

1 John

Personal Notes

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1:1 3
- 1:2 4
- 1:3-4 5
- Christianity In Crisis (Outline) 6
- 1:5-9 8
- 1:10-2:2 9
- Conquering Sin (Outline) 10
- Life In The Light (Outline) 12
- More to come...

Chapter One

¹What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

What. The book opens with and and contains four clauses that start with the neuter singular relative pronoun *ol*. A fifth clause is found in verse three. The relative pronoun *ol* refers to "the Word of life."

What was from the beginning. The term "beginning" translates the Greek word *arxh*, which means *from the first, originally*. The One he is writing about was in existence when time began and before creation. "From the beginning" is a relative reference with regard to time and the One John declares is without beginning or end. He is the alpha and omega. Jesus declared, "before Abraham was, I am." John is taking us back, before creation and prior to the incarnation. The One he is declaring was present prior to and at the time of creation and, according to John, He is the Creator of all that was created. Wuest notes the view of Westcott, "that John wrote his Gospel to prove the deity of our Lord, assuming His humanity, whereas he wrote his first epistle to prove His humanity, assuming His deity."¹ The three clauses that follow set forth the incarnation of "what was from the beginning." John starts his letter with an immediate refutation of Gnostic error. The Gnostics denied the incarnation of Jesus, contending that matter was evil. The **Docetic Gnostics** denied His actual humanity. They argued that Jesus body was not a real physical body. The **Cerinthian Gnostics** distinguished between the man Jesus and the *aeon* Christ that came on Him at His baptism and left Him on the Cross.² John, in his gospel, declared:

John 1:1 through John 1:4 (NASB) ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

The person of John's message precedes time and creation, and is none other than the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ.

What we have heard. Again, the relative pronoun *ol* refers to the Word of Life. The "we" in these clauses is exclusive. It refers to the company of those who personally encountered and experienced Jesus, of whom John was one. John is not declaring something ethereal or nebulous, but something he has personally encountered and experienced. John heard Him speak on many occasions, and the speaker and what He spoke had profoundly affected His hearers. F. F. Bruce says that John's language is that of apostolic witness: "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). What John heard was no mere bump in the night. It was audible, intelligible and the aorist tense tells us that it had an affect upon his life.

What we have seen with our eyes. John's second qualification for speaking authoritatively about the Word of Life is what he saw with his own eyes. The phrase "we have seen" translates the Greek word *elwra*, ^{1st} person, plural, perfect, active, indicative of *oraw* (3708). Wuest says: "...*horaoo* refers to the physical act of seeing, giving prominence to the discerning mind, to mental perception, and to mental activity. By the use of this particular Greek word for the act of seeing, John assures his readers that he not only had the sensory impression on his retina, but the understood what he was looking at."³ This would seem a direct response to the **Docetic Gnostics** who denied that Jesus had an actual human body. John insures his readers that he was not hallucinating and that what he saw was not an optical illusion. Luke declared that he was writing about things which had been passed on to him by "eyewitnesses" (Luke 1:2). Jesus told His disciples they were privileged to see what they saw and hear what they heard.

Luke 10:23-24 - "And turning to the disciples, He said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them.'"

¹ Wuest, *Word In The Greek New Testament, Volume II, The Exegesis of I John* (MI: Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954) page 88.

² Wuest, page 88.

³ Wuest, page 91.

Matthew 13:16-17 – "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

What we have looked at. The phrase "we have looked at" translates the Greek term *epeasameqa*, 1st person, plural, aorist, deponent, indicative of *qeaomai* (2300), *to gaze upon, to see, discern with the eyes*. The term *qeaomai* comes to us in the term *theatre*. John and his contemporaries gazed upon Jesus as though they were looking at a spectacle. John's was more than a passing glance, he had looked upon Jesus and contemplated what he saw.

