

Faith

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[0 : 00] Amen. Well, false teachers keep on keeping on, it seems to me.

Decade by decade, century by century since Jesus walked on earth, there are false teachers around. People who propagate wrong ideas about who Jesus is and wrong ideas about who he was, who come up with various portrayals of Jesus created often in images that appeal to them in some way.

Just in the last 15 or 20 years, I guess, some of the significant ones were a so-called scholar, a woman called Barbara Thiering from Sydney, who put together a couple of books that are little more than scandalous garbage, no better than being torn up and thrown in the bin, denying that Jesus really died, denying virtually everything at the heart of the Christian faith.

It was all cloaked under a guise or veneer of scholarship, which was very flimsy. Indeed, it's like building one of those Lego-type towers.

If you don't have a strong foundation, then the tower doesn't go very high, and she's tried to build a very high tower with virtually no foundation at all, and it's complete nonsense. But it rattles people.

[1 : 46] Similar sort of last 15 years, I suppose, an American church leader, I hesitate to call him a bishop, but that's the title he uses, called Bishop Spong, has propagated atrocious apostate unbelief, denying virtually every aspect of the creed of Christian belief, with huge following, making quite a deal of money, no doubt, on the royalties of his books, denying everything there is, really, about Jesus, about the scriptures, about sin, morality, judgment, the second coming, the resurrection, and anything else I've forgotten.

Little wonder that such a man also writes columns for a pornography website. But he gains quite a following, and within Anglican churches in Melbourne, there are Spong reading groups, or there have been at least in recent years.

In a similar sort of category, with perhaps differing motives, is Dan Brown, whom surely everyone has heard of. Seems everyone buys his book, even if they don't read it.

It doesn't take much to read it. It's trash. It's trashy reading literature, and it's trashy in its content. But it goes under a very deliberate, misleading, opening section, listing so-called facts, as though what we're reading is actually based on fact, about who Jesus is in the great church cover-up of 2,000 years.

Now, none of them are new, and I've just picked three almost at random, because they've gathered quite a following, but there are all sorts of folk around, every decade, every year almost, to come forward with some highfalutin idea about who Jesus was or was and is and isn't.

[3 : 32] All of them, really, in recent times, are just recycling ancient heresies. There's absolutely nothing new under the sun at all. It's full of escapism. That is, it's escapism from the truth and escapism from the demands of God.

It's little more than fantasy, with no evidence, often with scandal in its motive. It's a ridiculing of what significant evidence there is for the truth of Jesus, the truth of the scriptures, their reliability, etc.

They're often motivated by the desire for money and or fame, and they're often motivated to try and attack the church.

Perhaps there's been some mistreatment of those people by the church in years past, and so this is a way of them getting back at the church, and so on. Now, part of the issue I'm raising tonight is not so much the content of what they don't believe, nor the nature of those people, and there are many others whom I could list.

Sadly, many of them still in church leadership positions. The point at this point is that Christians are not immune from such scandal.

[4 : 45] So when Barbara Thiering gets into the market with her ridiculous nonsense of books, Christians come to me and say, what am I to make of this?

It sounds very persuasive. Look at all the footnotes. And is this really something that the church has got wrong for 2,000 years, trying to cover up in some way or other?

And so when Bishop Spong comes to town, and we hear him on the radio, of course, because he's very eloquent, Christians come to me and say, I'm troubled by this Bishop Spong, all these things I've held dear, but now I'm not so sure whether they're true or not, that Jesus lived or died or rose or is coming again or whatever.

I mean, some of it sounds appealing. And the same with the Dan Brown thing. A number of people have asked me to, you know, what do I think of the book?

So I've had to read it, reluctantly, let me say. And so on. And often what happens, I think, is that Christians are rattled by this attack on Christianity.

[5 : 54] They're rattled by the popularity that attaches itself to those who propagate such heresy, such as the people I mentioned and others. We've got to bear in mind, of course, that whenever heresy is propagated, people will flock to it.

Because as I began this series a few weeks ago, one of the great appeals of spirituality in our age and any age is a spirituality without morality. And so people flock after heresy because it doesn't have the morality that the Bible has.

And we ought not to be rattled. Because if we can somehow chip away at the foundations of the Christian faith, which has to do with the nature of Jesus and what he did in dying and rising again, etc., then we can chip away at morality and ethics and judgment and sin and all that sort of stuff.

