

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN

UPSIDE

A STUDY THROUGH THE BEATITUDES

A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE OF I JOHN

DOWN

WORLD

Christ

Baptist

Church

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LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

There was a news story August 2010 telling of a street-corner preacher in Britain mentioned to a passing shopper that the Bible calls homosexuality a sin.

- The comment got him thrown in jail.

The police were called and the responding officer was both an atheist who lived an alternative lifestyle and he charged the preacher with violation of the Public Order Act, passed in 1986 -- a law passed in 1986 to control violent rioters and football hoodlums.

- The preacher was carted off, and he spent seven hours in a cell for causing “alarm, harassment and distress.”

Welcome to the Upside-Down World

– a world in which:



- **truth** is trashed and **lies** are lauded
- the **honorable** are despised and the **depraved** are empowered.
- Where **sound morals** and **strong character** are mocked, while **immorality** is praised, paraded and protected.

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Surely one can fly this way, but the ideal manner of flight is right side up.

But, when wrong has been on the throne so long, right seems to be **the discordant voice** and when confronted by right, **wrong tilts its head** and shouts '**you've turned my world upside down.**'

In Acts 17, we have an account that occurred on Paul's second missionary journey -- which is recorded in its entirety starting in Acts 15:36-18:22.

A year or two after completing their first missionary journey, Paul suggested that he and Barnabas revisit the churches they had planted.

A reconstituted party would embark and passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews

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It was here they were confronted by Jews who were motivated by **envy** and bitter **jealousy**; and a large mob formed incorporating unsavory characters and street gangs into the mix to incite a riot.

- They set out to attack Jason's house, for he had welcomed the apostles into his home
- **Envy** (phthonos) is displeasure caused by witnessing the prosperity of others and **jealousy** (zelos) is zeal or ardor in defending what belongs to one.

[envy desires to deprive another of what he has -- and jealousy worries to hold on what is his]

The mob was after Paul and Silas and sought to take them by force and bring them out to the people; and when they couldn't find them, they took Jason instead, along with some of the brothers *in his house church, and dragged them before the city council.*

Along the way they screamed out, *"Those troublemakers who have turned the world upside down have come here to our city.*

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There are political implications in the hyperbole as the intention was not the cosmos (inhabited earth) but rather it means the Roman Empire, since it is a political charge

It is possible that news had come to Thessalonica of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius.

Nevertheless, there is truth in the accusation, for the Church of Christ is revolutionary, and it militantly opposes all forces – including rabbis and hired loafers

Even now, we live in an upside-down world, where wrong is right and right is wrong.

- **How are we to live in such a world?**

I John is a first-century letter written on the tiny Aegean island of Patmos – and it provides answers to the How do we live question.

- The profound truths found in the epistle provides practical insights to help in 2020

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There are those who believe the only way to remain holy and acceptable to God is to separate and segregate ourselves from the “upside world”

But there is a clear intention on God’s part toward believers found in the Gospel of John, where after reviewing His mission (17:1-5), Jesus raises a prayer for His followers (17:6-19)

In the prayer He addressed the inevitable conflict that would arise between His followers and the world.

It is here we see that Jesus’ followers assume the role assigned to Israel – for amid the culture in which we live we are still called to be light

And with this **open defiance of darkness** we will be persecuted by the society

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➤ **John 17:11-19** Now I am no longer in the world, **but these are in the world**, and I come to You. Holy Father keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. ¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and **the world has hated them** because **they are not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ **I do not pray that You should take them out of the world**, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ **They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.** ¹⁷**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.** ¹⁸**As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.** ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

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- They are “in the world” (V 13) still and Christ sends them “into the world” (V 18), but they **must not be like the world** nor get their *spirit, standards, and message* “out of the world,” **else they can do the world no good.**
- Verses 14 to 19 presents the Master’s ideal for believers and go far towards explaining the failure of Christians in winning the world to Christ.
- Too often the world fails to see the difference, thereby having no motivation for change
- We have been assigned to consecrate or set ourselves apart for the purpose of God.
- And this is accomplished in the sphere of God’s truth which comes from God’s Word (not human speculation, but God’s message to us).

It is easy to forget that John, one of Jesus's original twelve disciples, was responsible for five books that found their way into the NT.