And touched with our hands. The word "touched" is a translation of the Greek word *eyhlafhsan*, 3rd person, plural, aorist, active, indicative of *yhlafaw* (5584), *to feel, touch or handle*. It describes what blind Isaac did when he examined the hands of Jacob in Genesis 27:22. It is the word used by Jesus in Luke 24:39—"Behold my hands and feet, that it is I Myself. Handle [*yhlafhsate*, 2nd person, plural, aorist, active, imperative of 5584] Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

Concerning the Word of Life. The Greek phrase is *peri tou logou th" zwh"*, "concerning the word of life." There seem to be three views on the meaning of this phrase. 1) Some suggest that the term "Word of Life" is a reference to the *message of life*. 2) The NASB capitalizes both *Word* and *Life* and thereby declares it to be a reference to the incarnate Son, the Word of Life. 3) Still others suggest that John means it to be a reference to the life giving word. I am inclined to believe that John is referring to is not merely the message about Christ, but the fact that life is in a person, Jesus the Word. In his gospel, John tells us "In Him was life" (John 1:4). The life he is going to proclaim is not the by-product of some special enlightenment or of knowledge acquired mystically. This life is anchored in a person, namely Jesus Christ. The Word is not something, but Someone.

The New Testament in Everyday English translates this phrase "these things about the Word of Life," makes verse two a parenthetical statement and then uses verse three to complete this phrase. If one removes the parenthetical statement the thought would read, "these things about the Word of Life...that we have seen and heard, we declare to you so that you also may have fellowship with us...". The Contemporary English Version reads as follows: "The Word that gives life was from the beginning, and this is the one our message is about. Our ears have heard, our own eyes have seen, and our hands touched this Word." The NIV reads, "this we proclaim concerning the Word of life." The Pulpit Commentary (Vol XXII, page 2) says, "'The Word of life' means 'the Word who is the Life.'" It goes on to say that "The *peri* is strongly against the interpretation, 'the word of life,' i.e. the life-giving gospel. The "Word of life" is the One who was from the beginning; the One who John *heard, saw, looked at and touched*.

²⁻and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

This verse is parenthetical and expands on John's reference to the Word of life.

And the life was manifested. The term "life" used here is the same as that used in verse one. The word "manifested" translates the Greek word *efanerwqh*, 3rd person, singular, aorist, passive, indicative of *fanerow* (5319), *to bring to light, to manifest or display*. A. T. Roberson says it means "to make known what already exists, whether invisible or visible. This life that was invisible was made visible by the incarnation. This is what John says in 1:14 of his gospel—"The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld...". The invisible God becomes visible in Christ.

And we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us. There are three important verbs in this phrase. The first describes a *personal experience*; we have seen. The next two describe **a personal expression**. The word "testify" translates *marturomen*, 1st person, plural, present, active, indicative of *marturew* (3140), *to testify or depose*. John was giving his readers **a responsible affirmation** of what he knew to be true by personal experience. The word "proclaim" translates the Greek term *apaggellomen*, 1st person, plural, present, active, indicative of *apaggellw* (518), *to carry word back from an event or to announce formally*. John also made **an authoritative announcement**. He brought a message from the One he had encountered. The message he is proclaiming is the Life. This Life is the person of the Lord Jesus. This Life is without beginning and without end; it is eternal (*aiwnio*). This Life is such that there is no absence of life in Him. He is both essentially and ethically, LIFE. This Life co-exists with the Father and was made visible to us. The term "with" is *pros*, which means *to be near, close to* or as Wuest's points out *facing*.

³what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also. Again, "what" translates the relative pronoun *oj* and refers to what he had seen and heard. The terms "seen" and "heard" translate *ewrakamen* and *akhkoamen*, the same words used in verse one. The main verb in this long (verses 1-4) Greek sentence is *apagelomen*, and is translated "we proclaim." It is the same term used in the previous verse and means *to carry back word from a happening or to proclaim publicly*. In this case the proclamation is made to his readers.

So that you too may have fellowship with us. The term "fellowship" translates the Greek word *koinwnian*, *joint participation, communion, fellowship*. John's use of *koinwnian* transcends modern usage of the term "fellowship." There is no way that John could have expected to socialize with all of his readers. John made his proclamation so that the reader and hearer might partake of the "Word of life" with him. Wuest declares that *koinonian* is "a joint-participation with someone else in things held in common by both."⁴ Christian community is joint-participation in the Life that was manifest. We are a fellowship in the sense that we share the same Life.

Indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. John writes so that his readers might participate with him in partaking of that which he had seen and heard. Now John tells us that our fellowship exists because of our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The quality of our horizontal fellowship is dependent upon the reality of our vertical fellowship.

⁴These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

These things we write. John's means of communication was *grafmen*, written.

So that our joy may be made complete. The KJV has "your joy," but the better translation is "the joy of us" or "our joy." Instead of *umwn* the pronoun is *hmwn*. "In truth...*hmwn* evinces a still more generous solicitude—the very spirit of Jesus. As He could not be happy in Heaven without us, so the Apostle's joy was incomplete unless his readers share it."⁵ John's joy would be completed by the addition of their joy to his.

NOTES

The uniqueness of the Christian community is its common union in Christ. The more we move from fellowship with God through Christ the less community we have with one another. The truth of the incarnate Christ is essential to Christianity.

Did the ascension of Christ terminate our ability to hear, see, look upon and touch Christ? John says, "And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us" (John 3:24). Later John declared, "We know that we live in Him and He in us, because he has given us of His Spirit" (4:13). Christianity is more than doing Christian things. It is more than intellectual agreement with Christian doctrine. According to John, Christianity is experiential. It involves doing Christian things and believing Christian doctrine, but it also means that we are partakers of His life and that we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Jesus is someone we know personally, not just someone we know about.

⁴ Wuest, page 97.

⁵ The Expositor's Gree Testament, Volume Five, page 170.

CHRISTIANITY IN CRISIS

1 John 1:1-4 (NASB) ¹What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— ²and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

INTRODUCTION

John is writing to stem the tide of Gnosticism that had infiltrated the church. The **Docetic** Gnostics argued that Jesus did not have an actual human body. They argued that Jesus merely appeared in the form of a man. The **Cerinthian** Gnostics distinguished between the man Jesus and the eternal Christ that came on Him at His baptism and departed from Him on the Cross. Both streams of Gnosticism denied the humanity of Jesus. John writes to assure his readers that Jesus was both God and man.

OUTLINE

I. THE LIFE PRE-EXISTED

A. What was from the beginning

1. **John 1:1-3** – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."
2. **Luke 10:18 (KJV)** And he said unto them, **I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.**
3. **Revelation 1:8** – "**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,**" says the Lord, "**who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.**"
4. **John 1:15** – "John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks higher than I, for He was before me.'"

B. The life which was with the Father

1. **John 17:5 (NASB)** ⁵"**Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**"

II. THE LIFE PRESENTED

A. The life was manifested

1. **John 1:14** – "And the Word became 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."

B. The life which was with the Father was manifested to us

III. THE LIFE PERCEIVED

A. What we have heard – In Acts 4:20, Peter declared, "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." This is the language of apostolic witness.

B. What we have seen – This was no spiritual vision, but an actual seeing.

C. What we have looked at – John's was no passing glance, but a fastened gaze. It is the look of contemplation.

D. What we have touched with our hands – John and the other disciples had touched him again and again.

IV. THE LIFE PROCLAIMED

A. So that you may have fellowship with us

B. So that you may have fellowship with the Father

C. So that you may have fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ

D. So that our joy may be made complete

APPLICATION

1. **FELLOWSHIP** – This not a reference to church socials, but to joint participation in the Life. Those who have fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ will have fellowship with one another. The "scandal of the incarnation" is essential to Christianity and to our fellowship. We are a community of believers who have a common faith in the Word of life that was manifested.

