



1 John

Keep His Commandments

- Those who have been born of God want to keep His commandments
- 1 John 5:1–5 and John 3:1–8
- The purpose of John's letter was for them to know they had eternal life in Jesus and that He gives us whatever we need in this life, too (5:13–15).
- Those who really love God will also love other people.
- It is part of the heart change of those who have been made new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Keep His Commandments

- John continued this explanation by repeating what Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John's Gospel, that followers of Jesus are born again of God (John 3:1–8).
- The Greek phrase in John 3:3 that is typically translated “born again” literally means “born from above.”
- This is similar to here in 1 John 5:1 (“born of God”) and later in John 3:8 (“born of the Spirit”).

Keep His Commandments

- God's commandments are a joy for us, not a burden.
- If we love God and trust that He knows what is best for us, we will want the world and our lives to be the way God desires them to be.
- We will want to do what God says is right.
- In explaining this, John returned to what he said in 4:4, that we have already overcome the spirit of the antichrist that is in this world.

Keep His Commandments

- We can walk in newness of life, in righteousness.
- We can walk in the light. We can overcome the world.
- Our faith is not only about gaining eternal life when we die but also about living the abundant life God designed for us in the here and now (John 10:10).
- This is why God's commandments are not burdensome for His children but rather a joy.

Keep His Commandments

- This is the culmination of all John had been writing to these churches
- He wants them to understand the difference between false teachers and people who have really been born again (1 John 2:26).
- Those who know Jesus have been born of the Spirit and made new creations, so their lives reflect the ways of the Spirit.

Life, Now and Eternally

- Those who have Jesus have life, both now and eternally
- 1 John 5:6–12 and John 1:1–14
- The repeated word in this passage is “testimony” or “witness.”
- John was contrasting what these false teachers said with the truth.
- But he was not appealing to what the apostles had said was the truth; he was appealing to what God Himself says is true.
- The apostles’ teaching is true because it is what God says is true.

Life, Now and Eternally

- The evidence John gave for this was to say that there are three testimonies that all agree – the Spirit, the water and the blood.
- The water and the blood are both connected with Jesus, “he who came by water and blood” (5:6).
- This is something that must have been clear to John’s original audience because he didn’t explain to them what he meant by that, but it may seem a little obscure to us today.

Life, Now and Eternally

- One of the false teachers of that time was Cerinthus, who taught that Jesus was born an ordinary human. He denied the incarnation, that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. Cerinthus taught that divinity came upon Jesus only at His baptism (water) and left Him before His Crucifixion (blood), because he didn't believe God could die.
- As Paul wrote in Corinthians, the idea that God died on the Cross makes the Gospel seem like foolishness to those who considered themselves wise.
- According to the world, it doesn't make sense (1 Corinthians 1:18–25).

Life, Now and Eternally

- But the belief that Jesus was fully God and fully human, and therefore that God died on the Cross, is integral to the Gospel.
- If Jesus had been just a human being, His atonement would not have accomplished eternal forgiveness of all sins of all people of all times (Hebrews 9:11–28).
- In the opening of his Gospel, John taught that Jesus was not merely a man.
- He was with God in the beginning and through Him all things were made (John 1:1–4). Jesus was the Word made flesh; God made flesh (John 1:14).

Life, Now and Eternally

- When Jesus died on the Cross, it was God the Son sacrificing Himself for our sins (Galatians 1:4).
- God bore the punishment for our breaking the covenant.
- He promised in the covenant-cutting ceremony way back at the beginning in His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15).
- The doctrine of atonement requires that God Himself bore our sins, God the Son, the Word made flesh.

Life, Now and Eternally

- This is the testimony of God, that Jesus was not just a human being, but God made flesh. His baptism (water) proved He was sent by God as “my beloved Son” (Matthew 3:16–17).
- In His baptism, the Spirit of God descended on Jesus, but that wasn’t divinity coming upon an ordinary human being. He already was God the Son, God made flesh at the incarnation (John 1:14).
- In the moment of His baptism, all three persons of the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – were present together to declare Jesus as Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

Life, Now and Eternally

- Old Testament law required that a matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15).
- John gave three – the Spirit, the water and the blood. In the case of Jesus, we have the testimony of God the Father and God the Spirit that Jesus is truly God the Son.
- Even more than that of any human witnesses sharing what they saw about Jesus, we should believe God's own testimony about His Son (1 John 5:9–12).
- When we believe God's testimony, we will have eternal life.

