

## Grace and Faith Ministries

### Reading the Psalms & Proverbs through the Eyes of The New Covenant

#### “Out with the Old and In with the New”

(Points 1-7 are taken from the introduction in Part 1.)

1. **As New Covenant believers it is important for us to read the Bible in light of the finished work of the cross. His death initiated the New Covenant which is NOT the same as the Old.**
2. **Many believers today are merging the Old Covenant into the New Covenant resulting in something that falls woefully short of what God accomplished in Christ. When Old Covenant principles are mixed with New Covenant truths, the truth of the cross of Christ is nullified.**  
**Galatians 2:16-21 (Paul, publicly to Peter)** “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”
3. **When New Covenant believers try to live the Christian life with a mixture of new and old, they end up frustrated. This is because the law strengthens sin. So, if a believer who is free from sin due to being under grace has elements of the law system at work in their life, that person will be constantly fighting off sin instead of living in the freedom from sin that Christ provides.**  
**1 Corinthians 15:56** The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.  
**Romans 6:14** For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
4. **The dividing line of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is the death of Jesus. All writings prior to His death are to be examined in the light (truth) of the NEW Covenant.**  
**Hebrews 9:11-17** But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.
5. **This includes the teachings of Christ.**
  - a. **Jesus was born under the law and ministered to those under the law.**  
**Galatians 4:4-5** But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
  - b. **He was preparing the Jews for the New Covenant and often reasoned using the law while introducing a higher standard, not that of outward compliance but one which would require that they have a new heart (new birth).**  
**Matthew 5:27-28** “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
6. **This understanding does not negate Genesis - Malachi. However, the realization that the New Covenant has come and the Old Covenant has been replaced should be our frame of reference when reading those passages.**  
**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.  
**Hebrews 8:13** In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete.
7. **Many Christians today believe that even though they are free from the ceremonial law and saved by grace through faith, they must still keep the Ten Commandments to stay saved). This is not true.**  
**Deuteronomy 4:13** So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.  
**Hebrews 8:13** In that He says, “A new covenant, ” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.  
**2 Corinthians 3:7-9** But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

**Christians are not under any part of the law; not its blessings and not its curses. We are 100% free from it. The Law was meant to lead us to Christ. When we receive Christ we die to the law. It no longer has a purpose.**

### **Galatians 3:21-25**

*Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

### **Romans 3:4,6**

*Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God... <sup>6</sup> But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

### **1. We are forever forgiven of all sin.**

#### **a. Christ's offering for sin was once for all. It covered all of our sin for all time.**

#### **Hebrews 10**

*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. <sup>2</sup> For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. <sup>3</sup> But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. <sup>5</sup> Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:*

*“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,  
But a body You have prepared for Me.*

*<sup>6</sup> In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin  
You had no pleasure.*

*<sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—  
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—  
To do Your will, O God.’”*

*<sup>8</sup> Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.”<sup>[b]</sup> He takes away the first that He may establish the second. <sup>10</sup> By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. <sup>11</sup> And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

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- ➔ *The Old Covenant sacrifices were not able to make the worshippers perfect, but the New does.*
- ➔ *The Old Covenant never removed the consciousness of sin...the awareness of being sinful, but the New Covenant does.*
- ➔ *The priests in the temple never sat down for there was always some sin to be taken care of, but Jesus sat down. He made one atonement for sins forever.*
- ➔ *We are perfected forever...this means that we are forgiven completely and forever by the one time sacrifice. We do not need to go repeatedly to be forgiven as did the Old Testament saints.*
- ➔ *We are sanctified and we are being sanctified. This means that sanctification is happening to us with our cooperation.*

**b. Complete and total forgiveness is the principal provision of the New Covenant. Jeremiah 31:31, 34**

*“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*

**c. Forgiveness is automatic. We are continually cleansed from it. We do not have to confess it to get it. We do not have to worry about “unconfessed sin”. We do not need to get our sin “under the blood”. Our sins have been REMOVED!**

**1 John 1:7**

*But if we walk in the light (meaning we believe in Jesus<sup>1</sup>) as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses (Greek: “is cleansing”) us from all sin.*