2. **EXPERIENCE** – Did the ascension of Christ terminate our ability to hear, see, look at and touch Christ? John says, "And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know by the Spirit He gave us" (Jn. 3:24). Later John declared, "We know that we live in Him and He is us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (4:13). Christianity is more than doing Christian things. It is more than intellectual agreement with Christian doctrine. According to John, Christianity is experiential. It involves doing Christian things and believing Christian doctrine, but it also means that we are partakers of His life and that we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Jesus is someone we know personally and experientially, not just someone we know about.
3. **WITNESS VS. REPORTER** – A reporter is someone who seeks to accurately share someone else's experience. In most cases the reporter who wrote the story did not experience what he wrote. He merely collected information and conveyed the experience someone else had. Luke, in his gospel, tells us that he is passing along to his readers that which credible eyewitnesses told him. This is not the case with John. John was an eyewitness to the things he writes. He heard Jesus. He saw Jesus. He touched Jesus. There is a sense in which we are reporting what others have passed along to us, but there is also a real sense in which we are telling the world about our personal experience with Jesus. There is a current need for witnesses; those who have a first hand experience with the Word of life.
4. **SOMETHING THAT LASTS** – This epistle was written around 90 to 100 A.D., more than 60 years after the ascension of Jesus. John's encounter with the Incarnate Word was so dynamic that it was still impacting his life. The grammar of verse one declares that what John heard was still ringing in his ears. What John saw was still being seen. What John had looked upon was still inspiring awe. What John had touched was still touching him. I'm confident that John's experience with God was current, but he was still being impacted by his physical encounter with the Word. It kept him coming back for more.
5. **UNTIL ALL ARE WON**

⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you. The term "message" translates the Greek word *aggelía*, *the content of a message*, delivered in the name of any one. The phrase "we have heard" translates the Greek word *ákhkoamen*, 1st person, plural, perfect, active, indicative of *ájkouw*, *to hear, to listen to*. The term "announce" translates the Greek word *áhaggelíomen*, 1st person, plural, present, active, indicative of *áhnaggellw*, *to bring back word, announce, report*. The source of the message was the "Word of life."

That God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. The message itself is "God is light." God is, in His very nature, light. Vincent says, physically it represents *glory*, intellectually it represents *truth* and morally it speaks of *holiness*. Here, the applied meaning is holiness. The light and the darkness represent opposing moral conditions. God is absolutely and inherently holy and there is absolutely no trace of sin in Him. God is the sum total of moral excellence, and He is totally void of anything that would in anyway tarnish that excellence. Scripture tells us that He is "glorious in holiness" (Ex. 15:11). The angels before His throne never cry "Almighty, Almighty, is the Lord," but "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Is. 6:3). According to Psalm 98:1, His arm is holy. Psalm 105:42 declares that His promise is holy. Psalm 103:1, proclaims that His name is holy. The term holy is additionally used to describe God's word, God's Spirit and God's people.

⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness. Fellowshiping with the Light and living (habitual action) in sin are mutually exclusive. One prevents the other. To "walk in the darkness" is to continuously conduct one's life within the sphere of darkness and all that it stands for.

We lie and do not practice the truth. Those who claim to have fellowship with God and yet habitually "practice" sin are liars. Their claim is false and their conduct falls short of that which agrees with God's nature.

⁷but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light. To "walk in the Light" is to "practice the truth" or to live within the sphere of the Light. In addition to this, to walk in the Light is to allow the Light to expose what is in my heart. It is not a matter of perfection, but of humility.

We have fellowship with one another. The first benefit of walking or of ordering our life within the sphere of light is fellowship with the Light and with all those who are walking in the Light. The end of salvation isn't freedom from sin, but fellowship with the Savior, and this is only possible as I walk in the Light. The Light not only exposes sin, it also reveals Christ within. What is in the heart is exposed by the light, be it sin or the Savior.

And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. The second benefit of walking in the Light is cleansing from all sin. The cleansing agent is "the blood of Jesus His Son." The active agent is "the blood." We are the recipients of the cleansing affect of the finished work of Christ, but only as we stay in the Light. To cleanse is to remove that which makes us morally impure. It is the washing away or removal of impurity or defilement.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we say that we have no sin. Sin here is the condition that results from the act. This condition perpetuates more acts. Undealt with, sin spreads.

We are deceiving ourselves. Poetically, John wrote, "If sin we say we are not having, ourselves we are deceiving." We abandon what is true and commit ourselves to that which is not true. As long as we actively deny the truth revealed by the Light, we prevent the blood from actively cleansing us.