Life, Now and Eternally

- Those who know Jesus know the truth
- 1 John 5:13–21
- In this concluding section, John explained why he had been writing to them:
- It was a two-fold reason: to know that they have eternal life and to know that whatever they ask according to His will, they would receive.
- The first is confidence in our eternal life.
- The second is confidence that God will give us His best for us in this life.

Life, Now and Eternally

- John encouraged believers to pray for Christians who are sinning to repent.
- John told us earlier in the letter that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us (1 John 1:9).
- There is no sin too grievous to be forgiven when you truly repent.
- David was forgiven of adultery and murder.
- This means that as long as people are still alive, we can pray for them to repent, to turn from the kingdom of darkness to Jesus.

Life, Now and Eternally

- To conclude, John set up another stark contrast between those who are of the world and those who are born of God.
- The world is under Satan's power, but we are under God's protection.
- They keep sinning, but we repent. God has given us understanding of the truth, that Jesus is the Son of God and in Him we have life.
- This is the ultimate final truth John wanted his readers to walk away with.
- It all comes down to Jesus.

Response to
Anti-Israel Rhetoric

Biblical Foundation of Israel

- The biblical foundation for the nation of Israel can be found in Genesis 12.
- God makes three promises to Abraham. These are referred to as the Abrahamic Covenant and given to Abraham and his descendants. This is an everlasting covenant.
- First is a promise of a nation: “I will make you a great nation.” Second is a promise of special blessings: “I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.” Third is a promise of Divine protection: “I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you.”

Biblical Foundation of Israel

- Deuteronomy 28 has three predictions:
- First is a prediction of defeat and capture: “The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away.” This occurred with the Babylonian destruction by Nebuchadnezzar at end of the 7th century BC. A second prediction is of diaspora: “Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations.” This occurred when Titus and the Roman Tenth Legion destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. The final prediction was a return: “He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it.” This occurred with the return of Jews to Israel and the declaration of the state of Israel in 1948.

Political Foundation of Israel

- How did the nation of Israel begin? Centuries earlier, there was a keen fascination with the Holy Land in England. The Puritans, for example, employed a literal interpretation of the Bible. Their study of the Bible caused them to see Jews in a new light.
- Jews had been banned from England in the 17th century, but some wanted to bring them back to England before sending them to the Holy Land. Even back then, Oliver Cromwell exhorted the Parliament to aid in the restoration of Jewish state. Jews also longed to return to Israel. A phrase often sung at of the Passover Seder was, “Next year in Jerusalem.”

Political Foundation of Israel

- In the early part of the 20th century, this dream looked like it would become a reality. Lord Balfour served as England's foreign minister and signed the famous Balfour Declaration. He believed that religion and civilization in general, owed Judaism "an immeasurable debt, shamefully ill repaid."
- At the time, the phrase often cited was: "A people for a land, for a land without a people." The region was governed by the Ottoman Empire and had a small minority Jewish population.
- Unfortunately, promises were made and broken. Nothing happened until the end of WWII.

Political Foundation of Israel

- In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Israel.
- Although the plan was rejected by the Arabs, it was accepted by the Jews.
- Israel was established as an independent, sovereign state in 1948 by David Ben-Gurion.
- His declaration came on the day the British Mandate over Palestine was officially terminated (in accordance with UN Resolution 181 which called for the division of the land into a Jewish state and an Arab state).

Israel at War

- The nation of Israel fought in wars many times. Two important wars occurred in 1967 and 1973. The Six Day War of 1967 occurred as tensions between Israel and its neighbors heightened.
- Israel stated its position that the closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping would be a cause for war. Egyptian President Nasser announced that the straits would be closed to Israeli vessels and put Egyptian forces along its border with Israel.
- In June, Israel launched a series of preemptive airstrikes against Egyptian airfields. Israel was victorious.