*John 1:9 seems to be saying that we need to confess our sins in order to be forgiven, but John is not saying this. This refers to someone admitting that he has sin and God’s willingness to forgive and save someone (cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Paul never once taught that we need to ask for forgiveness in order to be forgiven, but always that our sins are already forgiven. If you would like to examine this topic further, please read the attached articles.*

**d. Forgiveness of sins is what we have as a permanent possession.**

**Ephesians 1:7**

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

**e. We are NOT “sinners saved by grace”. We used to be sinners, but we no longer are. We are the righteousness of God.**

**Romans 5:19**

*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.*

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

**2. Under the New Covenant God’s presence never leaves us.**

**a. Under the Old Covenant a man’s sin separated him from God.**

**Isaiah 59:1-2**

*Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened,*

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<sup>1</sup> Comment mine

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*That it cannot save;  
Nor His ear heavy,  
That it cannot hear.*

*<sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated you from your God;  
And your sins have hidden His face from you,  
So that He will not hear.*

- b. Under the New Covenant He abides with us forever.**

**John 14:16**

*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.*

**Hebrews 13:5**

*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

- c. We now have peace with God through Jesus.**

**Romans 5:1-2**

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**

*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

- d. Since our sins have been completely dealt with through the blood of Jesus we no longer are separated from God for any reason.**

- e. God is on our side.**

**Romans 8:31-32**

*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

- f. We do not need to enter His presence because His presence has entered us!**

**Colossians 1:27**

*To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

**1 Corinthians 6:17**

*But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

- g. He does not turn His back on us when we sin.**

*He does not even get angry with us.*

**Isaiah 54:9**

*"For this is like the days of Noah to Me, When I swore that the waters of Noah Would not flood the earth again; So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you Nor will I rebuke you."*

- h. Nothing can separate us from God's love.**

**Romans 8:35-39**

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written:*

*" For Your sake we are killed all day long;*

We do not need  
to enter His  
presence because  
His presence has  
entered us!

**Reading the Psalms & Proverbs through the Eyes of The New Covenant**

*We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”*

<sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

- 3. Because we have complete forgiveness and because His presence never leaves us, we can face difficulties with peace and confidence.**

**John 14:27**

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

**Philippians 4:6-7**

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

**Hebrews 13:5b-16**

*For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” <sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say:*

*“The LORD is my helper;*

*I will not fear.*

*What can man do to me?”*

**Hebrews 2:4-16**

*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. <sup>16</sup> For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.*

**Romans 8: Romans 8:38-39**

*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Hebrews 4:14-16**

*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

- a. PLEASE NOTE: It is perfectly acceptable to come to God in time of need. It is just important to remember that there is no need for desperation.**

**Getting the Most Out of Psalms and Proverbs**

- 1. Appreciate the Psalm for what it is.** You don't need to change scripture to appreciate it. Who wrote it? Why? How did the writer's Covenant influence his perspective? What did he long for that we already have?
  - a. Sometimes a Psalm is just what it is a historical plea for help.**
  - b. We cannot change the meaning.** For example, Israel cannot be replaced with the church, especially when talking about judgment. This would be replacement theology (which is inaccurate).
  - c. Often a Psalm is a prophecy with clear fulfillment in the New Testament.**

2. Consider what the author would have written had he been a partaker of the New Covenant.
3. Be thankful that your perspective is based on better promises.
4. If you'd like, compose your own Psalm reflecting a similar sentiment in light of the New Covenant.

**Psalm 6:1**

O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,  
Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.

**Psalm 10:1**

Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?  
Why do You hide in times of trouble?

**Psalm 15**

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?  
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

<sup>2</sup> He who walks uprightly,

And works righteousness,  
And speaks the truth in his heart;

**Psalm 27**

One thing I have desired of the LORD,  
That will I seek:  
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
All the days of my life,  
To behold the beauty of the LORD,  
And to inquire in His temple.

**Psalm 32:1-2**

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the LORD  
does not impute iniquity,

And in whose spirit there is no  
deceit.

