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The Message and the Mandate

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The Message and the Mandate: A Reading from 1 John

Lee Magness

Although 1 John defies conventional organization, a number of theological threads run throughout the letter. This reading, adapted from the New Revised Standard Version, arranges the material in 1 John topically to highlight those theological threads. It is configured here for a Leader (litanist, lector) (L) and two readers.

MESSAGE ONE — GOD

L This is the message we have heard...
1 God is light,  
2 and in him is no darkness at all.  
1 God is greater than our hearts,  
2 and God knows everything.  
1 The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.  
2 God is love.  
1 God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God.  
2 God is love.  
All God gave us eternal life.

MESSAGE TWO — JESUS CHRIST

L This is the message we have heard...  
1 God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.  
2 The Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.  
All Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.  
1 He was revealed to take away sins, in him there is no sin.  
2 The Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil.  
1 The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.  
2 He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.  
1 We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.  
2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.  
All He laid down his life for us.
MESSAGE THREE ~ We

L This is the message we have heard...
All We are from God.
1 We are God’s children.
2 We have been anointed by the Holy One, and we all have knowledge.
1 We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding
   so that we may know him who is true.
2 We have boldness before God.
1 We receive from him whatever we ask,
   because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.
2 We love because he first loved us.
1 We are God’s children now;
2 and what we will be has not yet been revealed.
L What we do know is this,
1 that when he is revealed,
All we will be like him,
2 for we will see him just as he is.

MESSAGE FOUR ~ If We

L This is the message we have heard...
1 If we say that we have fellowship with him while walking in darkness,
2 we lie and do not do what is true.
1 If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light,
2 we have fellowship with one another.
1 If we say that we have no sin,
2 we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
1 If we confess our sins,
2 he will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1 If we say that we have not sinned,
2 we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
1 If we do sin,
2 we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,
1 If we obey his commandments,
2 we may be sure that we know God.
1 If what you heard from the beginning abides in you,
2 then you will abide in the Son and in the Father.
1 If you know that he is righteous,
2 you may be sure that everyone who does right is born of him.
1 If anyone says, I love God, and hates their brothers or sister,
2 they are liars.
1 If we ask anything according to his will,
2 he hears us.
MESSAGE FIVE ~ WHOEVER

L This is the message we have heard...
L Whoever...
1 ...says, I know him, but does not obey his commandments,
2 is a liar.
L Whoever...
1 ...obeys God's word,
2 the love of God has reached maturity in this person.
L Whoever...
1 ...says, I abide him,
2 ought to walk just as Jesus walked.
L Whoever...
1 ...says, I am in the light, while hating a brother or sister,
2 is still in the darkness.
L Whoever...
1 ...loves a brother or sister
2 lives in the light.
L Whoever...
1 ...hates a brother or sister
2 is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know the way.
L Whoever...
1 ...does not love
2 abides in death.
L Whoever...
1 ...has the Son
2 has life.

MESSAGE SIX ~ EVERYONE

L This is the message we have heard...
1 Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness.
2 Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.
1 Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil.
2 Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because God's seed abides in them.
1 Everyone who obeys God's commandments abides in God,
   and God abides in him.
2 Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God,
2 and everyone who loves the parent loves the child.
MANDATE ONE ~ LOVING THE WORLD

L  This is the message we have heard...  
And this is the commandment...  
1  Do not love the world or the things in the world.  
Do not love the world:  
2  The love of the Father is not in those who love the world.  
1  Do not love the things of the world:  
2  For all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes,  
    pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.  
1  Do not love the world or the things in the world.  
2  For the world and its desire are passing away,  
All  but those who do the will of God live forever.

MANDATE TWO ~ ABIDING IN HIM

L  And this is the commandment...  
1  Abide in him,  
2  so that when he is revealed we may have confidence  
    and not be put to shame before him at his coming.

MANDATE THREE ~ BEHOLDING THE LOVE

L  And this is the commandment...  
1  See what love the Father has given us,  
2  that we should be called the children of God, and we are!

MANDATE FOUR ~ LOVING ONE ANOTHER

L  And this is the commandment...  
1  Love one another.  
2  Because we love one another, we have passed from death to life.  
1  And we ought to lay down our lives for one another.  
All  Love one another.

2  For love is from God.  
1  Since God loved us so much,  
2  we also ought to love one another.  
L  And this is the commandment...  
1  We should believe in the name of God’s son, Jesus Christ.  
2  Who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?  
1  Those who love God  
2  must love their brothers and sisters as well.  
1  Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.
2 How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

L Believe in Jesus Christ.
1,2 Love one another.
All Obey his commandments.

L The darkness is passing away, the true light is already shining.
1,2 The darkness is passing away, the true light is already shining.
All The darkness is passing away, the true light is already shining.