What a release that would be. Do whatever you like and be spiritual. And often as a pastor, I have to reassure Christians that what they have believed, what I teach, what the Bible says, is still solid.

Its authority is not actually being eroded by the nonsense that is being propagated by these authors, so-called scholars, so-called church leaders, and by the media.

[7 : 15] And so there are times when I have to explain to people that actually this is not serious scholarship. You see, Barbara Thiering's built on the premise that the Dead Sea Scrolls have influenced the New Testament in significantly devious ways.

Though the evidence for the Dead Sea Scrolls being before Jesus and in such a significant way is minuscule. I mean, there are some Dead Sea Scrolls that predate Jesus, but not really at the level that she speaks about.

That is, their theory is built on flimsy, on air, in a sense, not on solid foundation. Sometimes it helps people to explain to them the hidden or not-so-hidden agendas of people who propagate heresy for their own fame, their own scholarly so-called kudos, their money, their desire to get out of morality, or whatever.

Pastorally, to reassure people about the truth. See, the issue of the destabilising of Christians has to be addressed. And that's actually what John is doing in this letter.

Yes, he does, in effect, challenge the wrong teaching of the heretics that are around and trying to infiltrate the church to whom he writes. But in many senses, the strong thrust of this letter that we've seen is to reassure and encourage, to stand firm, the Christians to whom he writes.

[8 : 47] You see, the first century was no different from our century. Don't be beguiled by those who claim now we've got new ideas about Jesus as though somehow we've moved on. It's just old nonsense being trotted out yet again.

John's church was troubled by heretics who'd gone out from the church we saw a couple of weeks ago. We're now trying to attract the church members to follow them. Perhaps the church members were losing morale.

No doubt some had left the church to go with them. So you can imagine going to a church of 50 and now there's 35, or 100 and now there's 50, or something like that.

It's a bit demoralising. Maybe they're obviously grappling with doubts about their own faith. Is this actually true? Can we believe what we were first taught? Or have these new found ideas and insights and understandings, enlightenment, have those ideas really got something to commend them?

And that's the same for Christians today, it seems to me. Well, in this chapter 5, John brings this letter to a climax and he addresses that crisis of destabilising Christians.

[9 : 56] That is drawing together the threads of what we've seen in the first four chapters. What we've seen is in a sense an inseparable, let me say triumvirate, three things going together on which the whole thing hangs.

Right belief, the practice of love, and obedience of God's commands. And in effect, they are mutually compatible.

You don't have one without the other. And that's what John's been arguing in this letter. That one leads to the other and the other back to it and both of them to the third and the third back to the first and the second and so on.

Right belief, love, obedience of the commandments. So that's what John summarises here at chapter 5, verse 1. Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, right belief, has been born of God and everyone who loves, that's the second thing, the love, the parent loves the child.

By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments. Right belief, love, and obedience all hinging together inseparably in those opening couple of verses.

[11 : 11] For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. One of my closest friends is very fussy about what he eats and so much so that when he was a child it was only really bread and jam.

He's a little bit more adventurous these days. But almost invariably when I've gone out with him for a meal, he'll want to pick and choose on the menu. So he'll want the meat from that item on the menu but he'll want the vegetables from that item and he'll always want chips rather than roast potatoes or mashed potatoes or pasta or something else.

And I say to him, you can't always do that. You've got to choose. Some things go together and some things don't. You can't have that without what goes with it. Now in a sense, that's the sort of argument of John.

Right belief must be accompanied by love which must be accompanied by obedience to the commandments and you can put that in any order. Start with one, the other two follow. Start with the other, the other two follow.

And that's why we see all three packed together here at the beginning of this chapter. But we've seen them constantly through this letter. Right belief, love, and obedience to God's commandments.

[12 : 31] And they are the evidences for being a child of God. They are the evidences of being in a right relationship with God. They are evidences of walking in the light. They are evidences of God's grace in your life, bringing you into a relationship with him as his child.

They are evidences that you know God. They are evidences that you abide in him and that he abides in you. That's the language of this letter. John uses all sorts of terms of intimate relationship.

having fellowship, walking in the light, abiding in him, he abiding in you, et cetera, et cetera. And these are the three evidences. And it's not just one, but all three together.

