The First Epistle of JOHN

Prologue

1 [1]That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have witnessed with our eyes, that which we contemplated and our hands handled[1] with reference to the word of the Life[2]—[2]oh yes, the Life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and declare to you that eternal Life who was in the presence of the Father and was manifested to us—[3]that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us;[3] indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. [4]Yes, we write these things to you so that our[4] joy may be fulfilled.

The conditions of fellowship

God is light

[5]Now this is the message that we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and there is no darkness[5] at all in Him. [6]If we claim that we have fellowship with Him while walking in the darkness, we are lying and not living the truth. [7]But if we walk in the light just as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ[6] His Son cleanses us from all sin.[7]

God forgives confessed sin

[8]If we claim that we have no sin,[8] we are deceiving ourselves and the Truth is not in us. [9]If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us those sins and to cleanse[9] us from all unrighteousness.

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[1] John could hardly be more emphatic as to the certainty of what he is going to write—he is an eye-witness, an ear-witness, a hand-witness, a mind-witness…

[2] The text has the definite article with "life", and from the next verse it seems clear that the reference is to the Son (compare John 1:4).

[3] Note that the fellowship is to be based on historical fact, not someone's sub-culture.

[4] The manuscript evidence is badly divided between "our" and 'your', roughly 60:40%. The best line of evidence, in my view, is with the majority in favor of "our"; it is easy to see how many copyists could make the change (a change in only one letter). The more people we bring into the fellowship, the greater our joy.

[5] I suppose that "darkness" here refers to sin and Satan; presumably it follows that there is no light in Satan. Also, "walking in the darkness" (next verse) refers to living according to the world's values, a world controlled by Satan.

[6] Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[7] Cleansing is not the same as forgiveness. If a mother forgives her boy for playing in the mud, he escapes punishment, but that does not wash the clothes. Forgiveness takes care of the consequences of our sin in heaven, but for the consequences down here we need cleansing (although some consequences cannot be undone). As we walk in the light, we will be progressively cleansed.

[8] I take the reference here to be to the sin nature; of course someone without a sin nature would have no need of a Savior, nor of regeneration. Anyone who really thinks that he does not have one is most certainly self-deceived, if not satanically deceived.

[9] If He forgave without cleansing us, we would still be dirty. But He only forgives when we confess. (Do not forget Proverbs 29:1.)

10If we claim that we have not sinned,[1] we call Him a liar and His Word is not in us.

Jesus Christ is our Advocate

2 1My dear children, I am writing these things to you so that you not sin; if someone does sin, we have an Advocate in the Father's presence, righteous Jesus Christ—2also, He Himself is the propitiation for our sins;[2] not concerning ours only but also concerning those of the whole world.[3]

We must keep His commandments

3Now by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4He who says, "I have come to know Him," yet does not keep His commandments, is a liar and the Truth is not in him.[4] 5But whoever keeps His Word, God's love has truly been perfected in him: by this we know that we are in Him. 6He who claims to be abiding in Him really needs to act just like He acted.[5]

An old/new commandment

7Brothers,[6] I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old one that you have had from the beginning; this old commandment is the word that you have heard from the beginning. 8Again, I <u>am</u> writing a new commandment to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness[7] is passing away and the true Light is already shining. 9He who claims to be in the Light while hating his brother is in the darkness until now. 10He who keeps on loving his brother is staying in the Light, and there is no occasion for stumbling in him. 11But he who keeps on hating his brother is in the darkness and keeps walking in the darkness; he does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

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[1] The reference here is to individual acts of sin. To contradict God, who affirms that we do in fact commit sins, is to make Him out to be a liar—probably not a good idea.

[2] Now there is a good deal! Having Himself paid my debt, when the Son pleads my case before the Father, I will be cleared. Thank you, Lord! The term 'propitiation' is not so well known these days, but it has a specific theological content that needs to be preserved. It refers to an atoning sacrifice that is required to satisfy God's outraged character, outraged by our sin.

[3] "The whole world" cannot be limited to the elect, if language has verifiable meaning. Just because many do not avail themselves of the propitiation (most have never heard about it) does not mean it is not available.