And the truth is not in us.

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins. The word "confess" translates the Greek term *ὁμολογῶμεν*. It is a compound word meaning *to say the same thing or agree with*. If we say what God is saying about our sins, then the blessing of this verse is conferred on us.

He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins. The term "faithful" translates the Greek word *pistos*, *trustworthy, faithful, reliable*. The term "righteous" declares that our confession of sin gives God the legal right to act with regard to our sin. God's first action is to "forgive," *to send away, forgive, pardon or cancel*.

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The term "cleanse" translates the Greek word *kaqarish*, 3rd person, singular, aorist, active, subjunctive of *kaqarizw*, *to cleanse from sin, purify by an expiatory offering, make expiation for*, Hebrews 9:22-23. It is the word we get catharsis from. The aorist subjunctive speaks of a single act that keeps on cleansing. God not only forgives, He also cleanses us from the defilement which we incur by committing sin. The word "unrighteousness" translates the Greek term *adikia*, *injustice, wrong; iniquity, falsehood, deceitfulness*. As an attitude it is a disregard for the respect and obedience due to God.

¹⁰**If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.**

If we say that we have not sinned. If we disagree with God and say that we have not sinned or missed the mark.

We make Him a liar. He does not become a liar because of our denial, we merely declare or make Him out to be a liar. By our denial we are declaring that God has misrepresented the truth concerning us.

And His word is not in us. This reveals that His word does not dwell in us. The only reason such delusion is possible is because we are void of the Word. If His word were abiding in us, then it would confirm God's testimony against us.

Chapter Two

¹**My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;**

My little children. Here, the term **teknia** is an expression of endearment or affection.

I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. The phrase "*may not sin*" translates the Greek **mh**, a particle of negation, *not*, and **aharthte**, 2nd person, plural aorist, active, subjunctive of **ahartanw** (264), *to miss a mark, to sin, to be guilty of wrong*. Lest we be like the diabetic who increases his insulin so he can eat sweets, John tells us that the cleansing blood is not a license to sin.

And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father. Wuest points out that the phrase "if anyone sins" is aorist subjunctive and speaks of a single act, not of habitual action.⁶ The term "Advocate" translates the Greek term **araklhton**, noun accusative masculine singular of **paraklhtoj(ou(o`** a verbal adjective with a basic meaning *one called alongside to help*; (1) as a legal t.t., as one who appears in another's behalf *advocate, defender, intercessor* (1J 2.1); (2) as one who gives protection, help, and security *helper, comforter, counselor* (JN 14.16). Our Advocate does not plead our innocence, rather He presents His finished work as sufficient to pay our debt. He is our Advocate "with the Father." He is ever pleading or claiming the efficacy of His blood in our behalf before the face of Father.

Jesus Christ the righteous. Only He who is guiltless can plead for those who are guilty.

²**and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**

And He himself is the propitiation for our sins. The term "propitiation" translates the Greek word **ilasmoj**, nominative masculine singular of **ilasmoj(ou(o`** with a focus on atoning sacrifice for sin *a means of forgiveness, a way of reconciling* (1J 2.2; 4.10). Jesus did not merely appease God's anger, to the contrary, He removed that which alienated us from God and stood as an obstacle to our fellowship with God. On the Cross, Jesus died in our place and thereby removed the cause of alienation. All the wrath of God that should have fallen on us was visited upon Him, thus satisfying the demands of the Law and making faithers acceptable to God.

And not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. Jesus' propitiatory work is greater the need. It is sufficient to meet the need of the saint who commits an act of sin and to meet the need of all human kind.

⁶ Wuest, page 109.

**CONQUERING SIN
(1:5-2:2)**

INTRODUCTION

Sin prevents us from having fellowship with God and with one another. It is a barrier to relationships on a horizontal and vertical level. If we are going to live in community with one another and with God, sin cannot be excused or swept under the rug. If we are going to have fellowship with God, then we must deal with sin. This means that we must come to grips with what sin is. Instead of giving us a technical theological definition of sin, John declares the standard by which sin is defined as sin.

