

Rethinking Rebound

An Answer to the Misinterpretations of 1 John 1:9

Second Edition

From a Doctrinal Bible Study by

Pastor John A. Ricci

and

Louis E. DeBoer

Presented by the Congregation of
Grace Christian Fellowship

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Gnostic Heresy.....	3
3. Light and Darkness.....	8
4. Confession of Sin.....	15
5. His Word in Us.....	27
6. So-called Synonyms.....	35
7. Conclusion.....	43

All Bible passages are quoted from the King James Bible, the Authorized Version of 1611. All bold type and underlining are added for emphasis by the authors.

1 Introduction

The Bible clearly teaches that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is forgiven of all sins and is eternally secure in a permanent relationship with God (Colossians 2:13-14, Romans 8:31-39, Ephesians 4:30, John 10:27-29).

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The believer is saved by grace and can never lose the free gift of salvation provided through the Cross of Christ. No sin or failure by a believer can affect his salvation.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A question that needs to be answered is, “What happens when a believer falls into sin?” A believer’s sins are an issue *in the family between God the Father and His child*. God will discipline His children when necessary, but the believer is a child in the family of God, and his relationship with God is secure. A believer’s sin cannot cancel out God’s grace toward him. If a believer falls into sin and continues in it without repentance, then God will discipline him. But divine discipline is an act of fatherly love by God. God disciplines the sinning believer because He loves His child too much to let His child waste his or her life in the misery that sin produces (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

One of the traditional beliefs held by many believers is that when a believer sins, he loses fellowship with God. To regain fellowship we are told that the sinning believer must confess his sins to be *forgiven again* and *restored to fellowship*. They also tell us that the *filling of the Spirit* is an instantaneous, absolute condition attained by confessing all of one’s “known sins.” They therefore connect **Ephesians 5:18** (*Be filled with the Spirit...*) with **1 John 1:9** (*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*)

Some teachers today refer to this continual confession of sin as the doctrine of “rebound”—the concept being that we must immediately regain fellowship and spirituality after every sin. The teaching consists of the following basic points:

- Every time a Christian sins, he loses fellowship with God and loses the filling of the Spirit (the filling of the Spirit is considered an instantaneous, absolute condition¹).
- In order to recover fellowship and the filling of the Spirit, we must confess, or “name and cite,” our sins to God.
- If we do not confess our sins (“rebound”), then we remain “out of fellowship,” with the following disastrous results to our spiritual life:
 - God will not even hear our prayers.
 - We can not learn any more of God’s Word.
 - All spiritual growth immediately ceases.
 - Everything we do in God’s service (studying the Bible, witnessing, praying, ministering to our brethren, etc.) is all completely meaningless to God because we were “out of fellowship” the whole time.

Again, this so-called “doctrine of rebound” is formulated by combining 1 John 1:9 and Ephesians 5:18.

1 John 1:9 + Ephesians 5:18 = REBOUND

However, there is simply no legitimate reason to connect these two verses, as we will demonstrate in this study. This is merely an arbitrary *guess* that has to be made in order to create the doctrine of rebound, as 1 John 1 and Ephesians 5 are about very different subjects. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that this is an incorrect teaching based on a misunderstanding of 1 John 1:9. The subject of this booklet is understanding this verse in its proper context. When understood properly, it will be observed that this verse has no direct application to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ This is an erroneous interpretation of spirituality. For a more complete study on the subject of spirituality in the Bible, see *Biblical Spirituality: How a Christian Is Filled with the Spirit* by John A. Ricci.

2 The Gnostic Heresy

The context of 1 John 1:1-2:2 is the Apostle John's refutation of the Gnostic heresy. The Gnostics denied the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ came in a physical body born of a virgin woman at His First Advent. They believed that the flesh was evil and only the spirit was good, therefore Christ could not be the Son of God in the flesh. The Gnostics also believed that through obtaining a superior revelation of *gnosis* (knowledge) they no longer sinned. They treated sin as an illusion. Thus they professed not to sin.

The Gnostic beliefs about the person of Christ and the eradication of the sin nature amounted to "another gospel" and "another Jesus" (Galatians 1:6-9, 2 Corinthians 11:4). Though they professed to be Christians, they had rejected the heart of the faith, and their heresy and apostasy was proof that they were unsaved.

1 John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

2 John 1:9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

John clearly states that to deny the Son of God is come in the flesh is to be antichrist and unsaved.

1 John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

1 John 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

1 John 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

John wrote to these assemblies in Asia Minor to refute the errors of the Gnostics, who were challenging the truth of the person and work of Christ.

In verses 1-3 in 1 John 1, John reaffirms the apostolic witness and testimony to the incarnation of Christ, in opposition to the Gnostic denials that He came in the flesh. John states that the apostles had heard Him, seen Him and touched Him.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

1 John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us);

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Christ certainly came in a flesh-and-blood human body. In verses 4 and 5 John makes a statement about the nature of God and the joy of knowing and having fellowship with Him.

1 John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

To be in fellowship with God is salvation; to be out of fellowship with God is to be lost. To say that God is calling sinners to salvation is to say God is calling sinners to fellowship with Himself. In 1 John 1:1-3, John is addressing an audience under the influence of Gnosticism, which denied that Christ came in the flesh, and he is declaring that Christ has indeed come in the flesh, the apostles saw and touched Him, and John is bearing witness to this truth which gives us eternal life. **John is proclaiming eternal life through the Incarnation of Christ.** He desires to have fellowship with his readers as brethren, but in order for this to happen, they must believe what he has just declared about the Person of Christ. *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also **may** have fellowship with us...”* He is declaring the message of eternal life in Christ so that his readers may believe it and participate (fellowship) in the eternal life of the Father with the apostles. John and the apostles participate in the eternal life of God, and he wants his audience to have the same assurance he has about the fellowship of eternal life with God. John’s purpose in his opening statements is evangelistic. Read carefully these verses again:

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

1 John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and **shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;**)

1 John 1:3 **That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**

When John says we declare these truths about the Incarnation, eternal life, and fellowship, he is talking about salvation. In verses 6 and 7 when John says he wants his readers to have fellowship with the apostles, he wants them to participate in the eternal

life of God along with the apostles.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

He is speaking of salvation when he uses the word “fellowship.” Fellowship means to participate in something. Here John is calling them to participate (fellowship) with the apostles in eternal life by accepting the message that the apostles have declared about Christ Incarnate, who is Life Eternal. Some of these false professing “Christians” were under Gnostic influence and needed to accept the truth of Christ’s coming in the flesh and be saved. When John says we declare this unto you that you might have fellowship with us, he means, we declare the message of eternal life in Christ who has come in the flesh, that you also may participate in the fellowship of eternal life with the Father and participate in eternal life with us.

Here we would cite William Combs, professor at Detroit Baptist Seminary, who offers the following comments concerning the meaning of fellowship:

The correct view of fellowship in 1 John is, I believe, what I have chosen to call the salvation view—the salvation view of fellowship. **This position says that fellowship refers to the joint participation in a common life with God and fellow Christians.** Stott explains, “‘Fellowship’ is a specifically Christian word and denotes that common participation in the grace of God, the salvation of Christ and the indwelling Spirit which is the spiritual birthright of all believers.” [13] Akin observes, **“Fellowship with the Father and his Son, then, is essentially the same thing as having eternal life.”** [14] **Thus, to have fellowship or be “in fellowship,” is equivalent to being saved. One who is “out of fellowship” is an unbeliever.** Though this view has not been widely held in fundamentalism, it is the position of most commentators and seems to have been the only way the passage was understood until the rise of the Keswick and Dallas theologies.²

Another passage that provides strong support for the salvation view of fellowship is 1 Corinthians 1:8-9.

1 Cor 1:8 Who shall also **confirm you unto the end**, that ye may be **blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were **called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

When the Apostle Paul, the great teacher of the doctrines of the “mystery of Christ,” talks about our fellowship with God, does he even hint that it can ever be lost? And that we have to continually “recover” it because we’ll keep “losing” it? Not at all. He only reminds us that, as born-again believers who are eternally secure with the very righteousness of Jesus Christ, we will be “confirmed unto the end” and “blameless” at

² William Combs, “The Meaning of Fellowship in First John” (www.dbts.edu/pdf/macp/2007/Combs_Meaning_of_Fellowship_in_I_John.pdf). Footnote #13: “*The Letters of John*, p. 68.” Footnote #14: “*1, 2, 3 John*, p. 57.” Bold emphasis ours.

our Lord's return. Paul in no way indicates that fellowship with God is something that the Corinthians have to keep pursuing; quite the opposite, in fact. He reminds them that they will be **confirmed to the end** (eternal security, which is a permanent work of God from the day of salvation and never dependent on how we live) and that they will be **blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ** (they will stand before the Lord one day when He returns, clothed in His perfect righteousness, which again is guaranteed and in no way dependent on our lifestyle). This is the only issue concerning fellowship with God—have you believed in His Son and are now *in Christ*, or are you still lost and without Christ. And this is why John is declaring the person and work of Christ at the beginning of his epistle—because he is dealing with “a common life with God and fellow Christians,” which every believer is entered into permanently at salvation, as Mr. Combs describes in the above quote.

To be in fellowship is to be saved and to be out of fellowship is to be lost. When John declares the message of Christ Incarnate in these opening verses, he is in essence inviting his audience to participate in eternal life. This is an offer of salvation. The Bible is silent when it comes to any kind of warning that our fellowship with God can ever be lost, or that we have to do something to recover it. And the complete absence of any such scripture is very damaging to the rebound doctrine.

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life...

John is declaring that Christ has indeed come in the flesh, despite the Gnostic errors.

1 John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and **shew unto you** that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

John is showing and declaring that eternal life was manifested in the flesh to the apostles. Again this is directed to Gnostics in his audience who denied this truth.

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

John is saying we have seen and heard the incarnate Christ and we declare this to you that you may fellowship or participate in this eternal life, and also fellowship with us as believers in Christ. It is by embracing the message of Christ Incarnate that this audience may fellowship in the eternal life God has provided.

Now as to John's statement on the joy of his audience being “full”: “And these things write we unto you, that your **joy may be full**” (1 John 1:4). Here in context John is declaring the message of Christ Incarnate so that his readers may participate in eternal life with him, and by participating in eternal life their joy will be made full. Verse four cannot be separated in context from what is said in verses one through three. For those under Gnostic influence there can only be “fullness of joy” if they embrace the apostolic message of Christ Incarnate. It is this message which gives them participation or

fellowship in the eternal life, which John declares through the Incarnate Christ (whom the Gnostics deny in favor of “another Jesus”). It is only by embracing the message of Christ come in the flesh, the Incarnation, that these people can experience fullness of joy. They must be sure they have eternal life if they want to experience fullness of joy.

The teachers of the “rebound” doctrine insist that fellowship with God is a post-salvation experience that we must continually confess our sins to maintain. However, they have never been able to prove this from the Scriptures. And as we will see consistently throughout our study of the entire text of 1 John chapter 1, John is clearly dealing with the issues of being saved versus being lost, and not the believer’s spiritual life.