[4] A statement both strong and uncomfortable, yet true. Deliberate sin indicates an inadequate knowledge of God.

[5] I imagine John was remembering the upper room—John 14:12.

[6] Some 15% of the Greek manuscripts have 'beloved' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[7] I take "the darkness" to be a reference to Satan's kingdom, while "the true Light is already shining" would refer to the outworking of Christ's victory, which in a certain sense turned all old commandments into new ones—the indwelling Holy Spirit enables us to do what we could not, before. Darkness is merely the absence of light; to introduce light in any situation reduces the darkness, which is why the world hates us.

Look out for the enemy!

A bit of poetry

12Dear children, I am writing to you because your sins have been forgiven for His name's sake[1]—13fathers, I am writing to you because you have come to know Him[2] who is from the beginning; young men, I am writing to you because you have overcome the evil one;[3] children, I am writing to you because you have come to know the Father—14fathers, I have written to you because you have come to know Him who is from the beginning; young men, I have written to you because you are strong, and the Word of God remains in you,[4] and you have overcome the evil one.

We must not love the world

15Do not love the world, neither the things in the world;[5] if anyone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him. 16Because everything in the world—the craving of the flesh and the craving of the eyes and the pretension of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.[6] 17The world, with its craving, is passing away, but he who does God's will remains forever.[7]

A bunch of little antichrists

18Children, it is the last hour, and just as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared, by which we know that it is the last hour.[8] 19They went out from us but were not of us,[9] for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us—they left so that they might be exposed, that none of them were of us.

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1 Verse 12 is an introductory cover statement; in verse 13 John divides the cover group into three sub-groups; in verse 14 he returns to the first two categories [I confess that I do not understand the purpose of verse 14, unless it be that John wanted to enlarge on what he says to the young men but did not want to pass over the fathers].

2 An increasingly adequate knowledge of God has everything to do with spiritual maturity.

3 Spiritual warfare is not for 'children'.

4 For the Word to abide in you, you have to abide in it (John 8:31).

5 The crucial issue is the values that the surrounding culture seeks to impose on us—materialism, relativism, humanism; these values are directly opposed to the Father's values, and therefore to His love.

6 The world system is controlled by Satan (5:19 below), so that system with its values is against the Creator. As the Sovereign said in Matthew 6:24, it is impossible to serve two masters—the more so if one is God and the other is Satan!

7 Note that we have to do the will. "Whoever does the will of God, the same is my brother, my sister, my mother" (Mark 3:35). The Sovereign also said that it is a son who abides in the house forever (John 8:35).

8 One gets the impression that the early Christians expected the Lord's return within their lifetime. The Creator is not bound by our notions of time.

9 Those who have left the Christian community are often nastier than those who have never been a part of it. Notice that John calls them "antichrists"! There have always been defectors from the Faith, and they have always been bad news.

20You have an Anointing from the Holy One and understand all.[1] **21**I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the Truth.[2]

We must abide in the truth

22Who is the liar[3] but the one denying that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one denying the Father and the Son. **23**Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either.[4] **24**So you, let what you have heard from the beginning abide in you; if what you have heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Father and in the Son.

25This is the promise that He Himself promised us—the eternal life. **26**I have written these things to you concerning those who *are trying to* deceive you; **27**but really, you do not need anyone to teach you, because the Anointing that you received from Him abides in you; further, as the same Anointing teaches you concerning all things,[5] and it is true and no lie—well just as He has taught you, you will abide in Him.

Remember the accounting at our Lord's return

28And now, dear children, do abide in Him, so that whenever He appears we[6] may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. **29**If you have understood that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness has been begotten by Him.[7]

"We are children of God"

3 **1**Consider how great a love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God![8]

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[1] Presumably the "Anointing" refers to the Holy Spirit; to receive understanding we need to listen to Him.

[2] The Spirit of the Truth cannot lie (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; Titus 1:2), just as Satan cannot tell the truth (John 8:44) [if he ever does it is distorted so as to deceive].

