

SANCTIFICATION IN 1 JOHN:

**KEY TERMS AND DOCTRINES
IN LIGHT OF THE ARGUMENT
OF 1 JOHN**

Outline:

- I. Two views presented (test of fellowship vs. test of relationship/salvation/life)**
- II. Purpose of the epistle (analysis of the purpose statements)**
- III. Central terms (the meaning of key terms- fellowship, overcome, abide, walk, eternal life, know, light and darkness, perfected, joy, love, confess, born of God)**
- IV. A neglected observation in 1 John**
 - V. What does 1 John say about sanctification?**
- VI. Conclusion**

“John used “eternal life,” “fellowship,” “to know God,” and “abiding” synonymously when describing the Christian. Eternal life is a soteriological term, though quality of life is not completely removed from its meaning. Κοινωνία (“fellowship”) should be understood soteriologically so that “to be in fellowship” is equivalent to having eternal life, or being “saved.” Fellowship means participating and having partnership in the common possession of eternal life, not communion or relationships as one would expect in a family. Knowing God also refers to possessing eternal life (salvation), on the basis of John 17. Abiding is understood as reflecting the Pauline concept of being “in Christ” rather than that of walking in the Spirit. Therefore even the affirmations of 1 John 1:5–10 are tests of spiritual life.”

Gary Derickson

“The terms “fellowship,” “abiding,” “eternal life,” and “knowing God” are related, though understood as describing aspects of the believer’s relationship to the Father within His family. They develop John’s doctrine of sanctification rather than regeneration. Fellowship should be understood in its natural sense as expressing relationship or communion, rather than merely possession of a common property. Abiding should be understood in the Pauline sense of walking in the Spirit rather than being in Christ. This is supported in part from the Johannine use of abiding in John 15, which need not be understood soteriologically. Eternal life refers to quality of life, as in John 10:10, rather than salvation. Knowing God is not equivalent to being saved, but is the result of walking with Him in fellowship.”

Gary Derickson

“The tests given within the epistle enable the readers, understood as believers, to recognize when they are in fellowship with God in the sense of communion, not whether they are His children. The tests are not given to produce assurance of the possession of eternal life, of inclusion in God’s family, but of the “functioning” of that life within the fellowship of God’s family.”

Edward Curtis

Based on apostolic eyewitness testimony (1:1-2), John, who desired his joy to be complete by seeing his audience walking in the truth (1 John 1:4; 2:6; cf. John 15:11-12; 3 John 4), is writing to believers (2:7-14) to assure them of eternal life (5:13) in the midst of false teachers (2:22, 26; 3:7; 4:1) and to explain that fellowship with the only true God who is Light (1:3, 5; 5:19-21) is experienced and maintained by those who avoid sin (1:8-10; 2:1; 3:6-10) and walk in the light by abiding with Him on the basis of God's truth (1:6-7; 2:24), which will result in the desired goal of revealing our identity as God's children (3:9-10), avoiding deception from deceivers (2:26; 3:7), a mature love for God and fellow believers in reflection of the God who is love (2:5; 3:11, 23; 4:7-21), a knowledge of the true God instead of the alternative idolatry (5:20-21), and confidence at the coming of Christ (2:28).

1 Jn 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 Jn 1:4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

1 Jn 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

1 Jn 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

1 Jn 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

1 Jn 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 Jn 5:20 And we 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. This is the true God and eternal life.

What is the central purpose statement in 1 John?

1 John 1:3 “What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

1 John 5:13

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

**Describing the believer's
position?**



**Fellowship- eternal life- abide- to know God-
born of God- perfected- walk- light and
darkness- overcome- joy, love, confess**



**Describing the believer's
walk?**



Central terms in 1 John

POSITION	EXPERIENCE / WALK
eternal life	Fellowship
know	Walk
born of God	Overcome
	Abide
	Joy
	Light and darkness
	Love
	Confess
	Perfect

Central terms in 1 John

POSITION	EXPERIENCE / WALK
Eternal life	Walk
Know	Joy
Born of God	Love
Fellowship	
Overcome	
Abide	
Light and darkness	
Confess	
perfected	

