

Briefing Document: 1 John Lesson 53

February 25, 2026

Executive Summary

This briefing document synthesizes the theological insights from a study on 1 John, specifically focusing on the "purifying hope" found in the anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ. The analysis identifies five features of living in this hope, with primary emphasis on abiding in Christ, manifesting righteousness, and being established in the sovereign, "alien" love of God.

Key takeaways include:

- **Abiding as a Prerequisite:** Hope is limited to those who remain faithful to the Gospel and persevere in Christ to avoid shame at His return.
- **Righteousness as Evidence:** True hope is not merely a claim but is evidenced by a behavioral pattern of righteousness. The document distinguishes between perfection and the general "direction" of a believer's life.
- **The Nature of Divine Love:** God's love is described as *potapos*, a foreign or alien love that is self-sacrificing and independent of human merit.
- **The Distinction of the Believer:** The world's inability to recognize the children of God stems from its fundamental ignorance of Christ.

The Requirement of Abiding (*Meno*)

The first feature of living in the light of Christian hope is the act of abiding. Drawing from 1 John 2:28, the text emphasizes that hope is restricted to those who remain in Christ.

- **Definition of Abiding:** To abide (*meno*) means to remain, stay, and persist in faithfulness to the Gospel. It is a call to persevere rather than defect.
- **The Motivation of Hope:** Abiding is necessary to remain motivated and influenced by the promise of the Second Coming. Without this persistence, a person will not be sustained by the blessings of that hope.
- **Confidence vs. Shame:** The purpose of abiding is so that *when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28)*. Those who fail to abide—those who "went out from us" because they were not truly "of us"—will face shame upon Christ's return.
- **The Means of Security:**
 - **Salvation:** Achieved by faith.
 - **Sanctification:** Achieved by faith and obedience.
 - **Security:** Achieved through perseverance and endurance.

As noted in *Hebrews 3:6*, believers must *hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end*. This steadfastness identifies the "overcomer" described in Revelation and 1 John 5:4: *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

The Manifestation of Righteousness

True hope has a present-tense behavioral impact. It is not a passive waiting but is realized through the practice of righteousness.

Identifying "Phony" Hope

The text exposes individuals who claim to wait for Jesus but show no love for righteousness or hatred for sin. These are described as "phony," as they possess no right to the hope they claim. *1 John 2:29* states, *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

Oida vs. Ginosko

John uses two different Greek words for "know" to distinguish between types of understanding:

1. **Oida:** Refers to absolute, factual truth (e.g., knowing that Jesus is inherently righteous).
2. **Ginosko:** Refers to experiential knowledge (e.g., perceiving that a person's righteous life reflects their new birth).

Direction, Not Perfection

A critical distinction is made between "perfection" and "direction." A believer is not expected to be flawless, but the "pattern and practice" of their life must be oriented toward God.

- **The Goal:** The driving force of a Christian's life is the desire to honor Christ.
- **Repulsion of Sin:** As a believer grows closer to Christ, the things that dishonor Him become increasingly repulsive. One cannot simultaneously pursue righteousness and sin; they are mutually exclusive directions.

The Foundation of Sovereign Love

The third element of hope is that it is established in the love of God. *1 John 3:1* commands, *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*

The "Alien" Love (Potapos)

The phrase "what manner of love" utilizes the Greek word *potapos*, which signifies something foreign, alien, or inexplicable. This suggests that:

- God's love is utterly unknown to human experience.

- It is an "unearthly" love that is above and beyond human understanding.
- It is a love of the will (*agape*), which is spontaneous, self-giving, and self-sacrificing, seeking nothing for itself. As *John 15:13* declares, *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*

Saving Love vs. Common Grace

The document distinguishes between God's general compassion for the world and His specific "saving love" for believers:

- **Common Grace:** Indiscriminate love that "rains on the just and the unjust," providing warnings and the gospel presentation to the lost.
- **Saving Love:** An electing, unbreakable, and purifying love reserved for believers. This love is "slathered" or lavished upon those who were once enemies of God.

The Believer's Status and the World

The transition from "enemy" to "child of God" creates a fundamental rift between the believer and the world.

- **Sovereign Adoption:** Believers are not merely co-workers or friends; they are adopted members of God's kingdom.
- **Worldly Ignorance:** Because the world did not recognize Christ, it cannot recognize the transformed nature of His children. *1 John 3:1* concludes, *Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*
- **Separation from Sin:** The security of this hope is found in the fact that *neither death nor life... nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).*

Conclusion and Final Reflections on Judgment

When a believer stands before God, the focus is not on sin—which has been forgiven—but on rewards. While there may be a final moment of "tears" regarding lost opportunities to serve the kingdom, these are wiped away as the believer enters into glory. The ultimate fulfillment of Christian hope is being "loved into" an eternal relationship with God, sustained by His sovereign grace.

Greek Terminology Guide

Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Brief Definition
Meno [^1]	MEH-no	To remain, stay, or abide; to persist in a state or relationship.

Oida [^2]	OY-dah	To know absolutely; factual, certain knowledge of a truth.
Ginosko [^3]	ghin-OCE-ko	To know experientially; to perceive or come to understand through relationship.
Potapos [^4]	pot-ap-OS	From what country; foreign or alien; of an unknown or astonishing nature.
Agape [^5]	ah-GAH-pay	A self-sacrificing love of the will; choosing to love regardless of the object's merit.

[^1]: Used to describe the necessity of remaining faithful to the gospel (Abiding). [^2]: Used to describe the absolute knowledge that Christ is righteous. [^3]: Used to describe the experiential perception that a believer is born of God based on their life. [^4]: Used by John to describe the "alien" nature of the Father's love in 1 John 3:1. [^5]: The specific type of divine love that is self-giving and sovereign.