3 Light and Darkness

A key to understanding who John is addressing in this passage is distinguishing what John means by “walking in the light” and “walking in darkness.” We will see clearly by comparing scripture with scripture that John uses light to describe those who are saved and darkness to describe those who are lost.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

In verse 6 John states that to claim fellowship with God and to walk in darkness (here it means to reject the deity of Christ in unbelief) is to lie and not do the truth. To walk in darkness is to be lost in a state of unbelief. And as always, we must diligently compare scriptures for a complete understanding of the subject we are studying. John says back in verse 5, “This then is **the message which we have heard of him**, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and **in him is no darkness at all.**” The “message which we have heard of Him” is of course the message John personally heard from the Lord and recorded in his Gospel. Therefore, passages from John’s own Gospel are particularly relevant concerning this subject of light and darkness. Compare the following verses:

John 1:4 In him was **life**; and the **life** was the **light** of men.

John 1:5 And **the light shineth in darkness**; and **the darkness comprehended it not.**

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

John 1:7 The same came for a witness, **to bear witness of the Light**, that all men through him might believe.

John 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

John 1:9 That was **the true Light**, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and **the world knew him not.**

God is light. Christ is the Light. The difference between light and darkness is the difference between being with Christ or without Christ. Light and darkness are in fact used throughout the New Testament in reference to being saved or lost.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

John 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

From these verses it is obvious that in his Gospel and epistles John never uses darkness to describe a believer who sins and loses fellowship. Darkness characterizes unbelieving lost sinners, not believers who are children of light.

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

Col 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

1 The 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

1 The 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

1 Pet 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is important to note that because of the finished work of the Cross every believer has been called into a permanent position of fellowship with God and His beloved Son (1 Peter 2:9, 1 Corinthians 1:9).

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Contrary to popular teaching, a believer is not in fellowship with God, then out of fellowship when he sins, then back in when he confesses, then out again when he sins, etc., etc. The believer has a permanent, eternal fellowship with God because of the Cross. This fellowship cannot be broken or forfeited.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.

In verse 6, John states that those who claim to have fellowship with the Lord, but walk in darkness, are liars.

1 John 2:22 Who is a **liar** but he that **denieth that Jesus is the Christ**? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

In this epistle, the liars are those who deny Jesus Christ. John is dealing with the lost and unsaved.

1 John 1:7 But if we **walk in the light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin**.

In verse 7, John conditions fellowship with God upon walking in the light. Those who walk in the light are believers who have been saved (John 8:12, 12:46; Colossians 1:12-13; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5; 1 Peter 2:9). To walk in the light clearly means to simply be a believer; it is not a reference to the believer's spirituality after salvation. Note here that *to walk in the light is the condition of being cleansed of "all" sin by the blood of Christ*. This is a reference to the once-and-for-all cleansing of all the believer's sins at the moment he puts his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is obviously a reference to salvation in context. There is just no getting around this phrase: "*and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" The cleansing of **all** our sin **by the blood of Christ** can not be referring to anything but salvation. Any attempt to turn it into anything else would contradict numerous scriptures. Any attempt to make this verse a part of the believer's spiritual life after salvation (as the rebound advocates do) is an exercise in futility. Consider how the rebound advocates interpret this verse: "*But if we walk in the light* [name and cite all our sins to stay spiritual], *as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" If we interpret the phrase "walk in the light" as the rebound advocates do, then naming and citing all our sins to stay spiritual would be required to be saved! This would be *salvation by works*—a salvation that is dependent on how we live our spiritual life. A little simple logic easily exposes the error of the rebound advocates' interpretation.

When we understand, however, that walking in the light simply means to be a believer in Christ, then this verse makes perfect sense. This would line up perfectly with what John himself had already written: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me **shall not walk in darkness**, but shall **have the light of life**" (John 8:12). We cannot be saved and also walk in darkness. This coincides with all the other scriptures that use light and darkness to describe being saved versus being lost, especially in John's own Gospel. To walk in the light is to walk with God; to walk in darkness is to walk without God. This is about where the person is walking, not how they are walking. Every true believer walks in the light with God and Christ every day of their life, regardless of how they may stumble and struggle. Every true believer has the light of life.

Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace...

Col 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

The Scriptures are clear. At the moment of faith in Christ the believer is cleansed of all sins (past, present, and future). God forgives the believer and remembers the sins “no more.”

Heb 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Heb 10:18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

At the moment of faith in Christ the believer enters the light and passes out of darkness forever.

1 John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because **the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.**

1 John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, **is in darkness even until now.**

For John, to be in the Light means to be “in Christ” and saved. Note also John 1:8-9, “*He was not **that Light**, but was sent to bear witness of **that Light**. That was **the true Light**, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*” For John the Light is Christ Himself. To walk in the Light is to be “in Christ” and saved. To **walk in darkness** is to be lost and outside of Christ. John is dealing with contrasts between those who are saved and those who are lost.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that followeth me **shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

Here John himself records our Lord’s own explanation of light and darkness. And He directly contrasts **walking in darkness** with **having the light of life**. Having the light of life is to be saved; walking in darkness is to be lost. To be a follower of Christ is to simply be one who believes in Him. Our Lord would never say of any true believer that

they are not His follower, no matter how weak or backslidden they may be. Similarly, we read in John 12:46, “I am come a **light** into the world, that whosoever **believeth on me** should not **abide in darkness.**” Anyone who believes in the Light will always abide and walk in the Light. And he will never abide or walk in darkness again. He has “passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). “Walking in darkness” can only be the lost state of the unsaved; there is simply on other way this phrase can be interpreted.

Note the following scriptures in which light refers to being saved and darkness refers to being lost.

John 12:36 While ye have light, **believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.** These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, **that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.** [Note: The believer does not remain in darkness. For the true believer the darkness is past forever.]

Col 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Col 1:13 **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,** and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

1 Peter 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you **out of darkness into his marvellous light.**

Notice here the past action, “hath called”; the call out of darkness is a call out of the lost condition into the light, and has already been accomplished. This nothing less than a call to the unsaved to enter into restored fellowship with God, who is Light—a call to unsaved men to come out of darkness and into the light of fellowship with God.

As lost sinners, when they heard the Word, the call to salvation, they were being offered *every blessing in Christ* as part of the Gospel. The moment they believed they received everything that was offered in the call to “be reconciled to God,” fellowship included. When God calls sinners out of darkness into His marvelous light, it is a call to restored fellowship with God. The call to “be ye reconciled to God” is a call addressed to unbelievers to be entered into restored fellowship with God (which Adam lost in the Garden).

Again, Peter reminds his readers that God has “*called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*” This call out of darkness to light is the call to restored fellowship with God and every blessing that He is free to bestow on sinners because of the Cross. This is offered to unbelievers as part of the work of reconciliation. In reconciliation God is calling sinners to restored fellowship with Himself on the basis of Christ’s finished work.

1 The 5:4 But ye, **brethren, are not in darkness,** that that day should overtake you as a thief.

1 The 5:5 Ye are all **the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.**

Note very carefully that Paul clearly states that the Thessalonians were guilty of defrauding one another and sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8) which would be “fellowship with the unfruitful *works* of darkness” (Ephesians 5:11); yet Paul never says they are *walking* in darkness, because they are saved. They have passed out of walking in darkness forever. Though there was carnality among them, Paul stated boldly and clearly “*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness.*” If it were possible for a saved man to walk in darkness, here is the perfect opportunity for Paul to declare it, and he did just the opposite. He stated that even these carnal Thessalonians were “not in darkness” and “not of the darkness.” This passage is very damaging to the view that many have proposed, which says a believer can walk in darkness. Paul clearly says of the Thessalonians who were fellowshiping (participating) in the unfruitful works of darkness, “*Ye are not in darkness.*” Why were they not in darkness? Because they are *in Christ*, and the darkness is past forever, for those in Christ.

Paul, as John, is describing, not *how* these believers are walking, but *where* they are walking. As believers they are walking “in Christ”; therefore they are walking “in the light” who is Christ Himself. Believers are never commanded to “walk *in* the light”; they are commanded to “walk *as* children of light.” Believers are never told to “walk in the light,” for they are *always in the light* once justified, forgiven, and indwelt by Christ. For the believer, the darkness is past forever.

Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, **but now are ye light in the Lord:** walk as children of light:

1 John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: **because the darkness is past,** and the true light now shineth.

A believer in Christ can participate in the “works of darkness” at times, even while he is walking in the light, because he will never be completely delivered from his sin nature until resurrected glory.

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

God’s light shined into our hearts when we believed in Christ as our Savior, and that Light can never go out. No matter *how* we walk, we can always know *where* we are walking—in the light of Christ who indwells us. Once the light is in us and we are in the light by the grace of God (“I in you, and ye in me,” John 14:20), we will never walk in darkness again. Only the lost unbeliever can walk in darkness. Of this point Scripture is abundantly clear. A believer who is united to Christ and indwelt by Christ who is the Light, no matter how weak and backslidden, can never “walk in darkness.” The darkness is past forever.

This is John's point in 1 John 1:7, "But **if we walk in the light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**" Note the condition of being cleansed from *all* sin is to "walk in the light." To be "in Christ" is the meaning of "walk in the light." It is where we walk that John is concerned about—not how we walk. John is concerned with our position here, not our experience. Are we saved in the Light of Christ or lost in Adam and in the darkness? If I am in Christ who is the Light, that is where I walk. I am then told that to honor my high calling received at salvation I am to "walk worthy" (Eph 4:1-3). This concerns *how* I walk. This is where confusion occurs between these two important distinctions. We must always remember that "things that differ are not the same." I must distinguish "where" I walk from "how" I walk.

Now here is the point in 1 John 1:7. By simple implication and deduction, if one were to not "walk in the light," then he would not be cleansed from *all* sin and would be lost. This conclusion is inescapable if the language is taken at face value. If we take the simple approach to these verses, the plain language of the apostle presents the simple truth that to be "in the light" and to "walk in the light" is to be saved, and to be "in the darkness" and to "walk in darkness" is to be lost. Walking "in the light" is the believer's position through faith in Christ. Walking "as a child of the light" has to do with the believer's progress of growth in daily experiential sanctification. To walk in the light is to believe in the true Jesus. To walk in darkness is to walk in unbelief, or to profess another Jesus, as the Gnostics did.

The Gnostics claimed fellowship with God, yet by rejecting the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, they demonstrated they were still walking in the darkness of unbelief. Again, the issue of light and darkness is not about *how* one walks but *where* one walks. To walk by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as one's Savior is to walk in the light of God despite one's sins, weaknesses, and failures. To walk in darkness is to walk in unbelief and rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Simply put, to walk in the light is to be saved and to walk in darkness is to be unsaved. John writes verses 6 and 7 to challenge the Gnostic deniers of Christ's incarnation to enter into the light by believing the truth about the Person of Christ.

