

1 John 1:5-2:2 – God is Light

In the opening of 1 John, John stressed the fact that he was a first-hand eyewitness of Jesus. Jesus, the eternal Son of God became flesh. John saw, heard and touched Jesus during his life on earth. Jesus told John and the other disciples that they would be his witnesses along with the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27) and scripture (John 5:39). So, John bore witness and proclaimed what he saw and heard. What John proclaimed was Jesus, the Word of Life, the source of eternal life through whom we have fellowship with the Father, the Son and one another.

Read 1 John 1:5-10.

John said “this is the message”. Who did he hear the message from? What did John mean when he said that “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”? (1:5)

Verses 6-10 contain a series of conditional statements. Verses 6, 8 and 10 start with, “If we say”. There were false teachers who were making the claims contained in these verses but who were not truthful. Verse 7 starts with “If we walk in the light”. Verse 9 starts with “If we confess”. These are actions which true believers are engaged in.

Verse 6 says that if someone claims to have fellowship with God (see 1:3) but walks in the darkness that they are a liar. Given that God is light without any darkness, how is the conclusion of verse 6 obvious? What does it mean to walk in darkness?

Verse 7 says that if we walk in the light that we have fellowship. Since God is light, we might assume that the end of the sentence would be that we have fellowship with God. But, according to verse 7, who do those who walk in the light have fellowship with? Do those who walk in the light also have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ (see 1:3)? The end of verse 7 says “and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” How does Jesus’ blood cleanse us from sin? Given that God is light, why is it essential for us to be cleansed from all sin?

Verse 8 talks about people who claim to not have sin. What did John say about these people? What does this verse teach us about the nature of humans?

Verse 9 is a well know verse and often quoted after the “confession of sin” during worship services. Verse 8 told us that we are kidding ourselves if we claim that we don’t sin. Since we do sin, John said that we should confess our sins. What promise is given to those who confess their sins? Can we still go to heaven if we sin and then die before confessing our sin?

Verse 10 takes the claim of verse 8 one step further. These people not only claimed that they currently did not have sin but also that they had never sinned. What is true of people who make this claim? Verse 6 said that these phonies were lying to others and not practicing the truth (not doing the truth). Verse 8 said that these phonies were deceiving themselves and the truth was not in them. Verse 10 says that these phonies make God to be a liar and that his word is not in them. How did the claim of not having sin make God to be a liar?

Read 1 John 2:1-2

Just because we do sin doesn’t mean that we should sin. John said that he was writing so that they would not sin. God doesn’t want us to sin. Sin is rebellion against God. What does John’s use of “little children” say about his relationship with the readers and hearers of the letter? (2:1)

What happens if we, as believers in Christ, do sin? The word “advocate” here is the same word that was used of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, 26, 15:26 and 16:7. What does it mean that “we have an advocate with the Father”? (2:1)

What does “he is the propitiation for our sins” mean? If Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, does that mean that everyone will be saved? What does the end of verse 2 mean? Does it mean “every single person in the world” or does it mean “people from all over the world”? (2:2)

Why is it important for people to understand that they are sinners? By the false teachers’ denial of sin what were they also denying about Jesus’ death on the cross?

Many today want to “soft pedal” the Gospel. Why is it wrong to not mention sin in the Gospel message?