[3] The Text has the definite article—behind every liar is the father of lies. Those who claim that Jesus was only a good man, a great teacher, are on Satan's side.

[4] Some 20% of the Greek manuscripts add, "whoever confesses the Son has the Father also", as in most versions. I take it that John is making the point that to deny either the Father or the Son is to deny them both—the addition is unnecessary. The 80%, including the best line of transmission, are correct. Note that John rejects Unitarianism (Sabellianism, modalism). Also, this verse is directly relevant to how one should present the Gospel to Muslims.

[5] Compare John 16:13.

[6] One might expect 'you' instead of "we", but evidently John is concerned about the results of his labors, as was Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

[7] Do you find this statement to be uncomfortable? You probably know people who live moral, upright lives, but have never gotten 'saved' according to our definition of the procedure. Might there be something lacking in our definition?

[8] Some 15% of the Greek manuscripts add 'and we are' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The addition is out of place here, since John takes up that point in the next verse. The Father took the initiative in bestowing His great love upon us; it is up to us to "consider" and respond. Do please "consider": for the Father to call you His child is a privilege beyond compare.

The world does not acknowledge us[1] for this reason: it did not acknowledge Him.[2]

2Dear ones, right now we are children of God and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is[3]—**3**everyone who has this hope upon him purifies himself, even as He is pure.[4]

"Whoever abides in Him does not sin"

4Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness as well; yes, sin is lawlessness.[5] **5**And you know that He was revealed in order to remove our sins—in Him there is no sin.[6] **6**Whoever is abiding in Him does not sin;[7] indeed, whoever is sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him.[8]

7Dear children, let no one mislead you; he who keeps doing righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. **8**He who keeps doing sin is of the devil,[9] because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was manifested for this purpose: to undo[10] the devil's works. **9**Whoever has been begotten by God does not commit sin, because His seed remains in him; actually, he is not able to sin, because he has been begotten by God.[11]

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[1] Although perhaps 64% of the Greek manuscripts read 'you', the best line of transmission is with the 36% in reading "us". John is making a general statement, so it is properly inclusive—first person.

[2] John is probably remembering John 15:18-24. He was there.

[3] This verse is directly relevant to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:10-12.

[4] We will be completely exposed in His presence, and be fully conscious of it, so to avoid a bad scene we need to get a head start on the purifying.

[5] Lawlessness is rebellion against a known standard. It follows that John is not referring to the 'sins of ignorance' in the O.T.

[6] An important statement—that is why He can be our Savior.

[7] In order to sin one must stop abiding.

[8] An uncomfortable statement; again, deliberate sin indicates an inadequate knowledge of God. Compare Isaiah 6:1-5.

[9] God <u>demands</u> holiness. Belonging to God involves living a holy life (see verse 10 below).

[10] Many versions render 'destroy', but I prefer 'undo'—to undo a work involves undoing its consequences as well. In John 20:21 Sovereign Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I also send you". So we are here to undo Satan's works—there is certainly no lack of opportunity or challenge! However, Satan does not take kindly to any such attempt, so you need to know who you are in Christ, and be living in submission to the Holy Spirit.

[11] This statement appears to be so contrary to our experience that it has given rise to all sorts of evasive action. When explaining this verse in a church I ask all who have been born of God to raise a hand (raising my own)—most do. I then ask, "<u>When</u> were you born of God, from your mother's womb?" "Oh no", they will say, "it was when I was saved / born again." I then ask for a volunteer who was saved as an adult—'John Doe' offers, saying he was saved when he was 30. So I say, "Tell me, John, for the first 29 years of your life you were John Doe, right? Your family, your friends, everybody knew you." "That's right." "So when you were saved at 30 did you stop being John Doe? Nobody knows you anymore?" "Everybody still knows me." "So for 29 years you were John Doe and you continue to be John Doe?" "That's right." "Okay, so what do you have that was born of God? It can't be anything that was there during the first 29 years." Well, the answers will vary according to the theological sophistication of the person, but the

Children of God X children of the devil

10In this the children of God and the children of the devil are distinguished: whoever is not doing righteousness is not of God, also whoever is not loving his brother. 11Because this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another—12not like Cain, who was of the evil one[1] and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his *own* works were evil, while those of his brother were righteous.