And that's what John is summarizing here at the beginning of this chapter. Notice too, in passing really, in the first verse, everyone who believes that is an ongoing belief, really a trust, that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

John is not commending our striving for right belief about Jesus. Rather, it's actually something that in the end comes from God himself. Now, I've kept repeating that through these Bible studies and Sunday sermons because a simple reading of John may sometimes obscure the underlying grace of God in establishing the relationship.

[13 : 54] That is, we keep seeing these very high demands not to sin, to obey, to love, to have right belief as though they're things that we attain and then we can be in a relationship with God and then sure, but no, in fact, God's the one who by his grace gives us birth.

Behold what manner of love if you remember how chapter 3 began, that we should be called children of God and act of grace. The born of God in chapter 5 verse 1 is past tense.

It's already happened. The believing that's right is present tense. So God in his grace has made us his children and out of that flows the evidence of that relationship.

Right belief and then in the next two verses love and obedience. Notice too the intermixing or the interconnection really of the love of God and the love of Christians.

Christians we've often seen in this letter a very strong demand to love your brother and sister, Christian that is. No doubt the emphasis partly because of Jesus teaching in John 13 about the priority of loving your brothers and sisters and loving God and partly too no doubt because of the lack of love by those who are defecting from the church.

[15 : 11] But notice how verse 1 ends. Everyone who loves the parent that is God he's the one who's brought us into a relationship loves the child meaning fellow Christians rather than loving Jesus at this point.

That is if you love God then you will love God's people. And that love for fellow Christians that is by this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments.

You see you think how do you know that you love other Christians? And probably if I asked every one of you myself included our first answer would be to think of some act or attitude of love to another Christian.

But John says it's actually deeper than that. By this you know that you love other Christians because you love God and obey God's commandments. How does that work?

Well to take just one or two examples God commands that we honour our parents. Now on the assumption that our parents are Christians which is not always an accurate assumption our honouring of parents is a love of a brother sister Christian by obeying that command of God.

[16 : 25] God commands us not to bear false witness. So we love our brothers and sisters by not bearing false witness to them not lying to them misleading them from the truth.

And we could find a whole host of other examples of course as well. Love for our fellow Christians comes out of love for God it's because of the family relationship that is established by God that we're his children he's our parent or father therefore we love each other within the family of God's people and that's expressed in obedience to God's commands.

So verse 2 is saying I love Christians by obeying God and that is through some of the examples I've just given. Now often the caricature of God's commandments or God's character or nature is it is a bit of a killjoy.

I remember a Peter Cook and Dudley Moore sketch years ago many many years ago I think one at least of them is dead now if not both and it was they were chatting away about religion and they were saying you know you imagine that if you were an Ephesian they didn't quite get the word Ephesian right and there's a rat-a-tat-tat at the door it's Paul the apostle Paul's about not Paul what's he going to say Paul says God's about stop enjoying yourself well that's often the caricature people have of the commandments of God that God's just a killjoy and wants us to stop having fun as though his commandments are burdensome and onerous and pleasure sapping notice what John says at the end of verse 3 God's commandments are not burdensome why not because as verse 4 says for whatever is born of God that is

Christians conquers the world what an extraordinary argument none of you sitting here tonight look as though you've conquered the world today who's conquered the world not even sure that Leonardo DiCaprio did it on the bow of the Titanic when he says I'm the king of the world he was dead soon after didn't look particularly victorious to me who's conquered the world remember those final words of Jesus almost those final words of Jesus before he went off to the garden of Gethsemane to his disciples in that upper room the end of John 16 fear not for I have conquered the world it's important that we recognize that connection Jesus says those words just before he dies and yes at one level we might say well that doesn't look like conquering the world it looks like a

[19 : 23] Leonardo DiCaprio foolishness but of course in dying for Jesus he did conquer the world he conquered evil sin and death by rising not a conquest totally tied to the resurrection but a conquest that is actually there at the crucifixion it is finished he said the victory is won there on the cross before the resurrection he conquered the world the world of evil sin and the devil so how then do Christians conquer I mean if Jesus has conquered the world well what conquest is left well verse four goes on to say and this is the victory that conquers the world our faith not that our faith itself is powerful but we're plugging in our faith to the power of the death of Christ and his resurrection that's its locus that's what's so crucial in this letter it's not just faith as in the power of positive thinking like some crystal cathedral in western america tries to propagate it's faith in the death and resurrection of