I. THE SAVIOR'S CHARACTER (1:5) - God is Himself the standard.

- A. God is light** – This is a reference to God's moral perfection and holiness. When Isaiah looked in on God's throne room he heard angels declaring "holy, holy, holy." Hundreds of years later John heard these creatures and they were still declaring "holy, holy, holy." By using the term light to describe God's holiness, John tells us that this Light makes everything visible. Nothing can be hidden from its penetrating exposure.
- B. In Him is no darkness at all** – John goes on to tell us that there is nothing in God that would in anyway taint or blemish His holiness. He is absolutely flawless and morally perfect.

II. THE SAINT'S CONDUCT (1:7) – They walk in the Light. This is not a reference to sinless perfect, but to humility and repentance. Like the word of God, this light is able to "judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). To walk in the light requires us to deal with those issues exposed by the light. Those who walk in the light will experience two things.

- A. Fellowship**
 - 1. With God** – The end of salvation isn't freedom from sin, but relationship with God.
 - 2. With one another**
- B. Cleansing** – This suggests the confession of verse 9.
 - 1. By the blood** – There is no other medium available for dealing with sin.
 - 2. From all sin** – The blood is God's cleansing agent for any and all sin.

III. THE SINNER'S CLAIMS (1:6, 8, 10)

- A. I have fellowship with God even though I am living in habitual sin.**
 - 1. They are liars** – Their claim is false.
 - 2. They do not practice the truth** – Their conduct is false.
- B. I have no sin.**
 - 1. They deceive themselves** – They deny the truth revealed by the Light.
 - 2. The truth is not in them** - They are void of the truth.
- C. I have not sinned.**
 - 1. They make God out to be a liar.**
 - 2. God's word is not in them.**

IV. THE SINNER'S CLEANSING (1:9) - If we say what God says about our sin, then God does two things.

- A. Our part** – We must say what God says about our sins.
- B. God's part** – When we confess our sin, God is faithful to keep His promise and legally able to help us.
 - 1. He forgives us** for sinning.
 - 2. He cleanses us** from the defilement caused by sin.

V. THE SINNER'S CONSELOR (2:1-2)

- A. Who He is**
 - 1. Our Advocate with the Father** – One who pleads the case of another.
 - 2. Jesus Christ the righteous** – He is sinless and therefore qualified to plead our case.
- B. What He did**

1. **Our propitiation** – Jesus was the one upon whom God's wrath was visited. He took our place and thereby satisfied God's just demand for the death of the sinner.
2. **The world's propitiation** – Jesus propitiatory work is offered to the entire world or kosmou.

CONCLUSION

We will never experience pardon, peace or joy in their fullness until we take full responsibility for our sin; until we fully acknowledge that what we did was sin and that we did it. Only then can the Advocate plead His provision before Father on our behalf. Only then can we come into full fellowship with the God who is Light. If we will agree with God concerning our sinfulness, then He will agree with our Advocate concerning our forgiveness and cleansing. The provision is greater than the need, but only those who acknowledge their need experience its efficacy.

LIFE IN THE LIGHT
(1 John 1:5-2:2)

^{1:5}This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that **God is Light**, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is **in the Light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

^{2:1}My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*.

