

1 John Series

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The Preamble Continued: Fellowship with the Father and the Son distinguished from fellowship with the Holy Spirit

I. Review & Introduction:

1:1-4	Prologue—call to sharing eternal life with God through the apostles
1:5-2:11	Preamble—daily interacting with the Triune God
	1:5-2:2 fellowship with God the Father at His Holy Integrity
	2:3-8 fellowship with God the Son at His Commandments
	2:9-11 fellowship with God the Holy Spirit at His work in believers

Trinity ~ triunity of nature, person, personality (Slide 2)

1. Father's nature: "light in whom there is no darkness, none at all"

Our basic adjustment in our relationship with the Father: confession for violation of His character (**Ps 51:4** "against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in your sight. ...")

2. Son's commandments taught by him in person: "Do you not believe that I am **in** the Father, and the Father **in** me? I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells **in** me does the works." **John 14:10; 17:8** Jesus' words = Father's words and note John's use of the locative case.

Our basic adjustment in our relationship with the Son: submit to the NT picture of Jesus Christ as God Incarnate

1 John 2:8, "Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining"

John 1:9, "That was the true light which gives light to every man coming into the world"

FATHER'S NATURE ==> INCARNATION OF THAT NATURE SO IT CAN BE OBSERVED ==> Jesus Christ alone has the Father's nature united with human flesh.

Geisler question: *Conversational Evangelism* "If you were near death and you met all the great religious teachers and asked them what happens after death and they gave conflicting answers, whose advice would you take?"

II. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit who cannot be seen but whose INFLUENCE is seen in the Body of Christ—i.e., His work observed in believers around us (2:9–11) (Slide 3)

2:9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

Here John shifts his focus from the sensitivity to the Father's holy nature and from the verbal commands of the Son to the horizontal relationships among believers in the Church.

Compare the false claim in **2:9** with previous false claim in **1:6** concerning one's awareness of the holy nature of the Father and with the previous false claim in **2:4** concerning one's false claim to be following the commands of the Son.

Here is a third false claim concerning one's relationship with a fellow believer who has the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. Something must be wrong with this social relationship if one believer hates another believer when the same Holy Spirit is working in both of them.

How is this "new" love different from Old Testament love between people?

John mentions Jesus' teaching about "love" during the Upper Room Discourse several times as something new in history (cf. **John 13:34–35; 15:12–13; 17:26**). Start thinking about the quality of life in view here by comparing **John 17:26** with the startling statement in the Prologue of this epistle: the quality of eternal life first became visible to humanity with the Incarnation (**1 John 1:2**). From **John 17:26** we learn that internal to the Trinity there was a love relationship that only became manifest to humanity as Jesus began his ministry. Such a love within God was not so fully revealed in the Old Testament.

Such an intra-Trinity, eternal love relationship is why the Trinity doctrine is so important to understanding the personal nature of God. Without multiple persons in the Godhead as is the case in the various solitary monotheisms (e.g., Unitarianism's God, Islam's Allah, etc.), it is difficult if not impossible to claim that such a solitary god is truly a personal being. Such a deity in order to fully function as a person would have to create personal beings outside of himself. To do that, however, would shatter the aseity or absolute self-containment of such a deity. It would have to rely upon a creature to be able to express his love. By contrast the Triune Creator in no way had to create lesser personal beings in order to fully function in a personal way.

When we become believers according to texts like **John 3:16** and **1 John 5:11** we acquire the quality of life shared within the Trinity for all eternity. Since love is expressible only between two or more persons, Jesus insisted during the Upper Room Discourse that we express this new quality of life among ourselves in the Church (**John 13:34–35; 15:12–13**). Hatred or lack of love between believers, therefore, signals a problem with one or more of the parties involved.

2:10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

Notice how in John's contrasting style that verses **10** & **11** are connected like **1:6–7**. The picture here is of a trap along a walking path that is seen only if one is walking in the light. Resenting or ignoring the work of God a fellow believer sets one up for blindness and deception.

2:11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes

Hatred of a brother has a deep theological meaning. John doesn't treat it as mere a simple personality like/dislike. He later explains in **1 John 3:10–12** that when one refuses to exercise love toward a brother, there is an underlying resentment against the work of the Holy Spirit in that brother just like Cain in his anger toward God rejecting his worship took out his revenge on the nearest person who followed God. This pattern is typical of the unbelieving world around us and is the cause of church divisions and splits. (Slide 4)

III. Conclusion

We now have completed the Preamble to this epistle with its precise description of our distinct relationships with the Triune God.

1:5–2:2	fellowship with God the Father at His holy integrity
2:3–8	fellowship with God the Son at His commandments
2:9–11	fellowship with God the Holy Spirit at His work in believers