**Romans 4:6-8**

But to him who does not work but believes on  
Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is  
accounted for righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David  
also describes the blessedness of the man to  
whom God imputes righteousness apart from  
works:

<sup>7</sup> "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds  
are forgiven,

And whose sins are covered;

<sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the LORD  
shall not impute sin."

**Romans 5:13**

(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin  
is not imputed when there is no law.

**Job 1:20-21**

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and  
shaved his head; and he fell to the ground  
and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> And he said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,  
And naked shall I return there.

The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken  
away;

Blessed be the name of the LORD."

**Psalm 38:21**

Do not forsake me, O LORD;  
O my God, be not far from me!

<p><b>Psalm 40:6-8</b>  <i>Sacrifice and offering  You did not desire;  My ears You have opened.  Burnt offering and sin  offering You did not  require.  <sup>7</sup> Then I said, “Behold, I  come;  In the scroll of the book it is  written of me.  <sup>8</sup> I delight to do Your will,  O my God,  And Your law is within my  heart.”</i></p>	<p><b>Hebrews 10:5-10</b>  <i>Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:  “ Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,  But a body You have prepared for Me.  <sup>6</sup> In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin  You had no pleasure.  <sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—  In the volume of the book it is written of Me—  To do Your will, O God.’”  <sup>8</sup> Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings,  and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in  them ” (which are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then He  said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He  takes away the first that He may establish the second. <sup>10</sup> By  that will we have been sanctified through the offering of  the body of Jesus Christ once for all.</i></p>
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**Psalm 42:1-2**

*As the deer pants for the water brooks,  
So pants my soul for You, O God.*

*<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living  
God. When shall I come and appear before  
God?*

**Psalm 51:1-3, 10-17**

*To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the  
prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.*

*<sup>1</sup> Have mercy upon me, O God,  
According to Your lovingkindness;  
According to the multitude of  
Your tender mercies, blot out my  
transgressions.*

*<sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin.*

*<sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my transgressions,  
And my sin is always before me.*

*<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

*<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me away from Your  
presence,  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from  
me.*

*<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of Your  
salvation,  
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*

**Psalm 74:1-2**

*O God, why have You cast us off forever?  
Why does Your anger smoke against  
the sheep of Your pasture?*

*<sup>2</sup> Remember Your congregation, which  
You have purchased of old,  
The tribe of Your inheritance,  
which You have redeemed—*

**Psalm 85:4-7**

*Restore us, O God of our salvation,  
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.*

*<sup>5</sup> Will You be angry with us forever?  
Will You prolong Your anger to all  
generations?*

*<sup>6</sup> Will You not revive us again,  
That Your people may rejoice in You?*

*<sup>7</sup> Show us Your mercy, LORD,  
And grant us Your salvation.*

<p><b>Psalm 95:7-11</b>  <i>Today, if you will hear His voice:</i>  <sup>8</sup> “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion<sup>1</sup>  As in the day of trial in the wilderness,  <sup>9</sup> When your fathers tested Me;  They tried Me, though they saw My work.  <sup>10</sup> For forty years I was grieved with that generation,  And said, ‘It is a people who go astray in their hearts,  And they do not know My ways.’  <sup>11</sup> So I swore in My wrath,  ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”</p>	<p><b>Hebrews 3</b>  <i>Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house.</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,</i> <sup>6</sup> <i>but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.</i>  <sup>7</sup> <i>Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:</i>  “Today, if you will hear His voice,  <sup>8</sup> <b>Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,</b>  <sup>9</sup> <i>Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years.</i>  <sup>10</sup> <i>Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.’</i>  <sup>11</sup> <i>So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”</i>  <sup>12</sup> <b>Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;</b> <sup>13</sup> <i>but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.</i> <sup>14</sup> <i>For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,</i> <sup>15</sup> <i>while it is said:</i>  “Today, if you will hear His voice,  Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”  <sup>16</sup> <i>For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?</i> <sup>17</sup> <i>Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?</i> <sup>18</sup> <i>And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?</i> <sup>19</sup> <b>So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.</b></p>
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**Psalm 102:1-2**

Hear my prayer, O LORD,

And let my cry come to You.

