

1 John Lesson 10 Articles

The love of God toward us is testified also by many other proofs. If you ask why the world has been created, why we have been placed in it to rule over the earth, why we are preserved in life to enjoy innumerable blessings, why we are endued with light and understanding, no other reason can be given except the free love of God. But the apostle here has chosen the principal evidence of it, that which far surpasses everything else. It was not only an immeasurable love that God did not spare his own Son, that by his death he might restore us to life; it was also the most marvelous goodness, which should fill our minds with the greatest wonder and amazement. Christ, then, is so illustrious and remarkable a proof of divine love toward us that whenever we look at him, he fully confirms the truth that God is love.

His one and only Son. John calls him this for the sake of amplification. This shows more clearly how singularly God loved us when he exposed his only Son to death for our sakes. He who is his only Son by nature makes many sons by grace and adoption—all who, by faith, are united to his body. The apostle expresses the purpose for which Christ has been sent by the Father—namely, that we may live through him, for without him we are all dead; but by his coming he brought life to us, and unless our unbelief prevents the effect of his grace, we feel it in ourselves.¹

4:8 — *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

To be transformed into the image of Christ—God’s ultimate goal for us—means to increasingly reflect His loving character in our behavior and attitudes. Therefore if we are not becoming more loving, we have taken a wrong turn somewhere.

4:20 — *If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar . . .*

Love for God is not merely a warm sentiment or a pleasant feeling; it is a living, active force that changes who we are. Jesus Himself forever connected love for God with love for people (Matt. 22:37–40).²

“to be the Savior of the world” The fact that the Father chose to use Jesus as the means of salvation refutes the gnostic false teaching that salvation is obtained through special, secret knowledge related to the angelic levels. They called these angelic levels *eons* or realms of angelic authority between the high God and the lesser god who formed the world.

The phrase “Savior of the world” was (1) a title for the gods (i.e. Zeus) and (2) a common title for the Roman Caesar. For the Christian only Jesus could bear this title. This is exactly what caused the persecution by local caesar-cults in Asia Minor.

Notice it is all inclusive. He is the savior of all (not some) if they will only respond (cf. John 3:16; Rom. 5:18).³

¹ Calvin, J., & Henry, M. (1998). *1, 2, & 3 John* (p. 79). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

² Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (1 Jn 4:8–20). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.

³ Utley, R. J. (1999). *The Beloved Disciple’s Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John* (Vol. Volume 4, p. 232). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.