Israel at War

- The Yom Kippur War was fought in October 1973.
- A coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria came against Israel.
- The battle took place in Sinai and the Golan (occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War).
- Although Israel was victorious, it also recognized that there was no guarantee that they would always dominate the Arab states militarily.
- This recognition paved the way for US presidents and Israeli prime ministers to propose various peace initiatives.

Israel and Trump

- Three significant actions took place under President Donald Trump.
- First, was the US recognition of the right of Israel to occupy the Golan Heights.
- Ever since the 1967 Six-Day War, most of the Golan Heights had been occupied and administered by Israel.
- The eastern third remains under control of Syria.
- In 2019, President Trump proclaimed: “the United States recognizes that the Golan Heights are part of the State of Israel.”

Israel and Trump

- The second action was to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem and recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.
- The Jerusalem Embassy Act was passed by Congress in 1995 and provided the funds to relocate the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- Every president since then promised to move the embassy but failed to do so because of concerns from the State Department about possible repercussions.
- In 2017, President Trump announced the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital. The next year, the US embassy moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Israel and Trump

- The third action involves what is often called the West Bank (Judea and Samaria). In 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the US would no longer hold the position that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are “inconsistent with international law.”
- The secretary argued that the settlements are not “inherently illegal.” He argued that West Bank’s fate should be determined through negotiations and attacking the settlements “hasn’t advanced the cause of peace.” It is difficult to say that Israel “occupies” Palestinian territories because the nation of Palestine never existed.

Myth #1 - Palestinian Land

- One of the slogans heard on the street is that this is Muslim land or that this is the land of the Palestinians.
- The myth is easily dismissed merely by looking at the history of the land.
- Joshua entered the land around 1400 BC.
- The kingdom of David was established in 1000 BC. There was a First Temple built by Solomon.
- Then a Second Temple was built after Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. Jews were in the land at the time of Christ.

Myth #1 - Palestinian Land

- Even after Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70. More than half a century later, there was a second insurrection.
- Rome stamped out that revolt in AD 135. The Romans renamed the province Syria Palaestina to obliterate the link between the Jews and Israel. This is the origin of the word Palestine.
- Even after the Romans defeated the Jews, there was still a continuous Jewish presence for centuries. Islam only began as a religion six centuries later, and eventually Muslims entered the land when the Muslim army conquered Jerusalem in 636.

Myth #2 - Colonizers

- Another myth is the argument that the Jews are colonizers.
- Rich Lowry recently asked, “Why Aren’t the Arabs the Colonizers?”
- Jews were in the land, and Muslims only arrived almost 2,000 years later.
- You hardly ever hear any discussion about conquests or any empire-building of the non-Western world.
- That is conveniently forgotten and only used as a rhetorical weapon against Western nations.

Myth #3 - Apartheid State

- When we have taken tours to Israel, I have found that most Americans don't know that about a fifth of the citizens in Israel are Arabs. In fact, Arab citizens in Israel have the same rights as Jewish citizens. That is not what an apartheid state looks like.
- If you read Israel's Declaration of Independence, you will discover that this original document invites: "Arab inhabitants to the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenships and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions."

Myth #4 - Occupiers

- Another myth has to do with the establishment of Gaza and his governance. The current war illustrates the fallacy of “land for peace.”
- There was a push for independence in Gaza. Therefore, Israel in 2005 withdrew its troops from Gaza and forced all the 8,500 Jewish settlers to leave Gaza. By 2007, Hamas had violently seized control of Gaza after routing forces loyal to the rival Fatah faction of President Mahmoud Abbas.
- A year later Hamas and Israel reached a truce that halted the cross-border rocket attacks and ended Israeli offensives in Gaza. But soon rocket and mortar fire into Israel continued and has continued to this day.

Myth #5 - Civilian Casualties

- Over the years, Israel has used precision weapons to minimize collateral damage, but it is difficult to prevent such loss of life since so many of the Hamas military targets are intentionally located near schools, playgrounds, and hospitals.
- Israel is committed to saving lives and preventing civilian casualties.
- Hamas is committed to causing the most civilian pain to get favorable publicity on their side.
- This strategy goes back to the PLO and Black September in Jordan.

Resources