- I. THE LIGHT** – John says that **God is light** and that God is **in the Light**. When John says that God is light, he is not declaring that God travels at 186,281 miles per second. He is using something we know to help us understand the unknown. What light is to the natural world, God is to the spiritual and moral world. We use the term *light* with reference to knowledge. In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prayed, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened**, so **that you may know** what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (1:18, 19). To enlighten is to furnish knowledge or to instruct. An enlightened person is one who has been freed from ignorance and misinformation. We use the term light in this way when we ask someone if they can shed some light on an issue or topic. To keep someone in the dark is to withhold important information from them.
- A. Light makes vision possible.** There are two ways to discover where the coffee table has been moved. You can encounter it with the pain sensors covering your shinbone or you can turn on a light. I prefer turning on a light. Some people seem to enjoy living life the hard way. They learn by trial and error. They know fire is hot and have the scars to prove it. They are stubborn independent unteachable souls who are ever attempting to reinvent the wheel, but we do not need to bump our way through life. The Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and an light unto my path." John says, "God is light." Jesus declared, ⁹...**"Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."** (John 11:9-10). Just as information is light to the mind, revelation is light to one's spirit. Spiritual reality is not discovered by the natural man, it is revealed by the Spirit of God (1Cor. 2:9-14).
- B. Light is a revealer or illuminator.** Men walk in darkness, not because light is not available, but because they reject the light. They chose to live in the darkness. Jesus addressed this when He said, ¹⁹**"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed"** (John 3:19-20). Fear of exposure keeps men from coming to God.
- C. Light is uncompromising.** When John says, *God is light*, he takes us beyond the relative nature of natural light and goes on to say "and in Him is no darkness at all." The Light that is divine is absolute and casts no shadows. James tells us, "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow" (James 1:17). This Light pierces and penetrates everything in its presence. It leaves nothing unexposed. Like the word of God, it "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). It reaches beyond actions and reveals the inner attitudes and motives of the heart for what they are. It uncovers the hidden motivation behind the act of "giving all my goods to feed the poor" (1Cor. 13:3). I may not know my own heart, but the Light will reveal the counsels of my inner most self. I may chose to deny what I is exposed, but the Light will not allow it to remain hidden.

- II. **THE LIES** - Metaphorically, the term darkness is used to describe **ignorance of divine things** and the defeated **sinful lifestyle** it produces. More than once, Paul wrote, "I do not want you to be ignorant or uninformed, brethren." Wherever we find the presence of God, we will find Light. If light is absent, then God is not present.
- A. **Lie Number One (v.6): It's not what I live but what I know that's important.** Knowledge that is void of practice has not reached the heart. If the truth is present in us, then it will be revealed in the way we live. A consistently sinful lifestyle declares that we have no fellowship with God.
 - B. **Lie Number Two (v.8): I can sin without it affecting me.** The phrase "we have no sin" isn't a denial of the act, but of the consequences. John says that in such cases we are leading ourselves astray or deceiving ourselves.
 - C. **Lie Number Three (v.10): Christians cannot sin, therefore what I did was not a sin.** When God convicts us of sin, to deny what He says implies that He is a liar. The ability to deny that sin is sin reveals that His word is not in us.
- III. **THE LIFE (vs. 7, 9, 2:1-1)** – Living life in the Light is not a matter of sinless, but of dealing with sin. This view is supported by John's statement in 2:1—"My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus the righteous." John indicates that those who walk or order their life in the Light deal with their sin. They immediately respond to the exposure of sin by confessing their sin or by saying the same thing that God says about it--It is sin and it has affected my life. Those who live this way experience three marvelous benefits.
- A. **Forgiveness (v.9).** Confession gives God the legal right to **release** us from guilt, **reconcile** us to Himself and **restore** what has been lost or broken. Jesus is the means by which God is able to forgive us. He is the propitiation for our sins. On the Cross, Jesus died in our place. All the wrath of God that should have fallen on us was visited on Him, thus satisfying the just demands of the Law.
 - B. **Cleansing (vs.9, 7).** Confession gives God the legal right to remove the defilement or unrighteousness sin brings to our soul and spirit. According to verse seven, the cleansing agent is "the blood of Jesus His Son." He did not merely appease God's anger, to the contrary, He removed that which alienated us from God and stood as an obstacle to our fellowship with God. He imparts righteousness for faith and gives the faithful right standing with God.
 - C. **Fellowship (v.7).** Those who walk or order their lives in the sphere of light enjoy the blessings of uninterrupted fellowship with God and with all those who walk in the light. Fellowship declares that we share all that He is with Him. **We jointly participate** in His righteousness, in His joy, in His peace, in His moral perfection and so on.

CONCLUSION

Life in the Light is possible because of what God has done through Christ and because we confess our sin as sin. This forgiveness, cleansing and fellowship is now available to the whole world. The God side of the work is complete and all one needs to do to experience life in the Light is confess their sin and faith God's grace provision in Christ.