<sup>2</sup> Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;

Incline Your ear to me;

In the day that I call, answer me speedily.

**Psalm 139:23-24**

Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

<sup>24</sup> And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.

**Psalm 143:1-2**

Hear my prayer, O LORD,

Give ear to my supplications!

In Your faithfulness answer me,

And in Your righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,

For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

## Grace and Faith Ministries

### *Reading the Psalms & Proverbs through the Eyes of The New Covenant*

#### *A Look at 1 John 1:9*

*Gnostic Philosophy and Forgiveness of Sins*  
by Donald E. Harris

#### *John and Gnosticism*

*The epistle of I John in its delivery and structure is more in the line of a diplomatic polemic (a refutation of the opinions or ideas of another) or an instructional treatise (tractate). Its basic premise is to challenge dangerous issues, and in this case it is the nature of Christ and the need for atonement as challenged by Gnosticism. Similarly, the Gospel of John is also polemic in nature and unlike the other three gospels which are synoptic—in that John is presenting the Deity of Jesus Christ and his absolute uniqueness and presents strong arguments against any false ideas concerning Jesus' true nature as God incarnate and the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of world.*

*So what we have in I John is the Apostle of Love, near the end of the first century, gently but sternly, challenging Gnostic unbelievers who considered themselves to be Christians, and all the while denying two very foundational truths of salvation. These two truths are:*

- 1. Jesus is God in the flesh.*
- 2. Everyone has sinned and needs cleansing from sin.*

*However, these confessing Christians could not receive these two fundamental truths because their belief system had two diametrically opposed tenets that they promoted as truth:*

- 1. Sin is not real because it takes place in the material world and physical flesh counts for nothing.*
- 2. Jesus was not physical, but spiritual because the “Christ spirit” is immaterial.*

*As you read the first portion of 1 John 1 do not let the words “we” and “us” used in verses 1:8-10 lead to you to believe that he is addressing believers—he is not—John is simply being polite. If you read it in the context of “we as humans, or humanity,” then you would be closer to what John is saying. I have yet to meet any believer who has denied that they had ever sinned, or does not believe that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. See 1 John 2:22-23; 4:2-3; 5:1.*

*The Gnosticism of the day was a combination of Hellenistic philosophy with oriental religious traditions, and Gnosticism is more than just a religious end, it is more a method of belief that covers a large spectrum of practices. A particular Gnostic antagonist was a man named Cerinthus (a Jew by race and religion). Cerinthus mixed Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism into one syncretistic belief system and taught in Ephesus around 95 A.D. and the epistle of John is evidently dealing with this particular man's teaching. Throughout Paul's ministry there were men teaching Gnosticism in lesser forms and Paul deals with these teachings; however Cerinthus's teaching was of a very dangerous kind.*

*The word “Gnostic” means one who knows, and it is based on a boasting that basically says: “I know God—and probably on a deeper level than you.” These Gnostics usually achieved their “deeper” knowledge from ecstatic experiences. Gnosticism has one basic, nearly universally accepted tenet of belief, and that is a philosophical dualism, and this is a belief that spirit is good, and material is evil. This dualistic belief system would find the incarnation unthinkable because the divine would never come into contact with evil matter. It was this belief that made it difficult for Gnostic Christians who generally believed that the incarnation only appeared (or seemed) to be real. This heresy is called “docetism,” and is from the Greek word for “seemed.” A new teaching was presented by Cerinthus to solve this dilemma; he taught that Jesus and Christ were two different beings. Jesus was a mere man and Christ was celestial and descended on Jesus at the time of his baptism. Jesus was just a medium for the Christ spirit, and the Christ spirit used*

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Jesus' voice to speak and teach his words, thus no one truly heard or saw the divine spirit of the celestial Christ being. When the Christ spirit finished his message he left the man Jesus to be crucified, an event that has no relevance to life or salvation because the Christ spirit had no part in this. Cerinthus did not believe that the Christ spirit could die or come by blood (1 John 5:6; Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:11; 15:3; Galatians 2:21; Colossians 2:20; 1 Peter 3:18)

Anyone who believed these tenets was a Gnostic, and because of this ideology they would consider themselves truly spiritual and could have the exclusive rights to boast, "I am in the light, and I have fellowship with God!" For the Gnostics sin is not an issue to be forgiven or concerned with because having this "deeper knowledge" the Gnostics consider themselves spiritually divine and part of the divine, hence they could not have sinned—the flesh and the material world were of no consequence either. And it is because of this particular belief that was infiltrating the Church that the Apostle John writes this epistle.