- Of course, his most famous work is the gospel of John (biographical account of Jesus)
- Next in popularity is his lengthy and intriguing book of prophecy, Revelation.
- Sandwiched between the two are three lesser-known letters, revealing the heart and soul of this tender man of God. The following analysis helps our understanding of the three

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THE GOSPEL OF JOHN	THE EPISTLE OF JOHN	THE REVELATION OF JOHN
Emphasis on salvation	Emphasis on sanctification	Emphasis on glorification
Past history	Present experience	Future hope
Christ died for us	Christ lives in us	Christ comes for us
The Word made flesh	The Word made real in us	The Word conquering

[Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament](#) (p. 766). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

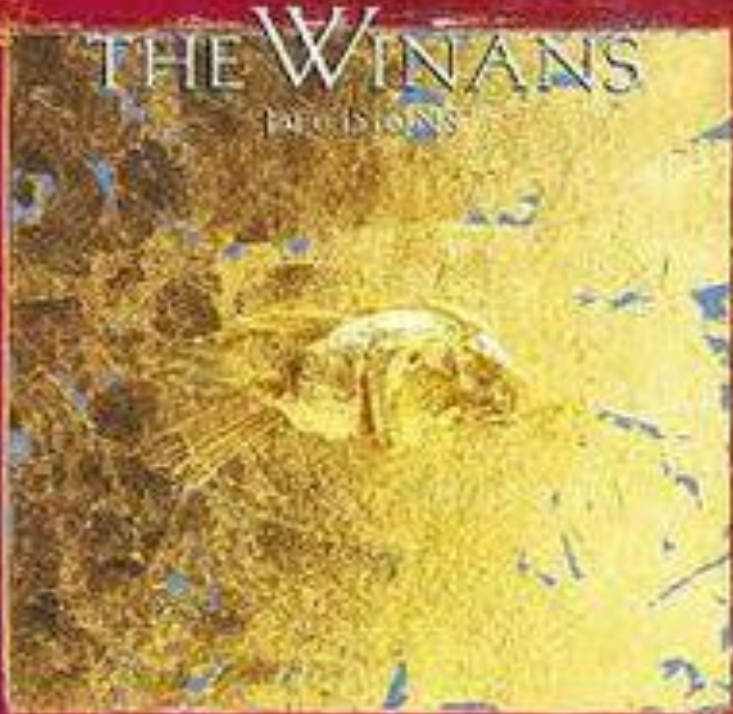
In our study of I John, I am going to ask you to read it every week in its entirety before our Tuesday night study.

- Only 5 little chapters written in a simple and uncomplicated style, it is an easy read
- In John's gospel, he declared the **way of life through faith in God's Son and in the I John, he emphasized the *nature* of that life as possessed by God's children.**
- **There is only one solution to victorious living in a world gone wrong**

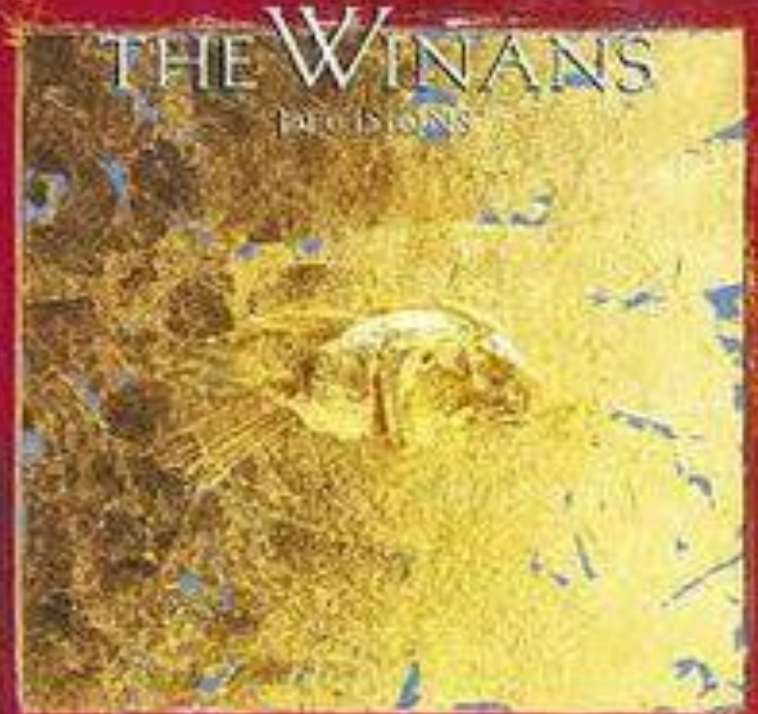
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In 1987 , there was an CD released by the Winans called ***Decisions*** and one of the cuts on the CD is ***Right, Left in a wrong world.***



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The lyrics said:

Well I picked up the paper this morning, And carried new not so news
Scandal seems to be runnin' ramped -- what am I supposed to do?