Jesus Christ that's the conquest that's the victory and into that event and that person we plug our faith and then we too conquer the world the word for victory is the Greek word Nike in effect remember that when you see the swish and think not swish but cross that's the Nike that matters for eternity not the shoes or the headband that Roger Federer and others wear and notice that it's faith in Jesus it's not the strength of our faith that matters it's the content or object of faith that matters the language of the verbs in verses 4 and 5 relate the fact that the victory is in the past that conquered the world and verse 5 who is it that keeps on conquering the world but the one who believes that

Jesus is the son of God not that the conflict is over but the outcome is assured the analogy I've used before is between D-Day and V-E-Day in the Second World War D-Day was the decisive day the 8th of May 1945 44 no I've lost June 1944 a little bit before I was born that was the decisive day when everybody knew the war was over and the allies had won but it took another 11 months to the 8th of May 1945 before Germany or Berlin fell and in a sense the war was really over in that 11 months there were some of the fiercest battles of the war from what I'm told but the victory was assured the outcome was certain the conflict wasn't and we keep on conquering is the language or the verb of chapter 5 and notice how chapter 5 verse 5 puts it the one who believes that

Jesus is the son of God people sometimes say to me I wish I had as much faith as you and I tell them that's not the issue I'm not sure that I've got that much faith you see faith is not one of those barometers like we've been looking at today seeing the temperature climb faith is not something that we can somehow emotionally bring ourselves together like the great big tiger barometer when Richmond occasionally score a goal at the MCG and this barometer comes on the scoreboard and everyone is meant to shout as hard as they can to get it up to 100 that's not what faith is about trying to mass sort of great reserves of faith to get it up to a high level not at all huge faith in thin ice will not keep you from falling into a freezing lake little faith in thick ice will keep you safe that is it's the object of your faith that matters you see

I could have a paper chair here and I could say I have absolute confidence that this will hold me and I sit on it collapses under me it's not the amount of faith it's the object of faith that's what matters and that's why it's so important that the object of our faith is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that he is the son of God not some newly conceived idea of Jesus not Jesus as you'd like him to be can we say and actually have the reality of conquering the world the content of faith is crucial and that's a deliberate pun for the word crucial comes from the word cross faith is not an optimistic outlook it's not wishful thinking it's not positive thinking it's trust located directed focused in a particular person of history and in the particular events of his incarnation crucifixion and resurrection

[25 : 13] John now develops that theme in the verses that follow it's so important for us this is the one Jesus is the one who came by water and blood Jesus Christ not with the water only but with the water and the blood and the spirit is the one that testifies for the spirit is the water most probably the claim of the false teachers is that when Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan therefore under the water that was when the voice from heaven was heard this is my son and the claim of the false teachers there was one in the first century the century after John wrote this letter called Sarinthus for whom his documents are still in existence claim that just before he died how could you have a divine spirit put to death on the cross but the divine spirit left Jesus and so he was human up to his baptism and then merely human just before his crucifixion onwards that's not an old heresy when I was studying at theological college less than 20 years ago we did theological discussions with students from another

Anglican theological college in Melbourne and these students from Trinity College exactly believed that heresy that at the point of his baptism Jesus became divine that is not really incarnate totally but the spirit of divinity came upon him but it left him sometime we're not told in the scriptures just before he died because how could the divine die serenthus all over again heresy all over again what John you see is saying here by water and blood is that Jesus was really human and really divine a real person that the son of God was real not just testified to at the time of his baptism but the blood was real and probably referring not just to blood to show that really human but blood on the cross when he died there he's the son of God as he dies on the cross the son of God not just human and the spirit gone from him and where he says at the end of that little section in verse six that the spirit testifies possibly he's referring to the testimony of the voice from heaven at the baptism maybe just in general about the testimony of the

Holy Spirit about Jesus and putting the three together there are three that testify verse seven says the spirit the water and the blood and they agree and in Jewish law two witnesses were needed to agree here we've got three that is probably the thrust of this is evidence that needs to be accounted for so anyone who tries to undermine the incarnation and the crucifixion of Jesus they've got a lot of work to do receive human testimony about these events that is I think and maybe John is even referring to his own testimony in his gospel because if you read his gospel it's very clear that he's writing to give testimony that people believe the truth about Jesus as the son of God in his life and in his death and his resurrection John says yes you've got human testimony but the testimony of God is that he's testified to his son notice here that faith is not just blind jumping in the dark faith has got a basis of evidence faith is not for the gullible or for clever people faith is grounded in evidence not in in proof

