion, the God of the Old Testament was clearly different than the God of the New Testament and Jesus. Using Luke 5:36-38 (the parable of the wineskins) and Luke 6:43 ("no good tree bears bad fruit nor does a bad tree bear good fruit"), Marcion argued that Jesus' message was totally new and apart from Judaism and the Jewish scriptures. Marcion wrote a list of proofs that the Old Testament God was different from that of the New Testament.<sup>12</sup> For example, The God of Genesis could not find Adam and Eve, having to call out, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9), whereas Jesus knew even the thoughts of man (Luke 5:22). A similar "proof" for Marcion was the God of the Old Testament saying, "an eye for an eye" (Ex. 21:24) where Jesus said, "If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also" (Lk 6:29).

Marcion considered the God of the Old Testament as a vengeful and hateful God, contrasted to the loving God of the New Testament. Similarly, the Old Testament God was centered on legal-minded justice while the New Testament God and father of Jesus was merciful. The Old Testament God worked through his faulty creation; the New Testament God came into that creation to save mankind.

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<sup>10</sup> Some scholars believe this encounter came in Rome rather than Asia Minor.

<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 3, 3:4

<sup>12</sup> This publication was called, *Antithesis*, and is lost. What we know of it today comes mainly from Tertullian's writings against Marcion from about 200 A.D.

Marcion put together his own set of acceptable scriptures. Marcion's "Bible" or "canon" consisted of Luke edited to his liking, and ten of Paul's letters again edited and explained by the peculiarities of Marcion's beliefs in introductions to the books. Marcion sought to distance the true teachings of Paul and Luke (and thereby of Jesus) from that of the other apostles. Marcion believed that Paul, Jesus, and Luke had supported his belief that the Old Testament God was a vengeful, hateful, harsh, and judgmental God, distinct from the God of the New Testament. Similarly, Judaism was a corrupt and wicked faith that promised an earthly Messiah to set up an earthly kingdom. That anticipated event was pre-empted by the loving God of the New Testament who sent Jesus (not a man, but an apparition!) to destroy the Old Testament and Judaism by revealing it for what it was.

So when Marcion put together his scriptures, he used the gospel of Luke, and none of the other three. Even the gospel of Luke required revisions, however. So, Marcion left off the first two chapters that linked Jesus to the Old Testament by birth and teaching. Similarly, Marcion left out the temptation narrative in Luke 4:1-3 because Jesus quotes Deuteronomy three times in response to Satan's temptations. Luke 4:16-30 where Jesus claims to fulfill the Old Testament was also booted from Marcion's Bible. Paul's writings also suffered editing from the hand of Marcion. Much of Romans 9-11 was removed, as were the critical verses from Romans 3:21-4:25. In Galatians, Paul's usage of Abraham as an example of faith was excised.

Marcion taught an ethic that was very impressive. No doubt many converts were won over to his system simply by his lifestyle. Again, there are impressive lifestyle examples found in heresies of orthodoxy today, but that doesn't change the issues of truth in belief and understanding. Marcion was celibate and required the same of his followers. He taught people that morality was important and urged people to live, denying the pleasures of this world and dedicating themselves to the next world.

The effect of Marcion on the church was significant. He spread his heresy far and wide (Tertullian would say he planted churches the way wasps do nests!). Marcionism grew so much that the movement lasted several hundred years. Not a small feat when you consider that it taught celibacy, so growth only occurred through conversion!

To defeat this heresy, the church had to grow in several areas. The church was forced to address issues of canon, or scriptural authority. What writings were authoritative? Only Paul? The church and orthodoxy set forward once and for all that the Spirit inspired not only Paul, but also all the apostles. So, the proper

scriptures were not merely Paul's epistles, but also the writings of Matthew, John, Peter, James, and Jude, as well as those affiliated with apostles (Mark with Peter, Luke with Paul and others). The church also addressed the role of Judaism and the Old Testament, confirming its authority and relationship to Jesus as Messiah.

## CONCLUSION

So, why does this history matter? Many reasons, first of which is this simple truth: Beliefs matter. *What* we believe – about God, about Jesus, about sin—these ideas alter how we behave. They alter our fellowship with God and his saints. They make a difference in who we are and where we are going. It is important to know God in truth.

Further, while Gnosticism itself is not prevalent in the world today, many of the elements that brought it about are easily found. These include disdain for the Old Testament, an improper appreciation of the Old Testament and how it relates to the New Testament, unusual explanations of Scriptures that breed unusual theology, the idea that some people possess certain keys of understanding that stand them and their teaching apart from orthodoxy and core Christian doctrine, the separation of the human into body and soul, etc.

We worship the one God. He is the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New. He came to earth in Jesus Christ, born of a virgin. Jesus suffered and died not because the law was wrong, but to fulfill the law. In him, we have forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

## POINTS FOR HOME

1. *“O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.”* (1 Tim 6:20-21).

Truth matters. Wolves parade in sheep's clothing for a reason. Wolves want to devour and wreak havoc without their true nature being discerned. The road to heresy doesn't always involve a U-turn. A slight deviation in the road traveled can easily lead to a place far from truth. (think of driving as we read Paul referencing a “swerve” from the faith!) We need to be diligent in our study and live in God's truth, and be wary of goofy interpretations of scripture that seem to stand apart from historic orthodoxy and straightforward interpretations.

2. The apostles “*did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (2 Pet 1:16).

We read Scripture as CAPITAL S – Scripture. It is not some religious wanderings of the devout minds of the ancients. It is an accounting of what happened when Jesus Christ walked on earth – died, was buried, and rose again. It is real history. That is why it transforms, in this life and afterwards!

3. “*Your BODY is the temple of the Holy Spirit.*” (1 Cor 6:19).

Jesus did not come to set us free *from* our bodies. He came to save us – period! He saves us as real people, body, minds, hearts, souls. This is the “complete person” Paul spoke of in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. We do not divide ourselves into “parts” beyond recognizing that God is at work restoring our minds, even while our bodies waste away. But this means our redemption is not as a soul for eternity, but as real people, body and soul, in God’s eternity. God expects us to be concerned about our whole lives, not simply what we feel and think!

## HOME WORK

To recap, we are memorizing 1 John this year in the English Standard Version. That amounts to two verses a week. To be current, we need to have memorized 1 John 1:1-2:4. This week we add 1 John 2:7-8. We provide all verses below for your help!

**1John 1:1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— **2** the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— **3** that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

**1:5** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship

with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

**1John 2:1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. **3** And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **4** Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, **5** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: **6** whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. **7** Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. **8** At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.