

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 3:5-6

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 1Jn 2:28-29

Someone else read 1Jn 3:4-10

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)

What similarities do you see in the language used in vv 3:4-9.

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.

Someone read v5.

In Greek, “He” is emphatic (*ekeinos* vs *autos*). And who is John referring to?

“Appeared” is the same word used in 2:28. In what way are they different?

“Take away sins” - Read GJohn 1:29.

The same author uses the same phrase “take away” by quoting John the Baptist.

Whose sins?

Ours

The word “sins” is preceded by the definite article – “he appeared in order to take away THE sins”

In fact, some MSS actually add the personal pronoun “our” to this verse, including one of the most reliable early MSS (*Codex Sinaiticus*), as well as some early translations (Coptic and Syriac).

“in order to” = Greek *hoti*, which give the reason something happens.
Because.

Read 1John 2:29, 1John 3:7

Jesus is described in these verses by what He has (or better, *is*):
righteous and pure

Now, in v5, He is described by what He lacks: “in Him there is no sin.”

The removal of the stain or our sins can only be accomplished by one who is himself sinless. Hence, the reminder: “in him there is no sin.”

This goes further that merely saying “he did not practice sin,” further even than saying “he committed no sin.” It declares that there is no indwelling sin in His heart.

CF., 2 Cor 5:21. He had no consciousness of it in His personal experience.

Someone read v6.

If, then, he appeared on earth to take away his people's sins, and is himself the sinless One, how can sin be cherished by anyone who abides in Him? The simple answer is: you can't!

This doesn't mean that we as children born of God stop sinning when we accept Christ as our Savior. It does mean that our lives are not characterized by sin; instead, we should be characterized by righteousness.

And, as was pointed out last week, John has already provided 2 "escape hatches" for the occasional sin:

1Jn 1:9; 1Jn 2:1

And, he has condemned any who claim to live without sin (1Jn 1:10)

Fellowship with Christ and indulgence in sin are contradictory. Whatever high claims may have been made by the heretical teachers, that indulgence is proof positive that such a person has no personal knowledge of Christ: "No one who sins has seen or known him."

For a similar idea, cf. 3Jn 11. This may seem at first glance to be a simple statement – and it is – but it has profound implications, for it indicates the gulf is so vast between the righteousness of Christ and "doing evil," that the latter can actually be characterized as never having seen God.

When will we see Christ "as He is?"

1Jn 3:2

Notice John's writing style, here. He contrasting seeing Christ "just as He is" at the Rapture, with sinful man not seeing Him at all.

Someone read v7

"Little children," this is the familiar address of John to his readers. However, in this case, it may be, as the commentator Westcott notes, that "the tenderness of the address is called out by the peril of the situation." Why do you think Westcott calls this situation "perilous?"

Because false teachers were trying to deceive true believers.

“Make sure no one deceives you”

The false teachers were seeking to lead John’s readers astray, not only theologically (cf 1Jn 2:25-26), but morally as well.

“The one who practices righteousness” – the force of the Greek is “the one who *keeps on practicing* righteousness is righteous.”

The heretics were apparently trying to promote the idea that their spiritually elite status made it possible for them to ‘be’ righteous without actually practicing it. John roundly rejects such notions.

There may also have been some who used the OT standard of the Law to measure their relative righteousness vs others around them.

Gen 6:9 (Noah); Job 1:1 (Job) Hebrew ***tam*** means “perfect”; Php 3:6 (Paul)

John insists that only those who actually *practice* righteousness demonstrate to the world they are truly saved and do not need to “shrink back in fear at His 2nd Coming.”

How are we saved?

By grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (3 of the so-called 5 *solas* of the Reformation:

1. *Sola Gratia*
2. *Sola Fide*
3. *Solo Christo*
4. *Sola Scriptura*
5. *Soli Deo Gloria*

This fact was probably being distorted by the false teachers into justification for not striving to be righteous. But, see:

GJn 14:15; 1Pe 1:15-16 and recall Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the MT. (Mat 5:48)

But how can we be righteous, holy and perfect? By grace!

“Just as he is righteous.”

Who is he? Do you think it is emphatic?

The Greek word *orthos* actually makes “righteous” into an essential quality. He is fully and completely righteous in his being. In his human as well as his divine nature.