I don't think but in evidence you see there are many things in life we cannot actually prove we can't actually prove that Julius Caesar conquered Britain in the 50s or whatever it was BC no one doubts it because the evidence is relatively strong the only reason people doubt the evidence about Jesus is that they don't want him to be their Lord the evidence is strong and so the issue for faith is the likelihood that the evidence is pointing to the weight of evidence beyond reasonable doubt don't be fooled into a course of trying to find proof but there is evidence that as one writer put it demands a verdict the contrast in verse 10 those who believe in the son of God have the testimony in their hearts those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that

God has given concerning the son that's a striking parallel because at first reading those who believe in the son of God are contrasted to those who don't believe in God not the son of God you see so tied is Jesus to God the father and in his own divinity that if you don't believe in the son of God then you actually don't believe in God at all so don't be fooled by those in our world for example who say yeah I believe in idols but not the real God you only believe in God when you believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ as the son of God and so when a Muslim says to you we believe in the same God we don't verse 11 goes on and this is the testimony God gave us eternal life and this life is in his son whoever has the son has life whoever does not have the son have life

[31 : 13] John's argument is not really just a theoretical argument although it's been quite solid thus far it's for practical reasons and the first practical reason that comes out of this is having eternal life if you have eternal life that's because you trust in the son of God Jesus Christ he alone has that life so if you don't believe in him you don't have eternal life so the outcome here is not just at a sort of academic ivory tower level the outcome here of whether you believe or not believe is about your eternal destiny that matters and if you read John the writer of this letter his gospel we keep seeing that theme of life time after time after time Jesus the life giver Jesus the one who has life in his name Jesus the bread of life the resurrection and the life the way the truth and the life and so on the whole of the gospel is about the gift of eternal life but right belief will lead to that eternal life wrong belief will not there are pastoral reasons behind this emphasis another pastoral reason comes out in verse 13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life that is he's not writing to people in order to make them Christians he's writing to Christians to assure them that they've got eternal life because the threat of those defectors has troubled them and maybe made them feel doubts about whether or not they have eternal life and John's reassuring them and he goes on then with another pastoral application prayer and this is the boldness we have in him Jesus that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us and if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask we know that we have obtained the requests made of him now we saw a bit of that issue a recent week when prayer cropped up earlier in this letter notice here that it's prayer according to God's will but it's prayer that is confident prayer that is bold bold confident same word it's recapitulating the theme that we saw maybe last

Sunday night I can't remember which week it was but the whole faith prayer is nothing we have no confidence to pray no confidence that our prayers will be answered right belief gives us confidence to pray and moreover confidence that God hears and answers our prayers and then out of that comes yet another pastoral application beginning of verse 16 John writes if you see your brother or sister committing what is not a mortal sin you will ask and God will give life to such a one this letter is dealt frequently with the theme of sin and sin we know is cleansed by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus as the end of chapter one and the beginning of chapter two made clear you see if Jesus is not incarnate the real son of God there is no atonement and no cleansing for sin so right belief lies behind this pastoral application as well that

Christian but a brother or sister Christian who fails from time to time like we all do and we pray for them and God will hear and keep them and cleanse them from their sins there's another benefit of right belief sins are forgiven and our intercession for sins is heeded and they are forgiven but notice how the end of that little passage I read to those whose sin is not mortal sin that is mortal I do not say that you should pray about that all wrongdoing is sin but there is sin that is not mortal what's mortal sin sadly John doesn't actually define it here but we've got to allow the context of the letter to give us some clues on that later medieval catholic theology made a distinction between mortal and venial sins the sins were the ones that could those who having sinned incurred the judgment of

God like Ananias and Sapphira and others and dropped down dead and what's actually being prohibited here is don't pray for the dead the thing is John doesn't actually prohibit prayer he just says in fact there's no point praying about it or he's not encouraging them to pray some make the distinction between deliberate and unwitting sins but that's not in the letter it's not in the language of the New Testament particularly or certainly here anyway the context of the letter though suggests that mortal sin is the sin of the antichrist that is the denial that Jesus is the son of God that was clear in chapter 2 verse 18 onwards and so such people who deny Jesus and therefore deny his incarnation crucifixion and resurrection are actually denying atonement they're denying forgiveness and so someone who practices that sin we saw associated as a child of the devil in chapter 2 associated as the antichrist in chapter 2 that's the mortal sin there's no forgiveness for them they don't believe in forgiveness because they've denied the incarnation crucifixion and resurrection you see the benefit of right belief is forgiveness of sins and don't feel troubled by am I committing a mortal sin here