4 Confession of Sin

In 1 John 1:8, John addresses a second error of these Gnostic unbelievers who claimed that they did not commit sin, since sin was an “illusion”: “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*” The Gnostics’ claim to sinlessness proved that the truth was not in them. Every believer, no matter how weak, is in the light and has the truth in them. John would never say of a true believer that the truth was not in them. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Truth (John 14:6), and He indwells every believer (Colossians 1:27).

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory...

At the moment of salvation through faith in Christ every believer comes to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). If someone does not have the truth in them, it is because they are unsaved. In 1 John 1:8-10, the apostle is not addressing saved people but rather unsaved Gnostics who claim to be sinless.

These verses when understood in context, are not written to instruct believers, but to address Gnostics who falsely professed Christ and denied His incarnation and their lost sinful condition. The solution for these Gnostic heretics who were under deception, according to the Apostle John, is verse 9: “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” John tells these unsaved Gnostics who claim to be sinless that if they confess (Greek *homologeō*: to admit, acknowledge) their sins, God will forgive them and cleanse them from all unrighteousness.

Those who teach “rebound” in 1 John 1:9 emphasize the Greek present tense of the verb translated “confess,” *homologeō*. They teach that since the form of the Greek verb is in the present tense, it is something that must be continually practiced, therefore confession is something that must be continually practiced. This is an arbitrary assumption that ignores the context of 1 John 1:9 completely. The truth is that the present tense does not always denote continuous, habitual action.

The present tense in the Greek language (or in English) can denote three types of action:

- It can express a momentary action **now taking place** or a state **now existing**. Examples: (1) *Anyone who leaves now should get there on time.* (2) *If he falls, he’ll get hurt.* (3) *Joe feels sore after taking that hike.*
- It can express an action that is **continuous** or **habitual**. Examples: (1) *He speaks with an accent.* (2) *He works in the construction business.*
- It can denote an action or state that is **always true**. Examples: (1) *The universe is God’s creation.* (2) *Two plus two equals four.*

We see three possible uses of the present tense. How do you determine which use of the present tense of the verb “confess” is meant in the passage? **Context** determines which sense of the verb is meant! Greek is no different from any other language in this respect. **Context** determines the meaning of words, and **context** determines how a verb is used.

Recognizing the immediate context of 1 John 1:9, as well as comparing it with the rest of Scripture, demands the normal usage of the present tense of “confess” (action now taking place or now existing), i.e., “*If we confess [admit now] our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

Another example of the present tense usage in English would be as follows: “*I am drinking this cup of coffee so I will be more alert.*” This does not mean that I will always be drinking a cup of coffee. In fact, I may never drink another cup of coffee. After this cup that I am drinking, I may give up coffee for health reasons. All you can tell from this present tense of the verb “to drink” is that I am now, at this moment drinking coffee.

Another use of the present tense is the statement, “*I work at the Folgers plant and I am drinking coffee as a taste tester, to make a living and support my family.*” From the context you would be able to determine that the verb “to drink” here is an action that I will continually be doing. Notice that in both statements “drinking” is in the present tense. Context determines **usage** and **meaning**.

We cannot restrict the present tense to only one meaning, as many self-proclaimed students of Greek tend to do, with 1 John 1:9 or any other verse, and ignore the context. The normal, most common usage of the present tense does *not* denote continuous action. A clear example of this usage of the present tense is John 4:13. In this verse, the Lord Jesus Christ makes this statement in the present tense: “*Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.*” The verb “*drinketh*” is in the present tense, which creates an interesting situation.

If the present tense *always* means continuous action, then Jesus has made an absurd statement! He is saying that those who drink water continuously from the well will be thirsty! This doesn’t make sense. If we are continuously drinking water, we will not be thirsty. What Jesus obviously meant from the **context** of the passage is that if someone takes a drink and drinks till his thirst is quenched, he will then get thirsty again, at some point after he finishes his drink of water.

Whoever “drinks” (present tense) of the water of life will be eternally saved—this is a one-time action. On the other hand, if we say, “Joe drinks soda when he’s thirsty,” obviously this is an action that is repeated indefinitely. If little Johnny walks over to the toolbox to get his dad’s hammer because he asked him for it, obviously he only has to do it once; he doesn’t have to keep on walking to the toolbox numerous times to fetch the hammer. But if he walks to school every morning, obviously this is an ongoing, repeated action. The *context* of the verb makes its meaning perfectly obvious. It is a matter of simple common sense. All the truths of Scripture are open and understandable to any humble, teachable Christian reading his English Bible and paying attention to the context, but they are needlessly complicated by those who play technical word games with Greek verb tenses. Verb tenses, whether in Greek, English, or any other language, have varied and flexible usages. To assign one narrow, rigid usage to the present tense, as the rebound advocates do, only demonstrates a lack of understanding of basic grammar. And those who have such a poor understanding of grammar should not be taking it upon themselves

to re-translate the Word of God to their own liking. God's holy inspired Word deserves far more respect and reverence than this.³

Other Scriptures that use the present tense in its normal function include the following:

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye **believe** [present tense] on him whom he hath sent.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and **believeth** [present tense] on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John 3:15 That whosoever **believeth** [present tense] in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** [present tense] in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

John 3:18 He that **believeth** [present tense] on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ...

John 3:36 He that **believeth** [present tense] on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Here in the third chapter of his Gospel, John plainly declares four times (in the present tense) that anyone who believes in the Son of God will have eternal life. Even the rebound advocates will declare that salvation is a one-time decision that never needs to be repeated. But if we were to apply their own translation technique to this passage, we would have to abandon this truth!

The teachers of "rebound" *assume* that to "confess our sins" means we have to stop and recall all the wrong things we've done, and then rattle off a list of all those "known sins" to God. And based on this *assumption*, they claim that it is impossible for an unbeliever to confess his sins. However, there is nothing in 1 John chapter 1 to suggest this, and it is always dangerous to build doctrines on assumptions.

In Matthew 3:1-6 and Mark 1:1-5, we have the account of the Jews coming to John the Baptist to hear his message of the coming Messiah who would take away their sins. These passages have nothing to do with "rebound"; these are unsaved Jews coming to hear John's message of salvation. And in both passages we are told that they came "confessing their sins."

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

³ Many rebound advocates heavily emphasize their supposed expertise in the "original languages" of Greek and Hebrew. They use this as a smokescreen to enable them to re-translate scriptures like 1 John 1:9 to fit their own doctrines. For further discussion on this particular issue, see Endnote on page 46.

Mark 1:2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Mark 1:3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach **the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**.

Mark 1:5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, **confessing their sins**.

These Jews confessed (acknowledged) their sinful state, and were baptized by John, which was representative of their identification with Jesus Christ and His washing away of their sins. To “confess” one’s sins simply means to acknowledge one’s status as a sinner (one who commits “sins”) who needs a Savior! If we want to know what the Bible means by confessing sins, all we have to do is compare scripture with scripture. The unbeliever is lost and “dead” in his sins. And to acknowledge those sins is to acknowledge his need for the Savior.

Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, **who were dead in trespasses and sins...**

Eph 2:5 Even when **we were dead in sins**, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)...

Col 2:13 And you, **being dead in your sins** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Here in Colossians 2, Paul explicitly declares that once we are saved, our sins are “forgiven,” “blotted out,” and “taken out of the way.” The Scriptures tell us repeatedly that as born-again believers, our sins are already forgiven (Acts 5:31, 13:38, 26:18; Romans 4:7; Ephesians 1:7, 4:32; Colossians 1:14, 2:13, 3:13; 1 John 2:12). Yet the rebound advocates would have us believe that we must spend the rest of our life constantly confessing our sins, minute by minute, in order to be forgiven *again*. Our access to our Heavenly Father becomes dependent on our continual, non-stop efforts to confess all our sins. And this becomes an impossible standard when we realize how sinful and helpless we really are. We can never have any real certainty that our Christian service means anything, or that our prayers are even heard, due to the constant fear that we might be “out of fellowship.” With this in mind, let us carefully consider the last three verses of the opening chapter to John’s epistle:

1 John 1:8 If we say that we **have no sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:9 If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we **have not sinned**, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Again, everything John has discussed in the first seven verses deals directly with salvation; to attempt to interpret these things as dealing with a believer's spiritual life requires a great deal of speculation and assumptions that can not be proven. And in verses 8-10, the issues of being saved versus being lost are still being addressed. John is dealing with people who say that they *have no sin*, and that they *have not sinned*. These are people who refuse to *acknowledge their sins at all*. This would fit perfectly with the doctrine of the unbelieving Gnostics, who denied the reality of sin. Since they are outrightly denying their sins, John exhorts them to confess their sins. They are not just denying a particular area of sin or just their post-salvation sins; they actually claim that they have no sin whatsoever, that they have not sinned, period. And this is something that any true Christian, who has trusted in Jesus Christ *to save him from his sins*, would never say. What John is asking of them in verse 9 is a confession of their sins, which they have denied—a general confession of their sins, which need to be forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Christ. And John does not say that the result will be the filling of Spirit. He exhorts those who deny that they have any sin at all to confess their sins, to be forgiven of those sins and cleansed from all unrighteousness. This can not be anything else but a salvation verse directed at unbelievers who deny that they sin. To try to twist it into anything else requires extensive, complicated systems of theological speculation that can never be proven, and depart drastically from the plain language of the entire chapter.

We live in a culture that is still heavily influenced by Roman Catholicism. And for many people, when they see this phrase “confess our sins,” they automatically assume it means rattling off a list of all the sins you've committed. However, this is not what John has in mind at all. To “confess” does not mean to “name and cite” a whole list of all the sins you can think of—this is merely an invention of men. John is referring to an unbeliever confessing his sinful state before God and therefore his need of the Savior (a general confession of one's sins). Confession of sins here is a simple acknowledgment that you commit sins—that you are a sinner and therefore need a Savior. And again, this is why, when John the Baptist came preaching “the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,” the Jews came to him, “confessing their sins.” As we noted already, all these thousands of Jews obviously did not come and rattle off a long list of all the sins they could think of to John the Baptist. This was a general acknowledgement/confession of all their sins, which would be washed away by the coming Messiah, whom John the Baptist was proclaiming. And this further proves the point that the remission of our sins is the result of our confession of our sins. We must simply understand confession of sins in the Biblical sense and in the context of these passages, rather than from the viewpoint of Roman Catholicism and man's legalistic traditions.

What happens at salvation is expressed in many ways in the Bible. We are told to believe, repent, receive, and obey the Gospel, as well as confessing our sins and confessing Christ as Lord, as in 1 John 4:15 and Romans 10:9, where those who “confess” Christ will be saved. To “confess” Christ is to simply acknowledge Him as your Lord and Savior. “*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that **acknowledgeth the Son** hath the Father also*” (1 John 2:23). And to confess your sins is to simply acknowledge that you have sins that you need to be saved from. (Remember, John wrote this epistle in refutation of the Gnostics, who denied that Jesus was the Son of God, and also denied that they sinned.) Admitting you are a sinner and believing in Christ as your Savior go together—you cannot believe in the Savior without acknowledging

(confessing) that you sin and you need the Savior. There are many proud unbelievers today, just as in John's time, who claim that they do not sin and they do not need a Savior. Anyone who considers these things objectively would have to agree that acknowledging/confessing one's sins is quite clearly a requirement for forgiveness and salvation. In fact, plain logic and reason would tell us that one cannot believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and trust Him to save him from his sins, without confessing/admitting the fact that he has sins that need to be forgiven. And the Scriptures are abundantly clear that our forgiveness is completely and eternally accomplished on the day of our salvation.

