

The First Epistle of John

...so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1John 1:3)

1John 1:1-10

Someone read v.2.

This is a verse-long parenthesis – this is indicated in the NIV, ESV, and NASB by a dash, and is indicated by a literal parenthesis in the NET and the KJV (interestingly, the NKJV opts for a dash).

What does a parenthetical comment usually indicate?
Some additional facts or information about the subject.

What does John mean by his use of a parenthetical comment in this verse – what important information is he adding?
He is explaining the Word of Life actually came in the flesh, and John is testifying and proclaiming that fact, and – importantly – that this life is never-ending and has always been with the Father and was “manifested” to him and his fellows disciples.

The Greek behind “manifested” (*phaneroō*) = to make known what already exists.

The life God gives to men was revealed in the historically in Jesus – this is a key point for John and why he chooses to include it in this slightly awkward parenthesis – it’s awkwardness calls it to our attention.

Indeed, this life is identical with Jesus, so that John can say he has actually seen it.

His proclamation thus consists of an act of testimony. But still his emphasis is not on the act of proclamation but on the historical reality of that to which he bears witness.

It is the eternal life which was with the Father and then appeared to us.
Compare Jn 1:1-2.

It is equally important for John AND his readers.

Someone read v. 3.

Having concluded his parenthesis, John returns to his theme with the

repeated words “seen and heard, we proclaim.” But he adds a purpose phrase: So that you may have fellowship with us.

Does anyone know the Greek for “fellowship?”

It literally means “having in common.”

Two or more persons may be said to be in fellowship when they have something in common.

See Lk 5:10 = fishing

Tit 1:4 = common faith

Phil 1:7 = share in the grace of God

Here in this verse, John clearly wants to make known his message so that by their acceptance they may become and remain his partners and thus be joined together in that Christian love which unites those with a common faith in Jesus Christ.

Read v 3 again:

Notice that the fellowship is not only with other believers, but also – more importantly – with the Father and Son. Here, the thought of union with God is uppermost.

John 10:38; John 17:21-23

John, perhaps more than any other Apostle, really understood the mutual indwelling of Father and Son, and it is this indwelling that makes possible our fellowship with God and Jesus.

There is nothing vague or sentimental about this fellowship. It involves obedience to the Commandments of Christ and faithfulness to His teaching communicated through the Apostles (this theme – one of the most important in 1John – will be developed more in the coming weeks).

What is important at this point is to apprehend the wonder of having an intimate fellowship with the Father and Jesus, of His desire for fellowship with us, and to realize what those false teachers had lost by choosing to sever that intimacy and abandon their faith.

Someone read v4.

I trust Barry covered this verse last week?

Did he talk about the difference between “my joy” and “our joy?”

If it is “our joy” it the inclusive “our” (Yours and mine), so this variant is not very important.

The difference rests on a textual variant which, like the vast number of textual variants, does not change the theological content.

Hymōn (=Your) vs *hēmōn* (=our). These words were apparently pronounced virtually identically, which may signify verbal transmission (the earliest and best copies have “our”).

Someone read vv 5-10

John now leaves the Prologue and begins by teaching something fundamental about God’s character.

What is that?

God is light - What Biblical parallels can you find for this reference?

Gen 1:3; Ps 27:1; Isa 49:6;
John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 3:19-21

It is this ethical sense that John has uppermost in his mind when he writes “God is light and in him is no darkness at all.”

That is to say, God is the source and essence of holiness and righteousness, goodness and truth, and there is in Him nothing unholy or unrighteous, evil or false.

Notice one of John’s distinctive practices is to state something one way, and immediately follow with its exact opposite.

An example is in the very next verse (we lie and do not practice the truth).

Thus, God revealed Himself in the OT, before Christ came, and when the age of fulfillment dawned in Christ, the character of God was unveiled in the life that was the life of men.

Thus, those who are in fellowship with the Father and His

Son Jesus Christ will reflect the character of God in their lives; they will walk as children of light.

Someone read v6

Here begins three tests of life, each beginning with the words “if we say..”

Each test takes the same form: A false claim followed by its antidote.

Who is making these false claims
> false teachers

This first false claim is that one may have fellowship with God at the same time one is walking a path characterized by sin.

Eg. Jn 3:20-21

Not only were did the false teachers fall short in this area, but even we who follow the Apostle’s teaching need to be reminded orthodoxy of doctrine is no substitute for righteousness of life.

The ethical use of the verb walk (*peripateō*) [peripatetic = walking around, itinerant] is used frequently in (1Cor 7:17; 2Cor 5:7; etc, etc), in the letters of John (1John 2:6; 2John 4, 6; 3John 3, 4); and in the Gospel of John (11:9-10; 12:35-36).

The early Gnostics believed that they could *be* righteous without necessarily *doing* righteousness. Consequently, spiritual communion with God was independent of physical morality.

Sin is always a barrier to fellowship with God (ps 5:4, 46:18, Isa 59:1,2) for “what communion has light with darkness? (2Cor 6:14).

If we make such a claim, we lie – deliberately, knowingly, self-evidently. We not only contradict the truth in our words, but deny it by our inconsistent lives.

“Our words and our lives are a lie” (NEB).

Read v 7.

John now affirms a complimentary truth. He has shown the consequence of walking in darkness, now he describes what happens when we walk in the light.

How can John say that God is light and then follow that with “as He is in the light.” Aren’t those contradictory statements?

God is “in the light” because He himself *is* light. And we are called to walk in the light beside Him. God is in the light because He is always true to Himself and His works are consistent with His nature.

2 Tim 2:13

If we are in the light, we obtain 2 benefits: What are they? We have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus cleans us of the sin that is revealed by the light.

“Fellowship with each other”

Since in V6, John declares that to walk in darkness prevents fellowship with God, we might expect him here to express the opposite truth that if we walk in the light, we will enjoy fellowship with God.

Why do you think he extends the metaphor to being in fellowship with other believers?

He has already stated in v3, our fellowship with one another is based on our fellowship with God and His Son.

The second benefit is that “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from ALL sin.”

The verb “cleanses” (katharizō) suggests God does more than merely forgive – He actively erases the stain of sin from our hearts.

Why is this verb in the present tense?

It’s a continuous process!

What do you think John has in mind when he speaks of “cleansing?”

Of the conscience from guilt and moral defilement

Why does Jesus have to continually forgive us if we receive forgiveness when we first come to Christ?

Repaired relationship enabling a close fellowship

1John 2:1

These benefits are permanently available to those united to Christ, but not to those who sever themselves from Him. To be severed from the fellowship of Christ’s people is to be severed from fellowship of Christ Himself, so closely are He and His people joined (FF Bruce).

The condition to receive these 2 benefits is to walk in the light, to be sincere, open, honest, transparent.