Central terms in 1 John

POSITION	EXPERIENCE / WALK
	Fellowship
	Walk
	Overcome
	Abide
	Joy
	Light and darkness
	eternal life
	know
	born of God
	Love
	Confess
	Perfect

THE FOUR USES OF ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ (*koinonia*) IN 1 JOHN:

1 John 1:3

“What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have **fellowship** with us; and indeed our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

1 John 1:6

“If we say that we have **fellowship** with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

1 John 1:7

“But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

LIFE

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graph TD; LIFE[LIFE] --> Quantitative[Quantitative]; LIFE --> Qualitative[Qualitative];
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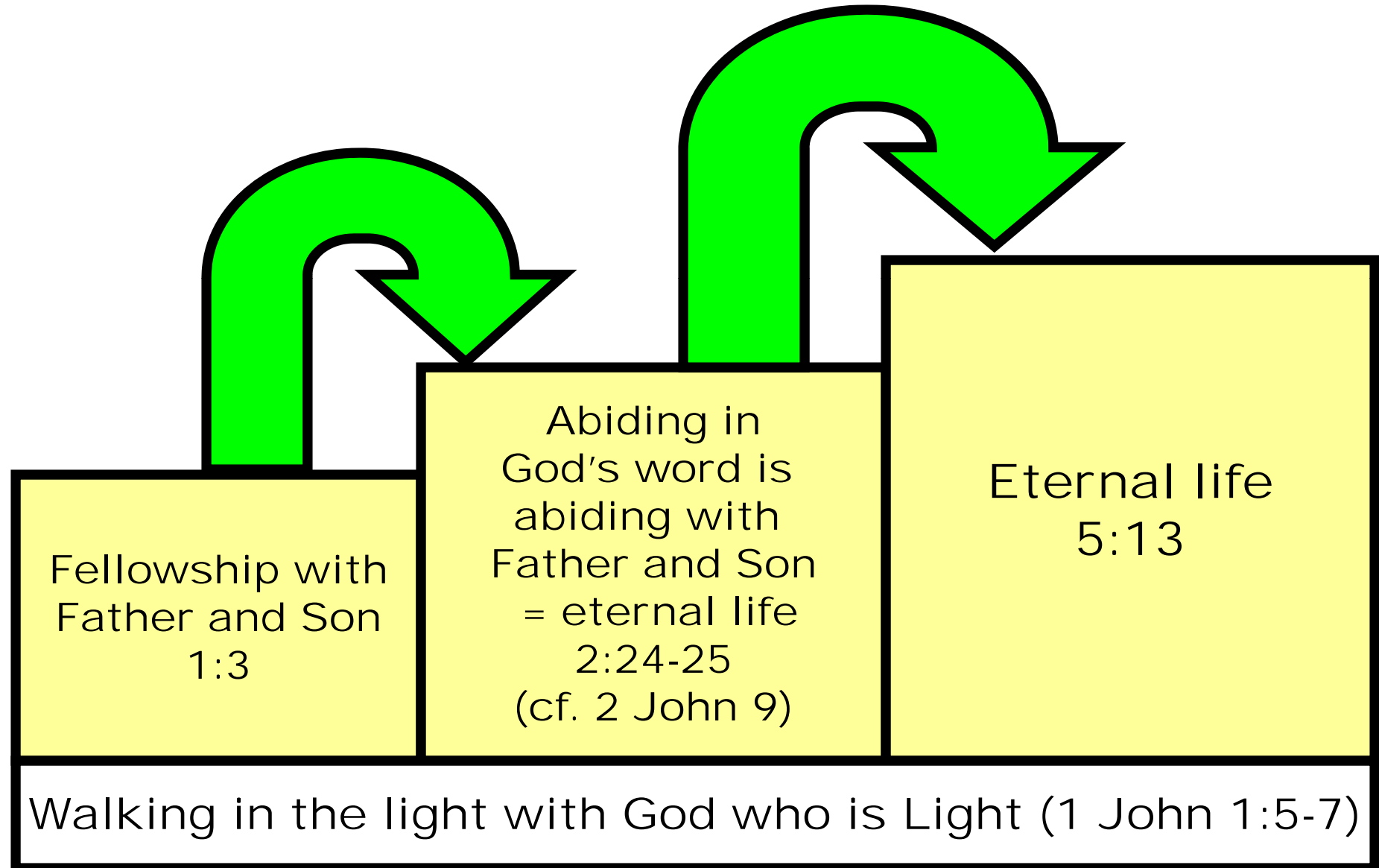
Quantitative

Qualitative

ζωή αἰώνιος (*zōē aiōnios*)

- **John 10:10** “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”
- **1 Timothy 6:12** “Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

The progression of 1 John (fellowship = eternal life)



1 John 2:3-5 “And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love for God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.”