Even the teachers of rebound cannot find one other scripture in the New Testament that supposedly says we need forgiveness of sins after salvation. All they can do is repeatedly claim 1 John 1:9. A simple question we would present to them is this: "Are our sins forgiven, or are they not?" In John 19:30, our Lord cried out, "It is finished!" If we truly believe that His work is a Finished Work, then we do not need to continually appeal to the Cross every day of our lives to seek forgiveness. So the second question we would present is this: "Is it a finished work, or is it not?"

We realize that there are still many faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who hold to the doctrine of rebound, as we ourselves once did. Yet it is still a dangerous error to compromise the finished work of the Cross, even in the most subtle way. The Scriptures abound with declarations of the blood and sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ as the *only* means of remission of sins, such as Romans 3:25; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:14,22; 1 John 1:7; and Revelation 1:5, just to list a few. One of the foundational truths of the Gospel of Christ is that all our sins were completely and eternally forgiven the day we confessed Christ as our Savior. It is a Finished Work. Yet the rebound advocates specifically teach that "rebound" is an *appeal to the Cross* to receive *forgiveness* whenever we sin. But again, if the work is already *finished* (as the rebound advocated claim to believe), then why do we have to appeal to the Cross *again*? We already appealed to the Cross of Christ for eternal redemption and forgiveness on the day of our salvation. And we are specifically warned about requiring further sacrifice for sins in the book of Hebrews, chapters 5-10. The writer describes Jesus Christ as the great High Priest who made a *permanent* sacrifice for sins, once and for all. And he explains that the repeated sacrifices of bulls and goats, performed by the priests in the Old Testament, could never take away sins.

Heb 5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. ...

Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Heb 5:10 Called of God a **high priest** after the order of Melchizedek.

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**.

Heb 10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, **which can never take away sins**.

To require an ongoing sacrifice for sins is to crucify the Lord Jesus over and over again (as in the Roman Catholic ritual of the mass).

Heb 6:6b ...they **crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh**, and put him to an open shame.

Heb 9:25 Nor yet that he should **offer himself often**, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

Heb 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once** in the end of the world hath he appeared to **put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**.

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Heb 9:28 So Christ was **once offered** to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, **can never** with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually **make the comers thereunto perfect**.

Heb 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

Heb 10:3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

Heb 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

In spite of this stern warning to require no further sacrifice for sins, the rebound teachers require their listeners to repeatedly appeal to the Cross, day after day, year after year, to seek forgiveness *again*. In their own subtle way, they “crucify the Son of God afresh.” It is vitally important to understand the difference between the principles of substitutionary sacrifice, atonement, and forgiveness in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, atonement was a temporary covering for sins performed repeatedly in the Levitical offerings; in the New Testament, the Atonement of the Cross is final and complete. We cannot take practices from the Old Testament Levitical period and try to enforce them after the Cross. We are specifically warned against this, especially here in the book of Hebrews. The rebound advocates, however, will frequently disregard these warnings and try justify their doctrine from the Old Testament confessions and sacrifices. After failing to find any substantial support for their doctrine in the New Testament, they will often appeal to an Old Testament scripture like Psalm 32:5.

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

Again, the Levitical system required various confessions and sacrifices for certain sins and specific breaches of the Law. This Old Testament program that David practiced was designed to foreshadow the Cross and has passed away. It has been replaced by the New Covenant. We cannot use one or two scriptures from the age of Levitical rituals to override all the Scriptures on the Finished Work in the New Testament. We might as well continue performing the sacrifices and observing the Day of Atonement. In addition to his confession of Psalm 32:5, David also offered sacrifices for his sins. Should we do the same? Any diligent Bible student who rightly divides the Word understands that we do

not have to deal with these issues of “uncleanness” before God in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and the confessions and offerings for cleansing, as the Old Testament Israelites did. The sacrifice of the Cross is complete, as opposed to the Old Testament offerings, which could never “make the comers thereunto perfect.”

God has also commanded us clearly and specifically in the New Testament to not return to those Old Testament Levitical practices, because in so doing, we would be denigrating the Final Sacrifice of His dear Son at the Cross. The ultimate divine purpose of the Old Testament ritual plan has been completely accomplished, culminating in God’s greatest work, the Cross of Christ. God’s perfect will for the Levitical types and symbols has been fulfilled and FINISHED, and we should recognize this and glorify Him for it. When we try to perpetuate these Old Testament Jewish confessions and offerings, we are essentially saying that God’s work was not complete, and we are disregarding the severe warnings of the writer of Hebrews.

The constant non-stop confession of “rebound” is also very different from the confession of particular violations of the Mosaic Law, or the offerings on particular holy days, performed by the Old Testament Israelites. “Rebound” is a continuous, minute-by-minute confession of all sins that would have been totally foreign to any Old Testament Israelite. The rebound advocates will talk about “grace” and the “finished work,” yet they impose a burden on Church-age believers that is far greater than anything that was required even in the Old Testament. The whole purpose of the Old Testament program of confessions and sacrifices was to foreshadow the ultimate final Sacrifice of Christ at the Cross—it was not to illustrate “rebound.” The atonement ritual performed in the Old Testament represented the once-and-for-all Atonement that would be accomplished at the Cross and the complete forgiveness that comes with it—not attaining forgiveness over and over through some ongoing, repetitive “rebound” ritual.

Many rebound advocates claim to be champions of grace and claim to believe that our sins were dealt with at the Cross, yet they insist on teaching a doctrine that keeps us occupied with our sins constantly...always concerned that our fellowship with God has been broken and we cannot serve Him or even pray to Him until we rebound again. This unfounded assumption that confessing one’s sins requires rattling off a list of all the sins you can remember *does not come from the Bible*. This idea has its origins in the Roman Catholic confessional booth. And while many conservative Christian churches have done away with the priest and the booth, the rest of the tradition has unfortunately stayed. Furthermore, rebound is actually a much more difficult standard to live up to than the Roman Catholic confessional. It is certainly a repulsive false doctrine and abuse of power to require the people to confess a list of all their sins each week to a priest who quite often is far more carnal than they are. But on a strictly practical level, at least it is only required once a week, while “rebound” is a constant, never-ending burden on the believer’s mind, as he must be constantly concerned about whether he is “in fellowship” with his Father, every moment of every day. We can never have any real confidence that we are still in fellowship with God as we pray, study, serve, etc. We are in imminent danger of having our Heavenly Father sever all communication with us every moment of every day. “Rebound” is an impossible standard that our Lord Jesus Christ has never required of His people. According to this legalistic false doctrine, *at any moment* during every day of our lives we could lose our access to God. We all have a nature in us that is utterly sinful, through-and-through. And we are accountable to a holy God in many ways

concerning our conduct—even more so as Christians, because we commit many “sins of omission”; not only do we disobey God by doing things we should not do, but we also very often *fail to do things* that we *should do*. And according to the rebound advocates, *any unknown sin* breaks our fellowship with God; therefore, we are in imminent danger of losing fellowship at every moment during our life on earth, *and we may not even be aware of it*. When we truly understand the ugliness and corruption of our old sinful nature, and what sin really is to God, then “rebound” becomes an impossible burden.

Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Our Lord came to give us rest. But false doctrines like “rebound” place a heavy burden on God’s people.

Here is another question that the rebound advocates would do well to consider, as a practical example of the problems with “rebound.” Suppose that you’ve been having a pretty good day. You’ve been trying to do the right thing and keep your thoughts pure throughout the day, as you deal with family, the job, the world, and the everyday challenges of life. You get home from work and you want to spend some time in prayer. But according to the rebound advocates, God will not hear a word you say if you have not “rebounded” and “recovered fellowship.” You almost certainly would have committed at least a few mental sins during the course of the day, but you honestly cannot remember. So now you’re stuck! You absolutely *must* make sure you are “in fellowship,” before you pray, study, or do anything at all to serve the Lord.⁴ But the *only* way to “recover fellowship,” is to *name and cite* your *known* sins! You’re most likely already “out of fellowship,” but there is no way for you to “recover fellowship.” What can you do? The rebound advocates are dogmatic that the only “doctrinal” or “Biblical” way to “recover fellowship” is to *name* your *known* sins to God. Therefore, if you cannot remember any of your recent sins (i.e., you do not have any *known* sins to *name* to God), there is no way you can actually “rebound.” You are actually stuck “out of fellowship” until you commit a “known sin” that you can “name and cite.” Ironically, the rebound advocates make great claims about how “easy” rebound is. But in reality it is far from “easy” to practice.

The authors of this book have met many former Catholics who shared stories about their experiences in the confessional booth. And some have shared experiences from their childhood when they would go to the priest because they were told to, but they

⁴ The teachers of “rebound” are adamant that we can do nothing of spiritual value when we are “out of fellowship.” But they are ignoring what is perfectly obvious from common everyday experience. There have been countless Christians throughout the ages who did not practice “rebound,” yet they diligently studied the Word and learned a great deal of truth; they showed steadfast faith and had many prayers answered; and they served the Lord faithfully, many of them even bravely facing a martyr’s death for the Name of Jesus Christ. And yet the rebound advocates would have us believe that they were “out of fellowship” for most of their lives! The authors of this book, as well as many of our brethren who previously practiced “rebound,” have had many experiences where we learned many lessons from the Bible, or witnessed to unbelievers, or even preached a sermon, and we had forgotten to “rebound” first, even though we may have been having a bad day, giving in the weakness of the flesh. Yet our study of the Word and our Christian service were never interrupted.

honestly could not think of any sins to tell the priest. They found themselves in a similar predicament as our brethren who practice “rebound.” So they would actually make up a few sins they never really committed, just so they would have something to tell the priest, and get it over with. We can fool a priest, but we cannot fool God. And there is no getting around the illogical fallacies of the “rebound” doctrine. This is certainly not the truth that sets us free. It is a legalistic deception left over from the Roman Catholic tradition of the confessional booth. It is merely one of the Romanist traditions that carried over to Protestantism in a modified form. And our challenge to the rebound advocates is this: Can this really be the truth that sets us free?

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Throughout the New Testament, the verb “confess” is used in reference to a simple acknowledgment of someone or something; it does not necessitate a repetitive, ongoing ritual like rebound. (See Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8; John 9:22, 12:42; Acts 23:8, 24:14; Romans 10:9, 14:11, 15:9; Philippians 2:11; James 5:16; 1 John 4:15; 2 John 1:7; Revelation 3:5.)