Well the government seems to be cheating selling arms to the enemy
And those who supposed to be preaching are now warning on my TV

I can't trust in a political system, The world's so rough that it's cold
I can't trust where they're bearly existing

You're the only thing right left --in wrong world

EH, you're the only thing right left in a world, in the whole wide world

We should the marital system couples gather and pray for love

If the parents don't stay together tell me where do the children grow

Well they started to teach evolution and creation god pushed aside,

but when class is done and graduation comes there's an emptiness inside

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Say it with me

(Winans): you're the only thing righteous left in a wrong world

(Marvin): **you've been a rock in weary time**

(Winans): you're the only thing righteous left in a wrong world

(Marvin): and **I want to thank you for never changin' yo mind**

(Winans): you're the only thing righteous left in a wrong world

(Marvin): you see **the nation is strayed away**, but **we're coming back to you cause**

(Winans): you're the only thing righteous left in a wrong

(Marvin): **they're callin' wrong right** and they're **callin' right wrong**, but you're
the only thing

(Winans): you're the only thing righteous left in a wrong world

(Marvin): and I need you lord, and I praise your name

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Lets embark on an examination of an Upside Down World – I John 1:1-

The author of this epistle never identified himself by name, but Christians since the beginning of the church have considered this letter authoritative, believing it was written by John the apostle.

He clearly places himself as part of a group of apostolic eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus, noting “what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also” (I John 1:3)

And throughout the epistle we are given five reasons why He wrote it under the theme “these things have I written”

A. That we might have fellowship (1:3). “Fellowship” is the key theme of the first two chapters (1:3, 6–7) and it has to do with our **communion with Christ**, not our **union with Christ**, which is sonship.

- Our daily fellowship may change; but our sonship remains the same.

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B. That we might have joy (1:4) – The blessing of joy is seen throughout the entire letter. Joy is the result of a close fellowship with Christ.

C. That we might not sin (2:1–2).

- The penalty of sin is taken care of when the sinner trusts Christ, but the power of sin over the daily life is another matter.
- I John explains how we may have victory over sin and how to get forgiveness when we do sin.

D. That we might overcome error (2:26).

- John was facing false teaching, just as we face false teachers today (II Peter 2).
- The false teachers in John's day were claiming:
 - (1) that matter was evil, therefore Christ did not come in the flesh
 - (2) that Christ only appeared to be a real man
 - (3) that knowledge of truth is more important than living the truth; and
 - (4) that only a "spiritual few" could understand spiritual truths.

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- As you read 1 John, you will see that John emphasizes:
 - (1) that matter is not evil, but man's nature is sinful
 - (2) that Jesus Christ had a real body and experienced a real death
 - (3) that it is not enough "to say" what we believe, we must practice it; and
 - (4) all Christians have an unction from God and can know His truth.

E. That we might have assurance (5:13).

- In his Gospel, John tells us **how to be saved** (John 20:31), but in this epistle, he tells us **how to be sure we are saved**.
- The letter is a series of "tests" that Christians may use to examine their **fellowship** (C 1–2) and their **sonship** (C 3–5).
- In each of these sections, John gives three basic "tests": **obedience** (walking in the light), **love** (walking in love), and **truth** (walking in the truth).
- In other words, I **can know I am in fellowship** with God through Christ if I am **not practicing sin**, if I **have love for Him and His people**, and if I **believe and practice the truth** and not some satanic lie.

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- Furthermore, I can know that I am a son of God in the same way: **if I am obeying His Word**; **if I have love for Him and His people**; and **if I believe and live the truth**.
- Note that the emphasis in C 3–5 is on being born of God (3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18).

John did not specify the recipients of this letter but, given his addresses in Rev. 2 & 3 to the seven churches in the immediate vicinity of Ephesus—the city where John ministered late in his life—he likely had those same churches in mind for this letter.

The letter offers little in the way of specifics, so pinpointing the date of its composition can be difficult.

However, its similarity with the gospel composed by John means it was probably written near the same time.

- A date of about AD 90, while exiled on Patmos, ends up being the best proposition.
- The parallelisms in I John are striking for their simplicity: **Christ vs. antichrists, light vs. darkness, truth vs. falsehood, righteousness vs. sin, love of the Father vs. love of the world, and the Spirit of God vs. the spirit of the Antichrist.**

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While this is not a complete list, it reveals a letter that presents the world in an uncomplicated way—**there is right** and **there is wrong**, period.

- This emphasis by John, while striking, is not without love.

It is quite the opposite, for John recognized that love comes from God, and he encouraged the believers to love one another (1 John 4:7).

John's first epistle teaches that while it is important to recognize the lines between truth and error, it must always be done in a spirit of love.

As he did in his gospel, John stated with clarity the purpose of his first letter – he wanted to proclaim good news about Jesus “so that they too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3)

The strategy to living victorious in an Upside-Down World centers in three issues: (a) the zeal of the believers, (b) standing firm against false teachers, and (c) being reassured that we already possess have eternal life.

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John wrote to churches full of people who had struggled with discouragement—whether due to their own sinful failures or the presence of false teachers in their midst.

The aging apostle hoped to ignite the zeal of these believers so that they might follow the Lord more closely and stand firm against those who meant to sow discord among the churches.

In doing so, they would solidify their relationship with God and gain confidence in His work in their lives.

“Open Church – Open Bible”

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