

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 3:4-10

Review

Where is John writing from?

What heresy was he addressing?

What flavor of Gnosticism was John specifically dealing with?

What did the heretics teach?

How does John deal with this false teaching?

1John 1:6-10

Someone read 1John 2:28 – 3:3

Someone else read 1Jn 3:4-10

How does v28 begin?

Literally, “and now” (*kai nun*). This phrase is emphatic in the Greek, and signals the beginning of a new section which continues through 4:6.

The 3 tests:

Moral Test of Obedience or Righteousness (2:28 – 3:10)

Social Test of love (3:11 – 3:18)

A digression about the our assurance of salvation and our condemning heart (3:19 – 3:24)

Doctrinal Test of truth about Christ (4:1 – 6)

John is continuing to build the case for why we should be righteous and obedient. What does he focus on in vv2:28 – 3:3?

The Second Coming

Not shrink away ... when He appears ... we will see Him just as He is

In this next mini-section, he links the need to be righteous with Christ’s past appearing.

What was His purpose in His first Coming?

To take away sin

Destroy the works of the devil

What similarities do you see in the language used in vv 4-9.

He uses similar language, but focus on slightly different aspects of the truth he is conveying.

Intro:

Everyone who practices sin (v4)

the one who practices sin (v8)

The Theme:

{the nature of} sin is lawlessness (v4)

{the origin of} is of the devil (v8)

The purpose of Christ's first coming:

He appeared in order to take away sins (v5)

The Son of God ⁽²³⁾ appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (v8)

The logical conclusion:

No one who abides in Him sins (v6)

No one who is born of God practices sin (v9)

What is John teaching by using this method?

The true nature and origin of sin, and asking us to reflect on what Christ really did for us on the cross and – most importantly – His triumph over the grave and the gift of Eternal Life.

The wages of sin ...

The free gift of God ...

(Rom 6:3)

To ask us to count the true cost of sin, in light of the fact that continuing in sin is completely opposed to the whole purpose of Christ's first appearing.

Someone read v4.

Who is 'everyone?'

John states a universal truth, to which there are no exceptions and from which there is no escape.

To whom is this universal truth specifically directed?

The heretical teachers

What do you think they were teaching?

We don't really know for sure, but they were probably teaching something akin to the following:

Because Christ paid for all our sins, one could have a casual attitude towards sin.

Or, that because the flesh is evil, and only the spirit is pure, one could indulge in whatever perversity one desired.

Or, because they were privy to "secret knowledge," they were beyond the simplistic demands on the rank-and-file.

Whatever they were teaching, John cuts the rug out from under them by referring to "everyone." There is not a caste system in Christianity – with the spiritually elite with their so-called secret knowledge at the top.

"Sin is lawlessness"

The use of the definite article can signify more than it does in English. For example, the article is often used before proper names:

Ho Iesous = THE Jesus

Elsewhere in the NT, it can denote the subject of a sentence:

"THE Word was God" not "God was the Word" (which is the word order in Greek)

theos hn ho logos

Why would the latter be not merely a grammatical error, but a theological one as well?

There is a rule in Greek grammar that when two nouns are both used with the article, the nouns are said to be "convertible." That means they are interchangeable.

The man is the runner = the runner is the man

What would you guess is the case here?

Literally, THE sin is THE lawlessness
ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία

Can anyone tell me what the literal meaning of “sin” is?

“Lawlessness”

In Greek, the word for law is *nomos*
Here, we have the word *a-nomia*
Literally, “against the law, contrary to the law, anti-law”

And when we sin, whose Law do we break?

John equates sin with rebellion against God. It is more than just passively “missing the mark,” it is an active violation of God’s Word and His will. It is vital that we accept John’s description of sin, because the necessary first step in living a life characterized by holiness, is to acknowledge the true nature and wickedness of sin.

All sin is lawlessness, but we all sin. How do we reconcile John’s teaching with this reality?

The word “practice” (Gk ποιεῖν) means the habit of doing sin. It is the exactly opposite of a life characterized by righteousness.

Furthermore, John has already cited two remedies for occasional sins:

1Jn 1:9 and 1Jn 2:1-2

And John has condemned those who claim to have no sin in the strongest possible terms. (1John 1:8-10).

Here’s a little test: Think about how your life has changed since knowing Christ. Think about the past 5 years. What habitual sins has God removed from your life? What are you still struggling with? Would your close friends say that you have changed? Is your life characterized by righteousness or habitual sin?

1 Cor 13:4ff – We’re all familiar with these verses. Now, try substituting your name for the word “love.”