Matt 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Acts 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

Rom 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

1 John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Rev 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

In 1 John chapter 1, John is telling the unbelieving Gnostics that if they confess (acknowledge) their sins, God will forgive them and cleanse them from all “all” unrighteousness. In other words, admit that you have sinned instead of denying your sin, and God will save you. To be cleansed from all unrighteousness is what happens at the moment of salvation through faith in Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26-27, Hebrews 10:10-12, 1 John 3:5, Revelation 1:5, Psalm 103:12). That is when the new believer is completely cleansed once and forever of all sins, past, present and future. Believing on Jesus Christ for salvation certainly entails acknowledging one’s sinful, fallen condition. The unbeliever cannot believe on Christ as his Savior without acknowledging that he is a sinner who needs a Savior. We still hear many unbelievers

say, “I’m a good person, I don’t sin,” and therefore deny their need for a Savior, just as the Gnostics in the early churches.

1 John 1:9 is a salvation verse for deceived unbelievers! The apostles wrote concerning issues of salvation for the lost as well as spiritual growth for the saved in their letters. These things can be easily determined by reading the full context of a passage. And after carefully considering the context of 1 John chapter 1, it is obvious that confession of sins in 1 John 1:9 is addressed to unbelievers, not believers. Yet men through religious tradition perpetuate the doctrine that this verse is instructing believers to confess their sins to be forgiven. All the believer’s sins have been judged and forgiven at the Cross. On the basis of one verse taken out of context, without any other verse in the New Testament to agree with it, men have built an unscriptural doctrine of the need for God’s own children to confess sins to be forgiven.

Dear reader, nowhere in the New Testament epistles to the church are believers told to confess sins to be forgiven. One will search in vain to find a verse that states a born-again believer must confess his sins to be forgiven and in fellowship with God. Every Christian is completely *forgiven*, in *fellowship* with God, and in the *light*, from the moment they believe (Colossians 2:13-14, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Peter 2:9). Note the following verses from the epistles that instruct the believer how to deal with sin in his life.

Eph 4:22 That ye **put off concerning the former conversation the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Eph 4:24 And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Eph 4:25 Wherefore **putting away lying**, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Eph 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

Eph 4:28 **Let him that stole steal no more:** but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Heb 12:1 Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.

1 Cor 11:28b But let a man examine himself...

1 Cor 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged [reference to divine discipline].

2 Cor 7:1 Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

2 Cor 7:9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance. [Repentance means to have a change of mind.]

James 4:8 Purify your hearts.

In all these passages the writer is dealing with the condition of the believer’s heart. The

sinning believer's need is not confession, but rather a change of mind about the sinful behavior that leads to a change of conduct. It is especially interesting to note that the apostle Paul when addressing issues of sexual immorality, division, lawsuits, drunkenness and other sins of gross carnality among the church at Corinth, never instructs anyone to confess their sins to be forgiven. If rebound were true, there was never a group of believers who needed to practice it more than the carnal Corinthians. But Paul gives no such instruction. Why? Because 1 John 1:9 is not applicable to believers.

As a point of clarification, the fact that we do not need to constantly “name and cite” our sins to stay “in fellowship” and receive some kind of second forgiveness, does not mean we never talk to God about our sins. Prayer is a precious time of intimate conversation with our Heavenly Father, and a time to share joy and thanksgiving, as well as our sorrows and burdens with Him. It is also an opportunity to seek His divine guidance in overcoming our weaknesses and sins. We can talk to our Father about everything that is happening in our lives, good or bad. As we are going through these times of struggle and our many failures in the weakness of our flesh, we can always pour out our hearts to the Lord, and call upon Him for help in the time of need, always with the complete confidence that we are in an eternal, unbreakable fellowship with Him, and He always hears every word of each one of His precious children. This is the great grace and faithfulness of our God. This is the truth that sets us free. The teaching of “rebound,” on the other hand, holds God's people in bondage. Many rebound advocates actually claim that the prayers of most Christians “go no higher than the ceiling”!

Most Christian churches generally agree on the basic Biblical principles of spiritual growth and maturity. We all agree that God requires us to pray, study His Word, trust His promises, evangelize the lost, serve the Church, and do our best to avoid disobedience and carnality as we “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” There are many challenges and struggles that the Christian must face, in his spiritual warfare against the flesh, the world, and our adversary the devil. Rebound, however, is an unnecessary additional burden placed upon God's people by the tradition of men. We are *always in fellowship* with God through the Cross of Christ. And the power of God is *always available* to us, from the indwelling Holy Spirit within us.⁵ There is no additional requirement in the Bible for maintaining fellowship with God or accessing the power of the Spirit.

Acts 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things...

⁵ For an in-depth study of the filling of the Spirit, we again refer the reader to our booklet *Biblical Spirituality: How a Christian Is Filled with the Spirit*, by John A. Ricci.

5 His Word in Us

In 1 John 1:10 the apostle repeats the warning again: “*If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us.*” John again is addressing the Gnostics. He states those who claim to have no sin make a liar out of God, and His word is not in them. When John uses the phrase “make him a liar,” he is describing unsaved men, not believers (1 John 5:10).

1 John 5:10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath **made him a liar**; because he **believeth not** the record that God gave of his Son.

The phrase, “His word is not in us,” is an expression that John uses to describe religious unbelievers. Every believer has the word of God in them and knows the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior.

1 John 2:14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and **the word of God abideth in you**, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Note carefully that John states that it is unbelievers in whom the word of God does not dwell. Jesus told the unbelieving Pharisees, “*And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not*” (John 5:38). Again in John 8:37, Jesus told the unbelieving Pharisees, “*I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.*” John would never say of any true believer that the Word of God is not in them, no matter how weak they may be. Every believer has the word of God in them because they have been born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God (1 Peter 1:23). This expression used by John further demonstrates that he is addressing unsaved men in unbelief, and that 1 John 1:9 is not directed toward saved men.

John opens his Gospel with a magnificent presentation of the Person of Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh, who shined as a light in the darkness and came to save fallen man from his sins—and the apostle opens his first epistle in the same way. Note the following comparison of the opening verses to John’s Gospel and his first epistle:

1 John 1:1 That which was from the **beginning**, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the **Word** of life...

John 1:1 In the **beginning** was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God.

John 1:2 The same was in the **beginning** with God. ...

John 1:14 And the **Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us**, (and we beheld his

glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1 John 1:2 (For the **life** was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that **eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:4 In him was **life**; and the **life** was the light of men.

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and **in him is no darkness at all**.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the **light**, as he is in the **light**, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

John 1:5 And the **light shineth in darkness**; and the darkness comprehended it not.

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

John 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

John 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

John 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

In both passages, John is obviously addressing the same great truths of the Christian faith—the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ and the reason for His coming into the world.

In 1 John 1:1-2, the Apostle John sets forth the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and eternal life; then in verse 3, he goes on to say, “*That which we have seen and heard [the coming of Christ and the eternal life He manifested] declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*” John declares the Person and Work of Jesus Christ to his readers, in order that they might have fellowship with him, and his fellowship is “with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Therefore, he conditions fellowship with God on *knowing the Person and Work of Christ*, i.e., becoming a believer in Christ. Those who have the “Word of Life” (1 John 1:1) in them, have “eternal life” (1 John 1:2). John is making a great evangelistic appeal to those who are yet unsaved, just as he did at the beginning of his Gospel.

Then in 1 John 1:5-7, he explains that if we are in the light, we have fellowship as children of God (as in verse 3), and “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”—an obvious reference to salvation and eternal life.

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk **in the light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with

another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

It simply cannot be denied that John is dealing with the subject of salvation and eternal life. And this is immediately followed by 1 John 1:8-10.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and **the truth is not in us.**

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to **forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and **his word is not in us.**

All the phraseology that the Apostle John uses throughout 1 John chapter 1 deals directly with being saved versus being unsaved. Those who have the Word are born again; those without the Word are lost. Those who do not have the Word in them cannot describe a believer who receives the word into his heart of good soil at salvation and of whom it is said:

1 Peter 1:23 **Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God,** which liveth and abideth for ever.

It is important to note here that the Word of God is a seed sown in the believer's heart at the moment of salvation. And again, John describes unbelieving Pharisees as:

John 5:38 **And ye have not his Word abiding in you:** for whom he hath sent, **him ye believe not...**

It is only the unbeliever, according to John, that does not have the Word in him. This is consistent with the precedent John has already set in this passage from his Gospel. John would never say of a true believer indwelt by the Living Word, Christ Himself, and born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word, that "His Word is not in you."

What we have noted is consistent with the plain language John uses, the context of 1 John chapter 1, and the rest of Scripture, as well as John's stated purpose in writing this epistle. At the end of the epistle John states his purpose in writing:

1 John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

1 John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**

John is writing to two groups within professing Christendom—to give assurance to those who have truly believed in Christ that they have eternal life, and to those who are unsure, "*that ye may believe on the name of the son of God.*" Here John has two groups of

professing Christians in mind. One group that has indeed believed on the true Jesus, and another group that has been deceived with another Jesus and another gospel. John is writing to give assurance to true believers in his audience, and also to evangelize those who have accepted a false Gnostic Jesus.

Another point that refutes the application of 1 John 1:9 to believers is in 1 John 1:8. The people John addresses who say they have “no sin” also “*do not have the truth in them.*” Jesus Christ is “**the Truth,**” and He indwells every believer. Salvation means coming to the “*knowledge of the truth*” (i.e., Christ, 1 Timothy 2:4). It is implausible for John to say of believers that the truth is not in them. Jesus Christ is the Truth. He indwells every believer, and they know the truth of who He is. Those who do not have the truth in them are unbelievers, the unsaved part of John’s audience. Note the following verses:

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, **because there is no truth in him.** When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: **for he is a liar,** and the father of it.

Satan has no truth in him and is a liar. When John uses the same language in 1 John, he is describing the unsaved under Satan’s dominion of darkness, who bare Satan’s characteristics. Having no truth in them and making God a liar is not the description of a child of God.

1 Tim 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and **destitute of the truth,** supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Note again that it is the unsaved that are “destitute of the truth.” Believers are also indwelt by the Spirit of truth. It is impossible for those indwelt by the Spirit to not have the truth in them. It is the unbelievers who are not indwelt by the Spirit of truth and do not have the truth in them.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, **even the Spirit of truth,** which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John writes to the “elect lady”:

2 John 1:2 For **the truth’s sake,** which **dwelleth in us,** and shall be with us for ever.

“Us” here refers to John and the lady he addresses. They are both certainly saved, and the “truth” dwells in them forever because the Living Word, Christ Himself, indwells them. It is impossible for the Truth not to be in them. They may choose to live by the Truth or not to live by the Truth, but this does not change the fact that the Truth is in every true Christian. How well they understand the truth and the Word is another thing, but they all have it. In 1 John 1:8, when John says “*the truth is not in us,*” he is saying that we are not

genuine Christians even though we profess to be. For John it is really very simple. If you have the Truth in you, you are a genuine Christian. If you do not have the Truth in you, then you are not a genuine Christian. There is no middle ground. For John there is no such thing as a true Christian who does not have the Truth in him. It is only false professors and unbelievers who do not have the truth in them. In 1 John 1:8 John is describing false professing Christians in his audience. The language is very plain and clear here, and simply does not allow for any other interpretation. John is addressing unsaved professing Christians (i.e., Gnostics) in his audience. His audience is not all true believers. This is the inescapable conclusion if we take the language in its plain meaning.