13My brothers, do not be surprised if the world hates you. 14We know that we have transferred out of the death into the life[2] because we love our brothers; he who does not love his brother[3] remains in the death. 15Whoever is hating his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding within himself.[4]

Love in deed and truth

16We know the Love by this: He laid down His life in our behalf; we also are obligated to lay down our lives in behalf of our brothers. 17Now whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart toward him—how does the love of God abide in him?

18My dear children, let us not love in word or with the tongue *only*, but in deed and truth 19—yes, by this we know that we are of the Truth and may put our hearts at ease in His presence, 20and that, if our heart should condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knows all.[5]

Confidence toward God

21Dear ones, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God, 22and whatever we may ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.[6] 23Now this is His commandment, that we believe in the name[7] of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded.

Bible speaks of a 'new man' or 'new nature' that the Holy Spirit produces in us. It is that new nature that is God's "seed" within us, and that seed cannot sin. But the old nature still exists, and it does indeed sin—recall the Apostle Paul's struggle (Romans 7:13-25).

1 Satan got Cain.

2 "The death" refers to Satan's kingdom; "the life" refers to Christ's Kingdom.

3 Some 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "his brother" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

4 Note the "is hating"—someone who murdered in the past can repent and be saved.

5 Well, the heart is 'deceitful above all things' (Jeremiah 17:9), so presumably Satan can use it to accuse us falsely, but the Righteous Judge has all the facts. He knows whether or not we were loving "in deed and truth".

6 I take the point to be this: if we are doing "the things that are pleasing in His sight", then we will not ask for something that will displease Him.

7 With reference to salvation the Text always has 'believe into Jesus / His name'—a change of position is involved, from being outside to being inside, which also involves commitment. Here John is writing to those who are already inside, so it is "believe in the name". John was with Peter in Acts 3:6, 16 and 4:10, and may be calling on us to make similar use of the Name.

24He who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.[1] This is how we know that He remains in us: by the Spirit whom He gave us.

Various instructions

Test the spirits

4 1Dear ones, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this the Spirit of God is known:[2] every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ as having come in flesh is of God, 3and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus Christ[3] as having come in flesh[4] is not of God; indeed, this is the spirit of the Antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming—actually, it is already in the world right now.[5]

4Dear children, you are of God and have overcome them,[6] because He who is in you is greater than the one in the world.[7] 5They are of the world; that is why they speak of the world, and the world listens to them. 6We are of God: he who knows God listens to us; he who is not of God does not listen to us—by this we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.[8]

Love one another

7Dear ones, we must love one another, because the love is of God and everyone who loves[9] has been begotten by God and knows God. 8He who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9God's love was made real within us by this: God sent His only begotten Son into the world in order that we might live through Him. 10In this is the love, not that we loved God but that He loved us—He even sent His Son as

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[1] Note that the reciprocal abiding depends on our keeping His commandments. When we stop, He stops. If you are not sure that you have the Holy Spirit, there is something wrong.

[2] Both the *Textus Receptus* and the eclectic ('critical') text have 'ye know', with 25% of the Greek manuscripts, so almost all versions so read. I wonder if this has contributed to the use of this passage as a 'litmus' test for demonization in some quarters. A better procedure is to use the discernment the Holy Spirit gives us. If we are to test spirits, then they most certainly exist! In today's world we desperately need the gift of discerning spirits (plural).

[3] Some 6% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[4] Some 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "as having come in flesh" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[5] The "spirit" of antichrist, an expression of Satan himself, has been around for a long time, but in our day is becoming ever stronger.

[6] What is the antecedent of "them"? Presumably it is the false prophets in verse one, as the next verse makes clear.

[7] Jesus is greater than Satan.

[8] Well now, this would make a good litmus test, but we had better be walking with God if we try to use it!