John 14:7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”

John 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

perfect active indicative of γινώσκω (ginosko)- to know
***refers to a believer’s experiential knowledge**

“born”

(γεννάω, *gennao*) – to be born

Occurs ten times in the epistle:

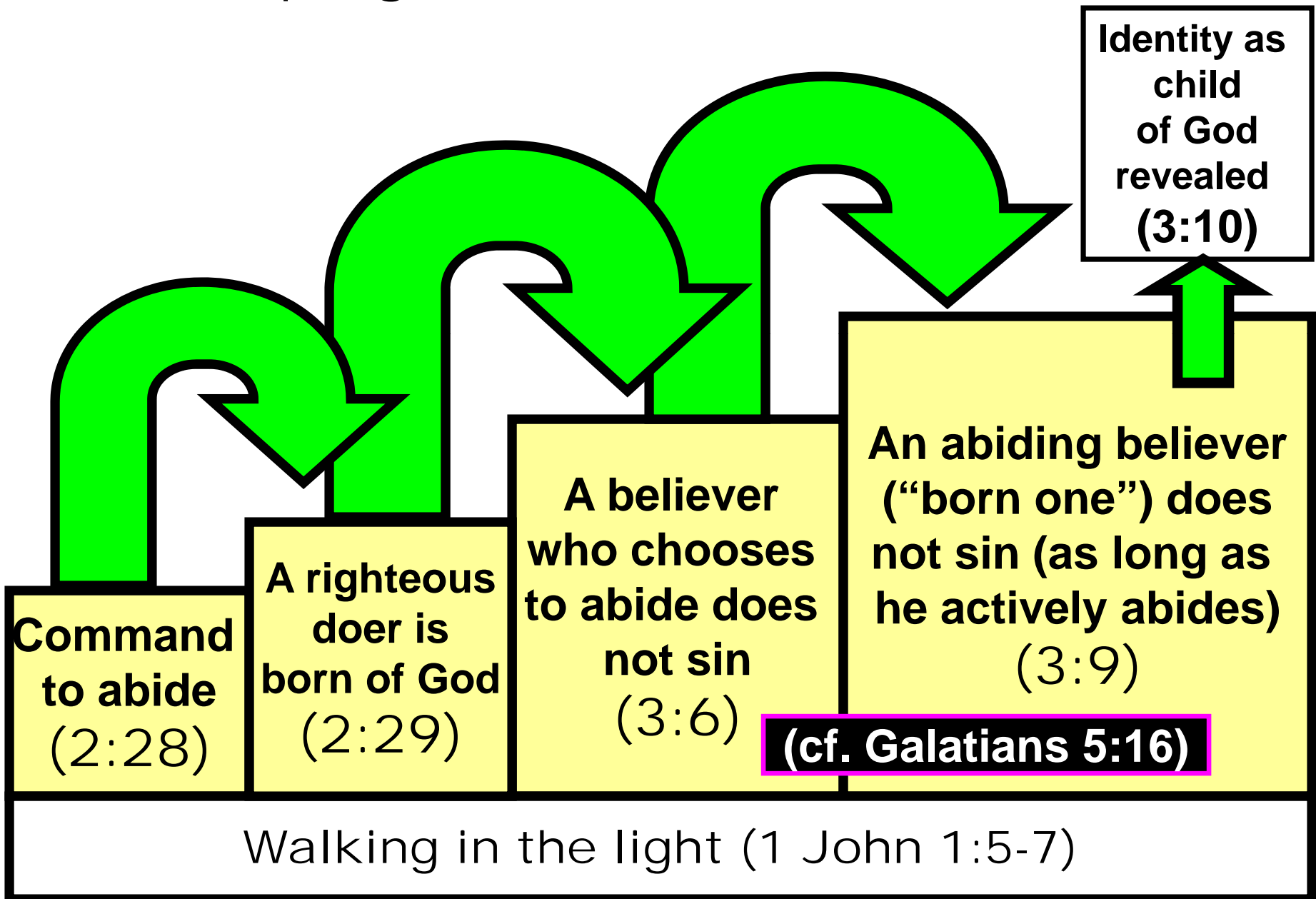
1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18