All believers, no matter how weak and no matter how they live, have the truth of Jesus Christ and the Gospel in them because the Spirit of Truth indwells them. It is impossible to say of a believer indwelt by the Spirit of Truth and Christ who is the Truth, that the truth is not in them. This is very clear and requires no elaborate system of interpretation as used by the rebound advocates. John is simply not describing believers in 1 John 1:8 when he says the truth is not in them. It is only unbelievers who are described as not having the truth in them. Any other explanation is playing word games, and does not fit into the plain language of John's writing. As such the rebound view is an unsatisfactory explanation of John's wording, because it ignores the force of the statement "the truth is not in us."

John also says in verse 10 that those who say "we have not sinned" make God a *liar*. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer and witnesses certain truths to them. The Spirit witnesses to us that we are sinners and that Christ is the Son of God who is our Savior. No true believer could ever make a statement that they have not sinned. And John also says that it is unbelievers who *make God a liar*:

1 John 5:10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: **he that believeth not God hath made him a liar**; because **he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son**.

Again, the implication is plain and clear, that those who make God a liar are unsaved. The people addressed in 1 John 1:8-10 are not believers but those under Gnostic influence who profess Christ, but deny they sin and deny Christ claim in the flesh. They still claim to be Christian and are actually found in the churches.

You see, dear Christian friend, 1 John 1:9 in its proper context has nothing to do with a believer. Every believer is already totally cleansed and forgiven, and this never needs to be repeated.

John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Col 2:13-14 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Heb 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Heb 9:25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

Heb 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Heb 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

Heb 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Heb 10:18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

1 John 2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Rev 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

One of the foundational truths of the New Testament is that our forgiveness of sins⁶ and cleansing from unrighteousness⁷ are forever finished through the Cross the day we believe in Jesus Christ. It is simply not logically possible to interpret 1 John 1:9 as anything other than a salvation verse. To do so requires extensive systems of theological speculation and doctrinal inventions of men. The rebound advocates essentially re-word the verse to say something like this: “If we name and cite our known sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our known sins and cleanse us from the sins we forgot we committed.” But the verse simply does not say this at all. It clearly, simply, and dogmatically promises us that we will be cleansed from *all unrighteousness* (as in many other salvation verses); it does not say, “You will be cleansed from the sins you forgot about, until the next time you sin.” Not only do the rebound advocates have to reconstruct the verse, they also have to invent a *whole new kind of forgiveness*—a so-called “post-salvation” or “parental” forgiveness. They claim that we also need this second forgiveness repeatedly after our initial “salvation forgiveness” (or judicial forgiveness). But there is simply not a shred of Scriptural support for this theory, which they have created out of thin air. This is merely an invention born of theological necessity—it is the only way they can get their rebound doctrine to work. One must wonder how many times God has to promise us that He has completely forgiven us forever, before we actually believe it? The rebound advocates have created this “parental forgiveness,” as opposed to judicial forgiveness, with no Scriptural proof that any such form of “forgiveness” actually exists in the Bible. Not only does this theory contradict everything else that the New Testament proclaims about the

⁶ Acts 10:43, 13:38-39, 26:18; Ephesians 1:6-7, 4:32; Colossians 1:13-14, 2:13-14, 3:13; 1 John 2:12; Hebrews 10:17-18.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:25-27, Titus 3:4-7, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 1:5.

forgiveness of our sins, it also contradicts the language of 1 John 1:9, which quite clearly has the *justice* of God in view—He is faithful and *just* to forgive and cleanse us.

Furthermore, it is unscriptural to say that we can be “forgiven” in one sense and “unforgiven” in another. We are either forgiven or we are not. We either believe in Christ and are completely forgiven with no strings attached, or we reject Christ and are not forgiven at all. Our Lord’s perfect sacrifice and perfect work on the Cross is finished and complete, and our forgiveness is not accomplished piecemeal in stages. Our forgiveness is complete, perfect, and permanent. And this is why we are commanded to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us.

Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.**

Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: **even as Christ forgave you**, so also do ye.

One will search in vain to find one New Testament scripture that teaches that God “keeps on forgiving” us after salvation. He forgave us forever at the moment of our salvation.

You may ask, “What is the solution for the believer when he sins?” John anticipates this question and answers it in the next verse, 1 John 2:1, “*My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*” In contrast to the deceived unbeliever who must “confess” (admit) he is a sinner to be forgiven, the believer who sins must recognize he has an Advocate, a “defense attorney,” with the Father when he does sin. The Lord Jesus Christ represents the sinning believer before the Father, and He is the one who satisfied the righteous demands of God against men’s sins (doctrine of propitiation, 1 John 2:2). Therefore when Satan, the accuser of the brethren, would try to condemn a sinning believer before the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ pleads His shed blood on behalf of the sinning believer. As a result, the Father accepts Christ’s plea because of the finished work of the Cross.

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Because of the Advocacy of Christ, the Father will never condemn a sinning believer. Never! The Lord Jesus Christ as the Advocate is the solution to a believer’s sins. Therefore, the believer can still rest in his acceptance with his Father, even after he sins, and not feel guilty and condemned before God.

When a believer sins, he must remember that he has an Advocate with the Father, and that his sins were already judged. Recognizing the advocacy of Christ on his behalf, the sinning believer can thank God that the sin has already been forgiven through the Cross where Christ took the punishment for all men. This is the amazing and wonderful freedom from guilt provided by our Lord Jesus Christ through the suffering He endured on the Cross.

After thanking God for the complete forgiveness from all sin, the believer is to turn from it and continue growing in the liberty, grace, and knowledge of God through

the Word (Galatians 5:1, 2 Peter 3:18). This is far different from practicing a ritual of constant confession of sins, which only focuses the believer on self and promotes a guilt complex. God wants the sinning believer to know He has accepted him completely through the Cross. He wants the believer's eyes focused on Christ's finished work, not his sins and failures. This is the way the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer, can accomplish the work of conforming the believer to the image of Christ.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

2 Cor 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

A word about the chastening of the Lord is appropriate here. When a believer is in rebellion against God's will, then our loving Father will correct him through divine discipline, or what we call the chastisement of the Lord. James 4:6 tells us that **God resists the proud** but gives grace to the humble. All believers have areas of weakness in thought, word, and deed that they struggle with. But God does not chastise His children for every wayward thought, word, or deed. God is concerned about the condition of our heart and the direction of our life. Is our heart humble and open to God or is our heart stubborn and closed to God? Believers who are growing spiritually, whose hearts are humble and teachable, still sin and fail, yet are not chastised for their sinful weakness, because they are not in prideful, stubborn rebellion to their father. They are merely weak in some area of the flesh.

When a believer falls into some pattern of rebellious sinful behavior, our Father does not immediately chastise them. The indwelling Holy Spirit will begin to convict the believer of their sin. Our father will give the rebellious child space and time to examine his heart and repent of his sinful behavior (Revelation 2:21). This time and space is given by God to allow the believer time to judge himself and to change the direction of his heart back toward God's will (1 Corinthians 1:31-32). If the believer responds to the Spirit's conviction when he has fallen, the believer will judge himself and repent, placing his heart in the right condition with the Father once again. When the believer judges himself, the Father will not have to chastise him. If, after having space and time to repent, the believer hardens his heart against the Holy Spirit's conviction, then the Father will begin to chastise His child to correct him and lead his stubborn heart to humble repentance. Once the rebellious child has repented, God will remove the chastisement according to His perfect timing. God's chastening is a sign of His love for His children and is designed to humble us and lead us to change our direction of heart back towards God's will (Hebrews 12:5-11).

6 So-called Synonyms

Since there is *only one* command to confess sins in the entire New Testament (1 John 1:9), the teachers of rebound must build their entire doctrine on this one verse (a verse that does not even mention the filling of the Spirit or “restoration to fellowship”). They have made “rebound” the foundational doctrine of the entire Christian life, yet they still cannot get around the fact that there is simply *not one scripture in the entire Bible* that instructs us to confess our sins to be filled with the Spirit or restored to fellowship. And this is very obvious when they attempt to turn other scriptures into “synonyms” for rebound. Examples of these alleged *synonyms* include 1 Corinthians 11:31, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9-10, Hebrews 12:1, Hebrews 12:12, and John 13:4-10. And not one of these scriptures actually mentions confessing sins, being filled with the Spirit, or being “restored to fellowship.”

1 Corinthians 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul is dealing with the subject of the Lord’s Supper and *discerning the Lord’s Body*. He relates the communion table, not only to our Lord’s body broken for us, but also to our relationship with our fellow Christians as the Body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 10, he has already made this point:

1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

1 Cor 10:17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Then later in chapter 11, he addresses the problems of those who mistreat other members of Christ’s body, specifically at the communion table itself:

1 Cor 11:20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper.

1 Cor 11:21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

1 Cor 11:22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

After rebuking the carnal Corinthians for mistreating Christian brothers who were materially less fortunate and disrespecting them at the Lord’s table, Paul then moves on to his well-known and oft-quoted dissertation on the Lord’s Supper:

1 Cor 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

1 Cor 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

1 Cor 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

1 Cor 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

1 Cor 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

1 Cor 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

1 Cor 11:29 For he that **eateth and drinketh unworthily**, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, **not discerning the Lord's body**.

Immediately after he reproves the Corinthians for their mistreatment of other members of the Lord's Body, Paul warns them about "not discerning the Lord's body," since they would be eating and drinking "unworthily." Therefore, his upcoming description of the divine discipline they were under (verse 30) is the result of taking the Lord's Supper while dishonoring the Body of Christ.

1 Cor 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Because of their behavior at the Lord's Table and their disrespect for the Body of Christ, many of the Corinthians had become sick, and some had even died the sin unto death. The Lord was exercising severe discipline upon them. And Paul then offers the solution:

1 Cor 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

Paul exhorts the Corinthians to *judge themselves*. They need to recognize the evil of their lifestyle, and turn from it. Performing some little ritual of "rebound" is not going to prevent the Lord's discipline for what they have been doing. And Paul makes no mention of losing fellowship with God or confessing sins in prayer. In fact, in two epistles to the Corinthians, who were the most carnal and backslidden of all the early churches, Paul never once warns them about losing fellowship with God or commands them to confess their sins to regain the filling of the Spirit.

Paul then goes on to instruct them to repent from their mistreatment of others and *change their behavior*. This is the only way they can escape divine chastisement.

1 Cor 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

1 Cor 11:33 **Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.**

1 Cor 11:34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

To judge yourself does not mean to “name and cite” all your “known sins” as the rebound advocates claim. It simply means to evaluate or *examine* yourself (as in verse 28). When we “examine” or “judge” ourselves, we can see the sinful, rebellious behavior that we need to turn away from. Only then can we expect the Lord’s discipline to cease. “Naming and citing” your sins cannot accomplish this.