[9] Of course this refers to *agape* love, not emotional or physical love. The world knows nothing of *agape* love, and Satan represents the opposite.

the propitiation for our sins.[1] 11Dear ones, since God loved us in this way we are obligated to love one another, really.

As He is so are we in this world

12No one has ever looked at God. If we love one another, God remains in us and His love is being perfected in us. 13By this we know that we remain in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14Yes, we have observed and do testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. 15Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.[2] 16Yes, we have come to know and believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in the love abides in God, and God in him. 17The love is perfected with us for this: that we may have confidence in the Day of judgment,[3] since just as He is so are we in this world.[4]

There is no fear in love

18There is no fear in love; rather perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment; so he who fears has not been perfected in love.[5] 19We love Him[6] because He first loved us.

20If anyone says, "I love God," while hating his brother, he is a liar. Well, how can he love God whom he has not seen, while not loving his brother whom he has seen? 21Indeed, this commandment we have from Him: he who loves God must love his brother also.

Our faith overcomes the world

5 1Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God;[7] also, whoever loves the Begetter should love the one begotten by Him as well. 2In this we know that we love the children of God, whenever we love God and keep His commandments. 3For this is the love of

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1 Oh praise God! Thank you, Jesus! The only adequate response is to live our lives for Him.

2 There is a big difference between 'profess' and 'confess'; to confess Jesus is to submit to Him.

3 This is an interesting concept; we may face the judgment with confidence, especially if our thoughts and actions have been oriented by *agape* love.

4 An important statement—note that it is in this world, not the next. But who is the antecedent of "He"? Verse 13 mentions the Holy Spirit, while verse 14 mentions the Father and the Son, so perhaps it is God the Trinity. As the body of Christ, we represent the triune God in this world. And we individually should reflect God's character in this world.

5 So why do we fear? Usually fear is directly tied to our self-centeredness—it is because of what may happen to us that we are afraid. To the extent that we identify with the interests of God and His Kingdom, we will be less concerned about ourselves.

6 Perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Him" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

7 I suppose that John would say that 'knowing' and 'believing' are different things. Satan certainly 'knows' that Jesus is the Christ, but it does not do him any good. How we act shows what we really believe, so to "believe" that Jesus is the Christ requires that we submit to Him.

God, that we keep His commandments;[1] His commandments are not burdensome, 4in that whatever has been begotten by God overcomes the world;[2] this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith. 5Who is he who overcomes the world if not he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Receive the witness of God

6This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ—not by the water only, but by the water[3] and the blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the Truth; 7actually there are three who bear witness[4] 8—the Spirit, the water and the blood—and the three are to one effect. 9If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is God's testimony which He has testified concerning His Son. 10He who believes into the Son of God has the witness within himself; he who does not believe God has made Him *out to be* a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has testified concerning His Son. 11And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.[5]

13I have written these things to you who believe into the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life, really believing into the name of God's Son.[6]

Our confidence

14Now this is the confidence that we have toward Him: if we should ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15And if we know that

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[1] The appropriate ways to demonstrate love differ according to the specific relationship involved; to demonstrate love for God is to obey Him.

[2] To overcome the world on a personal level is to reject its values and live according to Christ's values. It is the 'new nature' that has been "begotten by God"; the 'old nature' cannot overcome the world. To receive a new nature one must believe into Jesus.

[3] I suppose that "the water" stands for the Scriptures.

[4] Those who use the AV or NKJV are used to: "There are three that bear witness *in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth:* the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one." The words in italics are only found in five late Greek manuscripts (less than 1% of the total) and part of the Latin tradition, from which they came. To be more precise, the manuscripts are: (61)[16th], (629)[14th], (918)[16th], 2318 [18th], 2473 [17th], wherein the cursives in ( ) all differ from each other; the two that agree verbatim with TR were probably copied from it. The only one that is clearly early enough to have served as TR's exemplar, 629, is far too different—it lacks the seven last words in TR, omits another five, changes five and adds two—19 out of 40 words is too much; the *Textus Receptus* is not based on cursive 629, so it must be a translation from the Latin (or its exemplar is lost). The shorter reading makes excellent sense. [Those who make 'the three heavenly witnesses' a litmus test for orthodoxy are either ignorant or perverse (or both).]