“John used gennao twenty-eight times in his writings. At times the word refers to normal physical birth (John 9:2, 19, 20). Of more importance is the use of the term for spiritual birth. A Ringwald, NIDNTT, s.v. “birth,” p. 179, stated, “The Johannine writings use the expression gennethenai ek (to be begotten of) to describe the origin of the believer.” The question that needs to be asked is whether John’s use of gennao looks at regeneration or whether it also presupposes a degree of maturity. Clearly the passage in John 3:1-8 speaks of regeneration as Jesus testified to Nicodemus. Here John used the aorist of gennao to refer to regeneration (except in verse 6 and 8, which contain somewhat, usual wording). Similarly, John 1:13 used the aorist of gennao to refer to regeneration. In 1 John, however, John generally used the perfect of gennao (2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 5:4, and 5:18). The aorist is used only twice (5:1 second occurrence and 5:18 second occurrence). In 5:1 it refers to God and in 5:18 it may refer to Christ or perhaps the believer depending on the solution to the textual problem. Two considerations make it plausible that John used gennao in the perfect tense to refer to a maturing believer as opposed to a believer who was not maturing. First, the perfect tense itself frequently stresses the results of the action of the verb (cf. Burton, p. 37). Thus the perfect stresses the fact that the believer stands in the state of having been born of God.

While this is not identical to the concept of abiding, it is very similar. To abide in Christ is to remain in the fellowship initiated at the new birth. Hence, it was a short step for John to use the perfect of gennao to reflect the concept of abiding and not just regeneration. Second, the contexts in which John used the term suggest that he is thinking of more than regeneration. The one who has been born of God is not simply saved; he does what is righteous (2:29); he does not and cannot sin (3:9; 5:18); he loves and knows God (4:7); he has overcome the world (5:4). The fact that the one who has been born of God does not sin is parallel to the one who abides, who also does not sin (3:6). Also, in saying that the one who has been born of God loves God, John is making a parallel to the one who abides in the light (2:10) cf. also 4:12-13, 16). Therefore, it seems likely that when John said that a person had been born of God, he was implying that more than the new birth had taken place (which he expressed by the aorist). Such a person had grown in his position as a child of God. There is one example where John used the perfect to express the new birth, 1 John 5:1. However, even here the evidence of love is prominent...If one who abides in Him does what is righteous, it follows that the one who sins is not abiding in Him and is of the devil. Then John repeated his thought that the one who has been born of God, i.e. the one who abides, does not sin and indeed cannot (3:9).”

Edward Curtis

The progression of 1 John 2:28-3:9



Chiasm of 1 John 3:6-9

- A** No one who abides in Him sins (6a)
- B** Everyone who sins . . . (v. 6b)
- C** The one who acts righteously (v.7)
- B** The one who commits sin (v. 8)
- A** No one who is born of God sins (v. 9).

- 1 **John 2:5** “But whoever keeps His word, in him the love for God has been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him.”
- 1 **John 4:12** “No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.”
- 1 **John 4:17** “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.”
- 1 **John 4:18** “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”

τελειόω (*teleioo*) - to make perfect, complete, to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end.

God is
Light
1 John 1:5

1 John 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
Ephesians 5:8c "...walk as children of light"

**Ephesians
5:8a**

"You were
once
darkness,..."

Ephesians 5:8b
...now light in
the Lord..."