Ephesians 4:22-24 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Colossians 3:9-10 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

The teachers of rebound claim that putting on the new man means confessing (or “naming and citing”) one’s sins to be filled with the Spirit. However, they cannot provide a shred of scriptural evidence to support this. In fact, confessing sins and being filled with the Spirit are never even mentioned in the same passage. In these two parallel passages (Ephesians 4-6 and Colossians 3-4), Paul is setting forth the same aspects of the spiritual life and Christian living.⁸ In both cases, Paul is dealing with the same issues—negative behaviors such as bitterness, lying, anger, and carnal speech; and positive principles of spirituality including the renewing of the mind; patience and forgiveness for others; psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; giving thanks; prayer; family relationships; and laborers and employers. Therefore, it is quite obvious that putting on the new man has to do with your *lifestyle*, i.e., Christian virtue and integrity. This cannot be accomplished by “naming and citing your known sins.” Putting on the new man is the process of spiritual growth which takes place through renewing your mind in the Word of God. There is nothing at all in these passages to suggest that putting on the new man has anything to do with “confessing” or “naming and citing” sins.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1 immediately follows the “Hall of Fame” of Hebrews 11, which describes many of the most faithful Old Testament saints and their great *faith*, as well as their *self-sacrifice* and *service* in the Lord’s name. Nothing is said about them practicing “rebound.” The writer then uses this “*so great a cloud of witnesses*” to motivate us to live for the Lord. He exhorts us to *lay aside* the sin that we easily fall into, and to *run the race*. Once again, no reference is made to confessing sins or being restored to fellowship. To *lay something aside* is to simply turn from it or leave it behind...in other words, *stop doing it*. You can “name and cite” a sin all day long—it doesn’t mean you have laid it aside. These scriptures are very simple when we just humbly accept and obey what is

⁸ For a more thorough examination of these passages, see our booklet *Biblical Spirituality: How a Christian Is Filled with the Spirit*, chapter 4.

clearly stated, without trying to read all kinds of hidden meanings into them in order to justify our theology.

Hebrews 12:12-13 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

The teachers of rebound try to equate lifting up the hands and making straight paths with “rebounding.” But as usual, confession of sins and restoration to fellowship appear nowhere in the passage. In the preceding verses (Hebrews 12:5-11), the writer presents a dissertation on divine discipline, which leads straight into his instructions to “*lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet.*” We can rebound, rebound, and rebound some more, without gaining any spiritual strength or walking straight in the Christian way of life (walking after the Spirit). There are many Christians who rebound constantly, and who are still spiritually “feeble,” and whose path is very crooked.

Again, the context is the subject of *divine discipline*, and the Lord will continue to exercise discipline on His children as needed, for sinning and backsliding, and no amount of “rebounding” can change it. We must *turn* at the Lord’s reproof (Proverbs 1:23). Only true repentance removes the Lord’s discipline.

What the rebound advocates essentially do is take passages that deal with a change of heart and a change of life, and try to make them say, “Confess your ‘known sins’ to be ‘restored to fellowship’ and ‘filled with the Spirit.’” They are grasping at straws, searching for some kind of support for their doctrine, where there is none to be found.

John 13:4-10 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

Another passage that is misunderstood and is used to teach “rebound” is John 13:4-10. Those who teach the necessity of believers confessing sins to be forgiven and restored to fellowship, often cite the Lord Jesus Christ’s act of washing the apostles’ feet in verse 5 as proof of the doctrine of “rebound.” Even C. I. Scofield, whose reference Bible has many helpful notes, follows this erroneous line of thought in his footnotes on this passage.

Dr. Scofield taught that every believer was completely cleansed and forgiven from the guilt of all sins the moment of salvation, but needed daily cleansing from the defilement of sin continually throughout his life. Dr. Scofield cites the imagery of an Oriental returning from the public baths (*Original Scofield Reference Bible*, page 1,134).

Though the whole body has been washed, the feet get dirty on the way home. We are told that the dirty feet refer to the defilement of sin that hinders fellowship with God. The washing of the whole body is not necessary, only the feet. This allegedly correlates to 1 John 1:9, according to this view. However, it is important to keep in mind that the washing of one's feet was done *by another*; the Lord says nothing about washing our own feet. This humble task was reserved for the servant of the house towards his master or an honored guest.

The promoters of the rebound doctrine seize on the imagery of the public baths. According to the rebound advocates who apply 1 John 1:9 to believers instead of to unbelievers, when the Lord Jesus washed the apostles' feet, He was teaching them about the necessity of rebound. This erroneous conclusion is a misinterpretation of the Lord's statement in John 13:10, "*Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*"

There is something glaringly wrong with this interpretation. The Lord tells the apostles they are all clean except Judas (verse 11). When the Lord said, "*He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet,*" He was surely referring to the Oriental imagery alluded to previously. But was He alluding to the doctrine of "rebound," built on the faulty foundation of 1 John 1:9 twisted from its context? The answer is found for us right in the context of the passage. The problem is that the rebound advocates stop at verse 10. They ignore the rest of the passage where the Lord interprets His actions for us. Do not stop reading at verse 10 if you want to understand the meaning of foot washing. Continue to verse 12. Now, note Jesus' question to the apostles: "*Know ye what I have done to you?*" In other words, the Lord asks them, "Do you understand the meaning of Me washing your feet?" Here the Lord is going to explain what washing the apostles' feet means.

John 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

John 13:15 For I have given you an **example**, that **ye should do as I have done to you**.

John 13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Note that the Lord tells them that He has given them an *example* of humble service that they should practice towards one another. Our Lord does not say one word that even hints at confessing sins. He tells them plainly that He is their Lord and Master in authority over them, yet if He can humble Himself to wash their feet, so can they humble themselves to serve one another. Remember that in the world in which they lived, the custom was that the servant of the house would have the responsibility of washing the master's feet when he returned home from the dusty roads of Palestine. The servant of the house also washed the feet of the guests when they arrived at the door of the house. This was considered a lowly and demeaning task, reserved, not for those in authority, but for lowly servants. To wash someone else's feet was a humbling task.

The Lord's explanation of foot washing was, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Our blessed Lord Jesus has given us a tremendous example of humility in action towards our brethren, which we are to follow. We are to

humble ourselves to serve our brethren in Christian love. Now that we are “clean every whit” (born again and saved), this is how we should live. We know we have passed from death to life when we love the brethren (1 John 3:14).

Phil 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Phil 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Phil 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Phil 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Eph 4:3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Those who claim that the washing of our feet means “rebound” run into a serious problem in John 13:14, “*Ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.*” If washing our feet refers to confessing our sins to God for forgiveness, then how can we possibly wash each other’s feet?

There are many questions that the rebound advocates leave unanswered in their interpretation of this passage. When our Lord Himself explains the lesson behind the foot washing, does He mention anything at all about confessing sins or regaining fellowship? If “rebound” were true, this would certainly be an ideal place in the Bible to tell us about confessing our sins for restoration to fellowship. But our Lord says nothing of the kind. He says He has given us an *example* of how we are to *treat one another*. He commands us to “wash one another’s feet.” If the washing of the feet refers to confessing our sins for forgiveness, then *how can we wash each other’s feet?* Do we cleanse each other’s sins? Why are we inventing another explanation of foot washing, when our Lord has already given us a crystal clear explanation Himself? Why is the rebound advocates’ explanation of the foot washing completely different from the Lord’s? The rebound advocates contend that “rebound” was practiced throughout the Old Testament, and also by Jesus’ disciples during his earthly ministry. But if this were the case, then why would He have to teach it to them at the *end* of His earthly ministry by washing their feet?

The rebound advocates have totally missed the Lord’s teaching in this passage by ignoring verses 12-16 where the Lord interprets His act of washing the apostles’ feet for us. Isn’t it amazing how easily we can understand what is so plainly stated in the English language of a King James Bible? And yet a scholar of Greek and Hebrew can completely miss the simple truths of God’s Word, while a humble Bible believer, who reads the Bible in his own language with a teachable and obedient heart, can understand the simplicity of Scripture! What could be clearer than our Lord’s own words explaining to

us the meaning of washing the apostles' feet?!

If rebound were being illustrated here, we would expect the Lord to mention it, but we see nothing of the kind spoken by Jesus. John 13:4-10 has to be twisted out of context and our Lord's own explanation completely ignored to try to support the doctrine of rebound. Dear reader, do not accept blindly the opinions of men. Check out everything by reading the Bible for yourself. John 13:4-10 has nothing to do with a believer confessing sin to be restored to fellowship. Every believer is in permanent fellowship with God through the finished work of the Cross.

The rebound advocates employ a very dangerous method of arbitrarily reading foreign meanings into the text of a passage and randomly reading one scripture into another, with no logical scriptural reason to do so. There is simply not a shred of evidence that John 13:4-10 or Ephesians 5:18 are in any way related to 1 John 1:9. In contrast to the striking similarity between Ephesians 5 and its parallel passage in Colossians (as noted on page 37), 1 John 1 mentions none of the same principles. If we are going to arbitrarily make 1 John 1:9 the condition for being "filled with the Spirit," we could just as easily grab any other verse that strikes our fancy, and make up any doctrine we please.

The rebound advocates work very hard to build a bridge between 1 John 1:9 and Ephesians 5:18. But they refuse to acknowledge any connection between 1 John 1:9 and other scriptures that actually talk about confession of sins, forgiveness of sins, and cleansing from unrighteousness. And this is simply not a logical or legitimate method of handling the Scriptures. Why build a bridge from 1 John 1:9 to Ephesians 5:18, but not to other scriptures that actually deal with the same principles? They consistently fail to provide any logical scriptural reason for drawing these imaginary bridges from 1 John 1:9 to all these other verses (the so-called "synonyms"). This is a basic principle of Bible study that we must keep in mind when researching a subject like this. We cannot just draw lines randomly from one passage to another with no legitimate reason to do so. We wouldn't look up passages on church order when we're looking for information on eternal security, and we wouldn't look up passages on the Levitical rituals when we're looking for information on the Second Coming of Christ. We could come up with all kinds of conclusions and basically make the Bible say anything at all, if we can arbitrarily connect one scripture to another. For example, if we arbitrarily connected Ephesians 5:18 with Romans 16:16, we could say that we have to "salute one another with an holy kiss" to be filled with the Spirit! When we're reading 1 John 1:9, we need to look up other scriptures on confession of sins, forgiveness of sins, and cleansing from unrighteousness, rather than any random passage that we want to. For further instruction and understanding, we need to find other scriptures *where the same subjects are actually mentioned*, where we can actually show some clear relevance. And this is where the arguments of the rebound advocates fall short. They do not consider the scriptures that are clearly relevant to 1 John 1, and they consistently attempt to read numerous other scriptures into 1 John 1:9 that do not mention any of the same things mentioned in 1 John 1:9.