[5] Here is a plain statement.

[6] A person's name represents that person. Some 4.5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "really believing into the name of God's Son" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

He hears us, whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.[1]

Sins not leading to death

16If anyone should see his brother sinning a sin not leading to death, let him ask, and He will give him life for those who do not sin unto death. There is sin leading to death; I am not saying that he should make request about that. **17**All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.[2]

18We know that whoever has been begotten by God does not sin;[3] rather the one who was begotten by God preserves himself,[4] and the evil one does not touch him.[5]

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[1] Again, in order to be 'heard' we must ask "according to His will".

[2] The way John phrases this, "there is sin not leading to death", almost gives the impression that most sin does lead to death. Well, 'the wages of sin is death', both physical and spiritual. Christ's sacrifice can save us from spiritual death, but not the physical. So is John referring to a premature physical death? But verse 16 is about a "brother" sinning. Consider what is said in Hebrews 10:26-31.

> Because, if we deliberately keep on sinning after having received the real knowledge of the Truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **27**just a certain fearful anticipation of judgment and fierce fire that is ready to consume the hostiles. **28**Anyone who rejected Moses' law died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **29**Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be deemed worthy who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has regarded as unholy the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? **30**For we know Him who said, "'Vengeance is up to me', says the Lord, 'I will repay'." And again, "The LORD will judge His people." **31**It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God!

Note the 'after having received the real knowledge of the Truth' and 'by which he was sanctified' (see also verses 32-36). I fear that what I was taught in Seminary on this subject does not square with the Text. I am not aware of any passage that spells out the sins that do and/or those that do not. I suppose that a request about a sin leading to death simply will not be granted. We ignore this area of truth at our peril. For more on this subject, please see pages 354-59 in the third edition of my book, *ESSAYS on Discipleship, Missions and Spiritual Warfare*.

[3] This statement is very similar to the one in 3:9 above—please refer back to the note there.

[4] Instead of "himself", perhaps 8% of the Greek manuscripts have 'him' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). This changes the interpretation of the statement.

[5] "The evil one does not touch him" has given rise to the catastrophic idea that Christians cannot be demonized; but let us analyze the situation a bit. Wherein might the "touch" in the Text consist? It cannot be temptation, because Christ Himself was tempted (Mt. 4:1-11); it cannot be an attack on the body, because the Apostle Paul was so attacked (2 Corinthians 12:7); it cannot be an attack on the mind, because the Apostle Peter was so attacked (Matthew 16:22-23). So wherein might the "touch" consist?

Consider Ephesians 6:12—"our wrestling match" is against wicked spirits (wrestling is direct, physical, violent—it is impossible to be in a wrestling match and not be 'touched'). Consider also 1 Peter 5:8—why 'be vigilant' if that lion cannot touch us? You may be absolutely certain that believers can be and are demonized! The crucial thing is a **conscious** submission to the Holy Spirit (while controlled by the Spirit you will never be controlled by a demon).

19We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.[1]

Conclusion

20We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the genuine God, and the Life eternal. **21**Dear children, guard yourselves from idols.[2] Amen.

But just who is it that the evil one does not touch? The one begotten by God, or born of God—but who is the "born of God"? Since only Jesus was literally born of God from His mother's womb, the rest of us receive the 'new man' at regeneration, so the believer as a whole person is not in view. Please refer back to the note at 3:9 above.

[1] The verb 'lie' here is used for lying on a bed—your whole weight is resting on it. A bed has no volition, but Satan does; the picture is one of control. All human cultures have features that serve Satan's purposes, but some have more than others. Any true follower of Sovereign Jesus needs to evaluate the culture that surrounds him and reject those features that are contrary to God's values.

[2] The most dangerous "idols" are not made of wood, plaster or stone. Things like money, power, prestige, social standing and non-biblical worldviews are more dangerous.