[36 : 59] John doesn't sow any of that doubt in his readers but encourages them all the more that they are brothers and sisters in Christ and it's those out there who've left them they're the ones committing mortal sin they're not coming back so he doesn't command or encourage them to pray well finally a sequence of assurance in verses 18 to 20 notice that each of those three verses begins we know John is assuring his readers in the light of all that he said in this letter about their eternal secure standing with God and therefore they ought not to be troubled in the light of the false teaching the defectors and the popularity that they've received we know firstly in verse 18 that those who are born of God do not sin that is do not keep on sinning but the one who was born of God protects them and the language there is not that a Christian the one who was born of God but the language there is very specifically although it's a bit clouded in the English translation

Jesus is the one born of God or begotten of God he protects Christians and the evil one does not touch them just as Jesus promised to do in his discussion of himself as the good shepherd in John chapter 10 for example so what a marvellous reassurance in an evil world when false teachers are out there trying to get us to be deceived and misled to go astray into their heresy Jesus will stop them touching us he'll protect us because we're born of God he's our brother we are safe in God's family and then verse 19 we know that we're God's children and the whole world lies under the power of the evil one we don't lie under the power of the evil one is what John is saying here what wonderful reassurance again when the threats are around us we're safe we've conquered the world and then in verse 20 and we know that the son of God has come and has given us understanding a word that no doubt was used by the wrong teachers who claimed a special enlightenment or understanding as later

Gnostics used the same word so we've got already the understanding that we need so that we may know him who is true and we are in him who is true and his son that is in his son Jesus Christ he is the true God and eternal life notice there that emphasis true true true it's not any belief or any Jesus that saves it's the true Jesus and true belief in the true Jesus that saves and makes us secure for eternity that's why John began the letter the way he began the letter the way he did emphasizing the truth and reality of the Jesus whom he'd seen and heard and touched and yet the letter ends with the warning you see this great holding together of reassurance and warning little children keep yourselves from idols some say here's a completely new thing as though somehow this verse is just tacked on the end but not at all

Jesus is saying in John rather is saying in effect that the false teaching that heresy is a sin heresy is idolatry that is any version of the wrong Jesus is an idol it's setting up a wrong God it's idolatry keep away from it notice there then the tension between Jesus who will protect you from the evil one and not let them touch you but yet on the other hand our responsibility to keep away from idols you see Jesus absolute protection never exonerates us to go into paths of danger as though we can waltz out into the world and experience all its way saying well Jesus is going to let me get through this safely and yet so many Christians live that way don't they they live the way I've sort of done this illustration before and almost collapsed the lectern but if here's the line of God's commandment instead of keeping away and safe territory knowing that

Jesus will protect us so many Christians actually like to live on the edge thinking well it does actually look I wonder how far I could get here you know if my big toe is sort of still on the ground is that safe enough that's stupid but that's how many that's how we Christians live we flirt with sin and idolatry and danger we're told here to keep away yes it's true that Jesus will protect us as the good shepherd but that gives us no reason for going into stupidly dangerous territory keep away from idols what we believe matters religious belief is not just a matter of opinion like our world tries to tell us these days tries to say that every religious opinion is equally valid so long as you're sincere sincerity is not a barometer of truth it never has been it never will be wrong belief means that you are not a child of God I don't mean wrong belief as in someone who's just still a bit ignorant and not quite sure of the i's dotted and t's crossed wrong belief as in a denial of the truth means that you are not a child of God wrong belief means that your prayers are ineffective they might as well bounce off a wall wrong belief means that you will live a life lacking in love wrong belief means that you are not forgiven you have no atonement for your sin wrong belief precludes you benefiting from eternal life wrong belief is idolatry wrong belief is a mortal sin little children keep yourselves from idols but on the other hand right belief means sins forgiven and cleansed right belief means that you're a child of

[43 : 14] God right belief means that you have confidence to pray knowing that your prayers will be answered by God right belief means that you'll be confident on the day of judgment right belief brings you assurance brings you truth and brings you life 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 he is the true God and eternal life Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen Amen