This twisting of Scripture has produced a doctrine that is very damaging to a believer's spiritual life, and is virtually impossible to live up to. This is what happens when we start randomly assigning outside meanings to the text—when we start drawing all these random lines and making these spurious connections to other verses. If we can

just bypass the actual text of the verse, and turn it into a “synonym” for anything else, the plain statements of Scripture lose their authority, and we can now make the Bible say whatever we want. And this is exactly how doctrines like “rebound” are created. We can not just arbitrarily transfer the wording of one verse to another. We must simply accept what is stated at face value. And if we can undermine the plain statement of 1 John 1:9 this way, we could also undermine any other simple statement of Scripture. In fact, these are the very methods used by the Roman Catholics and the a-millennialist allegorizers of Scripture. When they encounter a statement of Scripture that contradicts their own doctrine, they claim that it should not be taken literally, and they read all kinds of foreign meanings into the text. And this is a very dangerous way to handle scriptures that deal with our forgiveness of sins and cleansing from unrighteousness before a holy and just God. We must be able to take these scriptures at face value, or the foundation of our faith is gone. Dear reader, we must beware of these unsound methods of handling the Word of God.

7 Conclusion

In spite of the overwhelming evidence that John is dealing with the issues of salvation for the lost in 1 John 1, the rebound advocates will insist that he is exclusively addressing believers. They have no solid evidence to support this claim, although they will often emphasize John's use of the pronouns "we" and "us." However, as we noted in the section on verb tenses in chapter 4, we must beware of the rigid, technical approach to the language of Scripture that disregards the context. The same word can be used in various ways in different contexts, and words in any language have flexible usage. It is quite natural for a writer or speaker to address his audience with inclusive language—for example, an evangelist addressing his audience or a pastor addressing the congregation with a statement like, "If we believe in Jesus Christ, we have eternal life." In either case, they may be addressing a mixed group, but there is no reason they can not use pronouns like "we" and "us." It is the context of the statement that matters; the usage of a pronoun like "we" does not necessarily mean that everyone present is in the same status. This is really reading way too much into the pronoun, and it does not prove the issue one way or the other. Considering the issues that John covers in his epistle, he is most definitely addressing a mixed group, and it is certainly not uncommon to have believers and unbelievers in the same assembly. This is just as true today as it was in John's time. Not all those who profess the Name of Christ are truly saved (Matthew 7:21-23). In the realm of professing Christianity (the "we" and "us" of 1 John 1), there are those who truly know the Lord and those who do not. John uses "us" because it is the sphere of profession he is dealing with. In the same house there are vessels of honor and dishonor. The wheat must grow with the tares. Throughout this epistle, John addresses the differences between those who are truly saved and those who are not. And these exhortations are designed to reassure those who accept Christ and to convict those who reject Christ. John himself sums up his purpose for writing this epistle:

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

John's two-fold purpose in his first epistle is to ensure that those who are truly saved will know that they have eternal life, and to convict those who are not saved to believe on the name of the Son of God.

Any writer can address different people with different issues within the same epistle. The writer is never limited to one narrow, specific audience. Who is being addressed must be determined by the context of each passage. John addresses various issues in this epistle, and we can not just make a blanket statement that he is only addressing believers throughout the entire epistle. This would be a dangerous assumption to make, especially since we know there were unbelievers and heretics in the early churches, and the apostles had to deal with this extensively in their epistles. This was a

major concern for John in writing his epistles, as he and the other apostles had to refute the heresies of the Gnostics, who were in the churches, denying that they were sinners and even denying that Jesus was the Son of God.

John writes in 1 John 2:18-19, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, **even now are there many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” And again, in 1 John 4:2-3, “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God:** and this is that spirit of **antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” In this short epistle, John strongly emphasizes the Person and Deity of Christ: “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that **Jesus is the Son of God**? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, **the Word**, and the Holy Ghost: and **these three are one**” (1 John 5:5-7).

In refutation of the Christ-denying heretics (“antichrists”), John repeatedly declares that we must believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God: “And this is his commandment, That we should **believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ**, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 John 3:23); “And we have seen and do testify that **the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world**. Whosoever shall **confess that Jesus is the Son of God**, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:14-15); “Whosoever **believeth that Jesus is the Christ** is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 John 5:1); “He that **believeth on the Son of God** hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life**. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and **that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God**” (1 John 5:10-13). Would John have to keep repeating these basic truths of the Person and Work of Christ if he was only talking to believers? Can we afford to make such an unfounded assumption? Especially when we already know that there were unbelievers in the early churches?

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of **the Word of life**;

1 John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and **shew unto you that eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

John specifically states at the beginning of his epistle that he is showing his readers “that eternal life” that was manifested in the “Word of Life,” the Person of Jesus Christ. If his audience were all believers already, why would he have to show them “eternal life”?

§

In summary, we can conclude from our study that 1 John 1:9 is not a command addressed to believers. We can state that if a believer examines himself and judges himself by turning from his sin, God will not have to discipline him (1 Corinthians 11:31-32). Self-judgment avoids divine discipline. But even when a believer is being disciplined by God, he is always a saved, secure member of God’s family forever. Remember, “*all*” the believer’s sins were forgiven at the Cross. As far as his Christian walk is concerned, the believer needs to judge himself and turn from his sin, and should always thank God that his sin was paid for at the Cross, once, for all, and forever. All believers still have an old sin nature inherited from Adam and will continue to sin till the day they get to Heaven. In Heaven, the believer will have a perfect glorified body like the Lord Jesus Christ’s and will never sin again.

Phil 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Phil 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Until that day, all believers will fight the battle against sin. Sometimes the believer will be victorious over sin, and at other times he will lose the battle and give in to sin. But no matter how he fares in the battle, the believer is always eternally secure in his fellowship with his Heavenly Father.

Always confessing our sins, in an effort to maintain our fellowship with God, is an exercise in futility. “Rebound” is nothing but another form of religious legalism, which is based on the opinions of men. It robs God’s people of their spiritual liberty by occupying them continually with their sins. This false doctrine teaches the saints that their sins can still in some way come between them and the Father. Dear reader, search the scriptures to see if these things are so. Do not hang on to religious tradition left over from Roman Catholicism and its manmade doctrine of the confessional booth. May God give you light and understanding as you seek the truth of His written Word.

Endnote The “Greek Game”

Many pastors today, and rebound advocates in particular, claim to be experts in the koine Greek language of the New Testament. They claim that Scripture can only exist in the “original languages,” and they base their doctrines on their own personal “corrected” translations. Most of them, however, are not even fluent or literate in Greek, and are in no way qualified to be Bible translators. And nowhere in the entire Bible are we ever told that we have to learn from the “original languages.” Common sense would tell us that if this were such an essential requirement for Bible study, the Bible itself would have to tell us. Yet we never once see the Apostle Paul saying that his letters had to be studied in the Greek language, and that translations are not good enough. We never see him warning non-Greek-speaking people that they have to learn Greek before they can understand his doctrine. The apostles wrote in Greek simply because this was the prevalent language of the known civilized world at the time. There is nothing magical about this language; there are no mysterious secrets hidden in the “original koine Greek” that cannot be found in our English Bible.

The koine Greek language rapidly declined after the apostolic era, and by the third century, the most widely used Bible was the Latin Bible (the true Latin Bible, as opposed to the corrupted Catholic Vulgate, which appeared much later). There was also a Syrian version in wide circulation. The Old Latin Bible was the primary Bible used by true Christians such as the Waldensians and Vaudois during the Dark Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church dominated the continent of Europe. And the main catalyst for the Protestant Reformation and the overthrow of Romanist tyranny was that God raised up men like William Tyndale, Myles Coverdale, Martin Luther, Pierre Olivetan, and others to translate the Bible into the languages of the common people. It was simple, common, uneducated Christians reading the Bible in English, German, French, etc., that brought the Catholic Church to its knees and set God’s people free. This was what produced the glorious history of countless martyrs and victory over religious persecution. These common Christians glorified God in the most inspiring ways, and were willing to lay down their lives for the right to have “God’s Book in their mother tongue.” They knew no koine Greek. They had no Greek lexicons. They heard sermons preached straight from a Bible in their own language. And they left a great Christian testimony that still inspires God’s people many centuries later. (For an extensive study of this subject, see our book *The Preeminence of Christ: The King James Bible versus the Modern Versions.*)

The faithfulness, perseverance, and self-sacrifice of early American Christians are familiar to anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of American history. And as they fought and suffered to win America’s independence, all they had to sustain them was their old English Bible. As America’s frontier expanded westward, the settlers, townspeople, and isolated families in small log cabins had only their English Bible. They had no Greek lexicons and no educated seminary graduate to teach them. Yet God used them and their sacrifices to build the great nation of religious liberty that we still enjoy 200 years later. 99.9% of the most faithful Christians throughout church history never knew koine Greek, never saw a Greek Bible or lexicon, and never heard any “Greek exegesis” during a sermon. If this is indeed such a vital requirement for Bible study, then God has been unfaithful to His people, because He did not provide this for them. And most of His people have never been given a fair opportunity to know His will and glorify Him. God has never commanded us to study from the original languages. And throughout history, the vast majority of His people have never even had access to the original languages. To say that a pastor needs to teach from the Greek is a fallacy.

The Romanist clergy also used identical tactics at the time of the Reformation. The priests would always tell the common people that they were incapable of understanding the Bible, and that they were dependent on the “doctors of theology.” They also told them that it was useless

for them to read the Bible in their own language, because “Scripture can only exist in Latin.” Many theologians and scholars today use the same method, except they say the Bible can only exist in Greek and Hebrew. But they have no Biblical or historical evidence to support this. Consider the following excerpt from *The History of the Reformation in England* by the great 19th-century Christian historian J. H. Merle D’Aubigné, in which Myles Coverdale, a faithful man of God and Bible translator, is debating this very issue with the Roman Catholic clergy: “‘*But Scripture ought to exist in Latin only,*’ objected the priests. ‘No,’ replied Coverdale again, ‘*the Holy Ghost is as much the author of it in the Hebrew, Greek, French, Dutch, and English, as in Latin. ... The Word of God is of like worthiness and authority, **in what language soever the Holy Ghost speaketh it.***’” When modern pastors tell the congregation that they cannot understand the Bible for themselves in their own language, and they have to rely on the pastor’s personal “corrected translations” of Greek and Hebrew, these pastors are using the very same methods used by the tyrannical Roman Catholic Church at the time of the Protestant Reformation.

The English Bible translator and famous martyr William Tyndale also encountered similar opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. As he labored to bring God’s Book to the English people in their mother tongue, Tyndale himself wrote: “*Some of the papists say it is **impossible to translate the Scriptures into English**, some that it is not lawful for the layfolk to have it in the mother tongue, some that it would make them all heretics.*” And at the end of his life, as he sat in a freezing prison cell awaiting his execution, he said, “The Word of God never was without persecution—no more than the sun can be without his light. By what right doth the pope **forbid God to speak in the English tongue?**”

Consider all the great preachers and missionaries over the centuries—Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone, William Carey, D. L. Moody, Robert Sheffy, and so many others—and great leaders like George Washington, “Stonewall” Jackson, and Robert E. Lee, who exhorted their troops from the Scriptures, and converted many of their soldiers to Christ. And none of them ever taught from Greek lexicons and their own personal “corrected translations.” God has always been faithful to provide His people with “God’s Book in their mother tongue.”