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Our aim is to regularly post a new lesson on the first part of each month. So if you wish to follow this course of study, please check regularly each month. If no new lesson appears at the beginning of a particular month, it indicates that we were unable to get it ready in time. In such a case, please check for it after the first of the following month. Your questions or comments are welcomed and will be responded to as much as possible.

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

by R. W. Young

“But the path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of Yahweh; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13)

LESSON 164, 1 John 5

We now begin the final chapter in 1 John. This is the chapter in which John states specifically why he has been writing the things he has been writing, namely in order that the believers to whom he was writing might know that they have eternal life. This last chapter completes the evidence that shows us that we are born of Yahweh and, therefore, have eternal life.

VERSES 1-5 Whosoever believeth that Yahshua is the Messiah is born of Yah: and every one that loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him. (2) By this we know that we love the children of Yahweh, when we love Yahweh, and keep his commandments. (3) For this is the love of Yahweh, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (4) For whatsoever is born of Yah overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, *even* our faith. (5) Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believeth that Yahshua is the Son of Yahweh?

The bottom line is faith in Yahshua as being the Messiah. As John says, “Whoever believes Yahshua is the Messiah is born of Yah”. This faith only comes about as we are born of Yahweh, born of water and of the Spirit like Yahshua said. (John 3:5,6)

To be born of water speaks of the cleansing power of the word. The word is the seed planted in the heart upon hearing the good news about Yahweh sending His only begotten Son into the world to die for our sins and to rise again from death in order to give us a new eternal life in which we are set free from the power of sin. As Yahshua said, “ And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

The apostle Peter says that the seed is Yahweh's word. He writes, "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever. (1 Peter 1:23) In Ephesians 5:26 Paul says the Messiah "gave Himself" for the Congregation, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." So again, the word is the seed that is used as the cleansing agent in bringing us into the new birth. It is the "water" by which we are born again. Yahweh speaks of this in Ezekiel 36:25 when He says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

However, the Holy Spirit is the one who uses the word to cleanse us as He opens our hearts to see the truth of the word that Yahshua is the Messiah, the Son of the living Elohim. It is the Holy Spirit of Yahweh that enlightens our minds to believe the good news. Without the work of the Holy Spirit we would remain blinded to the gospel, unable to accept it.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Messiah, who is the image of Yahweh, should shine unto them."

Peter, was the first stone to be built upon the chief corner stone in the building of the Congregation. Upon him and his confession of faith the other stones were later added. He was the first stone in the building because he was the first to recognize and confess that Yahshua is the Messiah the Son of Yahweh. When Peter made that confession Yahshua made it plain to him that he had not figured it out by himself or been taught it by someone else, but that it was revealed to him by the Father in Heaven. Yahshua said, "...unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *this* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 16:17) And of course Yahweh did so by His Spirit (called "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" in Eph 1:17).

Thus it is that we become born of Yahweh when we hear the word of the gospel and the Holy Spirit makes it come to life (fertilizes it, so to speak) within our heart and mind. Thus we are "born of water and of the Spirit." (John 3:5) The word is what cleanses our hearts when it is activated in our minds and hearts by the Holy Spirit.

We do not cause ourselves to be born of Yahweh any more than we caused ourselves to be born into this world. It is not, as some say, that it is by our believing Yahshua is the Messiah and Son of Yahweh that we become born again. Rather it is by being born again of the water (of the word) and of the Spirit that we come to believe that Yahshua is the Messiah. Our faith in Messiah is the evidence that we have been born of Yahweh. So if we believe, we should be very thankful to Yahweh that we have been born of Him.

Next in our verses, John says that everyone who is born of Yahweh loves the others who are born of Him. In other words, a person who is a child of Yahweh loves the other children of Yahweh. If we love Yahweh who gave us the new birth by His word and Spirit, then, we will also love the others whom He has brought into this new birth by the Spirit. This is one of the main, clear evidences that we are true believers and, therefore, have eternal life.

This lines up with what Peter said about being born again. He writes in 1 Peter 1:22-23, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of Elohim, which lives and abides for ever.”

But what is the evidence that our love for the others is true love? It is not just that we say we love them, or even feel that we do. As we read in chapter 4, John says, “By this we know that we love the children of Yahweh, when we love Yahweh, and keep his commandments.”

In other words just as John said in 1 John 4:20 that we are lying if we say we love Yahweh whom we have not seen and hate our brother whom we have seen, so it is equally true that we cannot love our brother who is born of Yahweh into His family if we do not love the Father, Yahweh, and, therefore, keep His commandments.