Spiritual
death



Light
in
the
Lord

Walking in the light

Walking in the darkness

Jn. 8:12; 1 Jn. 1:6; 2:11; Eph. 5:11

All three sections of the Hebrew Bible warn against idolatry

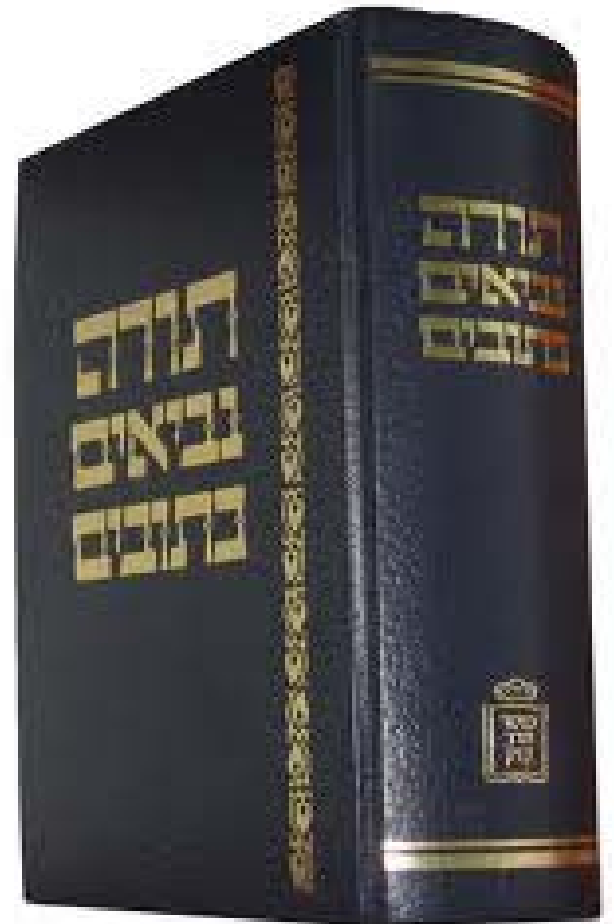
Exodus 20:1-5

Deuteronomy 4:15-19; 32:21

Isaiah 42:5-8

Jeremiah 10:1-10

Psalms 97:7; 106:34-36



The Triune God
of the Bible
(1 Jn 1:3; 5:19-21)

Idolatry
1 John 5:21

or

The
believer's
fellowship

A God other than
the God revealed
in the Bible

With whom you walk:

1 John 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Pauline epistles: Galatians 2:20

Where you walk:

1 John 1:5-7 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**Pauline epistles: Colossians 2:6;
Romans 6:4**

How you walk:

1 John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

**Pauline epistles: Galatians 5:16;
Ephesians 5:2, 15**

Absent from the body and with the Lord
2 Corinthians 5:6



1 John
1:9

Path A
Freedom
(walk by the Spirit)

Path B
Slavery
(grieve the Spirit)