**Confession and Forgiveness of Sins**

Within the teaching of forgiveness through the New Covenant the one Scripture that appears to be at odds with the rest of the "once for all" passages of Scriptures is 1 John 1:9. This single verse with its conditional "if" on forgiveness, which has no other to join with it, as it stands alone, is cited by nearly every believer to qualify as Biblical proof that we as believers need daily, if not constant confession of sins to receive forgiveness and uninterrupted fellowship with God. However when 1 John 1:9 is understood in its place and purpose this belief system has no foundation, and as mentioned in the above paragraphs the Apostle John is dealing with the insipid heresy of docetism that was taking the Church by storm near the end of the first century. Used alone, 1 John 1:9 does appear to teach a present tense conditional "if", or moment-by-moment forgiveness; yet many other Scriptures of the New Covenant teach a past tense, already complete forgiveness:

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

"When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions," Colossians 2:13

"And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more'. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin." Hebrews 10:17-18

"I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake." 1 John 2:12

We are either completely forgiven or partially forgiven—it cannot be both ways. If partially then no one has hope, for even the most insignificant sin left unconfessed would be enough to keep us from uninterrupted fellowship with God in the here-and-now, and heaven would only be a pipe dream, because should we die with even one sin unaccounted for—we will be eternally separated from God. However the Scripture resounds with the promise of complete and utter forgiveness! When Jesus said it was finished—it was finished. Unfortunately there are far too many who cannot receive the profound truth of "once for all" forgiveness and so many within the Body of Christ offer alternatives to this simple plan of forgiveness. Some of these false ideas are as follows:

1. We as believers are forgiven eternally according to God's record book. However, believers need to keep track of their sins here on earth and ask forgiveness so God will maintain fellowship with us. 1 John 1:9 is our spiritual antiseptic so God will not have to fellowship with dirty, unwashed kids. Evidently Jesus had no problem with dirty people while on earth, but now he is wearing

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*“spotless garments” in heaven—maybe now he does not want dirty sinful brethren grabbing his garments.*

*2. A two-tiered forgiveness plan. God completely forgave us; however, we need to maintain the cleansing. He did his part—we do ours. He gave us the blood of his Son for forgiveness and now we must be careful to receive it, and careful to put under the blood any and every sin we can recollect or dig up. And since God has judicially forgiven us we are obligated to present forensic evidence to God as to why he should not forgive us, and along with self-abasement, we proudly present collaborating evidence to prove our position. Thus we once again by our supplications are surprised to receive fresh forgiveness, and at the same time prove that God is truly merciful and forgiving.*

*Another very simple, yet profound fact that is almost always overlooked when trying to justify I John 1:9 as a prescription for forgiveness of day-to-day sins is its time of writing! The Apostle John wrote this epistle almost 30-40 years after Paul’s epistles and the book of Hebrews. If 1 John 1:9 is a forgiveness system that God wanted believers to live by, then somewhere along the line the Holy Spirit failed to communicate this very important aspect of having fellowship with him through daily cleansing—and the Apostle Paul failed to communicate this information as well. If this is the case, then the Romans; Ephesians; Galatians; Corinthians; Philippians; Colossians; Thessalonians; and large group of believers scattered across the Mediterranean and the Middle-East were kept from fellowshipping with God because of personal, unconfessed sins.*

*Another thing to keep in mind when reading I John 1:9 is the last part which shows the accepted belief concerning complete once for all forgiveness: “...to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (emphasis added). This does not mean just the ‘unrighteousness up to the point of confession’—it includes all unrighteousness—past, present and future! See Colossians 2:13; II Corinthians 5:17-20; Romans 4:5-8.*

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