The keeping of His commandments, as John says, is the love of Yahweh. Just as Yahshua said to the apostles, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15) It stands to reason that if you truly love someone you will seek to please him or her. So if we love Yahweh, we will seek to please Him by doing what He says, or has said, that is, by keeping His commandments.

John then adds the comments, “and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of Yah overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believeth that Yahshua is the Son of Yahweh?”

His commandments are not grievous – they are not burdensome – because we are born of Him and set free from bondage to the things of this world, which things would otherwise draw us away from His commandments. Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:11, “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”

It is the things of this world system that appeal to our flesh (that is to say, to our natural bodily appetites and our soulish mind) that draw us in the opposite direction of the commandments of Yahweh. As we have considered early in chapter 2 of 1 John, he that loves the things of this world – the desires of the flesh, the desires the eyes and the pride of life – does not love Yahweh. (1 John 2:16-17) Again, as we have also seen,

James says the one who loves the world (the things that our fleshly, soulish man desires) is the enemy of Yahweh.

But John tells us that whoever is born of Yahweh overcomes, or conquers, the world. He says it is our faith that gives us victory over the world system, that is, over its control of our being. The one who truly believes has victory over the world and the things that come from it to tempt us to not obey Yahweh's commandment.

In other words, if we really thoroughly believe the good news of salvation and the kingdom of Yahweh, we will be able to live for eternal values. This will enable us to resist the temptation to live for the present gratification of our flesh and soul as they tend to draw us away from obedience to Yahweh as they are stirred up by the things of this present age and worldly system. James writes, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own desire, and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)

When we had nothing to look forward to except death, we were keep in bondage to this world and the things of the world that gratified our present desires. We could only have the attitude of "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die". But now we have power to resist the drawing of the world on our fleshly desires, because we have a much greater life of everlasting, peace, and joy to look forward to.

This is what Hebrews 2:15 is talking about when it says, "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." As long as we had the fear of death, with no hope beyond, we were held in bondage to this world and its sins. We had nothing to enable us to resist our own fleshly, worldly desires.

Along with the appeal of the world to our flesh there was the spirit of this world, Satan and his demonic forces, that we had to contend with. They worked in us and kept us in bondage to the sins of the world. We had a law, or force, working in and upon our flesh that drew us to this world and to sin. But Romans 8:2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yahshua hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And Romans 8:15 says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Thus we have the flesh or bodily desires that drive us. We have the world system that presents us with things that appeal to those evil drives within our flesh. And we previously had the spirit of this world, evil powers and entities, that use the world to keep us in bondage to sin.

But now we have the Holy Spirit as the force that counteracts the spirit of this world that works upon our flesh through bodily appetites. Now we are able to resist those evil forces and our bodily desires that they work through to draw us into sin. We can resist and overcome the world because we now believe and have something much greater to look forward to.

As we read in 1 Corinthians 2:12, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of Yahweh; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of Yahweh.” This is all the result of our being born of Yahweh unto faith in Messiah and love of the brethren.

It is the difference between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. As Yahshua said, in John 3:6, “that which is born of the flesh” [the natural man] “is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit” [the new man in Messiah] “is spirit.” When we became born again, born of Yahweh, we came to faith in Yahshua as the Messiah and had the Holy Spirit, as the glorified Messiah, come to live in us and make our spirits alive unto Yahweh and to the things of His kingdom of light. This began a new life, a life of overcoming the world and the bondage to sin that it held us in.

In summary of what John has said in these verses we see the following things:

1. Belief that Yahshua is the Messiah is the evidence that you are born of Yahweh.
2. If you are born of Yahweh you will love the others who are also born of Him.
3. The proof that you do love them is that you love Yahweh and keep His commandments.
4. His commandments are not grievous (they are not burdensome) because we conquer the world and have victory over it by our faith that Yahshua is the Messiah.

Thus true, complete faith in Yahshua is the bottom line. If you really believe with a heart belief, that is, a belief that becomes the all encompassing center of your life, the controlling factor, it will enable you to joyfully live for Yahweh and not for your own wants and desires of the body and soul. You will come to love the things of Yahweh instead of the things of the world.

What a wonderful new life Yahshua has obtained for us by His death, and by His resurrection whereby as the life giving Spirit He is now able to live in us and set us free from the spirit of this world of sin and darkness. He spoke of this to the apostles before His death, burial, resurrection and glorification as the life giving Spirit.

He said to them, “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but ye know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (John 14:15-18) Thus He has come to live in us and change us into His likeness by the Holy Spirit, His own Spirit, being put within us.

We will go on from here in the next lesson.