Believers in Christ

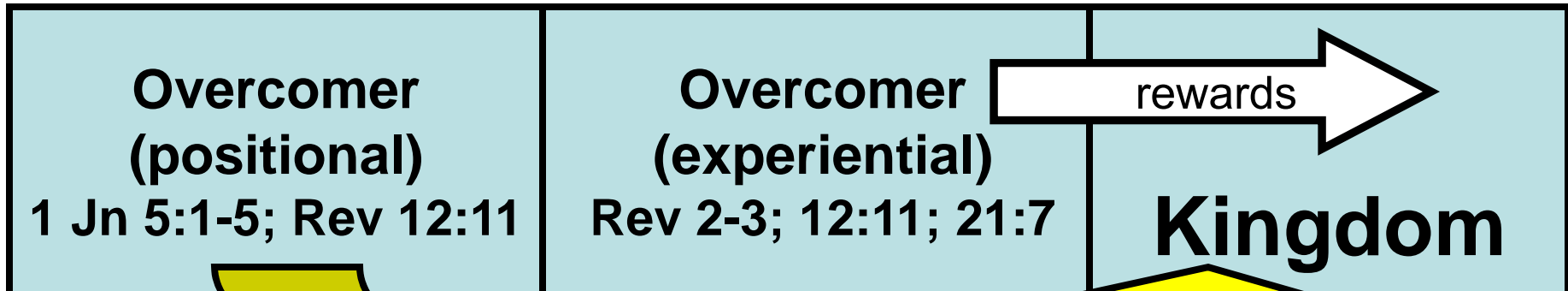
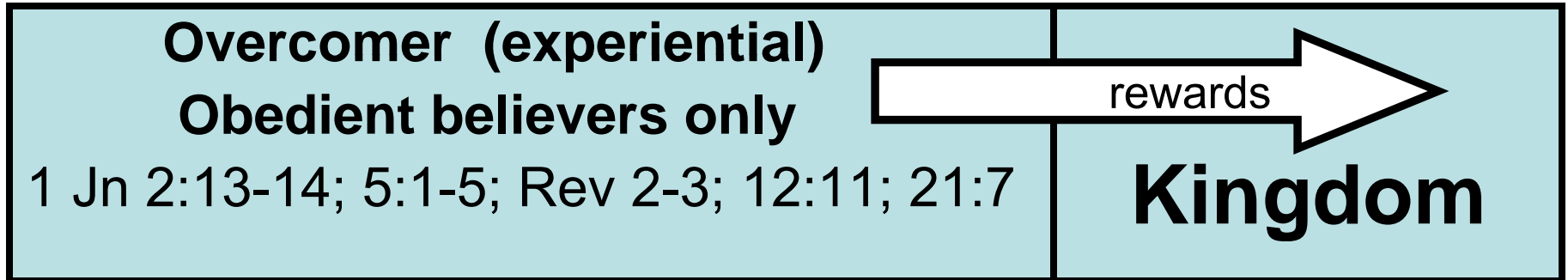
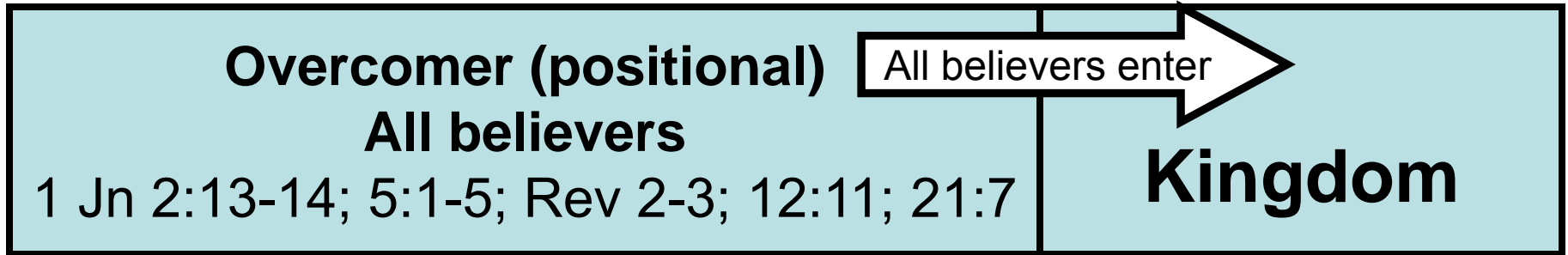
“Overcome”

νικάω [*nikao*] -

Verb= to conquer, to carry off the victory, to be victorious, to overcome.

νίκη [*nike*]- noun = victory.

Who is the overcomer? (νικάω - *nikao*)



“Overcome”

νικάω [*nikao*] -

Revelation 5:5

“...and one of the elders said to me,
“Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that
is from the tribe of Judah,
the Root of David, has overcome
so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

“Overcome”

νικάω [*nikao*] -

Verb= to conquer, to carry off the victory, to be victorious, to overcome.

Used 6 times in 1 John

(cf. 1 John 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4-5)

The church age believer
“overcomes”

- Revelation 2:10-11, 17,
26; 3:5, 12, 21

Israel “overcomes” in the Tribulation

- **Revelation 12:11** “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

It is used for physically overcoming in battle during the Tribulation period:

- Rev 6:2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out **conquering** and to **conquer**.
- Rev 11:7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss (the Antichrist) will make war with them, and **overcome** them and kill them.
- Rev 13:7 It was also given to him (Antichrist) to make war with the saints and to **overcome** them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.
- Rev 17:14 “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will **overcome** them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”

Paul uses nikao only two times:

- Romans 3:4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And **prevail** when You are judged.”
- Romans 12:21 Do not be **overcome** by evil, but **overcome** evil with good.
μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νικά ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.

Paul uses the compound word hupernikao once in Romans 8:

- Romans 8:37 “But in all these things **we** **overwhelmingly conquer** (hupernikao- to gain a surpassing victory) through Him who loved us.”